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Online Child Sexual Abuse and Preventive Strategies

L NATANIO SELLADURAI¹

ABSTRACT

This paper speaks about Child sexual abuse exploits and degrades children and can cause serious damage to cognitive, social, and emotional development of a child. As a society, we have a collective responsibility to prevent child sexual abuse. To accomplish this, we must initiate and support services and policies that enhance children's development, health, and safety and we must advocate for policies and programs to help meet the basic needs of children and families. We must also promote research, training, and public education to strengthen protective factors that buffer risk factors for sexual abuse while also directly addressing those risk factors. All adults and adolescents need to know that child sexual abuse is a crime that often causes severe damage to children, that help is available for those who seek it, and that children can never consent to sexual activity. Further, a comprehensive prevention strategy should include increasing parents' and other caregivers' awareness and knowledge of protective measures they can take on behalf of their children. A powerful public education message must be transmitted to the general public, encouraging society to recognize that child sexual abuse is both everyone's problem and responsibility. The goal of such public education efforts is to eliminate any tolerance for sexual abuse or confusion over what society condones as appropriate interactions between adults and children. Current child abuse prevention programs are focused primarily on educating preschool and elementary school children on how to recognize instances of abuse and teaching them personal safety skills.

Keywords: *Cybercrime, Child sexual abuse, Victims, Adult responsibility, Criminal justice services.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Online sexual exploitation most commonly includes grooming, live streaming, consuming child sexual abuse material, and coercing and blackmailing children for sexual purposes. As technology advances, new forms of this crime emerge. Never before has it been easier for perpetrators (Martellozzo 2013; Jonsson et al. 2019) to make contact with children, share images of abuse, hide their identity and profits – and inspire each other to commit further crimes.

¹ Author is a student at Saveetha School of Law, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Science (SIMATS), Chennai- 600077, India.

Accessing, possessing, producing and/or distributing images and/or videos of child sexual abuse. This crime is often referred to as “child pornography”. There are billions of examples of this kind of material on the Internet today. According to Microsoft, out of 1.8 billion images uploaded every day, about 270,000 were of child sexual abuse. Developing a relationship with a child to enable their sexual abuse and/or exploitation, either online or offline. The proliferation of social media, messaging and live streaming apps in recent years have seen a dramatic increase in reports of this crime. Using online video applications to view, and sometimes interact with the sexual abuse of children’s live. As live streaming services and video-based social media (Martellozzo 2013) apps (some of which allow anonymous communication) proliferate, so too do examples of this crime. Some countries, such as the Philippines have become hubs for this kind of abuse in recent years, where producing and/or utilizing sexual images and/or videos depicting a child, for the purposes of sexual, financial, or other personal gains. (Martellozzo 2019) Offenders can be adults or peers of the victims – and sometimes the child sexual abuse material is self-produced through manipulation of the victim. poverty is causing some parents to abuse their own children for profit. ECPAT works with INTERPOL, EUROPOL, and the police forces of multiple countries to better understand and confront the problem of online child sexual exploitation. In 2018, this resulted in groundbreaking research based on an INTERPOL database of sexual abuse images. with members, governments, religious leaders, the technology industry, and United Nations agencies, to tackle this crime more effectively.(Hayward and Cheit 2017) For example, in recent years, ECPAT has worked closely with Facebook and other social media providers to help develop systems for detecting and reporting child sexual abuse material, we work with the UK government-supported WeProtect campaign to help countries bolster laws and implement detection systems, and we work (Hayward and Cheit 2017; Wortley 2018)with religious leaders, including the Vatican to raise awareness and help them better understand the problem. advocate for better domestic legislation to ensure that countries have laws that are in line with internationally agreed conventions. In recent years, ECPAT’s country reports, as well as reports to the UN Human Rights Committee and the CRC Committee have been instrumental in helping governments identify gaps in the body of law so they can make appropriate changes. Compare legislation in different countries with the ECPAT(Hayward and Cheit 2017; Wortley 2018; Paranal, Thomas, and Derrick 2012) global database. Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, through social media, online gaming, or mobile phones. Children and young people may be the victims of online grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or emotional abuse. They also may be exposed to sexting, (Hayward and Cheit 2017; Wortley 2018; Paranal, Thomas, and Derrick 2012; van Gijn-Grosvenor and Lamb 2016) online

misrepresentation and cyberbullying. Online misrepresentation, popularly known as ‘catfishing’, is when someone pretends to be someone else to befriend people online. Often, people use pictures of people that are younger than themselves or of the opposite sex on social media accounts and chat rooms. These relationships can become romantic and sometimes lead to emotional or sexual abuse. Bullying that occurs on social media, online gaming or via mobile phones is called cyberbullying. It can be more harmful than other forms of bullying as it can occur day or night. It is sometimes harder to trace the bully online. Children and young people can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as strangers. They may or may not be experiencing abuse in the real world as well.

