GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2236
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.12.2025

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

2236: SHRI MURASOLI S:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Government, in coordination with other concerned Ministries/through collaborations/agreements with major social media platforms, proposes to introduce age restrictions/verification mechanisms for social media usage to protect children from harmful abusive/adult content to ensure a safer and more positive digital environment, if so, the details thereof;

(b)   whether the Ministry is considering Aadhaar/DigiLocker-based verification for social media accounts to enable easier tracking of fake/abusive users/cybercriminals to ensure stringent accountability without compromising privacy, if so, the details thereof;

(c)   the measures being taken to strengthen coordination with social media platforms and law enforcement agencies to curb online harassment, ensure women's safety/promote responsible/positive digital behaviour among women and children; and

(d)   if so, the details thereof

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): The Government accords highest priority for ensuring the safety and security of children and has undertaken various interventions in this regard. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has informed that it has undertaken several initiatives to strengthen online safety and protection of users recognising that the digital devices and online platforms, while being useful for education, communication, and entertainment, may also lead to risks such as exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying and privacy breaches etc. These include:

i.   The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("Intermediary Rules, 2021") notified under the Information Technology Act, 2000, which obligates intermediaries to act against unlawful and harmful content, maintain

a time-bound grievance redressal mechanism, ensure time-bound removal or takedown of such information, and provide information and assistance to law enforcement agencies. The unlawful information comprises any information that, among other things, is obscene, pornographic, paedophilic, invasive of another's privacy, insulting or harassing on the basis of gender, racially or ethnically objectionable, or promoting enmity between different groups on the grounds of religion or caste with the intent to incite violence, or harmful to child.

ii. The Intermediary Rules, 2021 cast due diligence obligations on the intermediaries, including social media intermediaries. Such due diligence obligations includes that the intermediary shall make reasonable efforts by itself to cause its users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share, among others, any information which is harmful to child or violates any law. Intermediaries are also required to remove information, violative of any law for the time being in force, as and when brought to their knowledge either through a Court order or through a notice by Appropriate Government or its Authorised Agency.

iii. The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 has been enacted which expressly provides safeguards for children by requiring the Data Fiduciary to obtain verifiable parental consent before processing any personal data of a child. The Act also prohibits Data Fiduciary from tracking or behavioural monitoring of children or targeted advertising directed at children.

iv. MeitY has launched the Information Security Education and Awareness Programme, which focuses on safe and trusted use of cyberspace, online safety, and cyber hygiene.

2. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has undertaken following research studies/ issued guidelines, including:

i.   "Effects (Physical, Behavioral and Psycho-Social) of using Mobile Phones and other devices with internet accessibility by children". The findings of the said research study were shared with concerned Ministries including MeitY and MWCD and the State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs). The study report is available at:

https://ncpcr.gov.in/uploads/165650458362bc410794e02_effect1.PDF

ii. NCPCR has included a section on "Cyber Safety" as part of the NCPCR's Manual on "Safety and Security of Children in Schools" in the year 2021 which (Manual) was published in the year 2017-18. The said Manual was also shared with Ministry of Education, CBSE and other concerned stakeholders for further dissemination.

iii. "Being Safe Online"- Guidelines and standard content for raising awareness among children, parents, educators and general public were issued in the year 2017. The Commission organized sensitization-cum-awareness generation workshops from time to time for concerned stakeholders on the said issue. The guidelines are available at:

https://ncpcr.gov.in/public/uploads/16613370496305fdd946c31_being-safe-online.pdf

iv.   The Commission also prepared Guidelines for prevention of bullying and cyber bulling in schools and conducted 25 Districts level programmes on the said topic in the year 2024-25. The guidelines are available at:

https://ncpcr.gov.in/uploads/1714382687662f675fe278a_preventing-bullying-and-cyberbullying-guidelines-for-schools-2024.pdf

v.   The commission has developed IEC materials on cyber safety which is available on digital platforms viz. YouTube.

vi.   **Recommendation to ad-hoc Committee by NCPCR-** Rajya Sabha constituted an ad-hoc Committee to look into the matter pertaining to the "Alarming issue of pornography on social media and its effect on children and society as a whole". The Commission, after conducting due inquiry into the matter of spreading of porn sites on the internet/web pages which also led to getting information about the related risks to children like online stalking, harassment, grooming etc., submitted its suggestions to the ad-hoc Committee.

vii.   **Meeting on Minors Committing Offences Due to Pornographic Content**: A meeting to address the "Growing issue of criminal offenses committed by minors, allegedly influenced by exposure to pornographic material", was held at NCPCR office on 05.08.2024. Representatives from Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center (14C) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Law & Justice (Legislative Department), Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) participated.

viii.   **Meeting with Social Media Platforms on Child Rights:** A meeting was convened at the NCPCR office on 13.08.2024 with representatives from social media platforms, including META, Google, YouTube, Snapchat, Sharechat, Reddit, Bumble etc. to deliberate upon various aspects concerned with Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).

3.   The Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced the PRAGYATA Guidelines on July 14, 2020, which aim to ensure the safety and academic welfare of students by recommending age-appropriate screen time limits. The guidelines also emphasize the importance of parental involvement in monitoring children's physical and mental well-being, promoting open communication about internet use, and balancing online activities with offline play and physical exercise.

4.   The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has undertaken several proactive initiatives to address the physical, mental, academic, and social impacts of excessive digital engagement, especially in the post-pandemic era. These include the implementation of PRAGYATA Guidelines to ensure structured and safe digital learning while minimizing screen time, and the publication of a comprehensive Cyber Safety Handbook to promote healthy online habits among students. CBSE has also conducted regular teacher training programs in collaboration with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), focusing on cyber wellness and balanced screen engagement. To further raise awareness, schools are encouraged to observe Cyber Jagrookta Diwas and establish Cyber Clubs that engage students in reflective

activities promoting mindful technology use. Additionally, Digital Etiquette Guidelines have been introduced to ensure appropriate online behavior, and there is a strong emphasis on students' mental well-being through activities that foster social interaction and physical activity.

5.   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

6.   The School Health & Wellness Programme (SHWP), a joint initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and Ministry of Education help to foster growth, development and educational achievement of school going children by promoting their health and wellbeing. Two teachers from each school identified and trained as 'Health and Wellness Ambassadors (HWAs)' transact age appropriate, culturally sensitive activity-based classroom sessions for one hour per week to promote joyful learning. Out of the select 11 themes, Safe Use of Internet. Gadgets and Media is one of the important themes which has been incorporated with the objective of developing the knowledge and skills of students to use media and Internet effectively and safely.

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