



Government Mandates Strong Safeguards on OTT Platforms to Protect Children from Age-Inappropriate Content

Centre Highlights Measures Under IT Rules, 2021 to Ensure Ethical Digital Media Practices

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Freedom of speech is guaranteed under Article 19(1) of the Constitution. At the same time, the Government is also cognisant of the growing risks posed by fake, false and misleading information on digital platforms.

The Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, under the Information Technology Act, 2000, (dated 25th February, 2021).

Part-III of these Rules provide for a Code of Ethics for publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) which, inter alia, require the publishers not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law for the time being in force.

The Code requires them to undertake age-based classification of content into 5 categories, based on general guidelines provided in the Schedule to the Rules.

The Code also provides that the OTT Platform will put in place adequate safeguards for restricting age-inappropriate content for children.

The Rules, inter alia, provide for Code of Ethics to be followed by publishers of news & current affairs. It includes adherence to the Programme Code laid down under the Cable Television Networks Act, 1995, and the Norms of Journalistic Conduct under the Press Council Act, 1978.

The Programme Code and Norms of Journalistic Conduct, inter alia, require publishers not to disseminate content that is inaccurate, misleading, false, or half-truths.

A three-tier grievance redressal mechanism for adherence to the Code of Ethics is also provided under the IT Rules as under:

- a. Level-I- Publisher
- b. Level-II- Self –Regulating Body of publishers, and
- c. Level-III- Oversight Mechanism of Central Government

The provisions of self regulation at level-I and level-II prescribed in the rules ensure the spirit of freedom of speech and expression of the press.

Also, Part II of the IT Rules, administered by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), among other obligations, requires intermediaries such as YouTube and Facebook to prevent the dissemination of information that is patently false, untrue, or misleading.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to check fake news relating to the Central Government.

After verifying the authenticity of news from authorized sources in Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms.

Under the Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Government issues necessary orders to block websites, social media handles and posts in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, and public order.

Creators' Economy

Large number of initiatives have been undertaken to support the creator economy in our country. Initiatives such as the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025, Create in India Challenges (CIC) and WAVES Bazaar have helped to increase local cultural representation in the digital space.

CIC mobilised talent nationwide and provided industry-linked training to help creators convert regional skills into professional digital content. Culturals at the WAVES 2025 provided grassroots performers with a global platform, enhancing their visibility and livelihoods by showcasing local music and folk arts.

The WAVES Bazaar has also been launched as a national marketplace where Indian creators can directly engage with global buyers, investors, and distributors, promoting India's diverse regional content internationally.

Through WAVES OTT, Prasar Bharati supports local content creators by offering a unified digital platform to publish, promote, and monetise authentic regional content.

Dr. L. Murugan, Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, responded in the Rajya Sabha to a question raised by Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu.

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