



Karnataka State Policy And Planning Commission

S Mohanadass Hegde

Member

To,
Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka
Vidhana Soudha
Bengaluru – 560001

Date: 10.04.2026

Respected Sir,

Subject: Submission of Draft Legislative Bill – “Karnataka Responsible Social Media & Digital Safety Bill, 2026”

I respectfully submit for your kind consideration a Draft Legislative Bill titled “Karnataka Responsible Social Media & Digital Safety Bill, 2026”, along with a brief note summarizing its key objectives and core pillars.

In recent years, social media platforms have evolved beyond communication tools into powerful instruments influencing public opinion and social behaviour. The increasing prevalence of misinformation, AI-generated deepfake content, and provocative narratives has raised serious concerns regarding public order, youth safety, and democratic discourse.

This proposed legislation aims to establish a balanced regulatory framework that ensures digital responsibility while safeguarding freedom of expression.

Brief Note – Summary of Key Objectives

The Bill seeks to:

- Ensure safe and responsible use of social media platforms
- Prevent the spread of misinformation and AI-generated deepfake content
- Protect youth and vulnerable communities from digital harm
- Promote digital literacy and critical thinking
- Establish accountability and transparency of digital platforms

Core Pillars of the Proposed Bill

1. Digital Responsibility & Platform Accountability

- Mandatory grievance redressal systems
- Time-bound removal of harmful content
- Transparency and compliance mechanisms

2. Misinformation & Deepfake Regulation

Identification and labelling of AI-generated content

Strict action against harmful and misleading information

Prevention of content that incites unrest or defamation

3. Citizen Protection Framework

Right to report harmful content

Protection against online harassment and misinformation

Time-bound grievance resolution system

4. Digital Literacy & Awareness Mission

Statewide "Digital Awareness & Media Literacy Programme"

Integration into school and college curriculum

Public campaigns promoting "Verify before you trust"

5. Technology-Driven Governance

AI-based detection of fake news and deepfakes

Real-time monitoring systems

Collaboration with technology partners

Conclusion

This Bill represents a forward-looking governance initiative addressing the emerging challenges of the digital era. It balances innovation with regulation, ensuring that Karnataka becomes a leader in digital safety, responsible media usage, and citizen protection.

I humbly request your kind consideration and guidance to take this proposal forward for appropriate examination and legislative action.

With high regards,

Yours faithfully,



(S. Mohanadass Hegde)

Member

Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE BILL Karnataka Responsible Social Media & Digital Safety Bill, 2026

1. Preamble

Whereas the rapid growth of digital platforms such as Instagram and YouTube has transformed communication, information sharing, and public discourse;

And whereas such platforms are increasingly being used to spread misinformation, AI-generated fake content, provocative narratives, and emotionally charged campaigns leading to social unrest and public harm;

And whereas a significant proportion of citizens, particularly youth, rely on social media as a primary source of information, making them vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation;

And whereas there is an urgent need to ensure digital responsibility, platform accountability, and citizen protection;

Therefore, the State of Karnataka enacts the following legislation:

2. Short Title and Commencement

This Act shall be called the “Karnataka Responsible Social Media & Digital Safety Act, 2026”

It shall extend to the whole of Karnataka

It shall come into force on such date as notified by the State Government

3. Definitions

“Social Media Platform”:

Any digital platform enabling user-generated content sharing (e.g., Instagram, YouTube) “Misinformation”:

False or misleading content intended or likely to misinform “Deepfake/AI Content”:

Digitally altered or AI-generated media impersonating real individuals “Harmful Content”:

Content inciting violence, hatred, panic, or defamation “User”:

Any individual accessing social media platforms

4. Objectives of the Act

Ensure safe and responsible use of social media
Prevent spread of misinformation and deepfake content
Protect youth and vulnerable communities
Promote digital literacy and fact-checking culture
Establish accountability of digital platforms

5. Regulatory Authority

Establishment of:

Karnataka Digital Safety & Social Media Regulatory Authority (KDSSMRA)

Functions:

