

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*147
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 10.12.2021

HATE MONGERING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

***147. SHRI JOHN BRITTAS:**

Will the Minister of Electronics & Information Technology be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Government has noticed reports regarding “ adversarial harmful networks – India case study” released by Facebook whistleblowers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is aware of the grave social issues that can be created due to the hate mongering on social media; and
- (d) if so, the action taken thereon?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

- (a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.
*147 FOR 10-12-2021 REGARDING HATE MONGERING ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

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(a) and (b): The Ministry has taken note of such news reports based on a whistle blower's statements regarding Facebook. The whistle blower referred to in such articles has attributed amplification of extreme views to algorithmic promotion. These news reports also refer to the apparent bias of significant social media platforms like Facebook for alleged circulation of hate speech, fake news & misinformation and Facebook's alleged negligence in deployment of adequate algorithmic measures in controlling these unwarranted circulations.

(c) and (d): Government has taken several steps to address the challenges of user harms and hateful information available on social media intermediaries/ platform. These, *inter alia*, include:

- (i) In order to ensure accountability of social media platforms to users and enhanced user safety, Government, on 25.02.2021, has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the Information Technology Act, 2000. These Rules require that the intermediaries follow certain due diligence as prescribed. They are required to inform their users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, objectionable, and unlawful in any way. They are also required to remove any unlawful content relatable to Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India or violative of any law, as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by appropriate government or its agency.
- (ii) Section 79 of the Act provides that intermediaries are required to disable/remove unlawful content relatable to Article 10(2) of the Constitution either through a court order or on being notified by appropriate government or its agency.
- (iii) Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above.
- (iv) Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) through a program, namely, Information Security Education & Awareness (ISEA), has been creating awareness among users highlighting the importance of following the ethics while using Internet and advising them not to share rumors/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides all the relevant awareness material.
