Access to Offshore Betting Websites after the Online Gaming Ban

A Survey-Based Analysis (Delhi NCR)

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Prepared by

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Executive Summary

The initial evidence from Delhi NCR suggests that the ban on real-money gaming (RMG) may not have reduced participation, but instead may have redirected user behaviour toward offshore platforms. Usage of offshore sites reportedly increased from 68.3% pre-ban to 82.0% post-ban, reflecting a net behavioural shift of 13.7 percentage-points. Statistical tests indicate that this movement is likely not random, pointing toward a directional migration away from regulated domestic platforms.

Spending patterns also appear to have shifted. Prior to the ban, offshore spending was mostly concentrated in low-value ranges. Post-ban figures show a sharp rise in higher spending brackets — including monthly outlays beyond ₹10,000–₹25,000+, which were nearly absent earlier — suggesting a possible escalation in the financial intensity of offshore gaming.

User engagement indicators reinforce this pattern. Offshore gaming reportedly shifted from occasional to frequent and repetitive use, with daily users rising from 3.4% to 42.3%. Sessions have become longer as well, with 44% of users now playing beyond two hours per session, compared to just 3.4% before the ban. Increased usage frequency aligns with perceptions that transaction processes remain frictionless — over 93% rated deposits and withdrawals as "easy" or "very easy."

Platform preference rankings show some churn but overall stability, with crash-type games continuing to dominate the offshore market. Meanwhile, the pathways for accessing offshore sites appear to have become more deliberate: encrypted messaging groups such as Telegram and WhatsApp now serve as the primary gateway, reflecting shifts in user strategies to navigate regulatory barriers.

Additionally, respondents mainly cite continued ease of access, absence of legal alternatives, peer influence, and more attractive rewards as key reasons for ongoing offshore engagement. This suggests that current enforcement measures may not yet be effectively restricting access or reducing demand.

Therefore, the emerging evidence from Delhi NCR indicates that the prohibition may have influenced not only where users play, but how intensely they engage, potentially exposing them to higher consumer-protection risks in an unregulated gaming environment.

1. **Assessment Context and Technical Approach:**

1.1 Regulatory and Behavioural Context:

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 (PROG Act)[1]—passed on 22 August 2025 and enforced from 1 October 2025—imposes a nationwide ban on online real-money gaming (RMG) in India. The regulation aims to curb gambling-related financial losses, addiction, fraud, and wider wellbeing concerns[2]. However, as seen across multiple sectors where prohibitions have historically had limited success—such as liquor restrictions leading to illicit alcohol markets[3]—early signs indicate a similar behavioural shift in the RMG ecosystem. Users appear to be moving away from domestic platforms due to the ban and gravitating toward offshore betting and gambling sites that operate outside Indian jurisdiction[4]. Such a shift raises significant regulatory and consumer-protection challenges, including continued financial exposure, lack of grievance redress, unregulated payment pathways, and increased vulnerability to fraud[5].

To assess these emerging trends, CUTS initiated a state-wise survey beginning with Delhi NCR, given its high digital penetration and large base of pre-ban RMG users. This report presents an initial snapshot of post-ban behavioural patterns in Delhi NCR and will serve as the foundation for comparison with upcoming assessments in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

1.2 Sampling Strategy:

The Delhi NCR survey engaged 1,000 adult respondents (18+) drawn from individuals who had participated in online money-based gaming prior to the PROG Act and who may have continued such activity on offshore or unregulated platforms following the ban. To reach this niche cohort, we employed a non-probability sampling strategy, combining purposive sampling, snowball referrals, and a pre-

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[1] https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/10/18bae7782749f36ebb062fdb0b2607ea.pdf

[2] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?id=155075&NoteId=155075&ModuleId=3#:~:text=Prohibition%20of%20Harmful%20Online%20Money,the%20Information%20Technology%20Act%2C%202000.

