AN OVERVIEW OF CYBERSPACE AND SPIRALLING ABUSE AMONG KERALA ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract
The abuse faced by the adolescent population in cyberspace from various prominent social media platforms and the efficacy of the existing legal framework in countering this social hazard are expected to be analyzed through this study. The adolescent population of Kerala is primarily taken into consideration as the apex source for this research. Post-pandemic era and the unchallenged rise in the usage of online platforms by adolescents for education and entertainment havepushedthem to a state of vulnerability at the hands of a wide variety of cybercrimes. The rise in registered cyber cases by legal authorities and the unmonitored amount of face time spent by this young segment of the population requires effective and immediate addressing to raiseconsciousness to prevent any forms of uninvited advancements from online predators. Even though there are government-initiated measures to counter harmful acts against adolescents and toddlers socially and at the educational institution level.
The simultaneous rise in cybercrimes against minors and the proportional correlation that it holds with child pornography is significantly alarming. Even though there is a rapid flow of information in the digital era. The addressing of cybercrimes is limited to merely safeguarding the monetary security of adults. The education system of third-world countries like India is more prominently dependent on digital space for nurturing their young minds via education and entertainment. The study aims to point out the relevance of a safe cyber domicile for future young minds. Initial study data is based on the registered crimes in POCSO cases by Kerala police and the child suicides in the state inthe past few years. The study investigates the relevance of inter-family relations in cyberspace. It also aims to study the impact of parental neglect, one of the major factors that contributes to the rise in cybercrimes among children. Data collected from various online sources were analysed using qualitative methodology.

Keywords: Cybercrime, adolescents, ICT, cyber parenting

Introduction

After Kerala's post-pandemic phase, there has been a sharp increase in internet usage and teenage participation. This young demographic uses social media and the internet extensively for social and educational enrichment; thus, it is unavoidable. This increase in cybercrime began in 2021. India, during its digital revolution, has seen a rise in cybercrime that goes beyond email threats and false lottery results to include grisly killings. Adnan Patrawala's kidnapping by his Orkut pals, a 16-year-old teenager from a rich family, was one of the defining crimes that revealed the danger of online anonymity (Samervel, 2012).Since Covid, there has been a marked increase in crimes against minors as the younger demographic of the population has increasingly turned to the internet for both amusement and educationalized purposes. Following the internet drive, the number of instances reported under Kerala's Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) law has risen in recent years (NewIndianXpress, 2022).Children who are the targets of cyberattacks may experience lifetime suffering. Adolescents are drawn to social media's entertainment section for its interactive viewing. Children can spend hours using several sites on social media. It has become nearly impossible for the parents of young children to keep an eye on their FaceTime because many families have multiple devices that can access the internet and social media.

The absence of adults building healthy relationships with their children in the digital realm is mostly due to their excessive involvement in the digital world and their nature of their work. The younger generation is more susceptible to internet predators due to unsupervised FaceTime. Children who are exposed to toxic mentoring fall victim to most ofthewrongdoings.According to cyber cases reported to Kerala police, most of them were online scammers who pretended to be bank workers to steal clients' private financial information.

These con artists also frequently pretended to be representatives of organisations run by the government, including the KSEB, to get one-time passwords (OTP). It is hard to create a solid awareness, as these pupils frequently have questions about the effects of internet rummy and other online games due to celebrity endorsements and minimized legal warnings. When such addictive games are normalised, kids are sufficiently curious to play them during their unsupervised face time. Since virtually all electronic communication devices are also used for financial transactions, purchasing tickets for these gaming platforms turns out to be a simpler chore for the kids, which could perhaps cause them to erode cash resources that are most likely possessed by their guardians. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube are some of the social media sites that students in the period 2018 and2022 used frequently(Moyer, 2022). Significant accounts of the distribution of child pornography and the harassment of children have been reported during this time. Almost all social media platforms act against account holders who engage in illegal activity online. Most often, the alleged offender's account is either permanently deleted or suspended for an undetermined amount of time. The prevalence of repeat offenders concerning cybercrimes has significantly increased.

These cybercrimes have a severely negative psychological effect on their victims,as the aftershock of an attack is capable of inflicting a prolonged impact on the victim. This furthers the development of psychological problems that are life-threatening to both the individual and others, such as anxiety, panic attacks, terror, frustration,excessive rage, and suicidal tendencies. There are three times as many cybersex attacks on females as on males.This varies in a range from 8% to 31% in females and 3% to 17% for males.As per studies,adolescent females who have experienced sexual abuse are more likely to have lower self-esteem, subjective well-being, environmental mastery, and a sense of purpose in life than other subjects who haven't(Manjula, 2021).

