

ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SRI LANKA: A National Research on Incidence, Nature and Scope



State Ministry of Woman and Child
Development, Pre-School & Primary
Education, School Infrastructure &
Education Services



End Violence
Against Children



Save the Children

World Vision



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	1
Methodology	2
The Incidence, Nature and Scope of Online/Cyber Violence against Children (OVAC) in Sri Lanka	2
Awareness on Online/Cyber Violence	3
The Role of Mass Media	4
Views of the Children regarding the Existing Legal Mechanisms	4
Existing Technology Driven Response Mechanisms	5
Recommendations	6
1. Policy and Governance	6
2. Criminal Justice	8
3. Victim support	9
4. Societal	9
5. Industry	10
6. Media and Communication	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The digital/cyber landscape of Sri Lanka has been on a rapid transformation since the dawn of the new millennium, and virtually is on an accelerated growth since the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. Contemporary studies conducted in the Asia–Pacific, Americas and Europe have indicated that new forms of online/cyber abuse against children are on the rise such as cyber sexual exploitation, cyber bullying and extortion, online grooming and cyber/digitally enabled extremist/violent radicalization of children, among many others. In recent sporadic studies and statistics it has become evident that those types of cyber violence have been committed against the children of Sri Lanka over the span of the last decade. However, due to the lack of systematic studies on the issue, it has been hindering the policy makers and implementers from grasping the exact nature, scope and the impact of the problem. Therefore in 2019, the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs of Sri Lanka together with Save the Children International, World Vision Lanka and LEADS (project partner organizations) commissioned this research study on the incidence, nature and scope of online violence against children, and the mechanisms that respond to cases of online violence against children in Sri Lanka. This research is a part of a project supported by the GPEVAC that aims to end all forms of online violence against children in Sri Lanka.

This study has been based on three key objectives:

- To assess the incidence, magnitude and impact of online/cyber violence against children in Sri Lanka.
- To assess the nature and effectiveness of response and support mechanisms currently available for children in responding to incidents of online/cyber violence committed against them.
- To learn and incorporate the views and proposals of children on measures required to prevent online/cyber violence, and a responsive and impactful response mechanism, that addresses both the effective and efficient enforcement of the law, as well as provision of appropriate and effective psychosocial support. The research design and the research questions were developed in order to achieve the aforementioned three key objectives.

Methodology

This research has employed a fusion of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to grasp a clear picture of the issue of online/cyber violence against children in Sri Lanka. The original research design included a survey of 2400 children covering all 25 districts. However, due to the Covid 19 pandemic this design was reformed under a contingency plan. The largest portion of the data has been derived from a quantitative, one-to-one survey conducted with 1911 children covering all 25 districts of Sri Lanka (965 boys; 946 girls). Other tools included focus group discussions with children, key informant interviews with children and international experts cum national/provincial level stakeholders, and an intensive context / literature review cum legal gap analysis.

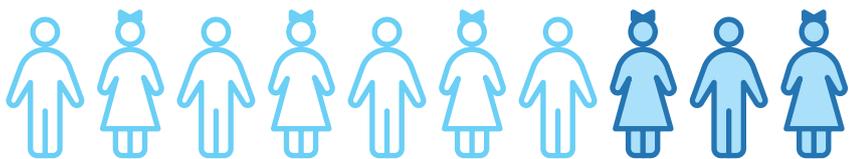
The research team together with the project partner organizations ensured that in the conduct of the research that the principles of 'no harm to children' and 'in the best interest of the child' were strictly observed. In order to ensure this all the personnel involved in the research were trained in child safeguarding and, perhaps for the first time in Sri Lanka, a Guideline on Conducting Research with Children was developed under the guidance of the Technical Working Group formed by the project partner organizations. Furthermore, a Child Risk Assessment Framework, especially designed for this research by the research team and the project partner organizations

has been employed. The research methodology received the approval of both the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, and the Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.

