

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2109
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 12.03.2020

MISAPPROPRIATION OF DATA IN SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

2109. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:

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

- (a) whether Government has noticed any misappropriation of data in social media platforms;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken by Government in this regard; and
- (c) the extent to which the personal data protection legislation will be helpful in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)

(a) and (b): Based on the media reports regarding misappropriation of data and interference by Cambridge Analytica (CA) in Indian elections, Government had approached Cambridge Analytica as well as Facebook separately on 23.03.2018 seeking clarifications. Cambridge Analytica responded on 03.04.2018 that they do not have any Facebook data of Indian citizens. On 05.04.2018, Facebook informed the Government that data of estimated 562,455 Indian's may have been accessed by Cambridge Analytica through installations of the App developed by GSR (Global Science Research) and installed by Indians. As there were perceived inconsistencies, Government again approached both companies separately and asked Cambridge Analytica for additional details emphasizing that any data concerning Indians is required to be given due sanctity. No further response however, was received from CA. Therefore, Government has handed over the matter to CBI for investigating the matter.

(c): Government on 31st July 2017, constituted a Committee of Experts on Data Protection under the Chairmanship of Justice B N Srikrishna, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India to study various issues relating to data protection. The committee had submitted its report and a draft bill which are available at <https://meity.gov.in/data-protection-framework>. The said draft bill was placed in the public domain and comments were sought. Feedbacks were received and after certain modifications, the PDP Bill has been introduced in parliament during the winter session 2019. the Bill has been referred to a joint committee of the parliament.

The proposed Personal Data Protection Bill seeks to bring in a culture of privacy by laying down obligations for data fiduciaries (like social media platforms) and enabling rights for data principals which will be enforced by a regulator, namely the Data Protection Authority. The bill is expected to address many challenges in regard of misappropriation and misuse of personal data.