Literature Review

Students increasingly need to learn digital literacy so they can manage their digital lives for daily tasks as well as create a defence against any potential social media risks. The state's educational institutions, and specific schools, do not use ICT at a level that keeps up with the quickly developing technical advances. This is supported by the eighth, ninth, and tenth-grade course outlines (SCERT Kerala, 2019). This curriculum is limited to the system hardware andsoftware usage. Even after going through the full syllabus, there is no helpful advice on how students should use social media or the internet.Given the stalled information flow, it is essential to implement a gatekeeping mechanism early on for this young group.

Adolescence can be considered a phase that every youngster passes through in their life journey. The youngster outgrows the fundamental characteristics of a child to an adult throughout this stage.The average adolescent's brain does not fully develop until they are in their mid-twenties (Owosina, 2020). The place that the youngster is socially and virtually associated with is where they learn and experience things for self-development. The youngster bears the psychological scars of this phase for the rest of their life. Typically, this occurs between the ages of 10 and 19(WHO). When contrast to boys, girls can experience this stage at a younger age.

ICT stands for Information Communication Technology, and it refers to a curriculum-driven educational system that focuses primarily on computer-based instruction for school-aged pupils. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) first introduced this educational program in 2004, and it was updated in 2010. The curriculum is made to teach kids how to use and become familiar with computer hardware and applications. From the very beginning of their academic careers, youngsters can develop their talents through e-learning due to this computer-assisted learning approach. This initiative's main goal was to bridge the digital divide between students of all backgrounds, regardless of their location or economic status. The program offers financial assistance to states and union territories nationwide to set up computer labs.

These are crimes that can threaten someone's life and property for a long time and have the potential to cause physical and psychological harm. In these attacks, computers or other electronic communication equipment are the targets of or employed as weapons. This entails unauthorized access to a person's personal information. Some of the most frequent crimes committed online include ransomware, cyberbullying, and financial fraud. The digital world is made even more vulnerable by the fact that the perpetrators of these illegal activities do not necessarily need to be present in person to commit the crimes(Kumar, 2021).

The proportional rise in average internet usage among parents and their children is present. The likelihood that youngsters will participate in digital space also increases as a parent uses the internet more frequently. Both variables must cross paths on their parallel journeys at various intersections of social interactions. A platform where parents can listen to their kids and learn about what they are interested in when they are online. It has been suggested that parents with higher levels of education participate in their children's online activities more, leading to more conversations that may influence the child's behavior and understanding of online hazards(Schneider & Buckley, 2002).

In nations like Malaysia, there is no set age for the use or ownership of electronic devices. This frequently occurs in kids from the age of seven (Wan Anita, 2016). The Ministry of Education implemented a program called Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) in Malaysian educational institutions. By this plan, each student who brings a communication device to class should voluntarily register it with the school as a personal item. This anticipates parental involvement in the use of mobile devices for formal education at home.Parents must raise their kids to be honorable and responsible users of internet services. That is just as important as being a decent citizen. To better comprehend and educate their children about cyber risks, parents' awareness of these issues also needs to be improved(Nazilah Ahmad, 2019).

Methodology

The study made use of content analysis's potential for gathering data in both quantitative and qualitative ways. Students between the ages of 10 and 19 made up the majority of the study's respondents. A poll was initiated to gather the opinions of 100 students, all under the age of 19, from various districts and schools throughout the state. The following goals of the study are to be addressed:

Objectives

- To identify the prevalence of cybercrimes against adolescents in Kerala.
- To identify the psychological impact of cybercrimes on adolescents in Kerala.
- To identify the efficacy of the school curriculum in spreading awareness of cyber threats in educational institutions in Kerala.
- To investigate the role of parents and teachers in spreading awareness of cyber threats among the adolescent population in Kerala.

Research design

The descriptive character of the study combines a qualitative examination of the most appealing features of the research issue with quantitative survey methods. The design by John W. Creswell served as the inspiration for the study's methodology (Research Design, 2023). Analysing the cyber issues Kerala's student population faces is part of the preliminary study. This includes identifying the types of cybercrimes being committed in the state that pose an existential threat to the younger population's ability to maintain good mental and physical health. The study concentrated on the initial set of research goals. The goal of the study evolved to include finding pertinent literature in this area that allowed for the formulation of research questions and the building of research tools. References from websites like Google Scholar, Research Gate, Shodhganga, and Academia that provided access to research documents were used to create the conceptual framework.