Monitor harmful content trends
Issue advisories and alerts
Coordinate with platforms and law enforcement
Promote digital awareness campaigns

6. Obligations of Social Media Platforms

Platforms operating in Karnataka shall:

Establish state-level grievance redressal mechanisms
Remove flagged harmful content within a defined time (e.g., 24–48 hours)

Clearly label:

AI-generated content
Manipulated media
Share periodic transparency reports with the State Authority
Enable fact-checking integration mechanisms

7. Content Regulation Measures

Mandatory tagging of deepfake and AI-generated content

Immediate removal of:

Content inciting violence

Defamation of individuals

Fake news causing public disorder

Temporary blocking powers in extreme situations (as per law)

8. Citizen Protection & Rights

Right to report harmful or misleading content

Right to grievance redressal within a fixed timeframe

Protection from online harassment and defamation

Awareness support through government campaigns

9. Social Media Literacy

Mission Launch:

“Digital Awareness & Media Literacy Programme”

Components:

School & college curriculum integration

Public awareness campaigns

Training for:

Youth Teachers Government officials

Focus:

“Verify before you trust”

10. Special Provisions for Youth Protection

Restrictions on harmful viral trends targeting minors

Collaboration with educational institutions

Mental health awareness linked to digital exposure

11. Use of Technology

AI-based detection systems for:

Fake news

Deepfakes

Viral misinformation

Real-time monitoring dashboards

Collaboration with tech partners

12. Penalties & Enforcement

Penalties for platforms failing compliance

Legal action for:

Creation and circulation of harmful deepfake content

Intentional spread of misinformation causing harm

Escalation to national laws under Government of India frameworks

13. Coordination with Central Government

Alignment with IT Rules and Digital India initiatives

Data sharing and regulatory coordination

Joint task force for national-level issues

14. Implementation Framework

Phase 1 (Year 1)

Authority setup

Awareness campaigns

Phase 2 (Year 2–3)

Platform integration

AI monitoring rollout

Phase 3 (Year 4–5)

Full enforcement

Evaluation and strengthening

15. Expected Outcomes

Digital Governance:

Reduction in misinformation and fake content

Increased platform accountability

Social Impact:

Reduced social unrest

Improved informed decision-making

Youth Protection:

Safer digital environment

Increased awareness and critical thinking

16. Conclusion

This Bill establishes a balanced regulatory framework that:

Protects freedom of expression

Ensures accountability

Promotes responsible digital citizenship

It positions Karnataka as a leader in digital governance and citizen protection in the era of AI and social media.

Optional Tagline

“Safe Digital Karnataka –

Annex 1

THE KARNATAKA RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL SAFETY BILL, 2026

A BILL to provide for the regulation of social media platforms, prevention of misinformation, protection of citizens from harmful digital content including AI-generated media, and to promote digital literacy and accountability in the State of Karnataka. BE it enacted by the Karnataka State Legislature in the Seventy-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:

CHAPTER I – PRELIMINARY

1. Short Title, Extent and Commencement

This Act may be called the Karnataka Responsible Social Media and Digital Safety Act, 2026.

It extends to the whole of the State of Karnataka.

It shall come into force on such date as the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a) “Authority” means the Karnataka Digital Safety and Social Media Regulatory Authority constituted under Section 4;
- b) “Social Media Platform” means any intermediary which primarily or solely enables online interaction, content creation, sharing, or dissemination of information by users;
- c) “User” means any person who accesses or uses a social media platform;
- d) “Misinformation” means any false, inaccurate, or misleading information which is likely to cause public harm;
- e) “Deepfake” means any synthetic or manipulated media generated using artificial intelligence to falsely represent a person or event;
- f) “Harmful Content” means content which: incites violence, hatred, or public disorder; defames or impersonates any individual; misleads the public in a manner prejudicial to public safety;
- g) “Prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

CHAPTER II – ESTABLISHMENT OF AUTHORITY

3. Establishment of Authority

The State Government shall, by notification, establish an Authority to be known as the Karnataka Digital Safety and Social Media Regulatory Authority (KDSSMRA).

