

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*44
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 05.02.2020

LINKING SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES WITH AADHAAR NUMBER

***44. SHRI SUNIL BABURAO MENDHE:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has formulated/proposes to formulate any policy to link social media profile of the users with their Aadhaar number;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the measures taken by the Government to keep a check on the spread of fake news, pornographic and anti-national content on the social media?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

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

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *44
FOR 05-02-2020 REGARDING LINKING SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES WITH AADHAAR
NUMBER**

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(a): There is no proposal with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to link social media profiles of users with their Aadhaar number.

(b): Does not arise.

(c): Cyber space is a complex environment of people, software, hardware and services on the Internet. With a borderless cyberspace coupled with the possibility of instant communication and anonymity, the potential for misuse of cyberspace and social media platforms for criminal activities is a global issue. There are media reports about social media platforms being misused to spread rumours, fake news and defame public personalities.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions for removal/blocking of objectionable online content. Social media platforms are intermediaries as defined in the Act. 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.

Further, section 79 of the Act provides that intermediaries are required to disable/remove unlawful content as and when brought to their knowledge by appropriate government or its agency or through a court order. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 notified under this section require that the intermediaries, which includes social media platforms, shall observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform the users of computer resources not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, objectionable, and unlawful in any way.

Government has taken several steps to keep a check on the spread of fake news, pornographic and anti-national content via social media platforms. These, *inter alia*, include:

- (i) MeitY took note of media reports about spread of fake news, misinformation/disinformation on Internet particularly using social media platforms. MeitY interacted with social media platforms particularly WhatsApp. Further, social media platforms those have implemented a number of steps to address the issue of fake news propagated using their platform.
- (ii) Information Technology Act, 2000, *inter alia*, has provisions to deal with obscenity and pornography. Sections 66E, 67, and 67A of the Act provides for the punishment and fine for violation of privacy, publishing or transmitting of obscene material and publishing or transmitting of material containing sexually explicit material respectively in electronic form. Section 67B of the Act specifically provides stringent punishment for publishing, browsing or transmitting child pornography in electronic form
- (iii) Ministry of Home affairs (MHA) has issued a number of advisories which includes advisory on cyber-crime prevention and control dated 13.01.2018 and also an advisory on incidents of lynching by mobs in some States fueled by rumors of lifting/kidnapping of children dated 04.07.2018.
- (iv) Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as well as Police are in regular touch with various social media platforms to address the issues of

removal of unlawful content as well as spread of fake news, misinformation/disinformation on Internet.

- (v) MeitY through a programme, namely, Information Security Education & Awareness (ISEA), has been highlighting the importance of following the ethics while using Internet and advice not to share rumors/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides relevant awareness material.
