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# **THE INTENSIFICATION OF MORALITY POLICING ON INDIAN DIGITAL PLATFORMS (2024–2025): A CONTENT ANALYSIS USING INDIA'S GOT LATENT CONTROVERSY**

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## **Introduction: The Digital Decency Dilemma In Indian Jurisprudence**

In recent years, India has seen a remarkable shift in the way people consume content. For decades, television, newspapers, and films were tightly regulated, as every movie required a CBFC certificate, and television and print media were subject to clear rules set by self-regulatory bodies. However, the emergence of OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime, along with the proliferation of user-generated spaces such as YouTube and podcasts, has completely changed the landscape. These new forms of media grew rapidly, often without the same level of scrutiny as traditional outlets. While this gave audiences more choice and provided a bigger platform for creative voices, it also raised genuine concerns about unregulated, easily accessible content, especially for young audiences.

To bridge this widening gap, the government introduced the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, commonly referred to as the IT Rules, 2021. Grounded in Section 87 of the IT Act, 2000, these rules were designed to bring accountability into the digital space. They required platforms to follow a Code of Ethics, classify content according to age suitability, and set up a three-tier grievance redressal system for both OTT providers and digital news outlets. For example, shows or films rated “A” (Adult) were to be placed behind parental controls and age verification mechanisms, preventing children from stumbling upon inappropriate content.

Although these measures marked an important beginning, their implementation between 2021 and 2023 was far from consistent. Many of the rules remained on paper, creating uncertainty for both audiences and platforms. This lack of clarity meant that questions around responsibility, censorship, and user protection continued to linger. By 2024–2025, the cracks in this patchy enforcement had become more visible, pushing the regulation of digital content

back into the spotlight and making it clear that India's digital governance needs stronger direction in the years to come.

### **Defining the Core Conflict: Article 19(1)(a) vs. Morality Restrictions**

When we talk about regulating content in India, the conversation always comes back to one important right that is the right to free speech, which our Constitution protects under Article 19(1)(a). But here's the catch: this freedom isn't absolute; the government can place certain reasonable limits, especially to protect national security, public order, or the country's integrity. And then there's the tricky part, which is the rules, about what's considered decent or moral. Our courts have said loud and clear that anything obscene (stuff that offends public decency or morals) isn't covered under free speech.

But what counts as 'obscene' or 'decent'? That's where things get complicated because these ideas aren't set in stone. They change as society changes. What people frowned upon decades ago may now be totally acceptable. This shifting line makes it difficult for courts to provide a clear answer, leaving artists and creators uncertain about where the limits lie. For digital platforms, this is even more stressful. Since the rules are unclear, they often face legal trouble or pressure from regulators, especially when their content challenges social norms or touches on sensitive topics.

### **The Ambiguous Legal Framework of Obscenity and Vulgarity**

The government's current crackdown on online content relies on a mix of laws, some of which are really more than a hundred years old. Together, these laws make it relatively easy to take action against content that is considered contrary to moral values.

### **The Archaic Standard: IPC Section 292 and the Hicklin Test**

One of the primary laws used is Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which pertains to obscenity. This law defines material, whether it's a book, a pamphlet, a drawing, or anything else, as obscene if it is "lascivious" or appeals to prurient interests. In simpler terms, if the material's overall effect is likely to corrupt or negatively influence people who might read, see, or hear it, it can be considered obscene<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mugdha Dwivedi and Aditya Pranav Dwivedi, 'Obscenity and the Legal Ambiguity in India: A Critical Analysis' (IJFMR) <https://ijfmr.com> accessed 5 October 2025

This approach to defining obscenity isn't new; it originated in the 19th-century British legal test known as the Hicklin Test. In India, the Supreme Court confirmed the validity of this test in a landmark 1965 case, *Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra*<sup>2</sup>. However, relying on this old test in today's world, especially with the rise of digital content, is a significant issue because the Hicklin Test allows authorities to judge a whole work by looking at only certain parts, sometimes the most graphic or sensitive parts, taken out of context. It also focuses on how the content might affect the most vulnerable or sensitive people, such as children, rather than on the work as a whole or its possible artistic, literary, or social value.