In the second stage of the research, rates of cybercrime and teenage abuse in Kerala during the previous few years were examined. Cross-referencing newspaper articles about crimes against children from earlier years was done as part of a pilot project. The eighth, ninth, and tenth-grade ICT curricula in Kerala were examined to find any remarks or subjects on cybercrime awareness and potential cyber threats. The poll clarified issues with the parental and teaching faculties' academic knowledge ofcybersecurity.

For the adolescent population, whose ages ranged from 10 to 19, the questionnaire was designed in a conventional format with 16 questions. The adolescent population's questions were broken down into distinct patterns that addressed logical, personal, psychological, and scientific components. The survey's closed-ended questions received correct responses that matched the questions posed to the participants.

Theoretical framework

Albert Bandura's social learning theory outlines the feature of an individual's ability to learn from their social environment (Higgins, 2006). According to the current situation, cyberspace exhibits coherent behavior with the social environment and serves as a necessary learning aid during an adolescent's learning process. So, a person's behavioral outcomes are greatly influenced by the rational effects that social media may have on them. Conditions, both good and bad, have an impact on the user.

According to George Gerbner's theory of habit formation, a user's ability to engage in an activity continuously or repeatedly out of interest or design leads to the development of a habit. Teenagers who engage in the digital world for a longer period after first using it become habitual users of social media because of its entertainment value. The survey revealed this as the use hours increase with time.

The study illustrates instances of cyberattacks on younger populations using Elizabeth Noelle Newman's spiral of silence theory (Kim, 2014), in which an opinion-raiser is compelled to lower their viewpoint because of cyber abuse or digital isolation. These situations cause severe psychological trauma in the victim, tormenting them to the point where they begin to doubt their sanity and refrain from expressing their opinions online.

Analysis

A deductive initial content analysisusing data on criminal activity against minors and the frequency of cyber offenses against them was conducted to establish the study problem (Kerala police, 2022). According to crime statistics, both toddlers and teenagers have been the victims of numerous types of abuse in cybercrimes. Adolescents from various educational institutions around the state were surveyed to gauge their awareness of cyber threats, as well as the degree to which their schools comprehend these dangers and their capability to address issues related to cybercrime. The most common and recurrent offenses against the younger population were found to be online grooming, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and sexual violence(NewIndianXpress, 2022). The number of cybercrimes in the state has tripled in the last five years, from 320 occurrences in 2017 to 955 incidents last year, the most ever

recorded by Kerala police.From 2017 to 2021, a total of 2,348 instances were documented. There was hardly any growth in 2018, with 340 incidents. Across the state, only 307 cyber incidents were reported in 2019, a startling decrease from the 426 incidents reported in 2020. Official sources claim that there is a correlation between the growth of internet use and the incidence of cybercrimes.

Respondents to the poll came from 40 different educational institutions throughout the state. Questions about cybersecurity awareness were answered by 100 candidates. The attendees were between the ages of 10 and 19. 21% and 36% of the responders, respectively, were between the ages of 18 and 19. 13% and 10% of them were between the ages of 17 and 16. The remaining 12% were 15, and 8% were under the age of 14. Male students made up 52.6% of the survey respondents, while female students made up 47.4%. The survey includes the following list of questions.

*Cybercrimes against the adolescent population in Kerala.

i) Adolescent population's participation in social media.

85.5% of all respondents expressed satisfaction with having a social network account. However, 14.5% of respondents said they neither had a social media account nor had they ever used one linked to their parents' profile. There were two choices: yes or no. Other justifications offered by these candidates for not using social media included a lack of time, opportunities, or resources to establish online identities, as well as a busy academic schedule.

ii) FaceTime preferred by students for their social media usage.
Regular users of social media make up38.2% of the population. 50% of the respondents occasionally use social media. 6.6% of the population does not use social media for amusement or education, whereas 5.3% of people use it remotely. During their free time and outside the classroom, students find the time to use social media.

iii) Students' awareness of cyberbullying.

