

Adhoc Committee report on the issue of pornography on social media and its effect on children

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Recently the Adhoc Committee of the Rajya Sabha Chaired by Mr. Jairam Ramesh constituted to study the issue of pornography on social media and its effect on children and society, submitted its report

Recommendations of the committee

- **Expansion of definition of child pornography:** The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 defines child pornography as any visual depiction (such as photographs or videos) of sexually explicit conduct involving a child. The Committee recommended that the definition of child pornography should be expanded to also include written material and audio recordings.
- The committee also recommended that 'sexually explicit' should be defined in the Act.
- **Defining grooming as a form of sexual harassment:** According to ILO Grooming is the process of building a relationship with a child to facilitate sexual contact with the minor. The Committee recommended that grooming should be defined and considered a form of sexual harassment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.
- **Exceptions to children:** The ad-hoc Committee recommended that minors should not be prosecuted for possessing or exchanging indecent pictures of themselves under certain

conditions.

- The committee recommended **exceptions for possession of child pornography in the case of:**
 1. reporting it to authorities, and investigation.
- **A clear outline of the responsibilities of intermediaries:** The Committee recommended that the responsibilities of intermediaries (such as internet service providers and search engines) should be clearly outlined. These responsibilities include;
 1. Reporting and removing child sexual abuse material
 2. Reporting identities of persons accessing child porn.
- **Measures by Social Media:** The Adhoc Committee recommended measures that social media sites may take **to protect minors.** These include:
 1. age restrictions,
 2. banning of users posting content related to child exploitation.
 3. providing information on illegal content to users in multiple languages.
- **Awareness campaign:** The Committee recommended that awareness campaigns should be initiated such as; a campaign for parents on early signs of child abuse, and a nationwide campaign on cyber bullying.
- **Training:** The Committee also recommended training for responders in child abuse investigations, and media persons reporting on child exploitation.
- **National Commission on Protection of Child Rights as designated authority:** The Committee recommended that an upgraded National Commission on Protection of Child Rights should be designated to deal with issues related to child pornography.
- **Constitution of State Commissions on Protection of Child Rights:** Further, State Commissions on Protection of Child Rights should be constituted in each state. States may also appoint e-safety commissioners to ensure, implementation of social media guidelines, flagging of

content, and age verification.

- **International cooperation for sharing information in dark web investigations:** The Committee recommended that India should sign agreements with other countries for sharing information in dark web investigations. Further, India should employ liaisons in priority countries who can fast-track requests for the takedown of online content under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.
- **NCRB to record and report all cases of child pornography:** The Committee recommended that the National Crime Records Bureau must mandatorily record and report all cases of child pornography.