Cyber Child Pornography: An Unexpected Global Heinous Crime Against Children

Haradhan Kumar Mohajan[1]

[1] Chairman and Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, Premier University, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Correspondence: Haradhan Kumar Mohajan, Chairman and Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, Premier University, Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Abstract

Children are naïve and innocent and often cannot understand the cyber security and threats. Cyber child pornography is the abuse of a child in a sexually explicit act online through images, audios, written forms, or videos that is unexpected and unwanted. It is now available in many different ways, such us pop-up adverts, websites, internet searches, emails, etc. It is a threat to internet users all over the world, and is considered as a heinous crime in most of the countries. It is increasing at an alarming rate in society due to a sizable profit of the pornographers. At present the size of the global pornography industry is more than $100 billion per year. It is necessary the detection, investigation, prevention, prosecution, and punishment for cyber child pornography actively in due time. Cyber child pornography is a global dreadful crime and hence, strong laws must be established for combating it.

Keywords: cybercrime, child pornography, sexual abuse, internet, cyber law

1. Introduction

The internet has given child porn new life because of the ease of transmission from one pedophile to million pedophiles and from a region to worldwide (Magid, 2014). It is used in every aspect of our daily life. The globe in cyber space is under the one roof and on the one click all ideas and information flow from one corner to the other corner of the world (Langde, 2023). The advent of the internet has given rise to all kinds of sexual materials and it has no real borders. Many factors affect sexual activity of human, such as gender, knowledge, attitudes, community, and religion (Abimbola, 2017). At present everything is displaying graphically, verbally, and pictorially; and anybody can share, manipulate, and transfers sexual materials via video clips, short animated movies, pictures, sound files, and stories within few seconds (Mathur & Mathur, 2019).

Cybercrime is any crime that is committed over the internet and it is an illegal act; and cyber child pornography is one of them (Fatima & Husain, 2020). Sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography are considered as the child sexual abuses, whose obscene materials come in many forms, such as photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes, and computer disks (UNODC, 2015). The child pornography is a serious violation of fundamental child rights that is growing and spreading alarmingly, and it becomes a matter of global concern (Adams, 2004). Now high quality digital cameras and powerful editing multimedia software are affordable and easier to use for creating and distributing child porn (Odzer, 1997).

Cyber child pornography is a global cybercrime against the most vulnerable populations and this is an issue of serious concern. It is increasing in the present society alarmingly due to easy accessibility and anonymity (De Jong & Cook, 2021). It is considered as child abuse that is different from other pornography (Mohajan, 2025f). It is estimated that there is a positive correlation between cyber pornography addiction and an increase in sexual

crime against children (Vinnakota et al., 2021). The extensive availability of pornography on the internet has become a great problem for society, Government, and law enforcement bodies, such as the police, prosecutors, and judges (Chitra & Basavaraju, 2019). New inventions and discoveries have widened the scientific scope as well as brought the new challenges for legal world. It is very necessary to ensure the emotional, intellectual, physical, and social wellbeing of the children of every nation (Langde, 2023).

2. Literature Review

A literature review is an overview of previously published works on a particular topic. It is a comprehensive summary, synthesis, and critical evaluation of existing scholarly sources (Galvan, 2015). It discusses published information in a particular subject area within a certain time period in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences (Anson & Schwegler, 2010). The five C's to write a literature review are cite, compare, contrast, critique, and connect that are identifying key theories, methodologies, trends, and gaps in the field, providing a foundation for new work (Baker, 2000).

Kathryn Seigfried-Spellar has explored the personality and cognitive characteristics of self-reported consumers and non-consumers of cyber child pornography. In the study she has found that child pornography consumers are more agreeable and less likely to make moral decisions based on social values compared to non-consumers (Seigfried-Spellar, 2013). Bernadette H. Schell and her coworkers have realized that cyber child pornography is an increasingly visible problem in the society with the growth in home personal computer (PC) usage and more readily available access to the World Wide Web (www) over the past decade. They have reviewed that the major social, legal, and technological issues facing citizens, lawmakers, and the police regarding cyber child pornography. They have proposed a new technological approach for combating online child pornography (Schell et al., 2007). K. Hari Praveera and his coauthors have tried to identify the prevalence of risk of cyber pornography addiction amongst medical students (Praveera, 2021).

M. A. Al Mamun and his coauthors have examined the attitudes and risk factors of Bangladeshi university students' pornography consumption. They have found that pornography consumption was predicted by being male, living in a rural area, being in a relationship, engaging in social media, such as Facebook, and watching movies (Mamun et al., 2019). Madhushree Joshi believes that child pornography is different from adult pornography due to intricacies involved. She has realized that cyber child pornography is more severe than any form of exploitation. After publication of the nude photos and videos, either with her consent or fraudulently, affects her mental health, and the prospects of development and the incident can leave a severe and lasting impact for the rest of her life. She has discussed the importance of new law Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO). She has provided the POCSO interpretation in tandem with the IT Act, and it is efficient in protecting child against the threat of cyber pornography (Joshi, 2021). Samir Bhadury has tried to find out the reasons and legal prospects regarding child pornography with the judicial pronouncements and legal solution on child pornography. These crimes are directly linked to the sexual abuse of children, and the effects on the child victims are strong (Bhadury, 2022).

