

## New IT Rules for Removal of Harmful Online Content

### Why is in News?

The government is strengthening laws to fight cybercrimes, especially obscene and child abuse content, ensuring better online safety.

### Key Provisions for Digital Content Regulation

#### IT Act, 2000

- Punishes publishing/transmitting obscene or sexually explicit material online.
- Stricter penalties for content involving children in sexually explicit acts.

#### IT Rules, 2021 (Intermediary Guidelines & Digital Media Ethics Code)

- Intermediaries (including social media platforms) must follow due diligence, or they lose legal protection from third-party content.
- Messaging platforms must identify the first originator of content in cases related to rape, sexually explicit material, or child sexual abuse material (CSAM).
- Intermediaries must remove explicit content within 24 hours if it exposes private areas, nudity, or sexual acts.
- Grievance Appellate Committees established to hear user appeals against social media decisions.

#### Film & OTT Content Regulation

- CBFC (Central Board of Film Certification) regulates film content under the Cinematograph Act, 1952 and Cinematograph (Certification) Rules 1983.
- Films unsuitable for minors are certified for adult audiences only.
- OTT Platforms must follow a code of ethics under IT Rules, 2021:
  - Classify content into age-appropriate categories.
  - Restrict access for children to inappropriate content.
  - Implement age verification for adult content.

### Government Measures to Strengthen Cybercrime Prevention

- **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal** - Allows citizens to report all types of cybercrimes, with a special focus on crimes against children.
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** - Established to handle cybercrimes in a coordinated manner.
  - Financial assistance provided to States/UTs under the Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Scheme for:
  - Setting up cyber forensic-cum-training labs.

- Training law enforcement personnel, public prosecutors, and judicial officers.
- Websites containing ***child sexual abuse material (CSAM)*** blocked based on Interpol lists received through the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- Internet Service Providers (ISPs) directed to implement the *Internet Watch Foundation (UK)* & *Project Arachnid (Canada)* lists to block CSAM websites dynamically.
- Department of Telecommunications (DoT) instructed ISPs to
  - Spread awareness on parental control filters.
  - Block certain websites containing CSAM.
- Cybercrime awareness initiatives by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
  - Twitter handle (*@cyberDost*) for spreading awareness.
  - Radio campaigns.
  - Handbook for Adolescents/Students on cyber safety.
- MoU signed between National Crime Records Bureau (India) & National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (USA) to share Tipline reports on child sexual exploitation and explicit online content with States/UTs for further action.

## Reference

[PIB - Government of India Taking Measures against Online Pornography](#)

