

NATIONAL

Cambridge Analytica controversy: Urgent need for data protection laws, say experts



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“There is no law under which government can take action against companies that misuse data”.

With the ripple effects of the Cambridge Analytica controversy showing up on Indian shores, experts have called out the urgent need for **data protection** laws in India.

“This is a wake-up call. Scenarios like these are no longer fiction or film stories,” said Cyber law expert and advocate Pavan Duggal. “These are real world scenarios which impact every country. I see no reason why it should not impact India. India is the biggest democracy in the world.”

The company’s India website mentions political parties such as the BJP, the Congress and the JD(U) as its clients, besides corporates such as Airtel and ICICI Bank. The website, however, was taken down later.

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“India needs to come up with more holistic laws... We are dealing with intermediaries and service providers. It is time India revisits its liability stand on intermediaries,” Mr Duggal said. Right now, Indian law was not very well prepared to handle such issues.

Pranesh Prakash, Policy Director, Centre for **Internet** and Society, said there was a fair deal of misunderstanding about what exactly had happened. “There is no allegation that FB manipulated or sought to manipulate the elections in America.” He explained that Cambridge

Analytica got access through another company that used an application that asked people to download the app and give access to their FB account. “By doing that, they got data from Facebook. The problem is they got access to data of people’s friends as well.”

He said it was shameful that India did not have a data protection law. “The Law Minister can go on and talk about taking strict action against companies that misuse data etc, except there is no basis for him to make such a claim. There is no law under which the government can take action.”



The banner is for the IOT India Congress 2018, held on October 09-10, 2018, at the Inland Convention Centre, Bangalore. It is described as 'THE PLATFORM OF PLATFORMS FOR THE INTERNET OF THINGS'. The tracks include Media & Entertainment, Digital Communications, Smart Cities, Manufacturing, Healthcare, and IoT Standards. A 'REGISTER NOW' button is present, along with a promo code 'IOTIC20' for a 20% discount. The banner also features a small 'i' icon and a close button 'X'.

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