

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 821
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 07.02.2018

MENACE OF BLUE WHALE GAME

821. SHRI RAYAPATISAMBASIVA RAO:

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

- (a) whether the Blue Whale Game is creating havoc among children and students and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (b) the number of persons who have fallen prey to Blue Whale Game so far;
- (c) the details of the instructions or advisory that have been issued to schools and colleges on Blue Whale Game;
- (d) the details of the feedback that has come for controlling or checking the spread of Blue Whale Game; and
- (e) whether the concerned Ministry is coordinating with Ministry of Home Affairs to control and stop the spread of Blue Whale Game among children, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) and (b): There had been media reports about alleged suicides/ attempted suicides due to dangerous online game like Blue Whale Challenge Game. In this regard, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had constituted a Committee to investigate all cases where suicides were committed or attempted allegedly using dangerous online games like Blue Whale Challenge. The Committee findings could not establish any involvement of Blue Whale challenge game in any of incidents reported to them. Further, in a writ petition (civil) no. 943/2017 on the same subject, Hon'ble Supreme Court has disposed off the case directing the Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories to spread awareness in the school children about the dangers such games propagate by bringing people into a trap.

Further, Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 provides for certain due diligence to be followed by Intermediaries failing which they would be liable. The Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011 notified under section 79 of the Act, inter alia, specifies that the intermediaries shall inform the users of computer resource not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is grossly harmful, harms minor in any way; violates any law for the time being in force; etc.

Law Enforcement Agencies regularly monitor the social media sites and take action under existing legal provisions for removal of malicious contents/materials and prosecuting the offenders.

(c): Government issued Guidelines for Safe and Effective Use of Internet and Digital Technologies to all CBSE schools vide circular dated. 18.08.2017.

Minister, Women and Child Development wrote to Principals of all schools on 31st August 2017 to take immediate steps to protect children from Blue Whale Challenge Game.

(d) and (e) : Ministry of Home Affairs had constituted a committee to investigate all cases where suicides were committed or attempted allegedly using Blue Whale Challenge Game. The Committee analysed the internet activities, device activities, call records and other social media activity, other forensic evidences and also interacted with rescued victims associated with these incidents. The committee findings could not establish any involvement of blue whale challenge game in any of the incidents reported to them.

Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and CERT-In interacted with service providers of social media regarding the steps to be taken to prevent users from falling prey to harmful online games.

Government has asked popular social media sites not to host any such dangerous online games and immediately remove the same as and when detected.