(A) Aim

To bring awareness to public to know about online child abuse.

The main problem of the research is that most of the children were sexually abused online because of parents are giving mobile phones below the age of 18 itself. This online and child abuse were been clearly discussed in child abuse prevention and treatment act. Relating to my topic there is a landmark case which is malayala Vedi vs state of Kerala. This research study have been compared with law in India and England. Law in India has been related to information technology act 2000 and the Indian penal code 1860. In England child abduction act 1984 has been plays a major role in online child abuse. ²So the outcome of the legal research is to know the concept of child abuse. The research paper has included the SPSS statistical which has a number of samples bases on gender variation and opinion variations it includes chi-square table and interpretation for each table. The table is done on the basis of the question asked to the public. The paper has been cited with citations with references. And the main websites have been included in MLA format.

(B) Objectives:-

1. To know the concept of child abuse
2. To analyze the concept of online child abuse
3. To bring informative things to public on online child abuse
4. To know the recent cases on online child abuse

(C) Literature review

Research in the United States and the United Kingdom has found that between 20 and 25 percent

² YourStory.com. 2022. *8 organisations that women can count on during tough times*. [online] Available at: <<https://yourstory.com/2016/04/women-helpline-india>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

of children who use the internet are exposed to sexual material³. The British study by Richardson (2001) found that one in five children aged under 17 years had visited pornographic web-sites. Finkelhor and colleagues study found that 25 percent of young people, aged 10-17 years, had come across undesired sexual material while searching online or using email. This finding was supported by a second US study, which reported that 25 percent of teenagers (Pilgrim 2018; Hallett 2017) using the internet had seen web-sites featuring sexual content.⁴ Apart from visiting pornographic sites, email offers an additional means for children to be exposed to sexually offensive or developmentally (Whittier 2011) inappropriate material. For example, a free e-mail service that is commonly used by children is saturated with commercial e-mails relating to sexual services, “adult” material and e-mails that appear to link to child pornography. (Whittier 2011; Halder 2018) Titles invite you to access “Teen Sex, Teen Pics, Teen Movies”, a “Free review of new hardcore porn site”, “Live sex see it now” and titles too offensive to reproduce here.⁵

In addition, e-mail addresses may be sold commercially to product marketers who send unsolicited e-mails, some of which may contain offensive material.⁶ Responses to unwanted e-mails, including requests to be taken off electronic mailing lists, frequently generates an increase in unwanted messages, as “spammers” (people who send electronic junk mail) are made aware that the address is active (Aftab 2000). Finally, children may be targeted for receipt of sexually offensive material through chat rooms (Feather 1999; Hellard 2001; Iannotta 2001; Wellard 2001). It would seem that children’s exposure to offensive sexual material via the use of real time communication services on the internet (i.e. e-mails and chat rooms) must raise the level of exposure considerably above the level of contact for web-sites, reported above. (Quayle and Cariola 2019)⁷

Online child sexual abuse and online child sexual exploitation involve the use of information and communication technology as a means to sexually abuse and/or sexually exploit children. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)

³ Unodc.org. 2022. *Cybercrime Module 12 Key Issues: Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/cybercrime/module-12/key-issues/online-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse.html>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

⁴ Europol. 2022. *Child Sexual Exploitation | Europol*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/child-sexual-exploitation>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

⁵ ECPAT. 2022. *Online Child Sexual Exploitation: A Common Understanding - ECPAT*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ecpat.org/what-we-do/online-child-sexual-exploitation/>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

⁶ Nytimes.com. 2022. *An Explosion in Online Child Sex Abuse: What You Need to Know (Published 2019)*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/29/us/takeaways-child-sex-abuse.html>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

