

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1753
ANSWERED ON:03.12.2014
FAKE ACCOUNTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has received complaints of fake/duplicate accounts by unscrupulous persons on social media;
- (b) if so, the details of the complaints received during the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any stringent action against such persons;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken up the issue with social media sites and if so, the details and their reactions thereto?

Answer

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

(a): The Cyber Space is virtual, borderless and unanimous. These unique characteristics facilitate anyone to open an account and post any information from anywhere on the Social Networking Sites, hiding his/her own identity and originality. There have been complaints from several persons that fake/duplicate accounts have been created in their name on the Social Networking Sites. There are also incidents reported where malicious incidents are initiated from some of the fake/duplicate accounts. However, no authentic data is made available by Social Media Sites on the number of such fake/duplicate accounts.

(b), (c) and (d): A total no. of 3, 45, 37, 41 and 45 cases of fake/duplicate accounts/ profiles on various social networking websites were reported to Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in the year 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 (till October) respectively by various Law Enforcement Agencies. In all the reported cases CERT-In contacted the respective social networking websites for disabling of fake/duplicate accounts and for getting user access details of these fake/duplicate accounts/profiles. In most of the cases, such fake/duplicate accounts were successfully disabled in association with social networking sites, having offices in India. However, no data was made available regarding the details of persons opening such fake/duplicate accounts.

(e): Government as and when such incidents of fake/duplicate accounts are reported, take up the matter with the concerned Social Networking Sites for disablement of such accounts. The Social Networking Sites are also providing for reporting of such fake/duplicate accounts on their sites. Further the Government has taken the following actions to prevent frauds by Social Networking 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 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 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 websites on priority basis.

(iii) Government is in regular dialog with the Intermediaries including Social Networking Sites for effective and efficient disablement of such content and fake/duplicate accounts.