

Q. 7

The Power to block online content must be used sparingly by the Government of India with sensitivity towards freedom of speech. Discuss.

### Introduction

Government issued directions for blocking the videos under the relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital media ethics code) Rules 2021.

Social Media - Rules seek to Empower Users of Digital Platforms & Ensure Accountability

↳ Tighter times to take down unfair content, assist law enforcement.

↳ Identify first Originator of a message.

↳ stricter rules for Bigger Platform

↳ Voluntary User Verification Mechanism.

Digital Media and OTT Platforms - seek to

address concerns over digital content through

1) Self Regulation & Self classification

2) code of ethics

3) Three tier grievance redressal Mechanism.

4) Subjects digital news media to same laws as Traditional media.

According to Government videos came under the ambit of section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act.

↳ It Confers on the Central & state govern-ment the power to issue directions to intercept, Monitor or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any Computer source.

The Grounds on which these powers may be exercised are.

↳ In the Interest of Sovereignty or Integrity of India, defence of India, the security of State.

↳ Friendly relations with foreign state

↳ For investigating any offence

### Conclusion

A fine balance between freedom of speech and the need to curb the misuse in digital platforms have to be maintained. Both government and the digital platforms will have to work together and fulfill this responsibility.