



Child Online Safety Toolkit

For Prelims: SDGs, UNCRC, UNICEF, Artificial Intelligence

For Mains: Vulnerability of Children to internet, Issues Related to Children

Why in News?

Recently, the **child online safety toolkit** was launched in an attempt to make the online experience safe for children.

What does the Toolkit Provide?

- **About:**
 - It is a **hands-on, comprehensive guide to making the online world free** from harm for children.
 - It **builds on existing international agreements and best practices**, developed in consultation with international experts from a range of backgrounds.
 - It has **accessible worksheets and resources** both online and in print to help make child online safety a reality.
- **The toolkit** supports the implementation of the following important international agreements and frameworks:
 - The [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)
 - The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\) General comment No. 25 \(2021\)](#) on children's rights in the digital environment.
 - The objective of the General Comment is to **explain how States Parties should implement the Convention on the Right of the Child in relation to the digital environment.**
 - It also **provides guidance on relevant legislation, policy and other measures** designed to ensure full compliance with their obligations under the Convention.
 - The [WeProtect Global Alliance Model National Response.](#)
 - WeProtect Global Alliance is a **global movement of more than 200 governments, private sector companies** and civil society organisations working together to transform the global response to child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
 - The [International Telecommunication Union's Guidelines](#) on Child Online Protection.
 - It is a **comprehensive set of recommendations for children, parents and educators, industry and policymakers** on how to contribute to the development of a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people.
- It also tapped into **UNICEF's Draft Policy Guidance on [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) for Children.**
 - **The guidance is designed to promote children's rights in government and private sector AI** (artificial intelligence) policies and practices, and to raise awareness of how AI systems can uphold or undermine these rights.

What is the Significance of the Toolkit?

- **Vulnerability:**
 - India has witnessed a **whopping 50% of internet penetration in 2020** as against 34.4% in 2019, predominantly as an after-effect of the pandemic.
 - The surge in online activity by children, therefore, becomes apparent as out of India's 749 million internet users, 232 million are children.
 - The internet serves as a **double-edged sword with enabling connectivity, access to knowledge**, and entertainment on one hand and **potential exposure to harmful and inappropriate content on the other**.
- **Addressing Child Sexual Exploitation:**
 - **Child sexual exploitation and abuse are also major concerns**, not only offline but also online.
 - In 2020, **65 million pieces of child sexual abuse material were reported** to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children of the United States, while many more went undetected.
- **Building a Digital Environment:**
 - The toolkit argues that **guaranteeing online safety is not just about responding to risks and harms**, it means actively designing a digital environment that is safe for every child.
 - With **one in three people online under the age of 18**, the centrality of digital technology in children's lives means that it must be formed with their privacy, safety and rights by design and by default.

What are the Related Steps taken?

- **Online Complaint Management System:**
 - The National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has **established an online complaint management system that enables a confidential platform for victims** (or their representatives) to report cases of child abuse and sexual assault.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has sanctioned a **'Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)' scheme** which comprises an online cybercrime reporting portal for cases of Child Pornography/ Child Sexual Abuse Material, rape/gang rape imageries or sexually explicit content.
- **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit:**
 - It probe offences covered under various provisions of the [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#), the [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act](#) and the [Information Technology \(IT\) Act](#), apart from other relevant laws.

Way Forward

- There may be differences between national contexts, but it is **essential that laws and regulations are aligned to the greatest extent possible** and enhance cross-border cooperation and understanding.
 - In the end, it is up to nations or organisations within nations if they intend to use the toolkit to create a safe environment for children online, and if they intend to adhere to various international conventions they have ratified.
- The extensive and critical nature of online child safety demands regulations and mechanisms that protect children.
 - It is **imperative to ensure an adequate understanding of the issue**, promote the best interests of the child, and develop appropriate recovery services for victims of cybercrimes.
- **There is a need to spread awareness through alerts and advisories**, training of law enforcement agencies, improving cyber forensic facilities etc.

Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. The Sustainable Development Goals were first proposed in 1972 by a global think tank called the 'Club of Rome'.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals have to be achieved by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call for action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
- They are built upon the success of the Millennium Development Goals, including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities.
- The goals are interconnected - often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.
- Adopted in 2015, SDGs came into effect in January 2016. They are meant to be achieved by 2030. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The SDGs were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The Club of Rome advocated resource conservation for the first time in a more systematic way in 1968. Hence, statement 1 is not correct. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

[Source: TH](#)

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