Because of this, the law is often applied in a broad, subjective manner, especially online. This means that creators and platforms can easily face legal trouble just because some people find parts of their content offensive, even if the overall work has value or is meant to provoke thought rather than harm.

### **Digital and Gender-Specific Statutes**

When it comes to regulating online content in India, the rules don't just come from the old Indian Penal Code. Newer laws have been enacted to keep pace with today's digital world and to protect women's dignity.

For example, the Information Technology Act<sup>3</sup> tackles digital content head-on. Sections 67 and 67A of this law make it illegal to share obscene or sexually explicit material online. These rules give the government stronger tools to control what appears on the internet, adding a modern layer to the older laws.

There's also the Indecent Representation of Women Act<sup>4</sup>, which aims to stop women from being shown in disrespectful or degrading ways. This law has been actively used by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to set guidelines for streaming platforms. In fact, it was one of the main reasons behind the widespread blocking of some smaller streaming services in 2025, as they were found to be in violation of these standards.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ranjit D Udeshi v State of Maharashtra* (1965) AIR 881 (SC)

<sup>3</sup> Information Technology Act 2000 (Act 21 of 2000)

<sup>4</sup> Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986 (Act 60 of 1986)

More recently, in 2023, India introduced the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita<sup>5</sup>, a new criminal code that replaces the IPC. However, even with this update, the basic rules regarding obscene or offensive content remain unchanged. This demonstrates that India continues to take the regulation of such material seriously, even as its laws evolve to meet the demands of the modern age.

### IPC Section 294: The Conflation of Obscenity and Public Annoyance

One law that causes significant trouble for online creators, especially comedians and individuals who enjoy joking or speaking freely, is Section 294 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). This law says that if someone does something obscene or uses obscene language publicly to the annoyance of others, they can be punished with up to three months in jail, a fine, or both.

This law was originally intended to prevent people from behaving in a rude or offensive manner in public places, such as streets, parks, or theatres. However, today it's being used against content shared online. For example, shows like India's Got



Latent have faced complaints under this law because authorities are treating the internet as a “public place,” and saying some viewers are “annoyed” by what they see online. Due to this broad interpretation, police or even ordinary people can file complaints against creators quickly, simply because someone finds the content offensive. Often, these complaints skip the usual, more careful processes intended to protect creators under the IT Rules of 2021. This makes it easier for authorities to censor digital content quickly, even when it may not truly warrant it.

What's worrying is that this old law about public decency is now being used to target online

<sup>5</sup> Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 (Act 45 of 2023)

speech in a way that can feel unfair. When something goes viral and causes a stir, creators can suddenly find themselves in legal trouble. It shows how quickly online popularity can turn into real risks for free expression.

## **The Samay Raina / India's Got Latent (IGL) Case: The Regulatory Trigger**

The controversy around the YouTube show India's Got Latent (IGL) marked a turning point in how India approaches digital content and decency. What started as a popular comedy and talent show quickly became the centre of a heated debate, moving the issue from a legal discussion into a full-blown political and governmental concern in early 2025.

### **Event and Immediate Backlash (Late 2024–Early 2025)**

The incident that triggered this storm occurred in late 2024. During an episode of the show, Ranveer Allahbadia, a popular podcaster and influencer known for his candid, often provocative style, asked a participant a question many found offensive. This question, described by viewers as a "sexually graphic hypothetical", touched on the participant's parents' private relationship. While it might have been intended as edgy humour or an attempt to push the show's boundaries, it quickly crossed a line for many viewers.

As soon as the episode aired, social media erupted. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook were flooded with messages condemning the comment. The backlash was not limited to everyday viewers; public figures, activists, and political leaders publicly criticised the show and demanded accountability. The rapid spread of outrage demonstrated how digital content, once released, can ignite strong feelings and mobilise public sentiment almost instantly.

This controversy underscored the vulnerability of digital content creators in today's fast-paced online world. Content creators now operate in an environment where a single comment or joke can lead to swift political pressure, legal scrutiny, and threats of censorship. Faced with mounting public pressure, government and regulatory agencies responded quickly. What had once been a largely academic or legal debate about the boundaries of free speech and decency in digital spaces suddenly became a pressing, real-world issue requiring practical solutions and policies. This moment compelled policymakers to reassess how to regulate digital content responsibly without stifling the creative freedom of expression.

