

India tried to ban PUBG Mobile many times but games are ‘technically’ difficult to ban, say experts

RAUNAK JAIN Jan 24, 2020, 15:01 IST



- The lawyer claims that school-going children are losing their interest in studies
- He also says that these children become aggressive and go into depression when they're asked to stop playing PUBG Mobile.
- The Punjab and Haryana High Court has asked the IT Ministry to decide on the matter.

Popular battle-royale game PUBG Mobile might be banned in India, yet again. A lawyer HC Arora, has filed a PIL against the game in the Punjab and Haryana High Court, saying the game is as addictive as a drug.

“School going children who are losing interest in studies have become addicted to the game. The parents of such children are helpless. In case they insist the children to stop playing it, they become aggressive and go into depression,” Arora said in his PIL.

This comes almost a year after PUBG Mobile was banned in Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat, Vadodara and Bhavnagar in India in March 2019. The local police even arrested several youngsters for playing PUBG Mobile during the ban. But the ban was lifted within a few weeks.

In the last few years, many cases of violence has been reported over the game. A Karnataka based 25 year old killer his father who was stopping him from playing the game. Another Delhi teen who killed his family was also known to be an PUBG addict.

Arora's PIL claims that the game 'normalises' violence, which affects the mental health of players.

Not the first time someone has wanted a ban on PUBG Mobile

This is not the first time cases have been filed against the game. Last year, a 11-year old child Ahad Nizam filed a PIL in the Bombay High Court for reasons similar to that of Arora's PIL. "PUBG Mobile promotes violence, murder, aggression, loot, gaming addiction, and cyberbullying," said Nizam's PIL.

The Bombay High Court sought IT Ministry's advise on the matter. To this, the ministry responded by saying that it is "technically difficult to ban the game". That could be true, as the United States has tried it and failed.

"Some US states, including California, have previously passed laws to regulate the sale of certain types of videos to children, but the US Supreme Court invalidated the same saying that video games formed part of the constitutional right to free speech and hence could not be regulated," said a [report by law firm](#) Nishith Desai associates.

Can PUBG Mobile be banned for being addictive and promoting gambling?

However, the correlation between excessive gaming and violence has not been completely tested in Indian courts. But there is precedence where courts allowed games that involve skill and strategy. That is how fantasy sporting platform Dream 11 won its case in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The Bombay High Court also issued a similar ruling.

Yet many players, parents even schools, colleges and hostels too are concerned about the addictive effects of PUBG. And, some action could be taken on medical grounds.

There have been reports of PUBG Mobile players falling sick after playing the game continuously for extended periods of time. A fitness trainer in Jammu was reportedly admitted to a hospital after playing PUBG Mobile for 10 days straight.

A 20-year old reportedly drank acid instead of water while playing the game. He died before he could be attended to by doctors. The World Health Organization too classified 'gaming disorder' as a medical condition.

"For gaming disorder to be diagnosed, the behaviour pattern must be of sufficient severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning and would normally have been evident for at least 12 months," said WHO.

But very few people are coming forward to bell the cat and that includes creator of the game. Tencent had tested a 'health reminder' to restrict gaming to a maximum of six hours per day. It later backtracked on it and apologized for the 'error'. That leaves players to see the error of their own ways.