

Pegasus – A Tool in the Hands of the Ruling Class

A controversy is raging across the world in the misuse of military grade spyware, Pegasus licensed by an Israeli firm NSO. Israel Government gave permission to NSO to sell the spyware to governments for tracking terrorists and criminals, NSO sold the spyware to several countries.

Pegasus has 60 customers in 45 countries. 51% of its customers are intelligence agencies, 38% are enforcement agencies and 11% military.

Cyber technology advancing in leaps and bounds after the advent of artificial intelligence has a huge affect on human society and lives of the people. Hence spying became very easy. One can infiltrate a malware in your computer. Arsenal Consultancy a Massachusetts based digital firm detected malware in the computers of the two of 14 accused in Bhima-Koregaon case. An unidentified attacker deposited dozens of the hidden files on the computers of Surendra Gadling and Rona Wilson. After that they found that the same files were deposited in the other accused in Bhima-Koregaon case including Stan Swamy before their arrest.

Pegasus is a spyware, it can copy messages that are sent or received, can harvest photos and record calls, can activate the microphone and record conversations. All these can be done without the knowledge of the phone's owner or phone's manufacturer. This spyware can easily identify the whereabouts of the target. Another thing is that without any direct contact with target phone, it can do all these things.

Pegasus had 50,000 numbers in its list across the world. Out of this 1,000 phones are in its surveillance. Government of India also bought Pegasus. 40 journalists are in its surveillance. Forensic labs conducted tests on seven smart phones. It revealed that Pegasus hacked five phones. Senior journalists M.K. Venu (The Wire), Sushant Singh (Indian Express), Siddhartha Varadarajan (The Wire), Shishir Gupta (Hindustan Times), Devirupa Mitra (The Wire), Smita Sharma (TV 18) and some others are in the list of Pegasus.

Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi, his assistants and his friends phones are also hacked by the spyware. Phones of Prasanth Kishore, Abhishek Benarjee (Nephew of Mamata Benarjee), Ashwini Vaishnaw (Central Minister), Prahlad Singh Patel (Central Minister), Pravin Jhogendra, personal secretary of Kumaraswamy (Ex. Chief Minister of Karnataka), former Prime Minister Devegowda and several other political leaders are in the list. Phones of rights activists, dalit leaders, poets, writers, professors, student leaders, CBI officers are hacked by Pegasus.

Senior journalists N. Ram and Sashi Kumar approached Supreme Court against the Government of India using Pegasus on several leaders and their activities in the country. They said that using Pegasus on these people is the violation of the Section 5(2) of Indian Telegraph Act.

Keeping surveillance on the phones of opposition leaders and other activists is not new. From the Times of Indira Gandhi, intelligence department doing this job for the ruling class.

BJP lead government started showing its real face and attacking opposition leaders alleging that it is a foreign Conspiracy to defame the government. The Prime Minister of France Macron ordered a probe on Pegasus. Several other countries followed the results. But Prime Minister Modi is not coming out to speak on Pegasus. BJP and RSS leaders shamelessly defending the government. Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are not ready to answer the questions and they are trying to avoid a discussion in the Parliament. So-called democracy once again failed and showing its weakness.