

Government, Netflix, NGOs stress on online safety

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Published
Updated

Aug 8, 2018, 3:32 pm IST
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The office of the Chief Minister Maharashtra, in partnership with the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) — an NGO working in the area of online safety, organised a forum called “Create, Connect, Respect: Empowering parents and educators to guide connected children and youth,” recently in Mumbai. This event was supported by UNICEF India, Netflix and FICCI Arise.

Bringing together both global and local leaders in the area of online safety, the focus of this event was on how to enable children and youth to benefit from the advantages that the Internet has to offer. At the event, the discussions included how to equip youth and their guardians to use online tools and other techniques which ensure that they have a

safe and age-appropriate experience online. According to an Alphabet report, over 80 per cent of Indian VOD consumers found online safety features useful and trustworthy in keeping themselves and their families safe.

In addition to Stephen Balkam, CEO of FOSI, speakers at this event included Javier Aguilar, Chief Child Protection Officer, UNICEF; Kuek Yu-Chuang, MD of APAC, Netflix; Kaustubh Dhavse, Joint Secretary and OSD to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra; Amitabh Kumar, HoD, Centre for Social Research, Siddharth Pillai, Director, Aarambh India Initiative, and **Gowree Gokhale, Partner at Nishith Desai Associates.**

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis sent a supporting message to the audience, saying “India houses the youngest population in the world. The transition of India from an emerging economy to a \$5 trillion economy will depend on how well we leverage our demographic dividend. The advent of the fourth industrial revolution entails adequate exposure of the Internet to every last person for a future-ready workforce.” In her remarks, Pankaja Munde noted that “The Government of India is coming up with a lot of new platforms where we can engage in this dialogue. We are working on making vulnerable populations more and more Internet savvy. Connectedness needs to go hand-in-hand with education so that people are empowered to have a safe and productive experience online.”

FOSI CEO Stephen Balkam said, “Online safety is everyone’s responsibility and everybody has to work together to maintain it. This can best be done through open dialogue with various stakeholders.” Netflix’s MD of APAC, Kuek Yu-Chuang, said, “Netflix encourages families to make wise decisions when streaming content from the Internet, including our own service. We are proud of the product features on our service such as PIN parental control that empowers our users to make these decisions.”