

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION 2989
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2021

SUICIDE DUE TO INTERNET GAMES

2989. SHRI ANTO ANTONY:

Will the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any statistics regarding number of children who committed suicide due to addiction of internet games and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (b) whether the Government has any plan to ban internet games and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (c) whether the Government has received any complaints in this regard and if so, the details of such complaints including the complaints received from the State Government of Kerala?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a): Government is aware of the growing number of online games available in India, as well as possible risks and challenges including that of user harms associated with them. This Ministry does not maintain data for number of children who committed suicide due to addiction of internet games. However, as per the information provided by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), there were two cases registered under abetment to suicide through online games under motives of cyber crimes in 2018. There are no such cases registered in the year 2019 and 2020. The latest data pertains to 2020.

Entries 34 and 62 of List II of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, provide for regulation and taxation of 'betting and gambling' to be under States' legislative powers. Based the erstwhile Public Gambling Act, 1867, most State Governments have enacted their laws to deal with betting and gambling within their jurisdictions. Some State Governments have extended their legislative and regulatory control over online games within their jurisdictions using these entries in the Seventh Schedule.

(b): This ministry does not have legislative jurisdiction over contents of Internet games except that it has the power to order blocking of public access to information on internet under specified conditions of section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 after following the due process as specified in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.

Further, keeping with the aim to have an open, safe, trusted and accountable internet, the Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the IT Act, 2000. The said Rules provide for removal of any information/application violative of any extant law, as and when notified by an appropriate government or its authorized agency.

(c): This Ministry has received some grievances regarding ill effects of internet games leading to wastage of time, addiction, causing mental & physical health distress, etc. No specific complaint from the State Government of Kerala was received in this regard.
