

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1385
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.07.2021

PREVENTION OF ONLINE PROSTITUTION

1385. SHRI A.K.P. CHINRAJ:

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any complaint with regard to online prostitution carried out on a website named 'Locanto' and if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon; and
- (b) whether the Government proposes to ban websites which facilitate online illicit and immoral activities and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a): The Locanto website is an internet platform where users can publish and respond to classified ads. There have been some complaints received by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) about the misuse of such sites for online prostitution.

Government has taken steps to curb such online activities. As per the Information Technology Act, 2000, publishing or transmitting of obscene and pornographic material in electronic form is a cyber crime. Further, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, notified on 25th February, 2021 under the Act, provides for disabling/removal of any unlawful content by intermediary on receipt of a court order or on being notified by the Appropriate Government or its agency. Also, Rule 3(2) of these Rules provides that on a complaint by an individual, the 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.

(b): "Police" and "Public Order" are State subjects. Complainants must lodge complaints at cybercrime portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) and with law enforcement agencies. Action will be taken by the law enforcement agencies as per the provisions of the IT Act.
