

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 672
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.09.2020

REGULATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

672. SHRI RAVNEET SINGH BITTU:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram etc. are being found to be increasingly used to incite violence and hatred in the society;
- (b) if so, the details of cases detected by the Government in the last three years, State/UT-wise along with the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether any steps are being taken by the Government to build any framework or regulatory guidelines to prevent misuse of these social media platforms which pose a threat to the unity and integrity of the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and If not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b): Cyber space is a complex environment of people, software, hardware and services on the Internet. With a borderless cyberspace coupled with the possibility of instant communication and anonymity, the potential for misuse of cyberspace and social media platforms for criminal activities is a global issue. In line with increase of usage of Internet as also the growth of social media platforms, there are increasing number of incidents of reporting of such content having potential to incite violence and hatred. Government has a well defined system of reporting and blocking for public access within the framework of section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 and the Rules thereunder. Section 69A of the Act empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above. The no. of websites/ webpages/ accounts blocked during the last 3 years are as follows :

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of websites/webpages/accounts Blocked</u>
2017	– 1385
2018	- 2799
2019	– 3635

The blocking of information for public access power is vested with Central Govt. and thus data for State/UT is not applicable.

(c) and(d) : The social media platforms are intermediaries as defined in the IT Act, 2000. Section 79 of the Act and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 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, inter alia, grossly harmful, harassing, defamatory, libelous, invasive of another's privacy, hateful, or racially, ethnically objectionable, disparaging, or otherwise unlawful in any manner. They are also expected to remove any unlawful content relatable to Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by appropriate government or its agency.
