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**National Human Rights Commission**  
**Minutes of the Open House Discussion on Access to Social Media**  
**by Children**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised an Open House Discussion (OHD) on 'Access to Social Media by Children' on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, in hybrid mode at Manav Adhikar Bhavan, New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC and was attended by Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Hon'ble Member; Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General; Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary MeitY; Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Director General (Investigation); Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law); Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary; Smt. Saisingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, along with senior functionaries from the centre and state governments, statutory bodies, members of academia, domain experts, UN organization and representatives of various civil society organizations.

**2. Smt. Saisingpuii Chhakchhuak**, Joint Secretary, welcomed the participants to the Open House Discussion on children's access to social media, noting its growing relevance in the digital age, especially post-COVID-19. She stated that globally, there have been varied responses, with some countries debating bans or restrictions on children's access to social media. She further highlighted that similar concerns are now being addressed within India, with certain States taking notable initiatives. She noted that the Commission convened this discussion to bring together key stakeholders for dialogue and collectively explore a way forward on this significant issue.



Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak delivering the welcome address

**3. Shri Bharat Lal**, Secretary General, NHRC in his opening remarks emphasised that children's access to social media must be addressed with seriousness, as it directly impacts their safety, dignity, well-being and future. He outlined the three technical sessions: i.) understanding the positive and negative impacts of social media on children, ii.) assessing the Indian regulatory framework and iii.) evaluating age-based restrictions or bans on children's access to social media. Referring to the NHRC's 2023 advisory on child sexual abuse material (CSAM), he noted the need for stronger digital safeguards and acknowledged governments' responses to online risks. He highlighted that while increasing smartphone access offers opportunities, it also raises concerns about mental health, with data showing significant non-educational usage among children. Citing the Annual Status of Education Report 2024, he observed that 76% of children aged 14–16 use smartphones for social media, compared to 57% for educational purposes, indicating a growing tilt towards non-educational use. He further stated key issues which include digital addiction, cyberbullying, harmful content, misinformation and data privacy risks. He stressed the need for a balanced, child-sensitive approach that ensures access to digital benefits while safeguarding children, concluding that policies must strike a balance between children's rights and their protection in the digital space.



Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, delivering the opening remarks

**4. Shri Justice V. Ramasubramanian**, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, in his inaugural address, welcomed the participants and described social media as a powerful force in the digital age. He highlighted the concepts of digital hygiene and digital devotion, while emphasising the need for digital discipline. Noting the complexity of regulation, he observed that even if ten genuine experts express concern and propose safeguards, social media giants possess the resources to counter them with far greater influence, highlighting the imbalance in the discourse. He also referred to emerging policy responses, mentioning that two state governments in India have begun considering the possibility of a ban, while countries such as Australia and France have already moved towards restricting children's access. Setting the tone for the discussion, he raised 3 key questions: i.) whether social media for children should be banned or regulated, ii.) whether such regulation should fall under State Legislatures or Parliament, and iii.) what should be the extent to which restrictions should be imposed. He concluded by urging participants to focus on practical, solution-oriented approaches rather than only discussing the negative impacts of social media on children.



Shri Justice V. Ramasubramanian delivering the Inaugural Address

**5. Shri S. Krishnan**, Secretary, Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology (MeitY), provided an overview of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to regulate the digital space, highlighting the government's recognition of growing social concerns and the urgency of addressing them, particularly in relation to children. He noted that while measures such as the IT Intermediary Rules have helped control issues like CSAM, regulating social media use by those under 18 remains a challenge. Referring to steps taken in February 2026, he mentioned the mandate for labelling synthetically generated content and restricting unlawful posts, while stressing the need to strike a careful balance in content regulation. He emphasised that digital access should be viewed as public infrastructure and called for parental controls to guide children's use of digital platforms, alongside continuous technology-oriented updates to regulatory frameworks. He also underlined the importance of monitoring how content is created and shared online, ensuring that harmful content is effectively restricted and encouraging states to take proactive steps in framing rules and regulations. Highlighting broader regulatory concerns, he referred to ongoing efforts to address online money gambling, issues of public order and health under the Central Government, and the potential role of internet gateways as a control mechanism. He acknowledged the challenges in regulating rapidly evolving technologies and software applications, including misuse of tools like VPNs, and raised key concerns around the feasibility of outright bans, methods of

access, and the need for comprehensive legal frameworks such as an online safety law.