[3] Luca, D.L., Owens, E. & Sharma, G. The effectiveness and effects of alcohol regulation: evidence from India. *IZA J Develop Migration* 9, 4 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40176-018-0139-1

[4] https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-s-online-gaming-ban-may-fuel-offshore-betting-money-laundering-125082200197_1.html

[5] https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/blog/the-dangerous-reality-of-offshore-gambling-the-hidden-risks-for-indian-gamers/113692017#:~:text=The%20link%20between%20gambling%20addiction,for%20up%20to%20three%20months.

existing verified respondent database developed through earlier research on online gamers.

Respondents were eligible if they had played online money-based games at least once before 1 September 2025. While the Act formally came into force on 1 October 2025, pilot testing with 100 respondents indicated that, from 1 September onwards, most major platforms had already disabled monetary transactions in anticipation of enforcement. Accordingly, 1 September was adopted as the operational cut-off to distinguish between pre-ban transactional behaviour and the post-restriction environment.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

The findings presented in this report are based on self-reported responses, which may be subject to recall inaccuracies or respondent bias — particularly in areas involving financial transactions or compliance-sensitive behaviour such as offshore betting. The sample is currently limited to users in Delhi NCR, and therefore insights may not be fully generalisable to other regions of India. Additionally, offshore usage patterns could not be independently verified, as these platforms operate outside domestic regulatory oversight and do not provide official data. Future phases of this study covering additional states may help validate and refine the trends observed here.

1.4 Respondent Profile: Delhi NCR Sample

This subsection summarises the key demographic characteristics of the Delhi NCR sample to contextualise the key findings presented in later sections.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	934	93.4
Female	66	6.6
Prefer not to say	0	0
TOTAL	1000	100

Table 2: Age

Age group	Frequency	%
18–24	100	10
25–34	563	56.3
35–44	182	18.2
45–54	103	10.3
55+	52	5.2
TOTAL	**1000**	**100**

Table 3: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	%
Student	79	7.9
Salaried	739	73.9
Self-employed	140	14
Homemaker	13	1.3
Unemployed/Other	29	2.9
TOTAL	**1000**	**100**

Table 4: Income

Household Income (monthly)	Frequency	Percentage
< ₹50,000	35	3.5
₹50,000–99,999	212	21.2
₹1,00,000–1,99,999	588	58.8
₹2,00,000+	149	14.9
Prefer not to say	16	1.6
TOTAL	**1000**	**100**

This targeted approach enabled the construction of a robust, policy-relevant dataset for Delhi NCR, suitable for analysing post-ban gaming patterns and, critically, for assessing the extent to which users appear to be shifting to offshore platforms despite the prohibition.

2. Key Findings from Delhi NCR:

2.1 The Shift to the Offshore Platforms:

The pre–post comparison reveals a substantial and statistically reliable behavioural shift in offshore platform usage following the implementation of the PROG Act. As shown in table 5 offshore usage increased from 68.3% pre-ban to 82.0% post-ban, representing a 13.7 percentage-point rise.

Table 5: Net Behavioural Shift

Total pre ban usage	683	68.3
Total post ban usage	820	82
Absolute percentage-point increase		13.7
Net behavioural shift (New shifters - Quitters)		**13.7**

When viewed relative to the pre-ban level, this translates into a 20.1% increase in offshore usage (table 6) —indicating that offshore participation is now one-fifth higher than before the regulatory intervention.

Table 6: Relative Increase (Based on pre-ban level)

	Frequency	Percentage
Total pre ban usage	683	68.3
Total post ban usage	820	82
Relative increase		**20.1**

A deeper behavioural breakdown (table7) shows that 24.7% of players who had not used offshore platforms prior to the ban shifted to offshore platforms afterward, while only 11.0% of previous offshore users stopped using them. This results in a net behavioural shift of 13.7% of the total sample toward offshore platforms. The direction of movement is therefore decisively toward increased offshore participation.

