GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 514
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 21.11.2019

AGE GROUP OF INTERNET USERS

514. SHRI JOSE K. MANI:

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

(a) whether data provided by the Internet and Mobile Association of India confirms that 66 million internet users in India are in the age group of 5-11 years;

(b) whether free access of internet to children while providing them access to digital tools and help in improving learning, will also increasingly expose them to dangers that lurk in the online world; and

(c) what precautions need to be taken to prevent children from stumbling upon inappropriate content or even worse, come in contact with cyber bullies or child predators which can scar them for life?

ANSWER

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

(a) : Yes, Sir.

(b): The technological advancement in Information and Communications Technology has brought in a lot of benefits in all walks of life including for improvement in learning for children. However, like any other technology, the same can also be used by miscreants to lure children.

(c):   Government has taken a number of steps to protect children from accessing inappropriate content online. These, *inter alia* include :

(i)   Government blocks the websites containing extreme Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) based on INTERPOL's "Worst-of-list" shared periodically by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which is the National Nodal Agency for Interpol. The list is shared with Department of Telecommunications (DoT), who then directs major ISPs to block such websites.

(ii)   Government asked major ISPs in India to adopt and disable/remove the online CSAM dynamically based on Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), UK list.

(iii)   Department of Telecom, has communicated to all ISPs requesting them to make suitable arrangement to spread awareness among their subscribers, through emails, invoices, SMSs, websites, etc,, about the use of Parental Control filters in the end-user machines/devices .

(iv)   Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a portal namely www.cybercrime.gov.in to report CSAM or Rape/Gang-Rape (RGR) or obscene contents on internet. ISPs are asked to remove any valid CSAM/RGR/obscene contents reported on this portal.

(v)   The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has adequate provisions to deal with prevailing cyber crimes including publication or transmission of obscene and sexually explicit content. Section 67B of the Act specifically provides for stringent punishment for publishing or transmitting of material depicting children in sexually explicit act, etc. Further, sections 354A and 354D of Indian Penal Code provide punishment for cyber bullying and cyber stalking against women.

(vi)   Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued an Advisory on 4.1.2012 on "Preventing & combating Cyber Crime against Women and Children", wherein it was advised to States/Union Territories to specifically combat the crimes in forms of cyber stalking, cyber bullying, child pornography and exposure to sexually explicit material etc.

(vii)   Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) is implementing a major programme on Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA). A dedicated website for information security awareness (https://www.infosecawareness.in) has also been set up.

(viii)   Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a circular on 18.08.2017 to all schools on safe and effective use of Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools and School buses.

(ix)   MHA released a booklet: "A Handbook for Adolescents/Students on Cyber Security" to create awareness among citizens especially students/children about various cyber threats that can impact the children and ways to safeguard themselves against cyber crimes. The copy of the booklet is available in the following link: https://mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/CyberSafety_English_Web_03122018.pdf.

****