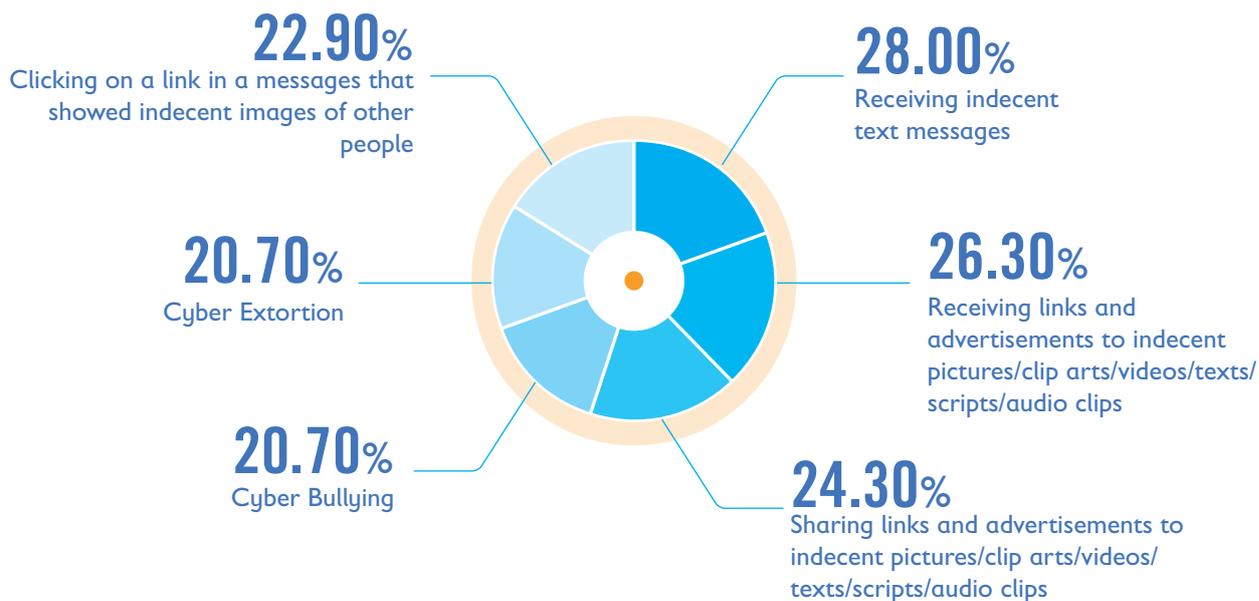
The Incidence, Nature and Scope of Online/Cyber Violence Against Children (OVAC) in Sri Lanka

The findings of the study revealed that over 28% of children have experienced some kind of online violence. In other words three out of every ten children interviewed in the study have experienced some sort of online violence. Irrespective of gender all children have suffered from online violence; however girls (29%) have suffered slightly more from online violence compared to boys (27%). These online violence include receiving an indecent message (28%), receiving indecent links and advertisements 26% and having an indecent link/message being shared in a group. In addition, 27% of children have experienced cyber bullying and extortion while nearly 20% have had an indecent image of them being shared on the internet. The findings suggest a significant prevalence of online violence against children in Sri Lanka.

Research on the incidence, nature and scope of online violence against children and the mechanisms that respond to cases of online violence against children.



Types of Online Violence



Of the children who have experienced online violence the most have experienced any form of online violence while using Facebook (Boys – Nearly 74% / Girls – nearly 58%), Instagram (Boys – nearly 41% / Girls – Nearly 52%) and Twitter platforms (Boys – 25% / Girls- Nearly 41%). This reveals that children using all social media platforms are vulnerable to online violence. Children are more likely to share an experience of online violence with a peer than an adult as a significant proportion (over 24%) % of children who have experienced violence had confided in a friend around his age about the incident. The children had rarely informed an adult about an instance of online violence and children identified generation gap and being afraid of being further victimized by adults deters them from revealing the experience of online violence to adults. Majority (61) of the children who had experienced violence stated that they were too scared to complain to an authority. Twenty five children stated they were threatened with revealing their personal information if they reported to authorities. Sixteen children stated they were threatened with their life. Another fourteen children stated they were given gifts to keep the online violence as a secret.