At its core, India's Got Latent episode highlighted the delicate balance India continues to seek: protecting freedom of expression while respecting deeply held cultural and moral values in a diverse society. It also brought to light the difficulties of governing digital platforms where content can reach millions instantly, crossing social, cultural, and linguistic boundaries

### Political and Legal Escalation

The backlash against India's Got Latent controversy swiftly moved from social media uproar to tangible legal consequences. Complaints poured in from across the country, leading to the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) in multiple jurisdictions, including major cities such as Mumbai and states like Assam. The complaints targeted key figures involved in the show, including Ranveer Allahbadia, Samay Raina, and other notable participants and judges such as Apoorva Mukhija and Ashish Chanchlani. The central accusations were serious: promoting obscenity and engaging in sexually explicit and vulgar discussions that many considered crossing the line. As the legal pressure mounted, the creators were summoned by the police for questioning, an intimidating step that underscored how deeply the controversy had penetrated the legal system. For these creators, what began as part of their work on a digital platform suddenly became a high-stakes legal ordeal with potentially severe consequences.



The situation escalated further when the National Commission for Women (NCW) publicly intervened, taking a firm stance against the show's content. In February 2025, the NCW expressed strong concern about the remarks made on the show, declaring them vulgar, offensive, and deeply disrespectful to individual dignity. The Commission's involvement raised the stakes even higher, as they formally summoned the content creators and producers involved to explain themselves and face scrutiny. This intervention signalled that the controversy was no longer just a matter of online outrage or isolated complaints, as it was fast becoming a national issue drawing attention from powerful legal and social institutions. The pressure culminated in the topic being formally raised in India's Parliament, adding a political dimension to what had started as a digital controversy. The fact that elected representatives debated the issue showed how seriously the government and statutory bodies took these

concerns.<sup>6</sup>

### **An unwelcome sequel: Bane of political controversies jumps from screens to streaming platforms**

Streaming platforms are already on the backfoot as far as tackling religious and political themes go, with some finished projects not even releasing. It is now becoming increasingly common for films and shows to be delayed or put on the backburner by OTT services.

Together, these developments painted a clear picture: digital content creators were now navigating a landscape where public opinion, legal enforcement, social advocacy groups, and political power combined to hold them accountable in unprecedented ways. The response was multifaceted and determined, reflecting India's growing willingness to regulate digital content deemed morally questionable and to utilise every available tool, including legal, social, and political, to do so. For the creators involved, this was a daunting reminder of the complex realities of producing content in today's India, where a viral moment can trigger swift legal action, social condemnation, and political scrutiny. For the country, it highlighted the challenges of balancing freedom of expression with respect for social norms and sensitivities in an ever-evolving digital age.

### **The Precedent of Self-Censorship and Platform Compliance**

As the legal heat continued to rise, with police cases emerging across various locations and official summons issued by groups like the Maharashtra Cyber Department, Samay Raina didn't shy away from the situation. He openly admitted that things had become tough and ultimately removed all episodes of India's Got Latent from YouTube on February 12, 2025. It was clear the backlash wasn't just online noise; it was causing serious problems.

"The socio-political pressures that have historically impacted theatrical film releases in India are now extending to OTT projects, potentially contributing to a growing number of unreleased titles," said Aslam Ahmed, partner at law firm Singhania & Co.

Ranveer Allahbadia, whose controversial comment kicked off much of the outrage, also stepped up and apologised publicly. It was a rare moment where someone in the spotlight actually owned up to the fallout instead of brushing it off. Later, the Supreme Court allowed Ranveer to resume his podcast, The Ranveer Show, but with a significant warning: he had to maintain a decent, respectful tone. This made it clear that freedom of speech is important, but

<sup>6</sup> 'National Commission for Women summons Ranveer Allahbadia, Samay Raina, others over controversial remark' (The Hindu, 13 February 2025) <https://thehindu.com> accessed 5 October 2025

it also comes with some ground rules, especially when your audience is huge and diverse<sup>7</sup>.

