

Children's Right to Internet Access

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Why in News?

Recently the Supreme Court ruled that children have a fundamental right to the internet under Articles 21 and 19(1)(a), rejecting blanket bans in favor of targeted safety safeguards.

- **Constitutional Provisions** – Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, while Article 19(1)(a) guarantees freedom of speech and expression.
- **Fundamental Rights of Children** – Children enjoy fundamental rights irrespective of their age, including the right to access and use the internet.
- **Blanket Restrictions** – The Court observed that blanket bans are disproportionate and have not been proven effective in making children safer online.
- **Parental Supervision** – It emphasised parental consent, guidance and supervision of children's access to social media platforms.
- **Child Mode** – The Court suggested dedicated child-mode accounts with age-appropriate content moderation and proportionate safety measures.
- **Online Safety** – Excessive restrictions may push children towards unregulated platforms and discourage them from reporting online abuse due to fear of punishment.
- **POCSO Act, 2012** – The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act aims to protect children against sexual offences and provides a legal framework for addressing such abuse.
- **Stakeholders in Digital Safety** –
 - Social media intermediaries, law enforcement agencies,
 - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY),
 - Parents and courts have a role in protecting children online.

Reference

[The Hindu| Children's Right to Internet Access](#)