⁷ Keller, M. and Dance, G., 2022. *The Internet Is Overrun With Images of Child Sexual Abuse. What Went Wrong? (Published 2019)*. [online] Nytimes.com. Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/28/us/child-sex-abuse.html>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

(1999)(Quayle and Cariola 2019; Easton 2019) defines child sexual abuse "as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (stranger, sibling or person in a position of authority such as a parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object for the older child's or adult's sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are (Romano et al. 2019)carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure."⁸ Child sexual exploitation involves child sexual abuse and/or other sexualized acts using children that involves an exchange of some kind (e.g., affection, food). Perpetrators of this crime commit abuse or attempt to abuse "a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes" for monetary or other benefit (e.g., sexual gratification).(Romano et al. 2019; Gómez 2019) Actually, it is often hard to distinguish between child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation because "there is considerable overlap between them" .⁹

International conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography of 2000, enumerate children's rights and clarify the obligation of states to protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Furthermore, regional conventions, (Romano et al. 2019; Gómez 2019; Julich 2005)such as the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Children a gainst Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of 2007 which entered into force on July 1, 2010, seek to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, protect victims, prosecute offenders, and promote national and international cooperation in the identification, investigation, prosecution, and prevention of these(Romano et al. 2019; Gómez 2019; Julich 2005; Krivacska 1993) crimesChild grooming"can be described as a practice by means of which an adult 'befriends' a child with the intention of sexually abusing her/him". Research and available data show that grooming is predominately perpetrated by males; to a lesser extent, women solicit children for sexual purposes and/or to groom them.¹⁰

In typical cases, the grooming process proceeds in stages, beginning with victim selection . Online, children participate in a variety of social media platforms and communication apps that perpetrators can utilize to gain access to children's accounts. ¹¹Perpetrators choose a victim

⁸ Ceop.police.uk. 2022. *What is online child sexual abuse*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/what-is-online-child-sexual-abuse/>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

⁹ In-mind.org. 2022. *Understanding Online Child Sexual Abuse and How to Talk to Children About it | In-Mind*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.in-mind.org/article/understanding-online-child-sexual-abuse-and-how-to-talk-to-children-about-it>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

¹⁰ YourStory.com. 2022. *8 organisations that women can count on during tough times*. [online] Available at: <<https://yourstory.com/2016/04/women-helpline-india>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

¹¹ Unodc.org. 2022. *Cybercrime Module 12 Key Issues: Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/cybercrime/module-12/key-issues/online-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse.html>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

based on the victim's "appeal/attractiveness" (determined by the perpetrators' desires), "ease of access" and/or (Negriff 2019)"vulnerabilities".¹²After victim selection, the perpetrator contacts the victim to gain access to him or her. The perpetrator then seeks to form a friendship with the victim. The perpetrator can glean information about the victim from online sources and use this information to deceive the victim by, for example, feigning common interests and hobbies and similar family and social situations, in order to relate to the victim, build rapport, and establish trust.¹³The perpetrator's objective is to further develop the friendship into a relationship. Before the sexual exploitation or abuse,(Negriff 2019; Wild et al. 2018) the offender assesses the risk of being detected, communicates the exclusivity of the relationship and the need for secrecy, and isolates the child. However, there may be exceptions to such approaches.¹⁴

Research has shown that online grooming does not happen through a linear process. It happens through a dynamic process driven by the motivation and capabilities of the offender and the offender's ability to manipulate and control the victim. The end goal of online grooming is to sexually exploit or abuse the victim (e.g., by manipulating or coercing the victim to take a sexually explicit image or video and send it to the perpetrator) or offline (e.g., by meeting with the victim in person to sexually abuse him or her).¹⁵

The "representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or representation (Quayle and Ribisl 2013)of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes" "as well as the use of a child to create such a representation" is known as child pornography. Given that what is being depicted in the material is the sexual abuse of a child and not sexual activities, the terms child sexual abuse material or child sexual exploitation material are preferred to remove any connotations that can surround the use of the term pornography. For material that depicts child sexual abuse, the term(Quayle and Ribisl 2013; Beckett and Pearce 2017) "child sexual abuse material" is used, which is a form of "child sexual exploitation material," and for "all other sexualised material depicting children" the term "child sexual exploitation material" is used. Regional laws relating to the sexual exploitation of children have separated child sexual abuse material from child sexual exploitation.¹⁶