63.6% of the population, when given the choice between the answers yes or no, affirms that they directly know people who have been the targets of cyberbullying. 36.4% of people say they are unaware of someone who has experienced cyberbullying.

vi) The comfort level of students in seeking out legal aid in times of cyberattacks.
In the event of a cyberattack, 63.6% of the population said they would feel confident in seeking legal assistance. Nonetheless, 18.2% of the population said they are unable to report such incidents, and another 18.2% said "maybe."The result obtained shows that more than 80% of Kerala's teenage population uses social media. Due to different problems like academic timetables, societal and economic constraints, and parental restraints, the remaining people do not think it is practicable. Over half of the population can satisfy their social media appetites for at least two hours regularly, and a good half of the people use it for that amount of time. The act of fulfillment may induce cravings and encourage users to use it regularly and for extended periods. One of the most frequent offenses committed against young people is cyberbullying. The fact that more than half of the students showed confidence in reporting cybercrimes is incredibly encouraging.

* Cybercrime's psychological effects on the adolescent population.

i) Cyberattacks on adolescents.

61.8% of people experienced a single cyberattack. More than one cyberattackwas encountered by 22.4% of the population. Among the participants, 14.1% of the population experienced no cyberattacks, compared to 1.3% of the population who experienced so frequently.

ii) Students' conversation with peers on cybersecurity threats.

53.9% of people occasionally have time to talk to their friends about cybersecurity threats. 22.4%, however, have never brought up this subject with their peers. 13.2% of people find time to do it frequently, and 10.5% do it regularly.

iii) Effects of cyber-attacks on the adolescent population.

According to 82.3% of respondents, cyberattacks made them depressed. 11.7% reported having additional psychological problems because of the cyberattack. Following the incident, 3.9% of people had difficulty sleeping, and 2.3% reported eating disorders. The options offered were depression, insomnia, eating disorders, and others.

More than half of the surveyed population experienced online attacks. It is much more difficult for children to be honest with their parents since they lack the confidence to disclose such attacks. Nonetheless, students have a habit of at least casually discussing online dangers with their peers. This is quite encouraging because everyone is learning new things from healthy discussions. According to reports, the most typical consequences of cyber-attacks caused by protracted melancholy include depression and sleeping problems. It is evident that cyberattacks are rather distressing and can have an impact on adolescents' social and psychological development.

*The effectiveness of Kerala's school curricula in raising students' awareness of online risks.

i) Types of cyber-attacks against adolescents.

According to reports, the most frequent form of cyberattack experienced by young people online is cyberbullying. In contrast to other cyberattacks, it covers a 71% range. Other attacks, with a 13.2% and 11.8% maximum, included cyberstalking and identity theft. There were no incidents of attacks that had a grooming component. 3.9% of other cyberattacks fell into this range. The choices included grooming, identity theft, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and others.

ii) Measures opted for by educational institutions in countering cyber-attacks.

35.5% of respondents affirm that they received no information from their respective educational institutions on counseling or support. 28.9% of respondents said they have sought counseling and information more than once. While 13.2% of the population receives aid on a regular basis, just 22.4% of the population has received assistanceonce. The choices were once, more than once, regularly, and never.

iii) Cybersecurity awareness in teaching faculty

Regarding their teachers' knowledge of online hazards, the majority of 35.5% gave an average score of 3 out of 5. 19.7% of people think their instructors are very knowledgeable. 15.8% and 11.8% of the people gave the awareness a score between 2 and 1, while 17.1% gave it a 4.

iv) Cybersecurity initiated by teachers.

48.1% of the teachers occasionally lead lessons on online safety,and 14.3% of the teaching staff always lead classes. 16.9% of them never held any cyber safety sessions, while 20.8% of them conducted sessions often.

v) ICT syllabus efficacy in the education system

On a scale of 1 to 5, 14.3% of the population gave the ICT curriculum a perfect score of 5, 18.2% gave it an average rating of 3, and 42.9% gave it a score below average. 10.4% of respondents said the experience was satisfactory, while 14.3% said it was unsatisfactory.

vi) ICT curriculum and cybersecurity in adolescents.

40.3% of people are unsure if the curriculum includes cybersecurity-related issues. 35.1% of respondents claim that the curriculum for ICT does not cover cybersecurity-related topics. The coverage of cybersecurity issues is confirmed by a section of 24.7%.

According to the survey, many educational organisations do not provide adequate training on cyber hazard awareness and cybersecurity sessions. Also, students claim that their teachers only have a cursory understanding of cyber threats. This is essential in limiting the dissemination of knowledge on this subject to their students. While some colleges do offer counselling sessions to students who have been the targets of cyberattacks, their reach is

rather small compared to that of the vast majority. Some institutions' ICT courses do not meet the needs of the student body. It is necessary to evolve the curriculum into a feasible defence system against cyberattacks, and much polishing work needs to be done.

