

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2302
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 07.08.2026

USE OF AI PLATFORMS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT BY STUDENTS

2302. MS. SWATI MALIWAL:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of any data or studies available with Government regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence-based platforms by students for mental health guidance, including the extent of such usage and associated risks, if any;
- (b) whether any advisory, guideline or cautionary communication has been issued to educational institutions or students regarding reliance on AI-based mental health tools, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of steps taken or proposed by the Government to regulate AI-based mental health tools to ensure safeguards for vulnerable users, particularly students?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (c): The Government is cognizant of the increasing adoption of Artificial Intelligence-based platforms by citizens, including students. It is committed to enabling safe, secure and equitable access to such technologies, while remaining mindful of the potential harms that may arise for vulnerable users.

Safeguards in this regard are provided under the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, supplemented by the IndiaAI Governance Guidelines, 2025.

The **Economic Survey 2025-26** has highlighted digital addiction as a public health challenge affecting India's children and youth, with impacts on cognitive development, academic performance and mental health, including anxiety, depression and sleep disorders.

The **IndiaAI Governance Guidelines**, released on 5th November 2025 promotes human-centric and responsible AI development. It recognizes that children constitute a vulnerable group that may face risks from AI systems, and long-term harm. The Guidelines recommend risk assessment frameworks and monitoring of AI-related harms to help policymakers better understand real-world risks from AI systems and design appropriate governance responses.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) conducted a study in 2021 on the “Effects (Physical, Behavioural and Psycho-social) of using Mobile Phones and other Devices with Internet Accessibility by Children.” The study report is available at: https://ncpcr.gov.in/uploads/165650458362bc410794e02_effect1.PDF

Additionally, **NCPCR** has prepared following guidelines on Cyber Safety and Protection of children:

- Guideline and standard content for raising awareness among children, parents, educators and general public titled “Being Safe Online” is available at: https://ncpcr.gov.in/public/uploads/16613370496305fdd946c31_being-safe-online.pdf
- Guidelines on Cyber Safety (for inclusion in) Manual on Safety and Security of Children in Schools are available at: https://ncpcr.gov.in/uploads/16613369326305fd6444e1b_cyber-safety-guideline.pdf
- Guidelines for Schools for prevention of bullying and cyber bullying” are available at: https://ncpcr.gov.in/uploads/1714382687662f675fe278a_preventing-bullyingandcyberbullying-guidelines-for-schools-2024.pdf
- National Council of Educational Research and Training has also released a handbook on “Safe online learning in times of COVID-19”. The handbook is available at https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Safetolearn_English.pdf

The following legal and institutional safeguards apply to AI-based platforms, including those accessed by students:

- **The Information Technology Act, 2000 and the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** requires intermediaries, including AI-based platforms, to observe due diligence and inform users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful to children or violates any law for the time being in force. Intermediaries are further required to report offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, to the appropriate authority.
- The **DPDP Act, 2023** and the Rules framed thereunder provide a comprehensive framework for protection of personal data, including that of children, and mandate verifiable parental consent before processing a child's personal data, while prohibiting tracking, behavioural monitoring or targeted advertising directed at children.
- Under the IndiaAI Mission, the **Safe & Trusted AI pillar** promotes responsible AI through the development of indigenous governance frameworks, technical tools and evaluation mechanisms. To operationalise this vision, the Ministry has undertaken 13 responsible AI projects across key areas including bias mitigation, explainability, privacy-preserving AI, algorithm auditing, deepfake detection, AI forensics, risk assessment and generative AI security.
- Under the **Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA)** programme, 6,650 awareness workshops have been conducted across the country, covering more than 11.37 lakh participants, including school and college students, along with multilingual handbooks, videos, posters and cartoon stories for children disseminated through www.isea.gov.in and staysafeonline.in.

Access to credible mental health support

For students seeking mental health-related guidance, the Government provides the National Tele Mental Health Programme (Tele-MANAS), a 24x7 tele-mental health counselling service accessible through a toll-free number (14416), video consultation and a dedicated mobile

application. As on 27.07.2026, 36 States/UTs have set up 53 Tele-MANAS Cells offering services in 20 languages, and the helpline has handled more than 42 lakh calls since inception, providing students with a credible, professionally staffed alternative to unverified AI-based mental health tools.
