

India ministers quit after caught watching porn in parliament

Reuters

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NEW DELHI, Feb 8 — Three Indian politicians from a morally conservative party, including a women's affairs minister, resigned today after being caught watching pornography on a mobile phone during a session of state parliament.

News channels broadcast footage showing Karnataka state Minister for Cooperation Laxman Savadi sharing a porn clip with his colleague C.C. Patil, the minister for women and child development, while sitting in the state assembly.

The owner of the phone, state Minister for Ports, Science and Technology Krishna Palemar, also quit.

"We are requesting the honourable Speaker of the House to conduct an inquiry and we'll come out with a clean chit," Patil said, denying that they were deliberately looking at porn.

The three men said they did not want to cause any embarrassment for their party, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which rules the state and is in opposition at a national level.

There has been outrage over the incident not just from rights activists and right-wing Hindu groups in conservative India, but also from the ruling Congress party which called for the assembly to be dissolved.

"We live in a country where there already is this social mindset that women are disposable commodities and are seen as transferable properties," Renuka Chowdhary, a former federal minister for women's development and a member of the Congress Party.

"It really is troubling that the people who are in positions of power and have the responsibility to change things actually have the same mindset and are busy watching porn," she told the CNN-IBN news channel.

Girls and women in largely patriarchal India face a barrage of threats including rape, dowry-related murder, forced marriage, domestic violence, honour killings and human trafficking. — Reuters

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