

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3423**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25-03-2021

**LIST OF BANNED WEBSITES AND BOOKS**

**3423 SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:**

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

- (a) whether the Ministry has been maintaining a list of websites and books, banned under Section 69A of the IT Act, if so, where can the list be accessed;
- (b) the procedure being followed for website blocking by the Ministry, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there are any redressal mechanisms for looking at website blocking notified by Government, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps that have been taken by Government to stop the spread of misinformation and the policy document thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c): Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) maintains data of URLs blocked under section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. Blocking is carried out as per the procedure specified in “The Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009” which has necessary checks and balances including a review mechanism. Rules specify that actions taken for blocking including the requests received are confidential and thus cannot be divulged in public domain.

(d): The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under IT Act on 25.02.2021 provides for enhanced user safety as well as accountability of digital media platforms. These Rules 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, patently false or misleading in nature but may reasonably be perceived as a fact; patently false and untrue and is written or published in any form with the intent to mislead or harass a person, entity or agency for financial gain or to cause any injury to any person; or violates any law for the time being in force.

Government has taken several steps to address the challenges of misinformation and rumours spreading via intermediaries including social media platforms. These, inter alia, include:

(i) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has set up a dedicated cell (Counter Misinformation Unit) under Press Information Bureau (PIB) as a measure to counter fake news on policies, schemes, programs etc. by Government of India. The Unit has a presence on prominent social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The information is also available on <https://pib.gov.in/factcheck.aspx>. The unit takes suo moto cognizance of fake news going viral on social media and also on basis of outside complaints.

(ii) MeitY regularly interacts with social media platforms on issues related to spread of fake news, misinformation/disinformation on Internet and takes action under section 69A of the IT Act, as appropriate. MeitY has also asked other Central Government Ministries, State Governments and law enforcement agencies, being the appropriate Government or its agency, to approach social media platforms for removal of unlawful content relating to their specific laws. Social media platforms have implemented a number of steps to address the issue of fake news propagated using their platform.

(iii) MeitY through a program, namely, Information Security Education & Awareness (ISEA), has been creating awareness among users highlighting the importance of following the ethics while using Internet and advising them not to share rumours/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides relevant awareness material.

(iv) MeitY on 20.03.2020 issued an advisory to major social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. wherein the Intermediaries were urged to:

- initiate awareness campaign on their platforms for the users not to upload/circulate any false news/misinformation concerning corona virus which are likely to create panic among public and disturb the public order and social tranquillity;
- take immediate action to disable /remove such content hosted on their platforms on priority basis;
- promote dissemination of authentic information related to corona virus as far as possible.

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