What this whole IGL mess really revealed was the power of the combined forces of legal pressure, government regulation, and political outrage. With FIRs, summon letters from the National Commission for Women, and politicians weighing in, creators and platforms started playing it safe. A significant amount of content was removed, and self-censorship became the new norm.

This approach didn't just quiet things down for IGL; it essentially set the stage for what was to come next. The government recognised the effectiveness of using public outrage to enforce rules, which gave them the green light to crack down on other digital platforms later in 2025. Thus, the IGL controversy became a significant turning point. Suddenly, it wasn't just about one show or one comment anymore; it was about how India would handle digital content as a whole. For creators, it's a reminder that gaining popularity online can bring a lot of attention, but not always the kind that's beneficial. It's also a sign that India's digital space is changing fast, and with that comes new challenges on what you can say and share.

### **Intensification of Regulatory Oversight (2025): The Post-IGL Environment**

India's Got Latent controversy acted as a spark, setting off a chain reaction among regulatory bodies. Instead of just issuing gentle warnings, the government moved swiftly to adopt a much tougher, more organised approach. Building on existing laws, they rolled out a strict compliance regime to hold digital platforms and creators accountable, signalling that leniency was no longer an option.

The controversy around India's Got Latent really shook things up for India's digital content regulators. What started as a warning quickly turned into a strong, no-nonsense approach from the government to get platforms to follow the rules more closely. After the IGL scandal, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) didn't hold back; they issued several clear advisories in early 2025. These advisories directly pointed to the IGL controversy as a significant reason for stepping up their oversight of online platforms<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> The Free Press Journal, 'Samay Raina | What India's "Obscenity Laws" Say About Ranveer Allahbadia's India's Got Latent Remark' (YouTube, 14 February 2025) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NNH3ScERbw> accessed 5 October 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Advisory dated 19 February 2025 (2025) [https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-02/advisory-dated-19.02.2025\\_0.pdf](https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-02/advisory-dated-19.02.2025_0.pdf) accessed 5 October 2025.

## Judicial Endorsement of Regulatory Concern

While the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was ramping up efforts to clean up digital content, the Supreme Court also intervened, expressing serious concern about online content. In April 2025, the Court took up a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) asking for a ban on obscene and pornographic content on OTT platforms and social media. A two-judge bench didn't mince words; it expressed deep concern about objectionable content being broadcast and stressed the need for some form of regulation.

News / Government Blocks 25 OTT Platforms For Obscenity

### Government blocks 25 OTT platforms for obscenity

TNN / Jul 26, 2025, 02:16 IST



The Indian government has blocked 25 OTT platforms, including Ullu and ALTT, along with associated websites and apps, due to sexually explicit and obscene content. This action follows warnings and consultations with various ministries and organizations, triggered by public grievances and violations of IT Rules and obscenity laws. The move is praised by some as a necessary step to protect cultural values.

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To get things moving, the Court sent notices to the central government and major streaming and social media companies, including Netflix, Amazon Prime, Ullu, ALTT, Twitter (now known as X), Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, requesting that they explain the steps they were taking. This was a significant development because it provided constitutional backing to the government's push for stricter rules regarding digital content<sup>9</sup>.

When the Solicitor General spoke on behalf of the government, he stated that some rules were already in place but acknowledged that stricter measures might be necessary. He described some content as so "perverse" that the government simply had to intervene.

With both the judiciary and the government on the same page, stricter controls on what can be shown or said online were implemented more quickly. This alignment also made it less likely that legal challenges against the Ministry's tough crackdown or use of Section 69A for morality-related cases would succeed.

<sup>9</sup> Devesh K Pandey, 'ALTT, ULLU among over 20 OTT apps banned for obscene content' (The Hindu, 25 July 2025) <https://thehindu.com> accessed 5 October 2025

## Constitutional Implications and the Chilling Effect on Digital Creators

The intensified regulatory environment from 2024 to 2025 isn't just a dry legal matter; it's a systemic threat actively chilling human creativity and open discourse. When laws are complex, overlapping, and unclear, a state of legal uncertainty arises, making the risks of creating, speaking, or publishing too high for ordinary people and artists alike.

