

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1164
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.12.2022

EXCESS USE OF ONLINE GAMES

1164. SHRI VISHNU DATT SHARMA:
SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY:

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

- (a) whether the Government is cognisant that a new trend of violence abetting video games, full of violence, is picking up among children and adolescents of the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is aware that there are a large number of games available on the internet which are not only wasting the time of our young generation but also making them addicted to gambling due to which the youth and their parents are facing huge financial loss;
- (c) whether the Government has taken or planned some measures to address these issues and the details thereof including ban, if any;
- (d) whether the Government in view of harmful excess use of online games, is planning to limit the gamers under 18 years to just 3 hours of online games per week and make industry responsible for enforcing the restrictions, like China; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring an Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable Internet for its users. With the expansion of the Internet and more and more Indians coming online, the potential for Indians being exposed to content depicting violence has grown. Online game content too is one among various categories of online content offered by online gaming platform intermediaries, which is picking up around the world, including among children and adolescents in India. The Government is aware of the possible risks and challenges associated with the online games including that of violence abetting video games, addiction to it, and consequential financial loss.

(c) to (e): To help achieve the aim of making Internet Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable, the Central Government, in exercise of powers conferred by the Information Technology Act, 2000, has made the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. These rules cast specific obligation on intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, to observe due diligence and provide that if they fail to observe such due diligence, they shall no longer be exempt from their liability under law for third-party information or data or communication link hosted by them. Such due diligence includes the following:

- (i) The rules cast specific obligation on intermediaries to observe due diligence by making reasonable efforts to cause its user not to host, display, publish, transmit or share any information that is harmful to child, causes incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence, relates to encourages gambling, or violates any law for the time being in force;
- (ii) To provide, upon receipt of an order from a lawfully authorised government agency, information or assistance for prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution under law;
- (iii) In case an intermediary is a significant social media intermediary (*i.e.*, an intermediary having more than 50 lakh registered users in India), to additionally observe due diligence in terms of appointing a Chief Compliance Officer and a nodal contact person for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies.

No proposal to limit the amount of time spent by gamers in playing online games is currently under consideration of the Government.
