

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1650
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 10.12.2025

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG CHILDREN

1650. SHRI PRADEEP PUROHIT:
SHRI BAIJAYANT PANDA:
THIRU ARUN NEHRU:

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

- (a) whether the Government has undertaken any study or survey to assess social media addiction among children and its negative impact on children below 16 years of age;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to bring any rules or issue specific guidelines to social media platforms to address social media addiction and its negative impact on children and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government has taken any action where children developed mental health issue due to usage of social media?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring an Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable Internet for its users, including children.

With growing Internet penetration, their risk of exposure to inappropriate and harmful online content have also increased. Recognising both the opportunities and associated risks, the Government has adopted a series of measures to protect children from harmful content and practices on digital and social media platforms.

Regulation of harmful online content

The Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act) and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) provide a strong framework to address unlawful and harmful online content, including content harmful to children.

The IT Rules, 2021 impose due diligence obligations on social media platforms and require them to remove content harmful to children or violative of any law.

Recent amendments to IT Rules require social media platforms and other intermediaries to remove unlawful content within 36 hours of a court order or authorised government notice.

Awareness and Education initiatives

To empower citizens, including young users and parents, the Ministry has launched the Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) programme.

It provides guidance on safe and responsible online behaviour through a dedicated website (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>), which regularly updates child-focused digital safety material and advisory content.

Protection of Children's Personal Data

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) and Rules 2025 provides a legal framework for safeguarding children's privacy online.

It mandates parental consent for processing children's personal data and prohibits practices detrimental to their well-being such as tracking, behavioural monitoring or targeted advertising towards children.

With regard to inappropriate and unlawful content on the Internet, the Information Technology Act, 2000 ("IT Act") and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules, 2021"), together, have put a stringent framework to deal with unlawful content in the digital space.

Studies conducted by The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights ("NCPCR"):

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights ("NCPCR") has conducted a study on "Effects (Physical, Behavioural and Psycho-social) of using Mobile Phones and other Devices with Internet Accessibility by Children" in 2021.

The study report can be accessed from <https://ncpcr.gov.in/>

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

1. 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
2. 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
3. Guidelines for Schools for prevention of bullying and cyber bullying" are available at https://ncpcr.gov.in/uploads/1714382687662f675fe278a_preventing-bullying-andcyberbullying-guidelines-for-schools-2024.pdf
4. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has 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
