

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 87
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 15.12.2017

TACKLING THE MENACE OF HARMFUL ONLINE GAMES

87. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA:
SHRI T.G. VENKATESH:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of steps taken by the Ministry to prevent teenagers from falling prey to harmful online games such as Blue Whale and other such games including banning them;
- (b) whether the Ministry is aware that such games are still available online;
- (c) whether the Ministry has made any such list, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the existing IT Act is compatible to punish administrators of such games and the intermediaries through whom games reach the users, if so, the details thereof, if not, steps taken to amend existing law?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM)

(a): Government has taken various steps to prevent teenagers from falling prey to harmful online games such as Blue Whale and other such games like:

- (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.
- (ii) Government has also published advisory/awareness materials on the websites, Newspapers, etc. regarding the dangers of Blue Whale Challenge Game.
- (iii) Government 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 had 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 7th August 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.

(vii) 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.

(b) and (c): No, Sir. Based on the analysis of cases reported, no such online games have been found.

(d): Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has adequate provisions for dealing with such crimes. Section 79 of the IT Act 2000 requires intermediaries to follow due diligence, 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.
