

Press Note:

Date: August 7, 2018.

### A Roundtable on Curbing fake news in Telangana

Telangana Government's ITE&C department conducted a Roundtable on 'Curbing Fake News' on August 7, 2018, in Hyderabad.

Fake information-induced mob lynching has claimed about 30 lives in as many as 18 of such reported incidents in India. Unfortunately, a few fake news related violence incidents took place in Telangana as well. To ensure the safety of our citizens, the state IT Department has planned to launch a series of measures involving all the stakeholders.

The participants at the roundtable included Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, IT and Industries Department, Mahesh Bhagwat, Police Commissioner, Rachakonda, Sajjanar, Commissioner, Cyberabad Police, Shikha Goel, IPS, Addl. Commissioner of Police, Crimes, Rama Rajeshwari, SP, Gadwal, Shivnath Thukral, Director, Public Policy, Facebook, Amar Devulapalli, Member of Press Council of India, Allam Narayana, chairman, Telangana State Media Academy and various functional heads of the government organizations such as Police Department, Telangana Press Academy, heads/representatives of important media houses, activists participated in the Roundtable session.

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, IT and Industries Department mentioned that Digital Media platforms have strengthened the hands of ordinary citizens adding that the next generation of internet users come from various sections and backgrounds. There should be a balance while formulating a law on curbing fake news. People today should be educated on the digital content.

At the session, Mahesh Bhagwat opined that intermediaries or the product companies also to be made accountable while seconding the suggestion of bringing in a tough law to deal with fake news.

Rama Rajeshwari, SP Gadwal & Wanaparthi stated that it is the extant social fabric that is being the root cause and technology is only accentuating the spread of fake news. She referred to the profiles of the victims as a pointer.

Facebook Public Policy Director Shivnath Thukral said that Facebook is taking spread of fake news seriously and are closely working with governments. He also said that Facebook acts swiftly against hate speech, nudity and child abuse and pulls down the content. "We are running massive campaigns, digital literacy workshops and also working very closely with civil society groups," he added.

Allam Narayana, chairman, Telangana State Media Academy, talked about how YouTube thumbnails bluff viewers into watching videos which barely has any relevant news. He also said fake news cannot be stopped but an awareness can be and should be brought into the people where they can differentiate between fake and authentic news.

Rakesh Dubbudu, Founder, Factly, stressed on the concerted efforts from all the stakeholders and educating the end-users.

The Roundtable highlighted the ways in which the spread of fake news through social media can be curbed by using new technologies, organising workshops and awareness programs. The participants discussed the issue in detail and brainstormed on action plans to curb fake news.

The IT Department will collate the opinions expressed at the Roundtable and will work with the stakeholders to chalk out a strategy. Director, Digital Media Dileep Konatham and Shailesh Reddy, CEO, T-SAT Network coordinated the session.