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Lawyers, activists seek ban on Japanese `rape game`

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New Delhi: Child rights activists and cyber law experts have together demanded a ban on Rapelay -- a Japanese video game that challenges a player to rape women.



The protesters want cyber laws to be made more stringent to prevent such games from finding their way into the Indian market.

Maintaining that obscene rape games may prove more dangerous than the offence of actual rape, cyber law expert Pawan Duggal said that the Information Technology Act, 2000, must be tightened and more expert bodies like the Computer Emergency Reaction Team (Cert-In) under the Information Technology ministry created to tackle such menaces.

"These rape games are more dangerous than an actual rapist. A rapist may abuse one or two women before being caught, but obscene Japanese rape games like Rapelay would surely infect young and impressionable minds and lure them into becoming a pervert rapist," Duggal said.

Reports have it that a three-dimensional pornographic game Rapelay, created by Japanese firm Illusion, threatens to invade Indian computers as the game can be downloaded from websites hosted abroad besides the fact that its pirated Compact Discs too have reached India.

Sandhya Bajaj, a member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), said that the game must be banned in the country immediately.

"I am just shocked that such a game can even be visualised and created. The Indian government must step in and ensure that the game is banned in the country," Bajaj told reporters.

"Such games do not just threaten the mental framework of children but is provocative to adults as well. The game must be banned and anyone found selling and buying the game should be held up," she added.

Senior police officers however confided to media that there was no mechanism to check what kind of pornographic material is entering the Indian grey market.

"It is almost impossible to detect what we are getting here on a day-to-day basis. We act only in case of a complaint," a senior police officer said.

Delhi Police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said they have got all required infrastructure in place to investigate cyber crime.

"We have two dedicated labs and trained experts," he said.

Asked if India has relevant laws to tackle such cyber crimes, Duggal pointed out the existence of section 67 of the Information Technology Act, which bans "publishing of information which is obscene in electronic form".

The act prohibits "publishing or transmitting in electronic form any material which is lascivious or appeal to the prurient interest or if its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it".

For the first instance the offence is punishable with a jail term of five years and fine up to Rs.500,000. On committing the offence for the second time one is liable to be jailed for 10 years besides paying a fine of Rs.1 million, said Duggal.

This provision could have well taken care of the copying and making of illegal and obscene CDs on Indian shores, but the fact remains that the offence is bailable.

Once out on bail, the offender is free to engage in his old profession of copying and reproducing CDs with the tardy legal system failing to punish quickly, said Duggal.

As for accessing and downloading such obscene games through internet from websites hosted abroad, India has only a semblance of technical wherewithal to tackle the malady.

Several officials in the cyber crime cell under the Economic Offence Wing of Delhi Police too conceded the IT Act's shortcomings in combating various cyber crimes.

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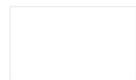
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