

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 888
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 04.02.2026

TROLLING OF WOMEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

†888. SMT. JYOTSNA CHARANDAS MAHANT:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of rape threats and organized abusive trolling directed at women on social media platforms and if so, the details of complaints received since January 2025, platform-wise;
- (b) whether the Government is likely to take strict cognizance of elements who use violent language against women under the guise of religious identity and employ it as a form of 'protective shield'; (c) if so, whether any audit is being conducted by the Government to fix the accountability of intermediaries for preventing sexual harassment arising from obscene or distorted content generated through Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools; and
- (d) if so, whether the Government proposes to withdraw the 'safe harbor' protection available to social media companies under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, so as to ensure that offenders do not receive protection?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (d): The policies of Government of India are aimed at ensuring a open, safe, trusted and accountable cyberspace for users in the country.

The Government is cognizant of the risks and harms arising from the misuse of digital technologies including the misuse of social media platforms for online abuse and harassment of women.

The Government after extensive public consultations with relevant stakeholders has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules") on 25.02.2021 which were subsequently amended from time-to-time to address emerging harms from misuse of technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The IT Rules cast specific legal obligations on intermediaries, including the social media intermediaries to make reasonable efforts to ensure that users of their computer resources do not host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any information that is obscene, pornographic, paedophilic, harmful to child, invasive of privacy, insulting or harassing on the basis of gender or violates any law for the time being in force. The rules also mandate the expeditious removal of such unlawful content within the stipulated timelines.

Significant social media intermediaries are additionally required to deploy technology-based measures, including automated tools or other mechanisms, to proactively prevent the dissemination of unlawful content (rape, child sexual abuse or conduct) and ensure timely compliance with removal requirements, appoint Chief Compliance Officer, Resident Grievance Officer and Nodal Contact person.

Further, intermediaries are required to establish the grievance redressal mechanism to enable its user to raise a complaint against the violation of the IT Rules. It also empowers the user to file an appeal against the intermediaries if his grievance is not resolved within the stipulated timeline or is not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Officer of the respective intermediary.

Failure of the intermediaries to observe the legal obligations as provided in the IT Rules would entail loss of protection under section 79 of the IT Act and the intermediaries shall be liable for consequential action or prosecution as provided under the extant laws.

Besides, the Information Technology Act, 2000 (“IT Act”) provides punishment for various cybercrimes such as:

Section 66C - (Punishment for identity theft) deals with misinformation, deepfakes, cheating by personation or identity theft;

Section 66D - criminalises the use of computer resources for cheating by personation;

Section 66E - prescribes the punishment for capturing and publishing or transmitting the image of a private area of any person without his/her consent.

Section 67A and 67B makes publishing or transmitting obscene material a punishable offence.

Section 69A - provision pertaining to issuance of blocking orders to intermediaries for blocking access to specific information/link.

Section 79 - allows the Appropriate Government/ agency to issue notice to intermediaries for removal of information being used to commit unlawful act.

Section 78 and 80 - empowers Police to investigate offences.

Additionally, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (“Act”) provides for the processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognises both the rights of the individual to protect their personal data and the need to process such personal data for lawful purposes.

The Ministry has also issued advisories on 26.12.2023 and 15.03.2024 through which intermediaries were reminded about their due-diligence obligations outlined under IT Rules, 2021 and advised on countering unlawful content including malicious ‘synthetic media’ and ‘deepfakes’. A similar advisory was also issued on 29.12.2025.

The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a dedicated portal to report cybercrimes [cybercrime.gov.in] and has also started a toll-free number 1930.