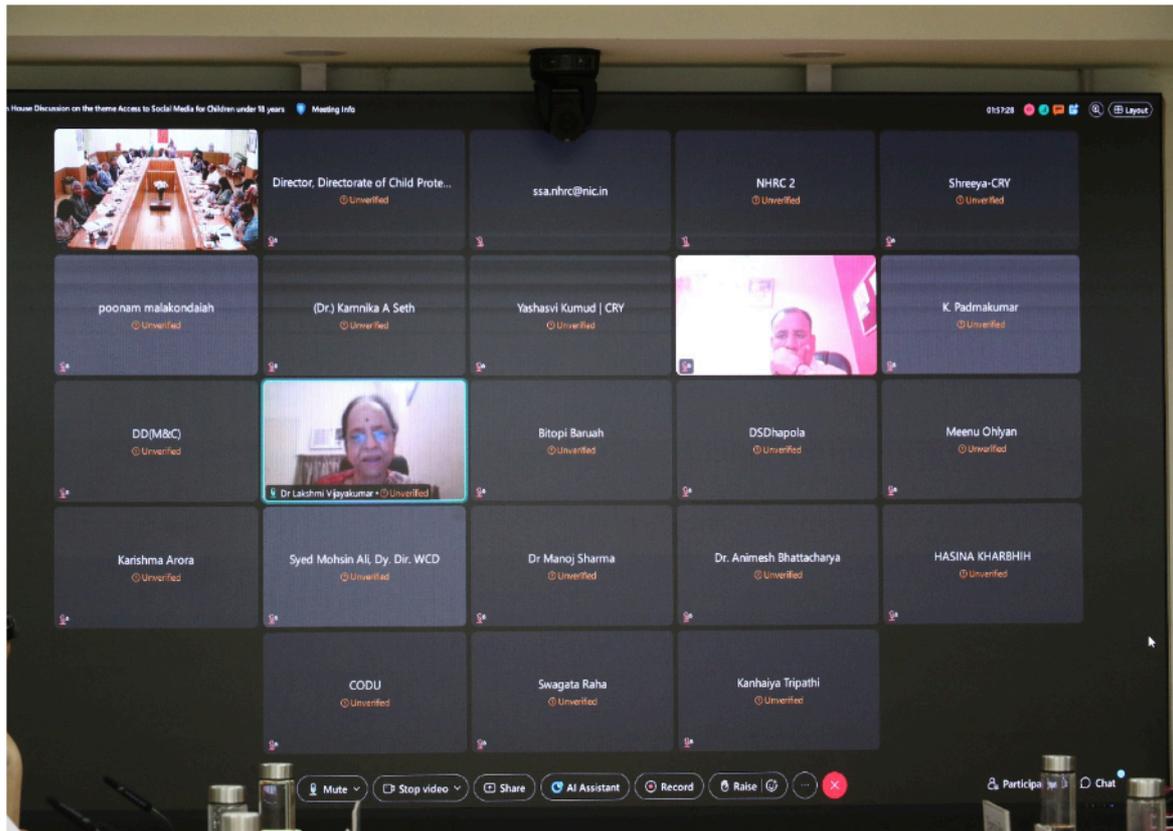


Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, delivering his remarks

**6. Dr. Sanjeev Sharma**, Member-Secretary, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, observed that whether social media should be banned depends on the specific problem being addressed, noting that while the benefits and risks are well understood, a major gap exists due to limited data sharing by companies, which restricts transparency and makes it difficult to quantify the current situation. He highlighted the complexity of deciding whether to ban certain content, as social media connects children to peers, interest groups and minority communities, raising questions of who, what and how to regulate. Since 2017, NCPCR has issued advisories, SOPs and guidelines, updating them in 2021 and 2024 to address cyberbullying, yet enforcement remains a challenge. He noted that addressing the issue requires two main strategies: creating effective legislation and raising awareness to mitigate harm. He highlighted the existing guidelines for school safety and security and the development of IT tools using AI to detect CSAM, with different states trying to make tools for their own systems. He welcomed NHRC's role as an umbrella body to coordinate uniform policies and tools across states, while proposing AI-based solutions at the central level to help detect CSAM and unify efforts among all agencies.

