

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1602

TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.07.2022

MISLEADING INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT SCHEME.

1602. SHRI PASHUPATI NATH SINGH:
SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note that videos, contents and information on various websites and YouTube channels spread fake and misleading information regarding various Government Schemes including anti Government agenda;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the further steps taken by the Government to curb such incidents and ban these websites/channels?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

(SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR):

(a) to (c): The Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under Information Technology Act, 2000, on 25th February, 2021, which inter- alia provides for Code of Ethics to be followed by publishers of news & current affairs and a three level grievance redressal mechanism for looking into complaints relating to violation of the Code of Ethics by such publishers. The Code of Ethics requires the publishers not to disseminate content which is inaccurate, misleading, false half-truth, etc.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has also been set up in Press Information Bureau under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in November, 2019 which addresses queries by citizens on its portal regarding authenticity of news in print, electronic and digital media and posts verified information on its social media platforms. In order to check the spread of COVID related fake news and to provide to the people an authentic source of all information relating to the pandemic, a COVID-dedicated Cell of FCU was also created on 31st March, 2020, to which people can refer information related to Covid-19 for verification. The Fact Check Unit has responded to 34,125 actionable queries(including queries related to COVID-19). The PIB has also busted fake news and 875 posts thereof have been placed on its social media platforms.

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has issued directions for blocking of 94 YouTube based news channels and 19 social media accounts/ websites/mobile applications for publishing content not found to be in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States etc., including fake news, in accordance with Section 69 A of Information Technology Act during the period 2021 to 2022.

Similarly, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), has also issued directions for blocking of 747 URLs containing on social media intermediaries during 2021 to 2022 regarding content covered under section 69A of IT Act, 2000.
