

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1421

TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.12.2024

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIGITAL MEDIA ETHICS CODE

1421. SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR:

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

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to implement the Digital Media Ethics Code to ensure responsible content on digital platforms;**
- (b) the specific measures introduced to balance freedom of expression and regulation;**
- (c) the challenges faced in monitoring digital content and the manner in which these are being addressed; and**
- (d) the impact observed in terms of compliance and public engagement with ethical digital media?**

ANSWER

MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW):

(a) to (d):- The Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) on 25th February, 2021 under Information Technology Act, 2000. Part-III of these Rules administered by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting provides for a Code of Ethics for publishers of news and current affairs on digital media and publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) and a Grievance Redressal Mechanism to look into complaints relating to violation of the Code of Ethics. There is a self regulation by the publishers at Level-I and Level-II of the Grievance Redressal Mechanism thus ensuring artistic freedom and the right to free speech and expression for such publishers.

Various measures for implementation of the IT Rules, 2021 like appointment of Authorized Officer, constitution of Inter Departmental Committee (IDC), registration of Self Regulatory Bodies (SRBs) etc have been taken by the Ministry. More than 3800 publishers have furnished information under rule 18 of IT Rules, 2021.

Writ Petitions were filed in various High Courts challenging maintainability of IT Rules, 2021. These cases, which were transferred to Supreme Court, have now been transferred to Delhi High Court for hearing. In two of these cases, Bombay High Court vide interim order dated 14.08.2021 have stayed the operation of sub-rules (1) and (3) of Rule 9 of the IT Rules, 2021.
