

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*12
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02-02-2018

POLICY TO MONITOR DANGEROUS CONTENT IN ONLINE GAMES

***12 SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA:**

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

- (a) whether Government has framed any policy regarding monitoring of dangerous content in online games;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of cases which have come to notice wherein online gaming has driven people to commit suicide or similar dangerous acts;
- (d) whether Government has taken any action to block such online games; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*12
FOR 02.02.2018 REGARDING POLICY TO MONITOR DANGEROUS
CONTENT IN ONLINE GAMES**

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(a) and (b): 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.

Government has asked popular social media sites not to host any such dangerous online games and immediately remove the same as and when detected. No separate Policy regarding monitoring of dangerous content in online games has been framed.

It is also understood that there is no formal Application, website or URL available for downloading/accessing online games like Blue Whale Challenge. Hence, there is little scope for using technical solutions to identify or block the dangerous online games.

(c): There had been media reports about alleged suicides/ attempted suicides due to dangerous online game like Blue Whale Challenge Game. In this regard, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had constituted a Committee to investigate all cases where suicides were committed or attempted allegedly using dangerous online games like Blue Whale Challenge. The Committee findings could not establish any involvement of Blue Whale challenge game in any of incidents reported to them. Further, in a writ petition (civil) no. 943/2017 on the same subject, Hon'ble Supreme Court has disposed off the case directing the Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories to spread awareness in the school children about the dangers such games propagate by bringing people into a trap.

(d) and (e): Government has taken various steps to prevent harmful online games, such as:

- (i) Government has directed various Internet/social media companies to identify and disable Blue Whale Challenge Game and related content on their platform, if they find any. Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and Indian Computer Emergency Response Team interacted with service providers of social media regarding the steps to be taken to prevent users from falling prey to harmful online games
- (ii) Government has also published advisory/awareness materials on the websites, Newspapers, etc. regarding the dangers of Blue Whale Challenge Game.
- (iii) Ministry of Home Affairs had constituted a committee to investigate all cases where suicides have been committed or attempted allegedly using 'Blue Whale Challenge Game'. The committee findings could not establish any involvement of Blue Whale challenge game in any of incidents reported to them.
- (iv) Government issued Guidelines for Safe and Effective Use of Internet and Digital Technologies to all CBSE schools vide circular dated. 18.08.2017.
- (v) The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) sent an advisory related to online dangerous games to Ministry of Women and Child Development on 07.08. 2017. The advisory contains best practices for parents and school teachers. Ministry of Electronics & IT also published an advisory related to protection of children from Blue Whale Game on its website (<http://meity.gov.in/advisory-blue-whale-challenge-game>) on 12th September 2017.

- (vi) Minister, Women and Child Development wrote to Principals of all schools on 31st August 2017 to take immediate steps to protect children from Blue whale Game Challenge.
