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**COMBATING ONLINE CHILD TRAFFICKING IN THE AGE OF  
TECHNOLOGY**- Purna Navani<sup>1</sup>**ABSTRACT**

This paper delves into the complex and disturbing issue of online child trafficking, focusing on the ways technology is used for exploitation and the risks faced by vulnerable children. It explores the various manifestations and forms of online trafficking, from cybersex trafficking to the use of cryptocurrencies by traffickers. The paper also emphasizes the importance of protecting children and highlights the role of prevention, education, and technology in addressing this pressing concern. It advocates for increased awareness, training, and collaboration among governments, law enforcement, and various stakeholders to combat online child trafficking effectively. The research underscores the need to protect the innocence and well-being of children in the digital age, emphasizing the responsibility of society to provide education and awareness to ensure every child's safety.

**INTRODUCTION**

The idea of prostitution and trafficking is not new, but due to the society's historical partial and religious framework, it is undoubtedly one of the most contentious and difficult questions to be answered. According to the definition of trafficking, obtaining, taking, or even coercing a person into prostitution is considered trafficking. Attempts to obtain, take, or coerce a person into prostitution are also considered trafficking. Network traffic analysis (NTA) is a technique for keeping track of network activity and availability to spot anomalies, such as security and operational problems. NTA is commonly employed for various purposes, such as monitoring and analyzing current and historical network activity, detecting malicious software like ransomware, and identifying vulnerabilities in encryption ciphers and protocols. How to fix a slow network Internal visibility improvement and blind areas removal.

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## **CYBER SEX TRAFFICKING**

Because children or teenagers are trafficked and brought to a cybersex den, cybersex trafficking differs from traditional trafficking. In this sort of trafficking, the ladies are brought to the location where all of the facilities, including a webcam, an audio player, and all of the related equipment, have been stored beforehand. The most typical, well-known are the rape and underage videos. In contrast to traditional or old trafficking, in this type of trafficking the girls are required to engage in sexual arousal with the clients via webcam to assist the traffickers in satisfying their clients, with the exception of a very small number of circumstances, such as when the client is trusted or paying a very high sum of money. Essentially, this is done in a relatively private location using a webcam, an internet connection, and video-sharing software. The development of video calls has significantly altered society. The desire to get together with friends and family has significantly diminished. With the development of audio and video technology, the exploitation of women has found a new home in society. Instead of sleeping with random customers, the victim in this type of exploitation must do a sexual act on either themselves or the actors that work in the agency with them. The clients' orders must be obeyed by the victims, and it is frequently advertised on that network or another network. This is simply forced prostitution conducted online. In poor nations it runs on a shifting network, employing encrypted networks and secret software, and most importantly, cryptocurrency has been utilized to mask the transactions. All nations, including NGOs and law enforcement agencies, must work together urgently to address this issue because the international character of crime has been shown to have a wider scope. The planning for the work must start very simply. Every country in the world now needs either an effective law against this crime or needs to change their laws to reflect the current situation, otherwise, the situation would be worse for the female child in the entire world and the civil society of every country. This is why seminars, educational programs, and mock drills should be handled very carefully and minutely, especially among the population in villages or small cities who are below the poverty line.

## **ONLINE TRAFFICKING: MANIFESTATIONS & FORMS**

People are bought and sold for exploitation reasons in human trafficking, which thrives during times of conflict and catastrophe. An improved method of the pandemic's expression is over the Internet. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) performed research that demonstrates how victims are sought out and recruited via social media and online dating

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services. Today's conventional physical and geographic barriers are gone, making it simple for a considerably bigger population of potential victims & customers to access the Internet. (UNODC)

- Virtually, there is sexual abuse and other sorts of exploitation; images and films are further sold to buyers globally on various platforms, generating additional revenue for traffickers at no further effort.
- Currently, traffickers use technology to identify, enlist, manage, and profit from their victims. They also use the Internet, particularly the dark web, to conceal illicit products resulting from trafficking without ever having to interact with their victims directly.
- Traffickers construct phony websites or place ads on social networking and job-related websites that are authentic. There is a live chat option on several of these websites. This increases the influence of traffickers over their intended victims by allowing them to contact them right away and giving them the chance to learn personal information.
- While traffickers may view their victims and their surroundings through the use of smartphone cameras during video conversations, location-tracking software and the usage of global positioning systems in mobile phones can be utilized to pinpoint the victim's location.
- Threats from traffickers to show intimate images or videos of their victims to family and friends as punishment for disobeying their demands are another way that traffickers keep control over their victims.

