

22003/07/2019-I4C
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs
Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre
(CIS Division)

North Block, New Delhi,
Dated the 28~~th~~ September, 2022.

To,

Chief Secretaries / Administrators of all States / UTs.

Subject: - Urgent attention on illegal digital lending apps leading to multiple suicides by citizens owing to harassment, blackmail and harsh recovery practices.

Sir/Madam,

Large number of complaints have been reported across India pertaining to illegal digital lending apps, that provide short term loan / micro credits at exorbitant interest rate with processing / hidden charges, especially to vulnerable and low income group people and use borrower's confidential personal data like contacts, location, photos/videos for blackmail/harassment. Harsh recovery practices followed by these illegal lending apps have claimed many lives across India. This issue has caused serious impact on National Security, Economy and Citizen Safety.

2. It has been learnt that these illegal lending apps that may not be Regulated Entities (RE) by RBI are using bulk SMS, digital advertisement, chat messengers and mobile app stores on a massive scale. Borrower has to provide mandatory access to contacts, location, phone storage in order to avail loan. This data is misused to harass and blackmail the citizens using morphed images and other abusive practices by recovery agents located in India as well as overseas violating RBI's Fair Practices Code.

3. It has been learnt that this is an organized cyber crime executed using disposable emails, virtual numbers, mule accounts, shell companies, payment aggregators, API services (account validation, document verification), cloud hosting, crypto currency etc. Hence, it is advised to involve domain experts during investigation.

4. Law Enforcement Agencies can avail the services of National Cyber Crime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL), one of the verticals of Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center (I4C), CIS Division for technical assistance on loan app analysis, malware

analysis and crypto transaction tracing. Authorities can email on dc.ncfi-i4c@mha.gov.in for the same.

5. All States/UTs are requested to take strict legal action in this regard. Further, all States/UTs are also requested to spread mass awareness in all Districts against the risks of using such apps.

Yours Sincerely,



28/09/2022

(Ashish Kumar)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India

Copy for information and necessary compliance to: -

1. Chief Secretaries / Administrators of all States/UTs.
2. DGPs/CPs of all States / UTs.
3. Director General, National Investigation Agency, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.
4. Director, Central Bureau of Investigation, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.