

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2879**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.08.2026

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CHILDREN**

2879. DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS:

Will the MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that some countries have restricted social media access for children below sixteen years;
- (b) whether Government has studied the impact of social media use on the mental and physical well-being of children in the country;
- (c) if so, the findings thereof;
- (d) whether Government proposes to restrict social media access for children below 16 years in the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (e): The Government recognizes the transformative potential of emerging digital technologies, particularly in enhancing access to education, information and services for children. At the same time, the Government is cognizant of the associated risks, including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, online abuse, excessive screen time and digital dependency, thereby necessitating appropriate safeguards for children in the digital environment.

The Government has put in place a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework under the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (as amended), and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 to ensure a safe, secure and accountable online environment for users, including children.

The Information Technology Act, 2000, read with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, provides a comprehensive legal framework to ensure a safe and accountable online environment. The Rules mandate intermediaries to exercise due diligence and prohibit hosting or transmission of unlawful

content, including content that is obscene, pornographic, invasive of privacy, harmful to children, promotes hate or violence, impersonates individuals, or threatens public order.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 further provides safeguards for children by requiring verifiable consent of parents or lawful guardians prior to processing of their personal data and prohibits practices such as tracking, behavioural monitoring and targeted advertising directed at children. The DPDP Rules prescribe operational mechanisms for obtaining verifiable parental consent, including through identity and age verification measures and the use of virtual tokens. It also provides for the right to withdraw consent, with corresponding obligations on data fiduciaries to erase such data in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to provide a framework and eco-system for Law Enforcement Agencies to deal with cyber-crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated Manner. The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>) enables the public to report all types of cybercrimes, with special emphasis on crimes against children. To strengthen a comprehensive and coordinated response mechanism to deal with cybercrimes, the Central Government has implemented measures such as raising public awareness, issuing alerts and advisories, training LEA personnel, prosecutors and judicial officers, and upgrading cyber forensic facilities.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has developed several resources to promote online safety. These include the “Being Safe Online” guidelines for awareness among children, parents, educators and the public; the Manual on Safety and Security of Children in Schools incorporating guidelines for prevention of cyberbullying; and the Guidelines on Preventing Cyber Bullying for school children issued in 2024. These resources provide information regarding online safety, reporting mechanisms, preventive measures and responsible online behaviour.

During 2025-26, NCPCR conducted conferences at State and district levels across the country on child rights issues, including school safety and cyber safety, and organised capacity-building programmes for school administrators and educators on child protection laws and safety practices. NCPCR is also conducting virtual district workshops on school safety and child security.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) commissioned a national level study on “Effects (Physical, Behavioural and Psycho- social) of using mobile phones and other devices with internet accessibility by children” in 2021. The main objective of the study was to understand physical, behavioural, and psycho-social effects on children of using mobile phones and other devices with internet accessibility. This was a nationwide study of all regions. The total number of responses collected were of 5,811 participants, consisting of 3,491 school going children, 1,534 parents and 786 teachers from 60 schools, across six states in the country. The study report is available on NCPCR’s website at-

[https://ncpcr.gov.in/public/viewPdf/165650458362bc410794e02\\_effect1.PDF](https://ncpcr.gov.in/public/viewPdf/165650458362bc410794e02_effect1.PDF)

The Ministry of Education issued the PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education in July 2020, which provide a framework for safe and effective online learning, including promotion of students’ well-being and responsible use of social media and electronic devices. CBSE has supplemented these efforts through guidelines on digital etiquette, cybersecurity training for teachers, publication of the Cyber Security Handbook and advisories to schools for establishing

Cyber Clubs to promote cyber safety awareness. NCERT has also incorporated cyber safety in its curriculum and developed resource materials on cyber safety and security.

The Government remains committed to ensuring that children are able to benefit from digital technologies while being protected from online harms.

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