The use of the term "child pornography" has been rejected by international organizations, law enforcement agencies, academics, and child protection professionals because it minimizes the

¹² Europol. 2022. *Child Sexual Exploitation* | Europol. [online] Available at: <<https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/child-sexual-exploitation>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

¹³ ECPAT. 2022. *Online Child Sexual Exploitation: A Common Understanding - ECPAT*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ecpat.org/what-we-do/online-child-sexual-exploitation/>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

¹⁴ Supra Note 6.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Supra Note 8.

serious form of violence against children it represents, it can place blame on the child rather than on the perpetrator of the offense, and it risks conveying that what is occurring is consensual. Despite this rejection, the term "child pornography" features prominently in less recent legal instruments from the past decade (e.g., the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography of 2000; the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime of 2000; and the Lanzarote Convention of 2007, to name a few; see Cybercrime Module 2 for further information).¹⁷

Child sexual exploitation and abuse material is distributed via email, text message, instant messaging, chat rooms, peer-to-peer file sharing networks, social media platforms, and unencrypted and encrypted communication apps.¹⁸ Child sexual exploitation and abuse material is also traded on password-protected sites, bulletin boards, and forums.¹⁹ A case in point was "Dreamboard". Individuals seeking to join Dreamboard were required to upload an image of child sexual abuse material depicting a minor younger than twelve years old with their application.²⁰

(D) Research Methodology :-

The present study is based on primary data collected by the researcher and the secondary data collected from books, journals, and online sources. The sample size of the research is 2038. The present study used a simple random sampling method for the selection of samples because the population is too high. This research survey has been taken in and around Chennai. The study used a percentage for meaningful analysis of the results of the study.

(E) Hypotheses :-

Ha: There is a significant association between age and Parents often give internet-enabled smart devices to their children at a younger age itself.

Ho: There is no significant association between age and Parents often give internet-enabled smart devices to their children at a younger age itself.

¹⁷ In-mind.org. 2022. *Understanding Online Child Sexual Abuse and How to Talk to Children About it | In-Mind*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.in-mind.org/article/understanding-online-child-sexual-abuse-and-how-to-talk-to-children-about-it>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

¹⁸ Europol. 2022. *Child Sexual Exploitation | Europol*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/child-sexual-exploitation>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

¹⁹ Supra Note 6.

²⁰ Keller, M. and Dance, G., 2022. *The Internet Is Overrun With Images of Child Sexual Abuse. What Went Wrong? (Published 2019)*. [online] Nytimes.com. Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/28/us/child-sex-abuse.html>> [Accessed 4 October 2022].

(F) Data analysis**Frequency Table****Table 1 :-****Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
13-18	435	21.3	21.3	21.3
19-25	420	20.6	20.6	42.0
26-35	660	32.4	32.4	74.3
36-45	367	18.0	18.0	92.3
Above 45	156	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	2038	100.0	100.0	

Source : Author's calculation from primary data.

Out of 2038 responses , 435 were between 13-18 which accounted to 21.3% , 4were between 31 - 50 which accounted to 90.7% , and 142 were above 50 which accounted to 100%.

Table:- 2**Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	877	43.0	43.0	43.0
Female	1161	57.0	57.0	100.0
Total	2038	100.0	100.0	

Source : Author's calculation from primary data.

Out of 2038 respondents , 877 were male which accounted to 43.0% and 1161 were female which accounted to nearly 57 % .

Table:- 3

Awareness about online child abuse

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Unaware	281	13.8	13.8	13.8
Slightly Aware	385	18.9	18.9	32.7
Somewhat Aware	672	33.0	33.0	65.7
Highly Aware	474	23.3	23.3	88.9
Aware	226	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	2038	100.0	100.0	

Source : Author’s calculation from primary data.

In the above cross tabulation , Out of 2038 respondents 435 of them are between 13 - 18 years , 420 of the are between 19-25 years and 660 of them are between 26-35 years , 367 of them are between 36-45 years and 156 of them are above 45 years.

