

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2173
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.08.2023

BAN OF ONLINE GAMES

2173. SHRI A. RAJA:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that many youngsters are committing suicides after losing money in gambling during online games and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government would bring a model legislation to ban online games in the country especially when some States have already taken the initiative and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any steps would also be taken to ban advertisements promoting online games in TV and social media, as they are clearly aiming at gambling and not game of skill;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the efforts made to discourage and desist youths becoming addicted to online games and thereby inter loss of money and productivity?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a): The Government is cognizant of the risks posed by online gaming addiction and also online gaming that involves gambling. The Central Government has put a framework and guardrails to prescribe and regulate permissible online games and on 6.4.2023, the Central Government, in exercise of its powers under the Information Technology Act, 2000, has notified amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. Through this framework, to be verified and declared as permissible online game in Indian cyberspace, such online game shall be free from wagering on outcome and does not cause user harm and addiction.

Data related to crimes, including cybercrimes, are maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), based on data reported by State Police and other law enforcement agencies. As per information provided by NCRB, no specific data on the incident of suicides after losing money in online gambling is reported to or maintained by it. State- and Union-territory-wise details of cases registered under the sub-category “Abetment to suicide (online)” within the category of “Cybercrimes” is at Annex.

(b) to (e): With regard to the users’ harms caused to the Digital Nagriks from online gaming, it is informed that as per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) (Three Hundred and Seventieth Amendment) Rules, 2022 dated 23rd December 2022, “Matters relating to online gaming” has been allocated to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.

To help achieve the aim at ensuring an Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable Internet for its users and with a view to enable consideration of issues related to online gaming in their totality, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had prepared draft amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, made by the Central Government in exercise of its powers under the Information Technology Act, 2000. On the draft amendments, the Government has undertaken extensive public consultation on the same to gather feedback for formulating the amendments during January-February 2023.

Following that on 6.4.2023, the Central Government, in exercise of its powers under the Information Technology Act, 2000, has notified amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. Under these amended rules, intermediaries have an obligation to not host, publish or advertise online real money game or other online game that is not verified as a permissible online game by self-regulatory body. To be verified and declared as permissible online real money game, such online real money game shall be free from wagering on outcome and does not cause user harm and addiction. The online gaming self-regulatory body will have to test and verify the online real money game against a framework made by it. Such framework will mandatorily include measures to ensure that such online real money game is not against the nation’s interest and also include adequate safeguards against user harms including self-harm and psychological

harm, risk of gaming addiction, financial loss and fraud through necessary measures. The amended rules have, thus, put in place an effective legal framework to address the concerns related to online games.

Further, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued an advisory, advising the private satellite TV channels, digital news platforms, social media platforms and OTT platforms to refrain from publishing advertisements of online betting and gambling platforms and/or any of their surrogate products.

Annex

Cases registered under the sub-category “Abetment of suicide”, within the category “cybercrimes”

S. No.	State/Union territory	2019	2020	2021
1	Andhra Pradesh	0	0	1
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0
3	Assam	0	0	0
4	Bihar	0	0	0
5	Chhattisgarh	0	0	0
6	Goa	1	0	0
7	Gujarat	2	2	2
8	Haryana	0	2	0
9	Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0
10	Jharkhand	0	0	0
11	Karnataka	0	0	0
12	Kerala	0	0	1
13	Madhya Pradesh	0	2	3
14	Maharashtra	3	3	3
15	Manipur	0	0	0
16	Meghalaya	0	0	0
17	Mizoram	0	0	0
18	Nagaland	0	0	0
19	Odisha	0	0	0
20	Punjab	0	0	0
21	Rajasthan	0	0	0
22	Sikkim	0	0	0
23	Tamil Nadu	0	0	0
24	Telangana	0	0	0
25	Tripura	0	0	0
26	Uttar Pradesh	0	0	0
27	Uttarakhand	0	0	0
28	West Bengal	1	1	0
29	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0	0
30	Chandigarh	0	0	0
31	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	0	0	0
32	Delhi	0	0	0
33	Jammu and Kashmir	0	0	0
34	Ladakh		0	0
35	Lakshadweep	0	0	0
36	Puducherry	0	0	0
	Total	7	10	10

Source: *National Crime Records Bureau*
