

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2274
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

OBSCENE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

2274. SHRI DHARAMBIR SINGH:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware of the increasing spread of vulgar, obscene and misleading content on platforms like YouTube, Instagram and other social media in India;

(b) the steps taken by the Government to regulate and monitor such content particularly content that negatively influences youth and promotes unethical behaviour;

(c) whether the Government has directed social media platforms to implement stricter content moderation policies and age-restriction mechanisms;

(d) the details of the complaints received and legal actions taken against content creators and platforms for spreading inappropriate or harmful content; and

(e) whether the Government plans to introduce new regulations or amendments under the Information Technology Act to ensure accountability of social media platforms in curbing the spread of such content and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

(DR. L MURUGAN):

(a) to (e): The Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“IT Rules, 2021”) on 25.02.2021 under the Information Technology Act,2000.

For the user generated content on intermediary platforms, Part-II of IT Rules, 2021, administered by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) casts specific due diligence obligations on intermediaries, including social media intermediaries to make reasonable efforts by themselves and to cause the users of their computer resource to not host, store, transmit, display or publish, etc. any such information that is obscene, pornographic, invasive of another’s privacy, insulting or harassing on the basis of gender, racially or ethnically objectionable, or promoting enmity between different groups on the grounds of religion or caste with the intent to incite violence, or harmful to child or that is relating or encouraging money laundering or gambling, or that is misinformation, patently false information, untrue or misleading in nature, or that threatens the unity, integrity, defence, security or sovereignty of India, public order, or that violates any law for the time being in force.

Similarly for the publishers of news and current affairs on digital media and publishers of online curated content (OTT Platforms), Part-III of the IT Rules, 2021, administered by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, inter-alia, provide for a Code of Ethics for such publishers. Besides, Section 79(3)(b) of IT Act, 2000 provides for notification by appropriate Governments of unlawful act or content to the intermediaries for removing/disabling access to such content. Under these provisions the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in March 2024, has taken action and blocked 18 OTT platforms for publishing obscene and vulgar content.

Action for hosting of content that is violative of any law, for the time being in force, is also taken by the appropriate law enforcement agencies on the basis of FIRs filed such cases.
