

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4126
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 18.03.2020

VIRAL SPREAD OF DANGEROUS ONLINE GAMES

4126. SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the spread of online games like skull breaker challenge, etc., which promotes self harm and suicide among kids and teenagers, and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to ban the viral spread of such dangerous games; and
- (c) the details of action taken by the Government against social media giants who allow their platforms to be used for spreading such risky games which are a threat to public safety?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)

(a) to (c): There had been media reports about alleged threats to the children due to dangerous online games like skull breaker challenge.

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 take action under existing legal provisions for removal of malicious contents/materials and prosecuting the offenders.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued advisory on skull breaker challenge on 20.02.2020 to all social media platforms informing that such game severely impacts minors and advising social media platforms to expeditiously remove videos performing/ attempting skull breaker challenge or influencing a child for skull breaker challenge. MeitY also advised social media platforms to run an online awareness campaign on their platforms to avoid such dangerous actions(s).

Government has issued guidelines for Safe and Effective Use of Internet and Digital Technologies to all Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) schools vide circular dated. 18.08.2017.

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) sent an advisory related to online dangerous games to Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) on 7th August 2017 and 13th August 2018. The advisory contains best practices for parents and school teachers. Minister, MWCD wrote to principals of all the schools to take steps to address the issue of online dangerous games.

MeitY published an advisory regarding “blue whale challenge” and published on its website (<http://meity.gov.in/advisory-blue-whale-challenge-game>) on 12th September 2017. Ministry of Electronics & IT published another advisory regarding “Momo challenge game” on its website on 27th August 2018.

MeitY and CERT-In interacted with service providers and social media platforms regarding the steps to be taken to prevent users from falling prey to harmful online games.