### The Structural Tension: Free Speech vs. Moral Majoritarianism

Article 19(2) of the Constitution says that free speech can be limited for reasons like “decency or morality” and “public order.” These are treated as two separate things. But here’s the catch: courts have mostly followed this old rule called the Hicklin Test (from a famous case called *Ranjit Udeshi*), which basically says it’s okay to restrict speech if it offends the moral values of the majority. This kind of sets up an age-old debate: how much should the government get to decide what’s moral for everyone?

Notable legal thinkers, such as Lord Devlin and H.L.A. Hart, have debated this issue.

Now, fast forward to today’s world of digital content. Things like stand-up comedy, satire, and podcasts often push the envelope by poking fun at social norms or using language that’s a bit edgy to get a laugh or make a point. However, the problem is that the old colonial-era laws on obscenity are vague and outdated, and there’s another law on “annoying others” that’s extremely subjective, meaning someone could essentially complain just because they didn’t like what they heard. So, content creators who rely on bold or provocative stuff are always walking a legal tightrope, unsure if they might get in trouble.



### The Chilling Effect on Creativity and Livelihoods

The whole "India’s Got Latent" controversy really shows how vague laws and legal pressure can seriously chill free speech. When creators see vague rules hanging over their heads, they start playing it safe, shutting down open, bold conversations out of fear. For individual digital creators, it’s almost impossible to take on the legal battles alone. They don’t have the deep

pockets or the resources to fight off multiple police cases or deal with summons from government bodies like the NCW. Meanwhile, their livelihood gets interrupted<sup>10</sup>.



Take what happened with Samay Raina, the host of "India's Got Latent." He ended up having to remove every episode of the show under legal pressure. Then the Supreme Court stepped in and told Ranveer Allahbadia, a content creator, that he had to adhere to strict rules on "decency and morality." Essentially, this sets a very strict legal standard that forces creators to be cautious; they must watch every word and tone carefully, especially when discussing sensitive topics<sup>11</sup>.

The problem is that this kind of judicial caution comes at a big cost. It makes it really hard for creators to be honest, to critique society, or to push boundaries through humour and commentary, the very things that keep democracies vibrant and strong. Independent creators get hit hardest here because their careers depend entirely on their audience and online presence. Unlike big streaming platforms that can afford legal battles, these individuals often have no backup. So, this legal caution doesn't just limit free speech; it puts many creators in a vulnerable spot, draining their creativity and courage<sup>12</sup>.

### **The Need for Modernised Standards and Safeguards**

The fact that we're still leaning on the 19th-century Hicklin test to figure out what counts as "obscene" just doesn't cut it anymore, especially with how fast digital media is changing. This old standard, which discusses whether something can "deprave and corrupt" people, really

<sup>10</sup> Harprit Singh Kaurav and Rishi Dubey, 'The Legal Challenges and Opportunities in the Regulation of Over-the-Top (OTT) Platforms in India' (Burnished Law Journal, 2025) <https://burnishedlawjournal.in> accessed 5 October 2025

<sup>11</sup> Suchitra Kalyan Mohanty, 'SC flags "serious concern" over obscene OTT, social media content; issues notices to Centre, streaming platforms' (The New Indian Express, 28 April 2025) <https://www.newindianexpress.com> accessed 5 October 2025

<sup>12</sup> Siddharth Kanojia, 'CREATIVE FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR OTT CONTENTS IN THE UK, INDIA, AND CHINA' (2023) 9(3) Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 246 <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2393246k> accessed 5 October 2025

needs to be replaced with a test that better fits today's world. What's needed is something that takes into account modern community attitudes and also recognises the serious value something might have, whether it's literary, artistic, political, or scientific. That's how it works in places like the United States, where even content that's a bit risqué can still be protected if it has real meaning or value<sup>13</sup>.

