



Child Pornography

For Prelims: [Child Pornography](#), Child Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), NCRB (National Crime Report Bureau), [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act, 2012](#), [Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit](#), The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

For Mains: Child Pornography, Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of the vulnerable sections.

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the EU lawmakers agreed to draft rules requiring **Alphabet's Google, Meta and other online services** to identify and remove **Online Child Pornography**, stating that **end-to-end encryption** would not be affected.

- The draft rule on **Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)**, proposed by the European Commission in 2022, has been a bone of contention between advocates of online safety measures and privacy activists worried about surveillance.
- The European Commission proposed rules requiring online services to identify and remove CSAM, addressing the inadequacy of **voluntary detection and reporting systems by tech companies**.

What is Child Pornography?

- **About:**
 - Child pornography refers to the **creation, distribution, or possession of sexually explicit material** involving minors. In India and globally, it's a heinous crime with severe implications, perpetuating the **sexual exploitation and abuse of children**.
 - Online child pornography is the **manifestation of digital exploitation**, refers to the production, distribution, or possession of sexually explicit material **involving minors through digital platforms**.
 - The [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(Amendment\) Act, 2019](#) defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a child including photograph, video, digital or computer generated image indistinguishable from an actual child.
- **Indian Scenario:**
 - The spike in cases of child pornography reflects the grim picture of online child sexual abuse in India. According to [NCRB \(National Crime Report Bureau\) 2021](#) the **cases have increased from 738 (2020) to 969 (2021)**.
- **Impact:**
 - **Psychological Impact:** Porn creates a psychological impact on children. It is associated with depression, anger and anxiety. It can lead to mental distress. It also impacts day to day functioning of children, their biological clock, their work, and their social relationship.

- **Impact on Sexuality:** When seen regularly, it gives a sense of sexual gratification and sexual obsession, which leads to a willingness to do the same things in real life.
- **Sexual Addiction:** According to some experts, pornography is like an addiction. It produces a similar effect on the brain as produced by consumption of drugs or alcohol on a regular basis.
- **Behavioral Impact:** Adolescent pornography use is associated with stronger beliefs in gender stereotypes, particularly for males. Male adolescents who view pornography frequently are more likely to view women as sex objects.
 - Pornography may strengthen attitudes supportive of sexual violence and violence against women.

What are the Challenges to Deal with Pornography?

- The effect of pornography is different in children belonging to the lower class compared to children belonging to the high class. A single approach **won't be able to handle the issue effectively**.
- In India, **sex is seen as negative (something which should be hidden)**. There is no healthy family dialogue regarding sex. It leads the child to learn this from outside which leads to an addiction to pornography.
- It's very difficult for **agencies to detect the activities of child pornography** and monitor them effectively.
- Availability of obscene content on regular websites and OTT (over the top) services like Amazon Prime, Netflix, Hotstar, etc, make it difficult to differentiate between the non-vulgar content and vulgar content.

What are the Indian Initiatives to Check Child Pornography and Child Abuse?

- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:**
 - The Posco act has **been amended in 2019**, the amended POCSO included stringent measures such as the death penalty for aggravated sexual assault on children.
 - The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019 has introduced several provisions to curb child pornography in India.
 - According to the amended act, whoever uses a child or children for pornographic purposes shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years and shall also be liable to fine, and in the event of second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years and also be liable to fine.
- **Other Initiatives:**
 - **IT act 2000.**
 - **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit**
 - **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**
 - **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**
 - **Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006)**
 - **Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016**
 - **POCSO Courts under Special Fast Track Courts.**

Way Forward

- Child porn should be banned immediately. Most of the time, **the first exposure of porn to a child is accidental for eg.** in the form of advertisement while browsing for other things on the internet. The government should **try to find technological solutions** to stop accidental exposure.
- Awareness and **sex education is a must and should be made compulsory** in schools. Parents and teachers must be skilled to deal with children in the modern era and technology.

Legal Insights: POCSO Act is Gender Neutral

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/child-pornography>