Table 7: Pre-Ban vs Post-Ban Offshore Usage Transition Matrix

n=1000

	Frequency	Percentage
Players who previously used offshore platforms but discontinued after the ban	110	11
Players who used offshore platforms before the ban and continued to do so after the ban	573	57.3
Players who did not use offshore platforms before the ban but began using them after the ban	247	24.7
Players who did not use offshore platforms before the ban and continued not to use them after the ban	70	7

The McNemar test (table 8) confirms that this shift is statistically significant. The number of players who moved from non-usage to usage (247) is substantially greater than those who moved in the opposite direction (110). This asymmetry produces a chi-square value of $\chi^2 \approx 51.8$ ($p < 0.0001$), demonstrating that the change is not attributable to random variation. In other words, the increase is both real and unidirectional, indicating that the ban has triggered a meaningful displacement of players from regulated domestic platforms to unregulated offshore counterparts.

Table 8: McNemar Test

2×2 paired table (n = 1000):			
	Post: Yes	**Post: No**	**Total**
Pre: Yes	573 (a)	110 (c)	683
Pre: No	247 (b)	70 (d)	317
Total	820	180	**1000**
Note: For McNemar, only b and c matter:			
b = 247 (No → Yes) → new shifters			
c = 110 (Yes → No) → quitters			
Calculation:			
Option A: Without continuity correction			
52.57422969			
Option B: With continuity correction (recommended for reporting)			
51.80952381			
Both values are very large, and McNemar uses degree of freedom (df) = 1.			
A chi-square of ~52 with 1 degree of freedom gives:			**p<0.0001**

These evidence indicates that the ban may have contributed to a shift in gaming activity toward offshore platforms, which could, in turn, pose greater consumer-protection and regulatory-oversight challenges.

2.2 Money Spent on Offshore Before and After Ban:

Patterns in the spending distribution indicate that, instead of clearly reducing gambling expenditure, the ban appears to have shifted where this spending occurs. Before the ban, offshore platform spending among users (n = 683) was concentrated in the lower ranges (table 9): 42.5% reported spending ₹0–999 per month and 49.9% spent ₹1,000–4,999, with only 7.6% in the ₹5,000–9,999 bracket and no respondents reporting monthly offshore spends above ₹10,000. This suggests that, prior to the ban, offshore platforms were largely used for relatively low-value or occasional play. However after the ban, the pattern on offshore platforms changes dramatically (table 10). Among post-ban offshore users (n = 820), only 12.7% remain in the lowest spend band (₹0–999), while 47.4% fall in the ₹1,000–4,999 range. Most strikingly, the proportion spending at higher levels increases sharply: 26.2% now

report spending ₹5,000–9,999, 7.2% spend ₹10,000–24,999 and 6.3% spend ₹25,000 or more per month—categories that were virtually absent in the pre-ban offshore spending profile. This upward shift in spend brackets indicates that not only have more players moved to offshore platforms, but their intensity of financial engagement has also increased.

Table 9: Typical Monthly Spend on Offshore Platforms before 1st September 2025

	Frequency	%
₹0–999	290	42.5
₹1,000–4,999	341	49.9
₹5,000–9,999	52	7.6
₹10,000–24,999	0	0.0
₹25,000+	0	0.0
Prefer not to say	0	0.0

Table 10: Typical Monthly Spend on Offshore Platforms after 1st September 2025

	Frequency	%
₹0–999	104	12.7
₹1,000–4,999	389	47.4
₹5,000–9,999	215	26.2
₹10,000–24,999	59	7.2
₹25,000+	52	6.3
Prefer not to say	1	0.1

2.3 Time Spent on Offshore Before and After Ban

2.3.1 Frequency of offshore platform usage before and after the ban

The frequency-of-play table (table 11) shows that, after the ban, offshore platforms moved from occasional use to becoming a regular part of players' routines. Before the ban, offshore users were largely casual: most played only 1–2 days per week and less than one-fifth played less than once a week, while daily users were almost negligible. In the post-ban period, this pattern reverses. Daily play on offshore platforms jumps to more than two-fifths of users, and the share playing less than once a week shrinks to a small minority. This shift is consistent with the earlier finding that 24.7% of players newly adopted offshore platforms after the ban and

that there was a net behavioural shift of 13.7% of the sample toward offshore usage. Therefore, the ban may have contributed to both increased migration to offshore platforms and a possible shift toward more frequent, routine usage patterns.

