

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 601
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.12.2021

SAFETY OF USERS ON INTERNET

601 SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the growing concern regarding the safety and security of users, particularly women and children, on the internet and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has rolled out new rules/guidelines to ensure online safety and dignity of women users and give a framework to deal with content, including fake content, which results in heinous crimes and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the necessary steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to eliminate childpornography, rape and gang rape imageries, offensive videos, and sites and content hosting platforms and other applications?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a) to (c): Government is committed for Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable internet while intermediaries shall always respect the Constitutional rights of all Indian citizens. Government has taken several steps for digital safety of people including women and children that *inter alia*, include:

- (i) The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions to deal with prevalent cyber crimes including the ones related to women and children. Sections 66E, 67, and 67A of the Act provide for the punishment and fine for violation of bodily privacy and publishing or transmitting of obscene/sexually-explicit material in electronic form. Section 67B of the Act specifically provides stringent punishment for publishing, browsing or transmitting child pornography in electronic form. Further, sections 354C and 354D of Indian Penal Code provide punishment for cyber bullying and cyber stalking.
- (ii) The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under the IT Act particularly deals with citizen safety especially for women and children. The Rules require that the intermediaries shall observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform their users not

to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, defamatory, obscene and invasive of another's privacy or otherwise unlawful in any manner whatsoever. The intermediary shall also adopt grievance redressal mechanism as prescribed in the Rules. Intermediaries are also expected to remove any information violative of any law in India as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by an appropriate government or its authorised agency.

- (iii) Further, rule 3(2)(b) of these Rules provides that on a complaint by an individual intermediary shall, within 24 hours, remove any content which prima facie exposes the private area of such individual, shows such individual in full or partial nudity or shows or depicts such individual in any sexual act or conduct, or is in the nature of impersonation in an electronic form, including artificially morphed images of such individual.
- (iv) Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) operates a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, www.cybercrime.gov.in to enable citizens to report complaints pertaining to all types of cyber crimes with special focus on cyber crimes against women and children.
- (v) 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 rumours/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides relevant awareness material.

Besides conducting training and awareness workshop including those exclusively for women, ISEA has published an exclusive handbook namely 'Information Security Awareness handbook for Women', 'Cyber Security tips for Women' and 'Online Safety tips for Women @ Home during COVID 19'. The awareness content designed/developed exclusively for women have been made available for download on the website <https://www.infosecawareness.in/women>.

- (vi) National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has published a booklet on "Child Victims of Cyber Crime – Legal Tool Kit" as a guide for investigating officers for better understanding of the cyber crime related laws in simple language.
