

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4828  
ANSWERED ON 31.03.2022

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT COMMUNAL HARMONY**

4828. SHRI RAVIKUMAR D.:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any proposal to set up committees to protect communal harmony in every district of the country and if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) the measures taken by the Government to protect Muslim women from harassment through apps like 'Sulli Deals' and 'Bulli Bai'?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS  
(SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI)

(a) 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The responsibilities to maintain law and order, including dealing with communal violence, rest with the respective State Governments. The State Governments are competent to deal with such offences under the extant provisions of laws. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued Revised guidelines on Communal Harmony in 2008 to all States/UTs, wherein the following Administrative measures were suggested in connection with setting up committees to promote communal harmony:-

- (i) In communally sensitive towns and areas, Peace Committees/Quami Ekta Committees, comprising prominent citizens, community leaders and representatives of political parties, respectable organisations, etc. should be set up, and periodic contacts with them should be maintained by the concerned officers at the police station, sub-divisional and district levels.
- (ii) Mohalla Committees, comprising members of all communities, should also be constituted for the proper and peaceful observances of festivals.

(b) The Government is committed to ensure that the internet in India is open, safe & trusted and accountable for all users. As internet expands and delivers many benefits for citizens, the Government is also aware of growing phenomena of users harms caused by misuse of some social media/intermediaries platforms by some users which also includes crimes against women and children caused as a consequence.

Two such Apps with derogatory and malafide intentions against women, which came to the notice of Government, were hosted on an open-source platform namely "GitHub". Both the

Apps allegedly picked up the profiles of the women from social media platforms, and Twitter was used to promote the alleged content.

‘Police’ and ‘Public Order’ are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. The Law Enforcement Agencies take legal action as per provisions of applicable law. In the instant case, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) coordinated with service providers and provided technical information to law enforcement agency to facilitate investigation.

Government has also taken the following steps to tackle cyber crime against women. These, inter alia include:

- (i) There are adequate legal provisions to deal with digital safety of persons particularly women and children. The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has adequate provisions to deal with prevalent cyber crimes including the ones related to women. Sections 66E, 67, and 67A of the Act provide for the punishment and fine for violation of bodily privacy and publishing or transmitting of obscene/sexually-explicit material in electronic form. Section 67B of the Act specifically provides stringent punishment for publishing, browsing or transmitting child pornography in electronic form.
- (ii) The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under the IT Act particularly deals with citizen safety especially for women and children. The Rules require that the intermediaries shall observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform their users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, defamatory, obscene and invasive of another’s privacy or otherwise unlawful in any manner whatsoever. The intermediary shall also adopt grievance redressal mechanism as prescribed in the Rules. Intermediaries are also expected to remove any information violative of any law in India as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by an appropriate government or its authorised agency. The intermediary shall publish on its website the name of the Grievance Officer and his contact details to address the grievances received from users and affected individuals / organizations. Intermediaries are also expected to remove any unlawful content as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by appropriate government or its agency.
- (iii) Also rule 3(2)(b) of these Rules provides that on a complaint by an individual intermediary shall, within 24 hours, remove any content.

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