Table 11: The frequency-of-play

Offshore Platform_Pre Ban			Offshore Platform_Post Ban		
	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Less than once a week	129	18.9	Less than once a week	30	3.7
1–2 days per week	362	53.0	1–2 days per week	231	28.2
3–5 days per week	169	24.7	3–5 days per week	211	25.7
Daily	23	3.4	Daily	347	42.3
Prefer not to say	0	0.0	Prefer not to say	1	0.1

2.3.2 Average Duration of a Gaming Session

The table on average time spent per session (table 12) highlights a clear deepening of engagement with offshore platforms after the ban. In the pre-ban period, offshore usage was dominated by short sessions: almost half of users played for 15–30 minutes, and only a very small proportion reported sessions longer than two hours. Post-ban, this profile changes dramatically. Long-duration play becomes common, with a large share of users now spending more than two hours per session, while brief sessions of under 15 minutes become rare. This pattern dovetails with our spending analysis, which showed a sharp rise in higher monthly spend brackets (₹5,000–₹25,000+) on offshore platforms in the post-ban scenario. Longer sessions, combined with higher spending, suggest that players who shifted to offshore sites are not merely experimenting but are maybe engaging in more intense and potentially more risky gaming behaviour outside the regulated RMG ecosystem.

Table 12: Average time spent per session

Offshore Platform_Pre Ban			Offshore Platform_Post Ban		
	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Less than 15 minutes	139	20.4	Less than 15 minutes	30	3.7
15–30 minutes	308	45.1	15–30 minutes	220	26.8
30–60 minutes	169	24.7	30–60 minutes	115	14.0
1–2 hours	44	6.4	1–2 hours	93	11.3
More than 2 hours	23	3.4	More than 2 hours	361	44.0
Prefer not to say	0	0.0	Prefer not to say	1	0.1

2.3.3 Gaming Session Per Day

The table on the number of sessions per day (table 13) further underscores the intensification of play in the offshore environment after the ban. Previously, offshore users tended to play a single session per day, with relatively few engaging in multiple daily sessions and very few exceeding five sessions. After the ban, this pattern is almost completely inverted. Only a small fraction now plays one session per day, while a substantial proportion report playing four to five sessions daily, and an even larger share play more than five sessions per day.

Table 13: Number of Sessions Per Day

Offshore Platform_Pre Ban	Frequency	%	Offshore Platform_Post Ban	Frequency	%
1 session per day	350	51.2	1 session per day	30	3.7
2–3 sessions per day	266	38.9	2–3 sessions per day	296	36.1
4–5 sessions per day	44	6.4	4–5 sessions per day	179	21.8
More than 5 sessions per day	23	3.4	More than 5 sessions per day	314	38.3
Prefer not to say	0	0.0	Prefer not to say	1	0.1

This rise in repetitive, high-frequency play aligns with the findings that offshore platforms are perceived as very easy to use for deposits and withdrawals (table 14)—93.7% rated the process as easy or very easy—making it simple for players to re-enter games multiple times a day.

Table 14: Ease-of-Use Assessment for Deposits and Withdrawals

	Frequency	%
Very easy	517	56.3
Easy	344	37.4
Neutral / Neither Easy nor Difficult	55	6.0
Difficult	3	0.3
Very Difficult	0	0.0

Taken together with the migration and spending results, this table suggests that the ban may have fostered not only a shift toward offshore platforms but also a marked escalation in the intensity and repetition of gaming within an unregulated space.