**7. Dr. Muktesh Chander**, Special Monitor, NHRC, observed that while technology and the internet offer significant advantages, particularly as a source of knowledge for younger generations, they also present notable challenges that must be addressed. He emphasised that completely restricting internet access is neither practical nor effective. He called for a focus on developing balanced and efficient regulatory mechanisms without over-regulation. He suggested that regulation could be strengthened at the level of internet gateways under central oversight to improve monitoring and control. Citing examples, he noted that major platforms like Twitter and YouTube have already taken steps to curb harmful and explicit content, demonstrating the role of technology companies in enforcement. He stressed that tech companies must take greater responsibility for compliance, alongside the need for robust age-verification systems and parental consent frameworks to regulate children's access. He also highlighted the importance of informed parental involvement and called for comprehensive cyber education for both children and parents to promote safer and more responsible use of digital platforms.

**8. Dr. Laxmi Vijaykumar**, Founder, Sneha Foundation Trust, Chennai, highlighted that while social media can benefit marginalised groups by fostering community, its negative impacts, such as addiction, mental health decline and reduced empathy, have been increasingly reported by parents, teachers and families, prompting global regulatory actions. She cited Australia's December 2025 under-16 social media ban, which led to a 25% drop in usage among youth, changes in promotional language by companies and no major shift to underground apps, though behavioural effects require longer-term study. She also noted that in India, youth lack adequate protections, and a temporary central ban of around two years could provide time to implement safeguards, especially given the brain's plasticity until age 16, when social media use triggers dopamine responses akin to addiction, impairing cognition, emotional regulation and empathy. She highlighted major problems: addiction and mental health risks (every extra hour raising anxiety/depression by 18%, which is worse for girls, with 1/3 experiencing cyberbullying or suicidal tendencies), grooming via disguised apps, social consequences from virtual interactions and platforms prioritising engagement over safety. Suggested solutions included short-term central bans mirroring global successes, medium-term digital literacy curricula in schools covering cyber risks and reporting mechanisms, parent education on monitoring apps, and long-term promotion of real-world play and empathy-building, alongside platform redesign for safety. She endorsed the Swedish Prime Minister's view of social media as a "big tank versus small brains," urging that bans serve as a bridge to comprehensive child protection, not a permanent fix.



Dr. Laxmi Vijaykumar, Founder, Sneha Foundation Trust, delivering her remarks

**9. Dr. Manoj Sharma**, Professor of Clinical Psychology at NIMHANS (SHUT Clinic), shared clinical insights on the impact of technology on youth, emphasizing that digital access is now an integral part of their lifestyles and that a holistic, behavioural approach is more effective than outright bans. He noted that children and adolescents, predominantly aged 16–20 but increasingly as young as 10, often seek help for tech-related issues driven by lifestyle factors such as weak family routines or peer influence. Restricting technology can lead to anxiety, irritability and withdrawal, highlighting the need for “preparedness” through education on healthy, balanced technology use rather than total avoidance. Dr. Sharma recommended lifestyle interventions including regulating sleep and appetite, establishing 30–40 minutes of daily screen-free family interaction, and incorporating physical activity to support mental and cognitive health. He concluded by advocating for a public health approach that prioritises mental health preparedness, family-based communication and balanced digital habits to mitigate risks associated with technology overuse among minors.

**10. Smt. Aishwarya Dongre**, Deputy Director, Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), opened by commending NHRC’s 2023 advisory on protecting children from Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and highlighted the work of the I4C as a dedicated online platform for registering cybercrime complaints,

particularly those affecting women and children. She shared an example where a nine-year-old child bypassed age-verification on a gaming platform, underscoring that children can often outsmart regulatory mechanisms. She noted that bans, such as in Australia, have led to increased VPN use, showing the limitations of outright restrictions. She also detailed I4C's work, receiving 77,000 complaints in 2025 alone, including cases related to online gaming, suicide-related content, blackmail, financial sextortion and enticement of children for sexual activities, with growing concerns about sexually explicit animated content. She emphasised the need to define 'social media' broadly, covering platforms, gaming apps and AI-based photo-editing tools. Highlighting proactive measures, she described I4C's internet-crawling tool and state-level initiatives in Telangana and Kerala to detect CSAM, while noting challenges on peer-to-peer and encrypted platforms. She encouraged empowering children by recognising their digital rights, citing mechanisms like the US 'Take It Down' system, and emphasised the importance of age-appropriate policies. She also outlined the Prevention and Mitigation System being set up to ensure real-time, coordinated responses to high-priority online crimes, including hash-sharing with industry to prevent content resurfacing.

