

#### **4. Curbing Child Pornography**

**Prelims Level: Governance - Policies**

**Mains Level: GS-II Issues relating to Development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.**

#### **Why in News?**

- A parliamentary panel has recently recommended a **code of conduct for Internet service providers (ISPs)** and strengthening the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to curb Child Pornography.**

#### **What is Child Pornography?**

- **Child Pornography** is publishing and transmitting obscene material of children in **Electronic Form.**
- In recent years child pornography has increased due to the easy access of the internet and easily available videos on the internet.
- Child pornography is the most heinous crime which occurs and has led to various other crimes such as sex tourism, sexual abuse of the child, etc.

#### **What is the problem in curbing Child Pornography?**

- Making laws is not the same as enforcing them. While sufficient anti-child pornography laws exist in many nations, enforcement is weak.
- Furthermore, policing a global operation like the Internet involves policing citizens from countries with widely differing domestic laws, cultures and social mores.
- Although these obstacles appear insurmountable, it must be remembered that child pornography is a substantive and compelling problem on international, national, and local levels, and it is not a harmless crime.

#### **What measures are taken by Indian Government?**

- India had blocked more than 800 pornographic websites in 2015 because of the concerns about child pornography.
- This particular decision was taken under the **Information Technology Act** and in consonance with **Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India** that allows the government to **impose restrictions on the grounds of decency and morality.**
- However, this complete ban was later lifted and only implemented to those websites containing child porn.

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- Recently, again the Department of Telecom has banned around 800 sites due to illegal content on websites.

### **What are key recommendations of the Panel?**

- Put in place a **multi-pronged strategy** involving technological, institutional, social and educational as well as State-level measures.
- There is a **need for code of conduct** or a set of guidelines for ensuring child safety online.
- There shall be a greater onus on **ISPs to identify and remove child sexual abuse material (CSAM)** as well as report such content and those trying to access them to the authorities under the national cybercrime portal.
- There is also need for **strengthening the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** so that it can serve as the **nodal body for Curbing Child Pornography**. It is suggested that the capabilities required in the NCPCR should include technology, cyber policing and prosecution.

### **What are the Arguments Regarding the Recommendations?**

- Some of the recommendations are expected to lead to **concerns over privacy and misuse**.
- It is believed that asking ISPs to report content in addition to **blocking and filtering may not be practical**.
- The suggestion to **break encryption** could also just **lead to traffic moving to Different Platforms**.

### **Need of an Hour:**

- There is a need to develop a victim-centric strategy instead of just focusing on prosecution