

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2804
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 24.03.2023

BLOCKING OF WEBSITES

2804. SMT. SULATA DEO:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of websites blocked by Government in the last year, and the reasons for doing so;
- (b) whether Rule 16 of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009 is opposed to and ultra vires Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000;
- (c) whether Government plans to allow these blocked websites a right of appeal under Rule 16; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring an Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable Internet for its users across the country and accordingly, the Government issues directions for blocking to access of information by public under section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 and the Information Technology Rules of 2021. The section 69A of IT Act provided power to government to issue directions for blocking if it is necessary or expedient to do so in the interest of sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for inciting cognizable offence relating to above.

The Government follows due process as envisaged in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information for Public) Rules, 2009. Such directions are issued to block 228 websites during the year 2022.

(b): No Sir. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgement in the Shreya Singhal v. UoI, (2015) 5 SCC 1 case stated that the "Section 69A and the Information Technology (Procedure & Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009 are constitutionally valid".

(c) and (d): The Rule 16 does not stop any blocked website to appeal before the Hon'ble Court.