* Evaluating the effectiveness of parents and educators in Kerala in raising adolescents' knowledge of online threats.

i) Parental engagement in social media.

52.6% of respondents said they sometimes engage with their parents on social media without setting up a schedule. 19.7% of respondents mentioned that they occasionally engage with their parents online. 18.4% of those surveyed reported that they never interacted with their parents onsocial media. 9.2% said encounters are rare. There were four choices: occasionally, sometimes, very often, and never.

ii) Parental support in cases of cyber-attack.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 46.1% said they would have complete confidence in telling their parents if they were the target of a cyberattack. 9.2% of the population gave a 4 on the scale, indicating that they lacked complete confidence. 13.2% of people gave their level of confidence a 3 on the scale, while another 9.2% gave it a 2 on the scale. 22.4% of the population had the least amount of comfort in disclosing a cyberattack.

iii) Parental neglect from excessive social media usage.

41.6% claimed that they experience severe parental neglect because of their parents' use of social media. On a scale of 1 to 5, neglect affects 20.8% of the populationon a scale of 3, and on a scale of 4 for 10.4% of the population. 18.2% of the students ranked 1 on the scale considering their parents' social mediause. On a modest scale of 2, 9.1% of the students are experiencing mild neglect.

As per the study, social media interaction between parents and their children is scarce. They may be able to explain kids' recent interests and online friends by offering a steady and amiable helping hand. There are instances of extreme parental negligence, and the likelihood of a pupil falling victim to such assaults is very high. Students find it challenging to inform their parents about cyberattacks. The solution to this problem is to make friends with kids in cyberspaceand figure out what they could be interested in.

Discussion

   a. Cyber-crimes in India

Cyberspace can first be seen as a platform for the exchange of data between millions of anonymous individuals who interact on multiple levels. From work platforms to entertainment, learning, and even our living rooms, cyberspace has expanded its influence. Laws already in place are not developing as quickly as new technologies. Early cybercrimes mostly consisted of verbal and psychological abuse. This involved modifying data, Trojan viruses, and spam profiles. Cybercrimes against people and the government mostly had a financial motive. Just as the internet expanded, the weaker members of society became the focus of some people's illicit amusement urges. This altered the characteristics of cybercrimes.

The illegal practice of depicting a kid engaging in real-time or prompted explicit sexual activity is primarily known as child pornography. This also covers the display of a child's private parts for sexual purposes (Bhadury, 2021). Another common cybercrime that targets only women and children is cyberstalking. This involves tracking children's digital footprints constantly while using internet platforms to harass them (Anna & Nicholas, 2022). According to reports, one of the most prevalent and ongoing problems affecting the adolescent population online is cyberbullying. This entails using web tools to constantly track down and bully teenagers using their digital footprints (Kim & Donghyun,2022).

According to reports, grooming is the newest and most popular attention-getting tactic used by internet predators to catch their prey. It entails an adult befriending a teenager to sexually abuse or traffic the victim once the two become emotionally bonded (Magiswary, Maniam, Manimekalai,& Iqbal,2021). Identity theft is a common crime that occurs when an unidentified person exploits a child's identity to commit cybercrime (Online Identity Theft, Security Issues, and Reputational Damage, 2021).

Teenage images and videos are sold virtually as part of online child trafficking. This creates the danger of both mental and physical maltreatment of children. Mostly, this is done for financial advantage (Devi, Chandrasekharan&Velayutham, 2016). A frequent threat that the online population faces is sexual harassment. When compared to men, this is notably higher for women. In the internet world, women are subjected to more unwelcome advances than men. Both physical and non-physical forms of sexual harassment are witnessed from cyber threats (Kamaku, Mary,Mberia&Helen, 2014). When information is shared, an adolescent's privacy is jeopardized.This may occur if someone freely gives information; however, it may also occur if that person's information is given without their knowledge or agreement by their family, friends, or an anonymous third party (Rzhevskaya, Natalia, Ruzhenkova, Victoria, Moskvitina, Uliana, Kolosova&Marina, 2020).

Teenage girls and boys are the main targets of two widespread cybercrimes: gaslighting and catfishing. Gaslighting is the psychological manipulation of someone who is being questioned about how they perceive reality. As a result, the sufferers' social abilities become questionable, which raises more doubts about their sanity (De Kemp, 2021). Catfishing is the practice of creating false profiles on social media platforms and using them to influence other users to commit wrongdoing (Brandu& Ray, 2021).

