

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No. *56
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.07.2026

ILL EFFECTS OF DIGITAL ADDICTION AMONGST CHILDREN

***56. DR. SAMBIT PATRA:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any survey regarding ill effects of digital addiction amongst the children;
- (b) if so, the details of steps proposed by the Government to encourage the safe use of digital access among the children;
- (c) whether there is any proposal to promote offline youth hubs and moderated school-hosted online spaces to promote safe use of digital space and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to promote simpler devices for children with usage limits and family data plans separating educational and recreational use?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN THE REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*56 FOR 22.07.2026, REGARDING ILL EFFECTS OF DIGITAL ADDICTION AMONGST CHILDREN

(a) to (d): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring an Open, Safe, Trusted and Accountable Internet for its users, including children.

Legal structure:

The Information Technology Act, 2000 (“IT Act”) and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“IT Rules”), together, have established a framework to promote digital well-being, user safeguards and responsible digital participation.

Obligations of intermediaries:

The IT Rules require that the intermediaries shall observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform the users of computer resources not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful to children or violates any law for the time being in force.

Recent amendments in IT Rules to ensure citizen safety:

Recent amendments to IT Rules require social media platforms and other intermediaries to remove unlawful content within three hours of the receipt of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or reasoned intimation by the Appropriate Government or its agency.

Data Protection:

Additionally, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (“DPDP Act”) has been enacted which establishes the legal framework to regulate the processing of digital personal data. The DPDP Act provides a legal framework for safeguarding children’s privacy online.

It mandates parental consent for processing children’s personal data and prohibits practices detrimental to their well-being such as tracking, behavioural monitoring or targeted advertising towards children.

Prohibiting online money gaming:

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, represents a major step to address digital addiction and financial harm among youth.

Blocking harmful content:

Section 79(3) (b) of IT Act, 2000 provides for notification to the intermediaries for removing/disabling access to unlawful content. Based on complaints, the Government regularly takes action against such intermediaries and OTT Platforms. The government has disabled 50 OTT Platforms for public access in India in last two years for displaying obscene content and for violation of Section 67 and 67A of the IT Act, Section 294 of the BNS and Section 4 of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

Digital addiction:

The Economic Survey 2025-26 mentions digital addiction as a serious public health challenge affecting India's children and youth, particularly those aged 15-29 who enjoy near-universal smartphone and internet access.

The Survey further highlights its profound impacts on cognitive development, academic performance, workplace productivity, social connectedness, and mental health, manifesting as anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, cyber bullying, and financial losses from compulsive gaming, social media, and online gambling.

Awareness campaigns:

Government is implementing a project on 'Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA)' for generating human resources in Information Security and creating general awareness on various aspects of cyber hygiene & cyber security among the masses.

So far, 6,650 awareness workshops have been conducted across the country covering 11.37 lakh+ participants, including school/colleges students, teachers, law enforcement, government personnel, and general public.

Further, multilingual awareness material in the form of handbooks, short videos, posters, brochures, cartoon stories for children, etc. published and disseminated through print, electronic, social media and www.isea.gov.in & <https://staysafeonline.in/>.

CERT-In also regularly shares safety and security tips and awareness posters, info-graphics and videos on its official websites and social media handles and is aimed at sensitizing internet users on cyber security attacks and frauds including online safety measures for children.

The Ministry of Education issued the PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education in July 2020, which provide a framework for safe and effective online learning, including promotion of students' well-being and responsible use of social media and electronic devices.

CBSE has supplemented these efforts through guidelines on digital etiquette, cyber-security training for teachers, publication of the 'Cyber Security Handbook', and advisories to schools for establishing Cyber Clubs to promote cyber safety awareness.

NCERT has also incorporated cyber safety in its curriculum, including a chapter on "Societal Impacts" in Classes XI and XII, and CIET-NCERT has developed and disseminated resource materials on cyber safety.
