



IT Rules Empower Citizens Against Misleading Content on Social Media Platforms

Publishers of News and Current Affairs Mandated to Follow Code of Ethics Under IT Rules

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Free speech is protected under Article 19(1) of the Constitution. The Government of India is also cognisant of the increasing instances of fake, false and misleading information across digital media platforms.

It has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, under the Information Technology Act, 2000, (dated 25th February, 2021).

Part-III of these Rules inter alia provides for Code of Ethics to be followed by publishers of news & current affairs. It includes adherence to the Programme Code laid down under the Cable Television Networks Act, 1995, and the Norms of Journalistic Conduct under the Press Council Act, 1978.

A three-tier grievance redressal mechanism for adherence to the Code of Ethics is also provided under the IT Rules.

Also, Part II of the IT Rules, inter alia, casts an obligation on intermediaries like YouTube and Facebook to prevent the dissemination of information that is patently false, untrue, or misleading in nature.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to check fake news relating to the Central Government.

After verifying the authenticity of news from authorized sources in Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms.

Under the Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, Government issues necessary orders to block websites, social media handles and posts in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, and public order.

The Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. L. Murugan, provided this information in the Rajya Sabha today in a reply to a question raised by Dr. Laxmikant Bajpayee

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