

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

**Union Minister for HRD Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launches information booklet
“Safe online learning in the times of COVID-19” to raise awareness**

**The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and UNESCO
New Delhi Office developed this booklet to raise awareness of students and teachers on
staying safe online**

New Delhi
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Union Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank digitally launched the information booklet titled “Safe online learning in the times of COVID-19” to raise awareness of students and teachers on staying safe online, today in New Delhi. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and UNESCO New Delhi Office developed this booklet. The booklet will be instrumental in keeping children, young people safe online through basic do’s, and don’ts that will help parents and educators teach their children how to use the internet safely.

After launching the booklet Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal said, “Since there has been a huge increase in online and distance learning in times of COVID-19 situation, there are many children and teachers learning by engaging with each other using online platforms. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and NCERT are committed to ensure safe and secure online environment for children and teachers and empowering them to stay safe online. We urge all victims of cyber bullying to Report and seek Support. I am happy to know that NCERT and UNESCO have jointly developed this Booklet which will facilitate in raising awareness of our students and teachers as well as ensure timely action in cases of cyber bullying.”



As a preventive measure to curb the further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools universities, training centres and other education institutions were closed across India since 20 March 2020. This has caused an unprecedented disruption of education and affecting more than 90% of the school population. The Ministry of Human Resource Development and State Education Departments have made concerted efforts to ensure continuity of learning through various digital platforms. This exposure of adolescents to different digital platforms increased their vulnerability to cyber bullying.

In India, an estimated 71 million children aged between 5-11 years access the Internet on devices of their family members, constituting about 14 percent of the country's active Internet user base of over 500 million. Two-thirds of internet users in India are in the age group of 12-29 year (Data shared by the Internet & Mobile Association of India). Data and statistics have highlighted that post lock down, the internet has amplified the risk of cyber bullying, including online discrimination for children and young people. With the aim of addressing these concerns, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and UNESCO New Delhi Office developed this information booklet. Director and Representative of UNESCO New Delhi Shri Eric Falt said, "UNESCO is committed to ensure access to safe, inclusive and health promoting learning environments for all children. It is imperative that websites, digital platforms, social media platforms are free of Cyber bullying, if children have to access quality education. This information booklet titled 'Safe online learning in times of Covid19' highlights the negative consequences of cyber bullying and ways to eliminate and prevent the same". UNESCO and NCERT are pleased to develop this booklet and hope that it acts as a valuable tool in creating a safer online environment."

Director of National Council of Educational Research and Training Prof. Hrushikesh Senapaty said, "Our investments in the education system will be ineffective unless we address issues of online safety and prevention of cyber bullying. Unsafe learning environments can undermine the quality of education for our learners, as it adversely impacts academic achievement and future education and employment prospects of students. An atmosphere of anxiety, fear and insecurity is incompatible with learning, and NCERT is committed to protect the health and well-being of young people and from online bullying."

NB/AKJ/AK/OA