2.4 Access Routes of Offshore Before and After Ban:

Across the responses, a small cluster of offshore platforms appears to dominate user awareness and usage. Aviator Game (Crash Game) emerges as the most prominent name, while Stake, Reddybook.club, RajaBets, Parimatch and 1xBET/1xBAT also feature repeatedly as popular choices among players. Together, these brands seem to account for a large share of the offshore gaming traffic reported in the survey.

The access-path analysis complements this picture by showing how users actually reach these platforms. Before the ban, the top three entry channels were friend referrals (Rank 1), messaging groups such as Telegram/WhatsApp (Rank 2) and social media ads/posts (Rank 3), indicating that peer recommendations and visible online marketing were central to onboarding. After the ban, messaging groups become the dominant gateway (Rank 1) with a sharp rise in use, while direct website or app access climbs to Rank 2, suggesting that users are now actively seeking out offshore platforms rather than discovering them incidentally. Friend referrals remain important at Rank 3, but social media ads and influencer links drop in prominence, likely reflecting stricter enforcement and content moderation. Mirror or alternate links and pre-saved QR codes see some increase but stay relatively minor. Together, these trends point to a shift toward more deliberate, community-driven and encrypted discovery routes, consistent with users consciously working around regulatory restrictions in the post-ban environment.

3. Key payment methods for offshore

Across all payment options available on offshore platforms, UPI to merchant emerges as the most widely used method, closely followed by Direct Bank Transfer / Bank App (IMPS/NEFT/RTGS/Net Banking). This shows that players continue to rely heavily on familiar and convenient domestic banking channels even when engaging with unregulated offshore platforms. Wallet payments and prepaid vouchers/gift cards remain available but are comparatively less preferred, indicating that ease and speed of financial transactions are critical facilitators of offshore gaming activity.

4. Reasons for Continued Use of Offshore Platforms After the Ban

The findings clearly show that accessibility remains the leading driver behind continued usage of offshore platforms post-ban. A very large proportion of respondents indicated that offshore platforms are still easy to access, underscoring

that enforcement measures have not meaningfully restricted availability. The lack of regulated domestic alternatives emerged as the second most influential factor, indicating that the ban may have inadvertently contributed to a shift toward offshore platforms.

Social influence also plays a notable role, with many respondents stating that friends and peers continue using offshore platforms, demonstrating how network effects sustain user engagement and migration. Additionally, better rewards, bonuses and promotional offers make offshore platforms financially more attractive than domestic options. Preference for game features, user experience, and interface quality further reinforces competitive strengths of offshore operators. Only a small proportion of users reported continuing use due to difficulty switching.

Taken together, these insights reveal that continued offshore usage is driven by a combination of persistent ease of access, lack of regulated alternatives, and superior value propositions on offshore platforms. This aligns with previous results showing increased play frequency, longer sessions, higher spending, and frictionless payments — highlighting that the ban may have displaced gaming activity rather than curtailing it, while potentially shifting users toward incentives and behaviours associated with higher risk exposure in an unregulated environment.

5. Conclusion

The findings from Delhi NCR provide an early indication of how user behavior may be evolving under the PROG Act. Instead of decreasing real-money gaming activity, the ban appears to have influenced a shift in participation from regulated domestic platforms toward offshore operators that function outside India's legal and consumer-protection framework. Offshore users also seem to be engaging more frequently and spending at higher levels, supported by continued ease of access, peer networks, and attractive rewards.

While these insights are preliminary and limited to one geography, they highlight the need for a more comprehensive policy approach that ensures safe user alternatives, effective enforcement measures, and sustained consumer awareness. As upcoming state-wise assessments are completed, a clearer nationwide picture will emerge—potentially informing balanced regulation that protects users while ensuring a secure and accountable gaming ecosystem.