4. Composition of Authority

The Authority shall consist of:

A Chairperson (not below the rank of Additional Chief Secretary)

Members from:

Information Technology

Home Department

Legal Affairs

Education

Public Health

Cybersecurity Experts

The terms and conditions of service shall be prescribed.

5. Functions of Authority

The Authority shall:

- a) Monitor digital platforms for harmful content trends;
- b) Issue advisories and directions to platforms;
- c) Coordinate with law enforcement agencies;
- d) Promote digital literacy programmes;
- e) Maintain a State-level reporting and grievance system;
- f) Submit annual reports to the State Government.

CHAPTER III – REGULATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

6. Registration and Compliance

Every social media platform operating in the State shall comply with provisions of this Act.

Platforms may be required to appoint a State Nodal Officer.

7. Due Diligence Obligations

Every platform shall:

- a) Establish a grievance redressal mechanism;
- b) Remove or disable access to harmful content within 24 to 48 hours of notification;
- c) Publish transparency reports periodically;
- d) Enable traceability of origin of unlawful content, subject to applicable laws.

8. Labelling of AI-Generated Content

Platforms shall ensure clear labelling of:

AI-generated content Manipulated or synthetic media

Failure to label shall attract penalties under this Act.

CHAPTER IV – CONTENT REGULATION AND SAFEGUARDS

9. Prohibition of Harmful Content

No person shall create, publish, or share harmful content as defined under this Act.

10. Deepfake Regulation

Creation or dissemination of deepfake content intended to defame or mislead shall be prohibited.

Platforms shall remove such content immediately upon detection or reporting.

11. Emergency Powers

The State Government may, in the interest of public order:

Direct temporary blocking of specific content or accounts

Issue urgent compliance orders to platforms

Subject to safeguards under applicable laws.

CHAPTER V – RIGHTS OF CITIZENS

12. Right to Protection

Every citizen shall have the right to protection from:

Misinformation

Online harassment

Defamation through digital platforms

13. Grievance Redressal

Users may file complaints regarding harmful content.

Platforms shall resolve complaints within prescribed timelines.

Appeals may be made to the Authority.

CHAPTER VI – DIGITAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS

14. Digital Literacy Mission

The State Government shall implement a Digital Awareness Programme:

In schools and colleges

Through public campaigns In collaboration with civil society

15. Curriculum Integration

Digital literacy and critical media verification shall be integrated into educational curricula.

CHAPTER VII – OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

16. Penalties for Non-Compliance

Platforms failing to comply may be liable for:

Monetary penalties

Temporary suspension of services (as per law)

17. Offences by Individuals

Any person who:

Creates or spreads harmful misinformation

Circulates deepfake content with malicious intent shall be punishable with:

Fine Imprisonment (as prescribed under rules and applicable laws)

CHAPTER VIII – COORDINATION WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

18. Harmonization with Central Laws

This Act shall operate in harmony with laws of the Government of India, including:

Information Technology Act, 2000 IT Rules, 2021

19. Data Sharing and Cooperation

The State may coordinate with Central agencies for enforcement and intelligence sharing.

CHAPTER IX – MISCELLANEOUS

20. Power to Make Rules

The State Government may, by notification, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.

21. Protection of Action

Taken in Good Faith

No suit or legal proceeding shall lie against the Government or Authority for actions taken in good faith under this Act.

22. Power to Remove Difficulties

If any difficulty arises, the State Government may issue orders to remove such difficulties.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The exponential growth of social media has led to widespread dissemination of misinformation, deepfake content, and harmful narratives affecting public order and citizen safety. There is an urgent need to regulate such platforms while ensuring responsible use and protecting fundamental rights. This Bill seeks to establish a regulatory framework for digital safety, promote accountability, and enhance digital literacy across Karnataka.

SCHEDULE (OPTIONAL)

Reporting timelines

Platform compliance checklist

Awareness programme structure

“The proposed legislation may be anchored under the Department of Electronics, Information Technology & Biotechnology (IT, BT), Government of Karnataka, with coordinated implementation support from the Home, Education, Law, and Information Departments.”