

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1200
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.02.2022

MANIPULATION OF ONLINE RATINGS BY CERTAIN APPS

1200. CH. SUKHRAM SINGH YADAV:
SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD:
SMT. CHHAYA VERMA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that apps such as "Tech Fog" are helping in manipulating online ratings in favour of certain policies and personalities by adopting fraudulent means; and
(b) the details of steps taken by the Ministry on the apps involved in frauds in the last two years?

ANSWER

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

(a): Government has noted the news articles about an App, namely, 'Tek Fog' that has been allegedly used to manipulate social media platforms. This Ministry has searched for the App on all prominent App Stores and APK Stores and could not find so called App in any of these online stores. This Ministry is not aware of any technical vulnerability that makes social media intermediaries susceptible to manipulation as reported in the news articles.

(b): The Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) at Centre and States take appropriate legal action as per provisions of law against the cyber crime offenders. Government has taken a number of legal, technical and administrative measures to prevent cyber crimes. These *inter alia*, include:

- (i) The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) issues alerts and advisories regarding latest cyber threats/vulnerabilities and countermeasures to protect computers and networks on regular basis.
- (ii) MeitY has blocked 27 fraudulent loan Apps brought to its knowledge under the provisions of section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- (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 rumors/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides the relevant awareness material.
