Global Laws on Fake News

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Recently, the Supreme Court of India has asked the Central government to frame guidelines on social media to control the spread of **fake news.** The directive came in the wake of growing incidents of violence fuelled by online rumours and fake videos.

Laws and Regulations to Curb Fake News in India

There are **various regulations in India** mentioned in different Indian laws like **Section 66** in The Information Technology Act, 2000, **Civil or Criminal Case** for Defamation, **Indian Penal Code,** etc. that restrict the spread of fake news throughout the nation.

Global Laws dealing with Fake News

- **Malaysia**
    - Malaysia was **among the first countries** to pass an **anti-fake news law** in the year 2018.
    - In Malaysia, spreading fake news draws a fine of 500,000 Malaysian ringgits (Rs 85 lakh) or up to six years of imprisonment.
- **European Union**
    - In April 2019, the Council of the European Union passed directives to change copyright laws and hold online platforms responsible for infringements by its users.
    - The law protects intellectual property that is frequently stolen and misused online.
    - The law applies to social media, internet service providers and search engines.

- **Singapore**
  - A draft law proposes jail term of up to 10 years for those who spread online falsehoods to harm the public interest.
  - Social media sites face fines of up to S$1 million (Rs 5 crore) for failing to act against such content.
  - There, individuals can also be asked to alter or remove their posts and could be fined up to S$20,000 (Rs 10 lakh) and imprisoned for a period ranging up to 12 months if they fail to comply.
- **Germany**
  - Germany's **NetzDG** applies to companies with more than two million registered users in the country.
  - The law requires companies to review complaints about content and remove anything illegal within 24 hours.
  - Individuals face fines of up to €5m (Rs 40 crore) and corporations up to €50m (Rs 400 crore) for failing to comply.
- **Australia**
  - A law was passed in Australia earlier this year that introduced penalties up to 10% of a **company's turnover** and up to three years in prison for tech executives for failing to remove social media content depicting terrorism, murder, rape or other serious crimes.
  - Failure to comply draws fines of up to A$168,000 (Rs 80 lakh) for individuals or A$840,000 (Rs 4 crore) for corporations.
- **France**
  - In October 2018, France passed **two anti-fake news** laws following allegations of Russian interference in the 2017 presidential election.
  - The laws allow the candidates and political parties to seek court injunctions to prevent the publication of false information.
  - It gives the French broadcasting authority the power to take off the air any network spreading misinformation throughout the country.
- **Russia**
  - In 2019 law punishing the individuals and companies for spreading fake news and information that disrespects the state was passed in Russia.
  - Publications found to spread fake news face fines of up to 1.5 million rubles (Rs 16 lakh).
  - Also, insulting state symbols and authorities draw fines of up to 300,000 rubles (Rs 3 lakh) and 15 days in jail for repeat offenses.

- **China**
  - China has blocked most of the social media sites and internet services like Twitter, Google, and WhatsApp in the country.
  - The country has thousands of cyber police personnel who monitor social media and screen content the government considers politically sensitive.
    - The government outright censors certain content, such as references to the **1989 Tiananmen Square incident.**
- Recently, **BBC news** conducted the **Trusted News Summit** globally bringing together senior figures from major global technology firms and publishing, to fight the disinformation present over different media platforms.
  - The summit agreed to work towards a joint **'Online Social Media Education Campaign'** to create and spread awareness regarding fake news present on different social media platforms.

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