Awareness of online child abuse

Crosstab

Count

	Are you 5 of online child abuse?					Total
	Unaware	Slightly	Somewhat	Highly	Aware	

			Aware		e		
What is your age?	13-18	67	52	138	112	66	435
	19-25	31	95	130	107	57	420
	26-35	56	90	282	174	58	660
	36-45	97	128	58	59	25	367
	Above 45	30	20	64	22	20	156
Total		281	385	672	474	226	2038

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	241.888 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	238.187	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	45.051	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	2038		

Table:- 4**parents give internet enabled smart device to children****Crosstab**

Count

	parents give internet enabled smart device to children					Total
	Unaware	Slightly Aware	Somewhat Aware	Highly Aware	Aware	
What is your age?						
13-18	67	52	138	112	66	435
19-25	31	95	130	107	57	420
26-35	56	90	282	174	58	660
36-45	97	128	58	59	25	367
Above 45	30	20	64	22	20	156
Total	281	385	672	474	226	2038

Source : Author's calculation from primary data.

In the above cross tabulation , Out of 2038 respondents 435 of them are between 13 - 18 years , 420 of the are between 19-25 years and 660 of them are between 26-35 years , 367 of them are between 36-45 years and 156 of them are above 45 years.

Table 6**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	241.888 ^a	16	.000

Likelihood Ratio	238.187	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	45.051	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	2038		

Using Chi-square analysis, it is tested whether the Intermediaries are liable for the content uploaded by the user . P value is less than 0.000 which shows that the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore there is an association between the Intermediaries like website owners , Internet service providers should be liable for the content uploaded by the user and gender.

II. DISCUSSION

Child sexual abuse is a hideous crime. For the vast majority of us, the idea of violating, hurting and abusing a child is intolerable. Nonetheless, these crimes are not as rare as we would like to think. Every day, countless children around the world are sexually abused and exploited, and images and videos of the abuse are circulated. Already in 2005, an estimated one million child sexual abuse images were online. 50.000 new child abuse images are added each year. More than 70% of reported images feature children below 10 years of age. And these images never disappear. Children that have been identified and rescued years ago still have to face the fact that their abuse remains freely available for anyone to view online, and are re-victimized over and over. We cannot afford to remain passive, and we cannot afford to act alone. This is no phenomenon that any country can tackle on its own. Modern technology allows criminals to move images, videos and contacts quickly between jurisdictions, exploiting legal loopholes and the anonymity the Internet provides. International cooperation is essential if we want to stand a chance of rescuing victims, putting a stop to continuing re-victimization and of finding and prosecuting offenders. abuse? Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation and emotional abuse. Child abuse can result from physical, verbal, or sexual harm. While child abuse is often considered to take the form of an action, there are also examples of inaction that cause harm, such as neglect. Households in which participants suffer from alcoholism, substance abuse, or anger issues demonstrate higher occurrences of child abuse as compared to households without. Outcomes of child abuse can result in both short and long

term injury, or even death. Some children may be unaware that they are victims of child abuse. Child abuse is widespread and can occur in any cultural, ethnic, or income group. Physical abuse involves non-accidental harming of a child by, for example, burning, beating, or breaking bones. Verbal abuse involves harming a child by, for example, belittling them or threatening physical or sexual acts. Emotional trauma can result from several forms of abuse.

III. CONCLUSION

Studies show that one in four girls and one in eight boys are sexually abused before the age of 18, and that approximately one in 20 children are physically abused each year. Child sexual abuse is the deliberate exposure of a minor child to sex or sexual activities that the child cannot comprehend or consent to. This behavior includes acts such as inappropriate touching of a child's breasts or genitalia, someone exposing their genitalia to a child, fondling, oral-genital contact, genital and anal intercourse, as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, and exposure to pornography. Child neglect occurs when someone does not provide the necessities of life to a child, either intentionally or with reckless disregard for the child's well being. This can include physical neglect, such as withholding food, clothing, shelter, or other necessities. Emotional neglect includes withholding love or comfort or affection. Medical neglect occurs when medical care is withheld. Religious freedom has become a point of contention in some cases of possible child abuse—some states, for instance, allow for medical neglect due to religious objections. There are also examples of some extreme religious acts that are considered child abuse in certain countries, but which are acceptable in others. Often, people use pictures of people that are younger than themselves or of the opposite sex on social media accounts and chat rooms. These relationships can become romantic and sometimes lead to emotional or sexual abuse. Bullying that occurs on social media, online gaming or via mobile phones is called cyberbullying. It can be more harmful than other forms of bullying as it can occur day or night. It is sometimes harder to trace the bully online. Children and young people can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as strangers.

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