There's also a big worry about how Section 69A of the IT Act is being used to block content that's labelled "immoral." This raises serious questions about fairness and due process in online settings. The IT Rules of 2021 established the Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC) to enable people to appeal decisions made by platforms; however, this system doesn't effectively address the larger issue: the government retains considerable discretion to block content under Section 69A without clear, transparent checks<sup>14</sup>. If we want to protect the fundamental right to free speech under Article 19, we need stronger, clearer safeguards against blocking content deemed morally offensive. Otherwise, this power could be misused to silence valid, if controversial, digital voices.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The years 2024 and 2025 marked a turning point in how the Indian government clamps down on online content it considers immoral or inappropriate. The controversy surrounding the show "India's Got Latent" became a big public and political trigger that pushed authorities, especially the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and related enforcement agencies, to go from issuing general warnings to rolling out a strict, catch-all enforcement strategy.

This new approach has two main parts. First, the government has been using criminal laws, such as Section 294 of the Indian Penal Code and First Information Reports (FIRs) under the IT Act, to target popular digital creators. This isn't just about punishing a few people—it's a way to make everyone in the digital content space start censoring themselves out of fear. Essentially, it sets a national bar for creators to be extra cautious.

Second, the government has been making strategic use of Section 69A of the IT Act, a powerful tool originally intended for national security purposes. This law lets the government take down

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<sup>13</sup> Mugdha Dwivedi and Aditya Pranav Dwivedi, 'Obscenity and the Legal Ambiguity in India: A Critical Analysis' (IJFMR) <https://ijfmr.com> accessed 5 October 2025

<sup>14</sup> 'About GAC - Grievance Appellate Committee' (Grievance Appellate Committee, Government of India) <https://gac.gov.in> accessed 5 October 2025

or block entire niche streaming platforms quickly if they're found guilty of broadcasting "obscene" content. What's new and worrying is the government's justification: they began using a so-called "quality test" where content without a clear storyline, theme, or social message gets penalised. This essentially allows the state to decide what constitutes cultural or artistic value, placing the government in the position of the ultimate arbiter of what's meaningful or not.

The Supreme Court's own concerns about online indecency have given this government approach extra weight, creating a climate where digital creators feel pressured to hold back. This chilling effect limits what people dare to say or joke about online, threatening the very heart of free speech in India—the world's largest democracy. Independent creators, who rely entirely on their online presence and audience engagement, find themselves especially squeezed because they don't have the resources of big streaming platforms to absorb these legal blows<sup>15</sup>.

### **Recommendations for Legal and Regulatory Reform**

Based on the analysis of the legal and regulatory response to the digital content crisis, the following reforms are recommended to strike a constitutionally proportionate balance between protecting public decency and safeguarding creative freedom:

**Statutory Clarification and Modernisation:** The Legislature should undertake reform to replace the archaic IPC 292 standard (the Hicklin Test) with a modern definition of obscenity that mandates the application of a contextualised "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value" test. This would legally distinguish protected expression from purely pornographic material lacking social value.

**Enhance Due Process in Executive Blocking:** When Section 69A of the IT Act is invoked on morality or public order grounds, new rules must be established to ensure transparent due process and post-decisional hearing rights for aggrieved creators and publishers, thereby limiting the Executive's unchecked expansion of blocking powers into the realm of content regulation.

**Delineation of Enforcement Mechanisms:** MIB and regulatory bodies should formally distinguish between violations of the Digital Media Ethics Code (related to age classification

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<sup>15</sup> Harprit Singh Kaurav and Rishi Dubey, 'The Legal Challenges and Opportunities in the Regulation of Over-the-Top (OTT) Platforms in India' (Burnished Law Journal, 2025) <https://burnishedlawjournal.in> accessed 5 October 2025

and access controls) and violations of criminal obscenity law (IPC/IT Act). This distinction prevents the conflation of procedural non-compliance with criminal liability, allowing for proportionate penalties rather than criminalising general "vulgarity."

**Judicial Guidelines for Satire:** The judiciary should issue clear guidelines to protect satirical and critical digital expression from vexatious criminal proceedings under broad clauses such as IPC 294. The scope of "public annoyance" must be strictly limited, mitigating the prevalent use of decentralised FIRs to stifle independent commentary and humour in the digital public sphere.

