

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*283
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 18.07.2019

FAKE NEWS THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA

***283 SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD:**

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

- (a) whether there are reports of increasing events of mishappenings and deaths due to false propaganda and spreading of fake news through digital media; and
- (b) the number of victims out of the above who belong to minority communities?

ANSWER

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

- (a) and (b): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *283 FOR 18-07-2019
REGARDING FAKE NEWS THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA**

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(a): There are media reports about spread of fake news, misinformation/disinformation on Internet leading to increased events of mishappenings and death particularly using WhatsApp platform. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) took note of this and issued a notice to WhatsApp on 3.7.2018. In their response submitted on the same day, WhatsApp conveyed a number of steps taken by them to address the issue of fake news propagated using their platform. In particular, they have shared the strategy of “Giving people the controls and information they need to stay safe” and “To work proactively to prevent misuse on WhatsApp”. Subsequently, on 19.7.2018, Government issued second notice to WhatsApp conveying that they need to come out with more effective solutions that can bring in accountability and facilitate enforcement of law in addition to the promised efforts towards labelling forwards and weeding out fake news. Since then, WhatsApp has published advisories and advertisements in print and electronic media.

Ministry of Home affairs (MHA) has also issued a number of advisories which includes advisory on untoward incidents in the name of protection of cows dated 09.08.2016, advisory on cyber crime prevention and control dated 13.01.2018 and also an advisory on incidents of lynching by mobs in some States fuelled by rumours of lifting/kidnapping of children dated 04.07.2018. Pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court’s order dated 17.07.2018 in WP(C) 754/2016, MHA has issued a directive on 23.07.2018 to all States for implementation of directions of the apex court.

Further, MeitY and MHA as well as Police are in regular touch with various social media platforms to effectively address the issue of blocking/removal of objectionable content.

(b): 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects as per the Constitution of India and States are primarily responsible for prevention, detection and investigation of cybercrimes through their law enforcement machinery. The Law Enforcement Agencies take legal action against the cyber-crime offenders as per the provisions of applicable laws. The data related to crimes and victims are not maintained by MeitY.
