

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5939
ANSWERED ON:29.04.2015
OBJECTIONABLE CONTENT ON WEB
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has directed any social networking/media sites to remove certain objectionable contents from their websites;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the number of such requests made to these sites during each of the last three years and the current year and their response thereto along with the details of web pages blocked by the Government recently and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of individuals booked in the country under section 66-A of the Information Technology Act during each of the last three years and the current year along with the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether there is any monitoring mechanism in place to regulate the contents posted in social networking sites; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by the Government to check the posting of objectionable contents on such sites?

Answer

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) and (b): Section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act 2000 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. Social Networking Sites were requested to disable 352, 1299, 200 and 496 Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) during 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (till March) respectively to comply with the Court orders. Besides, Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) received 11, 7, 6 and 1 requests during 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (till March) respectively for disabling of objectionable content from individuals and organisations, which merely forwarded those requests to the Social Networking Sites for appropriate action. A total of 708, 1349, 2341 and 143 URLs were blocked during the years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (till March) respectively, under Section 69A of the IT Act 2000 following the procedure as laid down under the Rules therein. This includes Social Media URLs of Facebook, Twitter, Orkut and LinkedIn.

(c): Police and Public Order are State subjects under the Constitution and as such the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are primarily responsible for prevention, detection, registration and investigation of crimes including Cyber Crime and for prosecuting the criminals through Law Enforcement machinery within their jurisdictions. National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) collects and maintains statistical data of police recorded cognizable crimes from 35 States /Union Territories. Information relating to cyber crime data relating to Section 66-A is not maintained by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

(d) and (e): There is no institutional monitoring mechanism for monitoring social networking sites. At present, Law Enforcement and Intelligence / Security Agencies make searches on the Internet on specific case-to-case basis. Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) within the National Media Centre in Ministry of Information and Broadcasting tracks current trends on social media and monitors Public Interface on the social media network. Government has taken the following steps to check the posting of objectionable contents on Social Media sites:

i) Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act. These rules require that the Intermediaries, including national and international social networking sites and matrimonial sites, 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. The said rules also require the intermediaries to appoint Grievance Officers to address the grievances received from users and affected individuals / organizations as and when received by them.

ii) Government issued the an advisory on 17th August 2012 to all the intermediaries, including national and international social networking sites, advising them to take necessary action to disable inflammatory and hateful content hosted on their web sites on priority basis.

iii) Government also conducts regularly awareness campaign on the issue to educate users.

iv) The Government is in regular dialog with the intermediaries including social networking sites for effective and efficient disablement of such objectionable contents.