The teenage population frequently receives criticism for erroneous online writings about them. This information has the potential to jeopardize their security and safety (Ray, Rohit, 2022). When someone is being threatened online, they threaten to reveal critical information about them. This phenomenon of ransom demands is categorically driven by financial gains (Rao, Sanjeev,& Verma, Anil & Bhatia, Tarunpreet, 2022). Online gaming was recognised as a behavioral addiction (*International Classification of Diseases (ICD)*, 2023) by the WHO.

There has been a noticeable increase in cybercrimes against minors in the state despite all the worries and prevention regulations. The state's ICT curriculum is insufficient to protect adolescents from current cyber threats. The study demonstrates the value of parent-child interactions online and how parents can better understand how their children use the internet. The report shows that more than 85% of adolescent students actively use social media, with most of them devoting more than an hour of each day to it. For the advantage of these users, the cyber awareness educational curriculum needs to be improved, given that most pupilsutilize social media platforms.

It is also essential to help parents of these users understand how important it is for them to interact with their children online and to gain a better knowledge of whether the materials those children are viewing and searching for are likely to be safe for their future. Alarmingly, the number of cyberattacks on teenagers and their peers has increased. Due to their lack of cyber awareness, they are in a position where they cannot even recognise the type of assault that has been launched against them. By doing this, the scope of cyberattack prevention and the development of countermeasures is avoided. A lack of confidence to tell their parents about a cyberattack on them is experienced by nearly half of the population under study.

The most common and easily executed cyber-attacks against the young population continue to be cyberbullying. The number of offenders in this crime is not decreasing even if there are strict regulations in place to handle this menace. Although cyber risks are not a frequent topic of conversation among adolescents, the study demonstrates that when they do, they frequently find acceptance and space among their friends. The fact that 63.9% of people say

they are confident about responding to a hack lawfully is encouraging. Yet, through teacher skill development programs, the degree of cyber awareness within the teaching faculty of this group needs to be increased.

b. Child protection laws in India

The Government of India introduced the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act (POCSO) on November 14, 2012, intending to protect minors from sexual abuse. According to incidents reported to the Kerala police, the number of POCSO cases in the state has significantly increased in recent years. After the epidemic period, this trend rapidly increases. In 2016, there were 957 cases reported, while in 2017, there were 1069. The situation radically worsened in 2020, when the number of cases increased sharply from 1253 to 1568 in 2021.The number of cases increased enormously in the year 2022 when compared to 2021.To protect children (under the age of 18) from sexual abuse, India's Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) went into effect in 2012. For the first time in legislation, offenses against children have been precisely specified. The Act stipulates severe penalties for sexual abusers, which are ranked according to how serious the offense was. The gender-neutral Act includes obscene photographs of children with other non-touch behaviors, like touching, in its list of sexual offenses. The Act includes child-friendly trial processes and a special court that can complete trials within a year.For a quick trial, the child's testimony must be recorded three days after the offense. The attempted commission of an offense is now also punishable. The act also prohibits the trafficking of minors for sex. The onus of proof is put on the defendant. The identity of the child cannot be revealed to the media. The Act mandates the reporting of sexual offenses following the highest international standards for child safety. Additionally, if someone spreads false information to defame anyone, even a kid, the law intends to punish them.

Limitations

The study was restricted to the state of Kerala, despite the reality that cyberattacks on young people are a global issue. Cyber laws must be updated and altered as quickly as possible due to how easily most violators avoid punishment for their offenses. To fill in any knowledge gaps and protect against internet threats while maintaining a healthy digital lifestyle, more research on the new cyber laws and educational policies on ICT is necessary. Other ICT curricula employed by all educational organisations weren't consideredduring this study. Furthermore, only pupils who attended schools from nine districts were included in the study.The likelihood of social media use among gifted students from special schools was not examined. Due to their greater vulnerability, this group of people may face greater cyber dangers than typical children. Cyber safety of these gifted populations is yet another concern to be addressed.

Conclusions

It is now crucial to teach youngsters how to stay safe online and to safeguard themselves from any form of cyber threats. The modification of the ICT curriculum in the school system is largely responsible for achievingthis level of sustainability. Through these, younger individualswill be able to anticipate the level of harm they may face online, and the assault on them can be made less fierce. The study suggests that torecognize the rational risks that their wards confront, parents need to spend more time interacting with them online. Their ability to contribute to a functioning world would be more greatly impacted by the degree of trauma they endure during their growth stages. A generation that is both physically and psychologically fit must be raised for this benefit. Additionally, efforts to halt cybercrimes targeting teens online must transition from a temporary project to a long-term one.

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