**11. Ms. Zaffrin Chowdhury**, Chief of Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships, UNICEF, highlighted the need for proactive bans and restrictions on social media, while acknowledging that children often bypass them, similar to the unregulated exposure to violent content on OTT platforms, which requires urgent attention. She stressed that technology providers must lead with built-in safeguards, as previous forums on youth violence have emphasised. She noted that sudden or poorly enforced restrictions can backfire, limiting effectiveness and ignoring the positive potential of the internet, AI and social media. She advocated for child-centred, consultative approaches, such as UNICEF's U-Report, to enable anonymous reporting, consultations and youth participation in decision-making. By involving children, governments, tech firms and NGOs collaboratively, regulations can be balanced, restricting harmful content while promoting the constructive use of digital platforms and empowering youth as co-creators of solutions.



Ms. Zaffrin Chowdhury, Chief of Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships, UNICEF, delivering her remarks

**12. Ms. Sharmila Ray**, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF, emphasised that while digital platforms provide entertainment, they also contribute to risks like sexual abuse and exploitation, and that banning social media alone is ineffective, as children increasingly turn to AI bots for non-judgmental interaction. She noted that today's digital environment lacks real-life checks like family supervision and algorithms further drive addiction through validation loops. Current research is limited by confounding factors such as global events while regulatory efforts often remain siloed, raising awareness but not changing behaviour. She advocated for regulation over outright bans, coordinated under a central authority while allowing state-level implementation, alongside longitudinal studies to track causal impacts. She highlighted the need for sustained intervention through caregiver engagement, integrated campaigns and holistic strategies that combine supervision, real-world connections and leveraging the positive potential of platforms while mitigating harms.

**13. Ms. Anuradha Joshi**, Principal, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi, emphasised that while social media can foster connectivity, its widespread availability on handheld devices has intensified problems like addiction, loneliness and exposure to harmful content. Drawing on studies such as Sherry Turkle's

*Alone Together* and Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, she highlighted the mental health impacts on youth and the importance of early education and awareness for both children and parents. At her school, guidelines from NHRC and the Ministry of Child Welfare have been implemented, including counselling, discussions on digital responsibility and linking online behaviour to privileges which encouraged students to approach counsellors and discuss their issues openly, fostering responsibility and self-reflection. She argued against outright bans, noting that young children naturally seek to push limits and advocated instead for age-appropriate regulation, gradual access to social media and safety tools, comparable to older, simpler devices. She highlighted the importance of face-to-face supervision, attunement with children and fostering responsibility before granting social media access, stressing that regulation tied to responsibility, rather than prohibition, is the most effective way to safeguard children while allowing them to benefit from digital platforms.

**14. Shri Rakesh Senger**, Executive Director, Kailash Satyarthi Foundation, highlighted the distinct challenges children face in both urban and rural India regarding digital consumption, noting that while parental awareness is important, primary responsibility for child safety must lie with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and social media platforms through stricter regulation and real-time monitoring. He pointed out that children in rural areas often access content via parents' smartphones, while urban children face a similar flood of global short-form videos, exposing all minors to inappropriate material. He emphasised the lack of accountability for ISPs and platforms, with actions typically taken only after complaints and minimal financial penalties for hosting harmful content like CSAM or trafficking materials. He proposed shifting regulatory responsibility to providers, establishing a dedicated authority for oversight and implementing real-time warnings for users who access restricted content, citing Arizona, USA, as a model. He urged the NHRC to lead in developing a comprehensive framework to monitor and regulate digital platforms, ensuring a safer online environment for children.



Shri Rakesh Senger, Executive Director, Kailash Satyarthi Foundation, delivering his remarks

**15. Shri Sourabh Ghosh**, Senior Manager of Research and Knowledge Exchange, Child Rights and You (CRY), highlighted that while internet use among children has grown significantly, excessive non-academic use, primarily for peer connections and to cope with loneliness or boredom, raises serious concerns. Such usage can disrupt sleep patterns, academic focus, and concentration, with impacts varying across different stages of child and adolescent development. He emphasised the importance of continuous awareness and capacity-building initiatives for children, teachers and parents, advocating for the integration of internet safety modules into teacher training curricula and training parents to guide their children in the safe and responsible use of digital platforms.