Csaba Erdős and his coworkers have shown that the widespread availability of internet-based pornography has led to growing concerns about its impact on mental health, particularly among children (Erdős et al., 2025). Prabhat Mathur and Manisha Mathur have shown that digital world presents everything graphically, verbally, and pictorially people shares, and manipulates transfers sexual material via video clips, short animated movies, pictures, sound files, stories and abusive behavior. They have realized the realistic concerns related to legal and technical hitches to the cyber porn and provide innovative insight to curb cyber porn crime and criminals (Mathur & Mathur, 2019). Eva González-Ortega and Begoña Orgaz-Baz have examined the prevalence and extent of minors' exposure to online pornography, the reasons for exposure, the types of images seen, and the strong effects of exposure, as reported by students. In their study they have found that more boys report sexual excitement and masturbation of cyber pornography, while more girls report avoidance, disgust or concern (González-Ortega & Orgaz-Baz, 2013).

3. Research Methodology of the Study

Research is a systematic investigation to increase knowledge, as well as systematic and organized efforts to investigate certain problems that require answers (Creswell, 2008). There are two basic approaches to research, such as quantitative approach and the qualitative approach; where first one is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior (Mohajan, 2020); and the last one uses precise numerical measurements (Silverman, 2011; Mohajan, 2018b). Methodology is an indisputably complex field (Howell, 2013). A good methodology clarifies the structure of the data to be analyzed and helps the researchers to see the phenomena in a new light (Herrman, 2009). Research methodology is a scientific technique to obtain data with specific purposes and uses that systematically solve the research problem (Shields & Rangarjan, 2013; Mohajan, 2017). It is an approach to methodically explain the research problem that may be implicit as a science of studying how research is run through scientifically (Kothari, 2019; Mohajan, 2018a).

Cyber pornography means an act of using cyberspace to create, display, distribute, import, and publish obscene materials, such as video, pictures, and movies that contain sexually explicit acts (Balki, 2023). In this study we have studied the basic concepts of child pornography where we have defined child pornography with its nature and addictions. Then we have discussed the effect of cyber pornography where we have observed that the children suffer emotional distresses. We have observed that child pornography materials are harmful to global children, and strict punishment laws are necessary to combat child pornography.

4. Objective of the Study

Sometimes children are interested and curious about sexuality and sexually explicit materials, the sex offenders take this advantage and target them through internet (Langde, 2023). Pornography is a type of sexual amusement based on sexual pictures, videos, audios, and written materials that can be sourced through electronic media, such as television, radio, and DVDs; print media, such as newspaper and magazine; and the internet (Diamond, 2009; Mohajan, 2025a). It is very popular among the adult and children, and millions of pornographic websites flourish them on the internet (Mohajan, 2025e). Child pornography is one of the type of sexual abuse against the children by way of audio, video, or any other type of descriptive depiction of a child engaged in any sexual activity with any adult or with the other children. At present the cyber child pornography becomes an increasingly unexpected and uncontrollable problem in the society. One third of the internet is covered by porn-sites that are leading to exploitation and suppression of women and children (Chitra & Basavaraju, 2019). The largest pornography site on the internet PornHub has reported that per year more than 42 billion people worldwide visit cyber pornography website (Pornhub.com, 2025).

5. Basic Concepts of Child Pornography

The word 'cyber' was introduced by American speculative fiction writer William Gibson in his 1984 fictional novel 'Neuromancer' that is used as a prefix to the worldwide field of electronic communication (Giacomini & Zaidi, 2012). The term "porne" refers to "indecent sexual stuff" which means prostitute, and 'graphein' means write or record; and the term "pornography" comes from the Greek letter "pornographos" whose literally meaning is writing about prostitutes that signifies to movies on all kinds of sexual activities outside the bonds of marriage (Vithayathil, 2021). Therefore, pornography is the showing of sexual acts with the intention to cause sexual excitement through obscene websites by using computers, internet, and also includes downloading and transmitting obscene pornographic videos, obscene writings, photos, etc. (Sharma, 2015; Mohajan, 2025d). The visual representation or depiction of a child engaged in a sexual display, act, or performance is known as child pornography. Therefore, the term "child pornography" implies conventional pornography with child subjects against their consent (ICMEC, 2013).

