

# Censorship On Video Games: Timepass Or Mania?

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Video games in the course of recent years have seen so much traction that today, it is a significant business. From computer games on non-exclusive Personal computers to video games at enormous fields on outstanding quality Personal computers, the business is making an unimaginable measure of chances to all the computer game fans.

Nevertheless, just like every other industry, the computer game industry has its dark side as well. While numerous computer games have effectively got the enthusiasm of individuals over the world, numerous different games could not effectively vanquish the market in numerous locales and got restricted.

According to a study published in the Journal of India Pediatrics by Dr Jeanne Funk, children found violent and high-stress games exciting. Of the children in the age group of class seventh and eighth students, 29 percent preferred sports games with violent graphics, while only 2% preferred educational games. With the advancement of technology, digital game creators have increased the realism of sadism and violent material.<sup>1</sup>

### *Effect of Video games and Online Games*

According to the American Heritage Medical Dictionary study of correlations between the mind, behaviour, and bodily mechanisms, the effect of playing violent video games on children on psychological variables such as aggression and stress and physiological variables such as pulse and respiration, blood pressure<sup>2</sup>.

The essential aspect of life, interaction and communication with others, is lacking nowadays due to technology. The excessive and uncontrolled use of technology by children and adolescents is becoming rampant and has a profound impact on the social skills and speech of children<sup>3</sup>. This is because of the amount of time a child or a teenager spends on these devices, which result in less interaction and communication with others. Another problem with video games and online games is the aggression and violence in children<sup>4</sup>. Research shows that children and adolescents who play violent video games showed increased emotional arousal and aggression and a consequent decrease of activity in the brain involving self-control, reticence and awareness. Some video games have led to aggressive behaviour and negative thoughts. Some researchers suggest a co-relationship between depression and playing online games. Children or teenagers who are depressed tend to spend much time alone on these new technologies. They find solace in spending time on these technologies.

### *The Blue Whale Challenge: A Typical Case*

A game called blue whale challenge was responsible for abetting suicides of children and young adults all over the world. It is estimated that around 130 teenagers lost their lives in

Russia alone<sup>5</sup>.

In 2017, due to the alleged Blue Whale game, Indian media reported many cases of child suicide, self-harm and attempted suicide<sup>6</sup>. Several newspaper articles also wrote about the stories of children committing suicides as a result of this game<sup>7</sup>. As there was an apprehension of more suicides, the Indian Government's Department of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology requested several internet companies like Facebook, Google, etc., to remove all the links linked to the use of the game<sup>8</sup>. The Centre for Internet and Society, an internet watchdog in India, condemned the news coverage, which stated that the suicides resulted from the game as there was a lack of evidence<sup>9</sup>. A series of cases were also filed before the High Court of Madras and Delhi sought a game ban. Subsequently, a petition was filed before the Supreme Court in the form of a Public Interest Litigation<sup>10</sup>. The Supreme Court directed the Central government to ban the game. The government contended that it was not possible to regulate or ban the dangerous game that had claimed many lives across the globe.

### *Need for the Censorship*

**It safeguards children from very violent and pornographic content.** The internet, smartphones and TV have made things easy for children even though they have adverse effects on all sorts of content. Press surveillance allows children more ability to access the internet and watch tv while shielding themselves from nudity and abusive content.

**To protect children from unhealthy content.**

In today's world, parents have much work to shield their children from negative influences. There is content everywhere, including stuff that gets past parental filters and kid-friendly apps that may lead to future dangerous interactions.

*Censorship can give a country's image an extra layer of protection.*

We also employ censorship to limit how much information the average public receives from their government, corporations, and huge organizations daily.

*Censorship protects the rights of artists, inventors and innovators.*

Did you know that copyright laws are a form of censorship? Patents and any other legal framework that grants someone exclusive access to a particular type of content or work without enabling others to do the same are examples of this.