**16. Dr. Karnika Seth**, Cyber Lawyer and Public Policy Expert, noted that children, as citizens of India, have rights and therefore an outright ban on social media is not a viable solution. She advocated for regulated access using tools like age verification and stronger monitoring of VPN usage, coupled with better coordination among various stakeholders, including international agencies, for more effective implementation. She also highlighted the need to strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms, such as efficient takedown processes, improve training for law enforcement agencies and ensure robust enforcement of laws at the ground level,

noting that regulation through the Parliament of India is essential for uniformity and legal validity.

**17. Dr. Amit Sen**, Director, Children First, New Delhi, raised critical questions about which aspects of social media's impact are most concerning: whether neurodivergence, emotional and physical safety, or mental health issues such as addiction, self-harm, or suicide, and secondly, what should be the appropriate call to action. He suggested that social media use could be entirely restricted for children under 13, while access for ages between 13 and 16 should be carefully regulated. He further emphasised that regulations should be centralised for consistency but flexible enough to accommodate local, cultural and societal contexts, aligning with frameworks like the NEP 2020, given India's vast diversity.

**18. Shri Kabir K. Shirgaonkar**, Director of the Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communication, Government of Goa, acknowledged that while a blanket ban on social media is difficult to implement given its advantages, the negative effects on youth are a matter of serious concern. He noted that the state, in consultation with various stakeholders including NGOs, plans to deliberate the issue in the Goa Assembly and provide recommendations that balance the benefits of social media with measures to mitigate its adverse impact on children and adolescents.

**19. Shri Syed Mohsin Ali**, Deputy Director, Child Protection and Development Unit, Department of Women and Child Development, Government of NCT of Delhi, cautioned against a complete ban on social media for children, highlighting that while risks exist, these platforms also offer opportunities for learning, creativity and access to information that can support a child's growth when used responsibly. He advocated for a regulated approach, recommending age verification to ensure proper identification, the inclusion of digital literacy and digital rights in school curricula to educate children about safe and responsible online behaviour and strengthening of grievance redressal mechanisms to address complaints related to cyberbullying, exploitation and other online harms effectively and promptly.

**20. Dr. Sneha KAS**, Director, Directorate of Child Protection, Department of Women and Children, Bengaluru, Karnataka, highlighted Karnataka's initiative as the first state in India to propose a ban on social media use for children below 16 years. She noted that concerns over unsafe online exposure and its potential psychological impact on minors motivated this move. The state government is currently developing detailed guidelines and regulatory mechanisms to effectively implement and monitor the proposed restrictions, ensuring that children's digital safety and well-being are prioritised.

**21. Ms. Swagata Raha**, Legal Researcher and Head of Restorative Practices, Enfold India, emphasised that today's children are digital natives, or "phygital" users, for whom the digital and physical worlds are inseparable. She noted that social media serves as an important equalizer, enabling children with disabilities and those from marginalised communities to connect, communicate and access opportunities. Highlighting practical challenges, she pointed out that many teenagers use shared devices, such as parents' phones, making bans or strict regulations difficult to enforce. Before considering any restrictions, she stressed the need to clearly define the problem and ensure compatibility with children's rights, including freedom of speech. She noted gender disparities in device access, limitations of age verification and privacy concerns with methods like facial scans. She recommended an evidence-based approach grounded in Indian studies, advocating for Parliament-led regulations targeting platforms with stronger child protection policies, algorithmic monitoring, limits on adult-minor interactions, robust grievance redressal mechanisms and ongoing research studies to guide effective implementation.

**22. Dr. Deepak Goel**, Scientist G and Group Coordinator, Cyber Laws, Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology (MeitY), highlighted the need for nuanced discussions among parents, children and other stakeholders regarding social media use, noting a stark difference in perspectives including the need for state intervention between children, parents and companies. He recommended that any policy suggestions be shared with the Ministry of Education, NCERT and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. He also emphasised the need to clearly distinguish between social media and the broader internet and highlighted challenges related to VPN usage that must be addressed for effective regulation.



Dr. Deepak Goel, Scientist G and Group Coordinator, Cyber Laws, MeitY, delivering his remarks

**23. Ms. Hasina Kharbhih**, Founder & Chairperson, Impulse NGO Network, Meghalaya, emphasised that instead of imposing an outright ban, social media platforms should be effectively regulated, as bans fail to address underlying issues and often push users to alternative, unregulated platforms. She stressed the importance of online safety for children and young users, advocating mandatory age verification mechanisms to protect minors from harmful or inappropriate content. Highlighting the need for stronger safeguards, she suggested reviewing and updating existing laws, including the Information Technology Act and the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, to keep pace with the evolving digital environment and emerging challenges. Strengthening regulation and legal frameworks, she argued, offers a more practical and sustainable approach than bans for ensuring safe and responsible digital use.