Traffickers may receive, conceal, and transport large sums of money with less chance of being discovered thanks to the internet use of cryptocurrencies for the unlawful earnings of this extremely lucrative crime. The fact that human trafficking is a global problem and that technology is being abused makes it increasingly harder for law enforcement to combat this crime. As any investigation requires cross-border collaboration and a certain amount of digital knowledge, law enforcement authorities face practical obstacles including discovering and safeguarding evidence when a crime is organized in one nation, with victims in another country, and a client in a third.

### **AND WHY ARE THEY AT RISK?**

Almost all youngsters are vulnerable to online exploitation. Children are more likely to be victims of trafficking if they exhibit certain traits and behaviors, for instance: Adolescence, social isolation, parental conflict, past physical abuse, depression, bullying, poverty, urbanization, and family dissolution are all factors that contribute to adolescence.

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Examples include males looking for support online as they establish their sexual identity, adolescent kids wanting to access porn, and the fact that all kids are at risk of being sexually exploited online.

Children must be protected from predatory criminals who profit from the helplessness and vulnerability of their victims. It can be particularly challenging to locate accurate CSEA (Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) data, especially online. The available information, however, suggests that girls are more likely to be impacted. Boys are likewise significantly affected, but because they are less frequently included in surveys, less is known about their experiences. For instance, girls and women begin to participate in numerous demographic and health surveys around the age of 15.

Boys' and younger children's experiences are thus rendered invisible. Due to social norms that shape perceptions that boys are not vulnerable, a recent global questionnaire found that the problem of CSEA against boys is "relatively unknown, unacknowledged, and not reacted to, across a wide range of contexts and cultures." This makes rescue & rehabilitation even more challenging.

Every country holds that its youth and future generations are its greatest resources. Therefore, to build a bright future, the government should make sure that the younger generation understands the advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet. The younger generations, especially children, actively engage in online shopping, education, social interaction, and entertainment, but it's worrying when they become involved in unethical activities like cyberbullying, child pornography, sexual exploitation, harassment online, identity theft, and morphing because they were unaware of these activities.

This is typically due to the younger generation's lack of awareness and correct education, as well as the parents' sufficient care. Both the government and citizens are to blame. Government officials share responsibility for failing to inform and educate the public about cybercrimes. Both the physical and virtual worlds are rife with criminal activity. Everything we hear, read, and see in the digital world is sometimes false and deceiving. The same motivations that drive criminals in the actual world also drive those in the digital realm, yet the latter offers more anonymity to the offenders.

It is crucial to teach kids how to behave safely online so they can benefit from the web's gifts and protect themselves from potential threats from online crooks. In addition, it is critical that the government actively cooperate with law enforcement, the academic community, school

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staff, parents, and kids to create a safe environment for young children as well as to reduce and battle cyber-pedophiles.

A multi-layered approach is urgently needed to manage the online hazards, which present a variety of difficulties and call for greater international cooperation to produce creative solutions. With the quick uptake of computers and the internet, cybercrime has become a significant problem for both the government and the general public. Nearly 440 billion children under the age of 18 live in India, which is also home to 19% of all children worldwide. According to a report from Ericsson, 3 million urban Indian children and teenagers use mobile broadband, and 30 million urban Indian children and teenagers own mobile phones. Parents who use mobile broadband are more likely to introduce their children to technology.

The younger generation heavily relies on the internet and online technologies to stay connected for all of their daily tasks and recreations, including information, e-mails, social networking, e-banking, e-shopping, web TV, news, education, home-work research, online gaming, downloading music, videos, movies, and other contents, etc. are more exposed to specifically targeted cybercrimes. This frequently takes the form of online harassment, child pornography, stalking, hacking of social media or email accounts, identity theft, unintentional exposure to sexually explicit content, inappropriate content, etc. Since there is virtually little possibility of being arrested or assaulted when prostitution is done online, the internet has entered its most worrying and harmful phase. The main mediums for advertising prostitution services were publications, brochures in phone booths, bathrooms on trains, and subways.

### **HOW DO WE PROTECT**

- Technology may be used to identify victims, enhance police investigations, and prosecute offenders, giving hope to the most vulnerable children despite the growing illegal use of technology by traffickers. To effectively tackle human trafficking online on a national and international scale, we must develop a shared strategy.

- Prevention and Education:

Increased awareness and educational tools are needed in all areas.

Being aware is the first and most important step in addressing this growing threat. For young children and girls who are increasingly on the radar of sex traffickers, a safety matrix can be created by starting with an understanding of "how" and "why" to begin with. Activities that promote awareness as part of the curriculum, along with resources and support for

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instructors, can have a positive impact. The dependence of younger children on adults who abuse them must be included in educational programs for this age group, and practical reporting methods must be provided so that they can seek help from sources other than their families or caregivers. programs to teach youngsters, specifically those between the ages of 11 and 15, about the safe sharing of self-created photographs, films, etc. Education programs regarding perpetrators approaching children directly should be targeted at older children aged 14–15 and above, especially with children in the age bracket of 11–15 years old.