### *Regulations governing video games and online games in India*

Just one state in India has managed and authorized a law relating to online-based gaming. The Sikkim Online Gaming (Regulation) Act, 2008 was passed on June 28, 2008, by the Government of Sikkim, and the primary goal of the act is to control and manage online-based gaming and furthermore to force charge on the games.

**Indian Penal Code, 1860** ("IPC") section 292<sup>11</sup> punishes those who deal with the sale, drawing, writing, painting, publication, advertising, import, export of obscene books. The penalty of committing this offence is imprisonment for a term of up to two years and a fine of Rupees Two thousand for the First Conviction. If the accused is guilty of the same offence again, he is liable to be punished and imprisoned for a term which may extend to five years and a fine of Rupees Five thousand.

Section 293<sup>12</sup> of IPC punishes the selling of obscene objects to young people. Here the age of

the person should be below 20 years. So if a person sells, distributes or even shows an obscene object to a young person who is below the age of 20 years, he is liable to be punished.

**The Information Technology Act, 2000** briefly covers the aspect of punishing the works of publishing obscene or sexual content in the electronic form. Section 672 and 67A of the IT Act deals with punishment for publishing and transmitting obscene content in electronic form.

**According to Section 67<sup>13</sup>**, if the material is obscene, in electronic form and its nature is lascivious and appeals to the prurient interests and corrupts them, then such a person whoever is publishing it is liable to be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years and with a fine which may extend up to INR Rupees five lakh in case of first conviction and case of second conviction the imprisonment may extend up to five years and fine which may extend to rupees ten lakh.

**According to Section 67A<sup>14</sup>**, if a material is published or transmitted which is sexually explicit, then whoever does it is punishable for imprisonment, which may extend to five years and a fine which may extend to Rupees Ten Lakh in case of first conviction. In case of a second conviction, he shall be punishable for imprisonment, extending to seven years and a fine that may extend to Rupees Ten Lakh.

**The Indecent Representation of Women [Prohibition] Act, 1986** also prohibits indecent representation of women. It prohibits showing or depicting a women's body or any part thereof, which is done through advertisement, drawing, painting, or publication, penalizes the person responsible for it.

## 2. CONCLUSION

As per the study, this legislation deals with matters that are only obscene in nature. It does not explicitly touch upon the subject matter of violent video games and online games. It does not specify to curb violent video games that might negatively impact an individual's mind. For example, violent games like the blue whale challenge could not be banned in India due to technical and legal issues. These issues are not recognized by our laws as there is no specific legislation dealing with the same. When there are no specific laws relating to video games and online games in India, it becomes challenging to deal with the legal issues on this subject matter.

In order to make society comprehend the impact of these games, we need to make sure those professionals who are in these areas share their knowledge with the parents by which we can try to regulate the impact of violent games on adolescent minds and help them develop positive skills for better behavior and better interaction.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup><http://www.legalservicesindia.com/articles/cenpb.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/19446/7/07\\_chapter%201.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/19446/7/07_chapter%201.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Griffiths, M.D. Friendship and social development in children and adolescents: The impact of electronic technology.

<sup>4</sup> Bonita Klemm, Video-Game Violence, *Young Children*, Vol. 50, No. 5 (JULY 1995), pp. 53-55

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/worldnews/3003805/blue-whale-suicide-game-challenge-deaths-uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2017/sep/01/bluewhale-challenge-at-least-75-whalers-in-tamil-nadus-madurai-1651006--1.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/blue-whale-challenge-indore-boy-noted-tasks-in-schooldiary-before-trying-to-kill-self/803991/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/blue-whale-suicide-game-latest-news-india-onlineviral-internet-google-ban-links-a7954786.html>

<sup>9</sup>Supra note 10

<sup>10</sup> (2018) 12 SCC 674

<sup>11</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1704109/>

<sup>12</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/doc/601866/>

<sup>13</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1318767/>

<sup>14</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/doc/15057582/>