**24. Dr. Poonam Malankondaiah**, Special Monitor, NHRC, emphasised the rights of children and shared insights from her school visits, noting the commendable role of MeitY-supported cyber security clubs in raising awareness. She recommended that social awareness initiatives be aligned with legal frameworks and that parental consent and involvement of nuclear families be prioritised, given potential conflicts between children and parents. She advocated for government-led regulation at the

national level, targeting specific platforms through research rather than punishing users or imposing blanket bans. She further suggested establishing a dedicated committee to determine which platforms require oversight, and emphasised that fostering strong digital ethics alongside regulation would create a safer and more responsible digital environment for children.

**25. Smt. Anupama Nilekar**, Director General (Investigation), emphasised that social media regulation should extend beyond children to include adults, particularly personnel in the Indian Armed Forces. She highlighted that armed forces members are vulnerable to risks which could have broader national security implications. She stressed that these concerns require careful examination and tailored regulatory measures to ensure both individual and national safety.

**26. Dr. Justice B. R. Sarangi**, Hon'ble Member, NHRC, in his closing remarks, advocated a balanced approach of 'regulated banning' rather than a complete prohibition on social media use by children. He suggested that access could be restricted up to a certain age, such as 13 years, following due consultation with stakeholders, while ensuring that regulations remain practical and implementable across all states. Providing a legal and constitutional perspective, he emphasised the need for a uniform central law to ensure equal digital opportunities and protections for children across India, avoiding disparities between states. He noted that while initiatives like Karnataka's proposed ban reflect growing concern, their effectiveness depends on proper monitoring and enforcement by designated agencies. Highlighting the rural-urban digital divide, he stressed that technology must be used in a non-discriminatory manner to benefit all children equally. He concluded that a structured regulatory framework, supported by a dedicated enforcement mechanism, is essential to ensure children's safe and balanced development in the digital age.



Dr. Justice B. R. Sarangi, Hon'ble Member, delivering his remarks

**27. Shri Justice V. Ramasubramanian**, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, in his concluding remarks, reflected on the central debate of whether regulation or an outright ban is the more appropriate approach to children's access to social media. He acknowledged that while bans are often seen as difficult to implement, the focus should remain on what best serves the safety and well-being of children rather than on ease of enforcement. He stated that any approach, including a ban if considered necessary, should be based on careful assessment and supported by evidence and stakeholder consultation, referring to international examples such as Australia. He also noted that such measures may have implications for both child protection and platform accountability. He concluded by emphasising that policy decisions in this area should be guided by the best interests of children, with due consideration to practicality, effectiveness and overall impact.

The following suggestions were given by speakers in the Open House discussion:

- i. A regulated-use framework should be adopted instead of a complete ban, as total bans are often impractical and may push usage to unregulated spaces; the focus should be on safe, supervised and age-appropriate access.
- ii. A rights-based approach should guide policy, balancing children's right to access information and expression with their rights to safety, privacy and dignity, in line with global child rights standards and the principle of the best

interests of the child.

- iii. Clear age-tiered access norms should be established, where children below 13 years do not have independent access, those aged 13-15 use social media in a limited and supervised manner with parental consent, and those aged 15-18 have regulated access with safety controls and time limits.
- iv. Restrictions on children's social media use should be targeted and proportionate, focusing on high-risk features (like anonymous interactions and addictive algorithms) rather than full platform bans, while ensuring children's access to educational and developmental opportunities is not hindered.
- v. Robust but privacy-conscious age verification systems should be mandated, avoiding intrusive methods and ensuring inclusivity for children without formal identification documents.
- vi. Social media platforms should be required to adopt 'safety by design' and 'privacy by default' principles, including private accounts for minors, restricted messaging from unknown users and limited discoverability.
- vii. Addictive design features such as infinite scrolling, autoplay and excessive notifications should be regulated to reduce overuse among minors.
- viii. Targeted advertising, profiling and behavioural tracking of children should be prohibited.
- ix. Platforms should conduct regular risk assessments and ensure greater transparency in their systems and algorithms affecting children.
- x. Liability for compliance should be clearly placed on social media platforms, similar to approaches adopted in countries like Australia, ensuring accountability for protecting children online.
- xi. A coordinated centralised approach should be adopted where the Central Government sets uniform standards on child safety and platform regulation, while State Governments handle implementation through local enforcement, education and child protection systems.
- xii. India should establish a comprehensive, child-centered legal framework that ensures platform responsibility, effective grievance redressal, regulation of harmful content and algorithms, and promotes digital literacy among children and stakeholders.
- xiii. Enforcement of existing laws should be strengthened through improved investigation, prosecution and accountability mechanisms.
- xiv. A regulatory authority or strengthened oversight mechanism should monitor compliance and enforce standards across platforms.
- xv. Cybercrime helplines and reporting systems should be integrated and made child-friendly, with accessible and timely grievance redressal mechanisms.

