

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2655

TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2021

MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

2655. SHRI S. MUNISWAMY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has any plan to implement a new scheme on safeguarding the right to freedom of expression of the citizens and prevention of the misuse of social media platforms and online news platform;
- (b) if so, details thereof;
- (c) the manner in which the Government proposes to implement the said new scheme and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (d) the time by when, the new scheme is likely to be implemented and the benefits that are likely to be accrued to the common people therefrom?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): Freedom of speech and expression is a constitutionally guaranteed Fundamental Right to citizens under Article 19(1) with restrictions as stated in Article 19(2). Government, on 25th February 2021, has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Codes) Rules, to ensure accountability of intermediaries including social media platforms to users and enhanced user safety. Further, the rules define the additional due diligence for the Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs) which have come into effect from 26th May, 2021. These Rules also cover due diligence to be followed by publishers of online news platforms. There is no further plan to introduce any new scheme.

(d): The Rules requiring due diligence to be followed by all intermediaries have already become effective with its notification and the additional due diligence to be followed by the SSMI have also become effective from 26th May, 2021. The Rules have created a robust grievance redressal mechanism empowering users to seek time bound response. The intermediaries are also required to remove any unlawful material on receipt of a court order or on being notified by an Appropriate Government or its authorised agency.
