

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *124
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 21.12.2018

**PROLIFERATION OF FAKE VIDEOS REGARDING
SAFETY AND QUALITY OF FOOD**

***124 SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA:**

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has written to the Ministry expressing concern over the proliferation of fake videos and messages on social media that spread rumour on the safety and quality of food available in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government has any plan to put in place any mechanism to target such fake videos and messages so that action can be taken against people for circulating such fake videos and messages?

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 RAJYA SABHA STARRED
QUESTION
NO. *124 FOR 21-12-2018 REGARDING PROLIFERATION OF FAKE VIDEOS
REGARDING SAFETY AND QUALITY OF FOOD**

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(a) and (b): Yes, Sir. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on 27.11.2018 has written to Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) about circulation of false and malicious videos on various social media platforms regarding the safety and quality of food available in the country. FSSAI has requested MeitY to take up this issue with various social media platforms to sensitize them on the large scale implications of such false propaganda and advise them to put in place system for tracking of messages so that such mischievous perpetrators could be brought to book and penal action can be initiated against them.

(c): The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions for removal of objectionable online content. Section 79 of the Act provides that intermediaries are required to disable/remove unlawful content on being notified by appropriate government or its agency. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 notified under section 79 of the IT Act require that the Intermediaries 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, affect minors and unlawful in any way.

Government has taken several steps to target such fake videos and messages to take action against people for circulating such fake videos and messages:

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) took note of media reports about spread of fake news, misinformation/disinformation on Internet particularly using WhatsApp platform 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.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has 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.
- MeitY and MHA as well as Police are in regular touch with various social media platforms to effectively address the issue of removal of objectionable content.
- 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 rumours/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) has also been set up where a module on fake news have been provided.
- FSSAI organized a Food Safety Communication workshop on 15.12.2018 to sensitize the media professionals on integrities of food safely ecosystem and the right

techniques of reporting related to food safety, with the objective that media plays an important role in circulation of right facts to the masses regarding any concerns related to the food ecosystem in our country.