- xvi. Centralised monitoring systems using appropriate technologies should be developed to detect harmful content and enable timely intervention.
- xvii. Cybercrime units and digital forensic capabilities should be strengthened through specialised training and child-sensitive procedures.
- xviii. Fast-track mechanisms or dedicated courts should be established to address cases of online abuse and exploitation involving children.
- xix. International cooperation should be enhanced to address cross-border digital risks and enable effective enforcement.
- xx. Digital literacy should be integrated into school curricula, covering online safety, privacy, cyber hygiene and critical thinking.
- xxi. Awareness and capacity-building initiatives should be conducted for children, parents, teachers and communities to promote safe and responsible digital use.
- xxii. Parents should be encouraged to adopt balanced and communicative approaches, with structured usage habits, reasonable screen-time limits and promotion of offline engagement.
- xxiii. Schools should implement appropriate device-use policies, provide counselling support and promote responsible use of digital tools for learning.
- xxiv. Policies should ensure that they do not widen the digital divide and must account for the needs of rural populations, girls and marginalised groups, including shared-device environments.
- xxv. Advanced safety technologies should be deployed to detect harmful content and emerging risks such as misuse of AI should be addressed through appropriate safeguards.
- xxvi. Large-scale and longitudinal research should be conducted for a better understanding of children's digital usage patterns and long-term impacts.
- xxvii. Children should be included in policymaking processes, and online safety measures should be integrated into broader child protection frameworks.

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## **List of Participants**

### **From the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**

1. Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson
2. Dr. Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Hon'ble Member
3. Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General
4. Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law)

5. Smt. Anupama Chandra Nilekar, DG (Investigation)
6. Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary
7. Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary
8. Ms. Varsha Apte, Consultant (Research)
9. Ms. Radhika Goel, Research Assistant
10. Shri Rishi Kumar, Research Assistant
11. Ms. Vaidehi Rastogi, Junior Research Consultant
12. Ms. Stuti Joshi, Junior Research Consultant
13. Ms. Shelly Anand, Junior Research Consultant
14. Shri Raghwendra Singh, Junior Research Consultant
15. Ms. Avani Verma, Junior Research Consultant
16. Ms. Lakshmi Kumari, Junior Research Consultant

### **Invited Officials and Domain experts**

1. Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
2. Dr. Deepak Goel, Scientist G and Group Coordinator, Cyber Laws, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
3. Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, Member-Secretary, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
4. Dr. Muktesh Chander, Special Monitor, NHRC
5. Dr. Laxmi Vijaykumar, Founder, Sneha Foundation Trust, Chennai
6. Dr. Manoj Sharma, Professor of Clinical Psychology at NIMHANS (SHUT Clinic)
7. Smt. Aishwarya Dongre, Deputy Director, Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)
8. Ms. Zaffrin Chowdhury, Chief of Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships, UNICEF
9. Ms. Sharmila Ray, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF
10. Ms. Anuradha Joshi, Principal, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi
11. Shri Rakesh Senger, Executive Director, Kailash Satyarthi Foundation
12. Shri Sourabh Ghosh, Senior Manager of Research and Knowledge Exchange, Child Rights and You (CRY)
13. Dr. Karnika Seth, Cyber Lawyer and Public Policy Expert
14. Dr. Amit Sen, Director, Children First, New Delhi
15. Shri Kabir K. Shirgaonkar, Director of the Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communication, Government of Goa

16. Dr. Sneha KAS, Director, Directorate of Child Protection, Department of Women and Children, Bengaluru, Karnataka
17. Ms. Swagata Raha, Legal Researcher and Head of Restorative Practices, Enfold India
18. Ms. Hasina Kharbhih, Founder and Chairperson, Impulse NGO Network, Meghalaya
19. Dr. Poonam Malankondaiah, Special Monitor, NHRC

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