- The purpose of targeted tools and support is to give parents the information, concepts, and communication strategies they need to safeguard their children against online sexual abuse.
- Extortion is a subject that needs to be covered in instruction on the dangers of using social media and video chats for minors between the ages of 8 and 17.
- essential themes are widely communicated in public spaces and the commercial sector.
- media involvement in the campaign's promotion.
- Partner certification scheme for the travel industry.
- training sessions for partners and community seminars.
- campaigns to increase awareness at the national level, as well as reporting and response tools, such as helplines.
- The proactive identification of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) across digital platforms must be scaled up and made more commonplace. This will make it easier to find, catch, and charge violators.
- We should also take into account the latest techniques used by traffickers to find victims, conduct focused awareness-raising initiatives, and provide criminal justice and law enforcement professionals with specialized training.
- identifying victims, speeding up the detection and removal of photos that are available to the public, and offering assistance to victims and survivors are all ways to protect victims from future exploitation.
- Giving people access to information about where to seek assistance, where to file complaints, and how to report abuse will go a long way toward preventing child sexual exploitation online.

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- Raising awareness of child helplines and lowering the stigma associated with reporting abuse will also help. For instance, who does one call for assistance if they are forced to perform domestic labor and have access to someone else's phone?

### **IT FOR GOOD**

When technology is used to educate people about human trafficking online, we can reach a wider audience. For example, we can conduct virtual lessons and create content specifically for kids, teenagers, parents, teachers, health professionals, and others.

Databases, Web crawling, Photo DNA, and other technical advancements have improved forensic procedures to progress cases of trafficking, including child sexual exploitation, investigations.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The topic of online child trafficking and the research mentioned touch upon several important legal implications. Here are some key legal aspects related to this issue:

- **International and National Laws:** Child trafficking, including its online variants, is illegal and condemned under both international and national laws. Numerous international conventions, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, address child trafficking. Countries have their laws and regulations to combat child trafficking and protect minors.
- **Cybercrime Laws:** Many countries have specific cybercrime laws that address offenses like cybersex trafficking and the use of technology for child exploitation. These laws typically impose strict penalties for those involved in such activities.
- **Child Protection Laws:** Most countries have child protection laws that aim to safeguard the rights and well-being of children. These laws often include provisions related to child trafficking and exploitation, and they may define various forms of child abuse and neglect.
- **Dark Web and Encryption:** The use of the dark web and encryption for trafficking activities raises complex legal challenges. Law enforcement agencies often face difficulties in tracking and prosecuting traffickers who use these technologies. Laws related to encryption and the regulation of the dark web vary from country to country.

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- **Prevention and Education Initiatives:** Legal frameworks can also support prevention and education initiatives. Laws may mandate or facilitate educational programs in schools and communities to raise awareness about online child trafficking and teach children how to protect themselves.
- **Privacy and Data Protection:** Online trafficking often involves the collection and sharing of sensitive personal information, which raises privacy and data protection concerns. Legal regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union govern the handling of personal data and impose obligations on organizations to protect individuals' privacy, including children.
- **International Cooperation:** Child trafficking is a global issue that often crosses borders. International legal cooperation, mutual legal assistance treaties, and extradition agreements are essential for prosecuting traffickers who operate in multiple jurisdictions.
- **Legal Support for Victims:** Legal systems should provide support and protection for the victims of child trafficking. This includes legal aid, safe housing, and counseling services. Many countries have victim-witness protection programs to encourage witnesses to come forward.
- **Financial Regulations:** Cryptocurrencies mentioned in the research can pose challenges for tracing the flow of money in child trafficking. Some countries are implementing or considering financial regulations related to cryptocurrencies to address this issue.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Legal frameworks often require the establishment of reporting mechanisms, such as helplines, for individuals to report child trafficking or exploitation. These mechanisms must ensure the safety and anonymity of those reporting such crimes.

Addressing online child trafficking involves a combination of international and national legal measures, including criminalization, prevention, education, privacy protection, and support for victims. Legal systems play a crucial role in combating this heinous crime and protecting the rights and well-being of children. Collaborative efforts among countries and stakeholders are essential to effectively combat online child trafficking.

## CONCLUSION

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The social problems of child trafficking are the most inhumane things that exist in the world. We must take the initiative to inform and instruct individuals in our immediate vicinity—including our children—about how to use the internet safely. The threat of cyber trafficking can be greatly reduced by being aware of potential internet traps. The life or innocence of a kid is a gift, and neither should ever be for sale. By safeguarding, teaching, and raising awareness about appropriate social media use and the attendant dangers of online trafficking, let's give every child their today.



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