Cyber pornography refers to all internet usage activities, such as sexual content for recreation, entertainment, exploration, education, trade, and seeking sexual or romantic partners (Chauhan & Ritu, 2018). Cyber pornography addiction is a sexual activity on the internet that causes addiction, has a negative impact, and includes physical, mental, social, and financial problems (Agastya et al., 2020). It is dependent upon their various religious, moral, social, cultural and sexual beliefs. Cyber child pornography means pornographic material that presents i) a child engaged in a sexually explicit conduct, ii) a person appearing to be a child engaged in a sexually explicit conduct, and iii) an image representing a child engaged in a sexually explicit conduct (Chopra et al., 2006). It is a serious violation of fundamental rights to protect and care necessary for children wellbeing. Thousands of young children are sexually abused and photographed by pornographers, and these films are being used for men's pleasures (Adams, 2004). Children may deliberately search for this material due to age-appropriate curiosity (Flood, 2007). In recent years, child pornography sold over the internet has become an increasingly visible problem for society, regardless of geographical and legal jurisdictions (Ashton et al., 2020; Mohajan, 2025b).

6. Effect of Cyber Pornography

Cyber child pornography is a misuse of modern technology and violation of privacy of children. Amongst the various evils spread by technology, pornography is one such menace to which children are an easy prey, as they belong to the vulnerable group of the society (Joshi, 2021). It is a global issue that has significant negative impacts on the psychological and emotional development of children. The children who are exposed to cyber pornography may experience emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on lives, beliefs, and relationships (Lirëza & Koçi, 2023). Child pornography is rampant and increases negativity in the society. It affects the behavior and attitude of the children and sometimes it encourages the immorality, sexual violence, and negative attitude towards children. Sometimes physical injuries and pain can happen, and sexual transmission diseases can spread during pornography shooting (Akdeniz, 2008).

Child pornography has been causing harm to children for centuries, and it is not just one offence, rather it is a series of offences and harsh consequences (Bhadury, 2022; Mohajan, 2025c). It is found that 9 out of 10 boys

and 6 out of 10 girls are exposed to some form of pornography before the age of 18 years (Praveera, 2021). It degrades the position of a child by depicting them as sex objects and showing them as passive recipients of degrading and violent acts leading to unrealistic and artificial expectations and various forms of physical, mental, and sexual abuse, such as anger, depression, anxiety, etc. are developed (Dombrowski et al., 2007). Sometimes, the unhealthy sexual attitudes and behaviors, such as hypersexual behaviors are developed among victims that can lead to further exploitation (Gillespie, 2010).

7. Cyber Law for Child Pornography

Child pornography has become one of the most complicated issues in law enforcement. It is often avoided in both social and research circles because of the heinous abuses that are targeted children face (Prakash, 2018). Child pornography materials that are harmful to child and obscene cannot host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update, and share; these violate cyber security law (Flood, 2009). There are three main international legal instruments that address child pornography: i) the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the rights of the child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, ii) the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime; and iii) the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. These are effective tools for combating the sexual exploitation and abuse of children (ICMEC, 2013).

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) of 1998 is a United States federal law that is effective from April 21, 2000, and applies to the online collection of personal information by persons or entities under US jurisdiction about children under 13 years of age (Warmund, 2001). The United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) took vital initiatives to combat cyber sexual abuse, child pornography, and pedophilia; and took initiatives to adopt uniform preventive and controlling measures especially on 18-19 January, 1999 at Paris with 150 participants (Verma, 2016). In 2001, the European Council's Committee on Crime Problems and Cyber Crimes adopted the draft convention with the initiatives of 41 nations that deals with the content related offences, and tries to prohibit child pornography and cyber pornography (UNODC, 2010). In February 2006, Mark S. Proctor was sentenced by US District Court Judge to a total of 151 months imprisonment after pleading guilty to possession and distribution of child pornography (UNODC, 2015).

It is necessary to take a comprehensive approach that must incorporate both preventive and protective. Recently, artificial intelligence (AI) technology is becoming increasingly important in preventing and combatting child cyber pornography (Lirëza & Koçi, 2023). Child pornography is a multi-jurisdictional problem to which a global approach must be applied. Successfully combating child pornography and child exploitation on a global scale it is required uniform legislation that every country can apply. The judges demanded maximum imprisonment or a maximum fine or both to reduce child pornography worldwide (Gillespie, 2010).

8. Conclusions

Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography are serious criminal offenses, and these are growing and spreading worldwide very quickly. Speedy increase of cyber child pornography is due to rapid technological development and anonymity provided by cyberspace and the low cost of consumed resources. It is now becomes black marketing multibillion dollar industry in all over the world. There is no doubt that the internet has caused the most explosive growth in child pornography than at any other time in history. A child is at the very beginning of his/her life and has many years to live ahead. If s/he becomes a victim of cyber child pornography, it becomes very difficult for that child to live normally afterwards. Despites many advantages in internet, still child pornography is considered as an unsafe zone for the children and adolescents. It is not easy and even possible to eradicate cyber child pornography completely from the cyber world during the latest scientific and technical developments, and strict laws are necessary to reduce them. To combat cyber child pornography all the international communities and the countries ought to totally banned child pornographic sites on internet. The maintaining of safety and welfare of children of the world is essential for all countries, and all Governments should work together on this issue.

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