The children and the key informants identified characteristics that makes children vulnerable to online violence. The gender of the child is a key characteristic as the finding revealed that girls have a higher tendency to experience online violence (29%) than boys. Another characteristic was lack of parental supervision. Children and key informants agreed that lack of parental supervision allows perpetrators to exploit children. Moreover, sharing personal data and pictures publicly was also seen as a characteristic. Children felt that sharing these information publicly could lead to online violence such as edited pictures and identity theft.

Children identified impacts to be interrelated and complex. The key impacts identified by children includes isolation from family and peers due to shock and shame , decrease in academic performance, mental health issues and changes in behavioural changes. The level of impact of online violence varies according to subjective factors such as the personality of children, family background, support available to children at home and schools.

Awareness on Online/ Cyber Violence

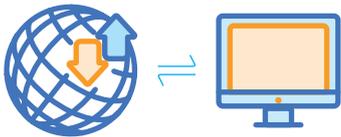
Children stated that majority of parents (73%) find it difficult to supervise children's internet as they lack awareness of how internet works and how children can be exposed to online violence against children. They also added that parents also lack an understanding of how to take legal measures when children experience online violence (69%) and majority of the children stated they would not confide in a parent if they experience an online violence. Moreover, ninety five percent of children believe educators have awareness about online violence. However children stated that they would not confide in a an educator as educators often blame and victimize the child for the online violence (67%), as educators do not protect confidentiality and privacy of children (19%) and nearly 10% of children stated that their educators/ teachers would create issues at school, while nearly 9% said they are afraid of their educators/teachers.



73% of parents find it difficult to supervise children's use of internet as they lack awareness of how the internet works and how children can be exposed online violence against children.

Characteristics that make children vulnerable to online violence.

- Trusting people you meet in online platforms too much
- Sharing personal information publicly on social media platforms.
- Lack of awareness of online violence
- Lack of supervision by parents



71% of children stated that internet service providers do not have a good understanding of online violence as they do very little to curb online violence. The key informants added to this criticism on two grounds; one is that the ISPs have failed to take responsibility for the internet service they provide, and secondly the ISPs' lack of support to law enforcement authorities.

Over 71% of children stated internet service providers do not have a good understanding of online violence as they do very little to curb online violence. The key informants added to the criticism on two grounds; one is that the ISPs have failed to take responsibility for the internet service they provide, and secondly the ISPs' lack of support to law enforcement.

The Role of Mass Media

Children also commented on the role of mass media in the battle against online violence. Over eighty four percent of children stated Sri Lankan mass media is aware of online violence. Nearly sixty six percent of children stated that (1254) media do not report cases of online violence ethically. According to the children there are number of factors pointing to irresponsible reporting of online violence. Nearly 64% of children stated mass media organizations do not protect the identity of children while reporting and nearly 10% stated media organizations try to make profits by reporting online violence. Moreover, children stated Over 4% media organizations broadcast programmes that sexualizes children and another 4% stated media reports sometimes can lead to cyber bullying and further harm to victimized children.

Nearly **66%**



of children stated that the media does not report cases of online violence ethically. Children felt that mess media does not protect the identity of children while reporting and they try to make profit by reporting online violence. In addition, children stated that media organizations broadcast programmes that sexualize children and such reports head to further harassment.

Views of the Children regarding the Existing Legal Mechanisms

The study also explored the legal dimension of online violence against children in Sri Lanka. Findings suggest that majority of children (65%) found the existing laws against online violence to be inadequate and requires further improvements. The key informant also agreed with the premise and suggested to amend existing law to efficiently address online violence. Due to the inadequacy of law and efficient legal procedures 92% of children stated that they would not seek legal support when faced with online violence. They also identified other factors that deter children from seeking legal support such as fear of the perpetrator (3%), as they consider online violence to be less of a harm (38%), because taking legal can action can create issues in the future as legal procedures take a long time to resolve a case (31%) and as children try to resolve the issues by themselves (28%).

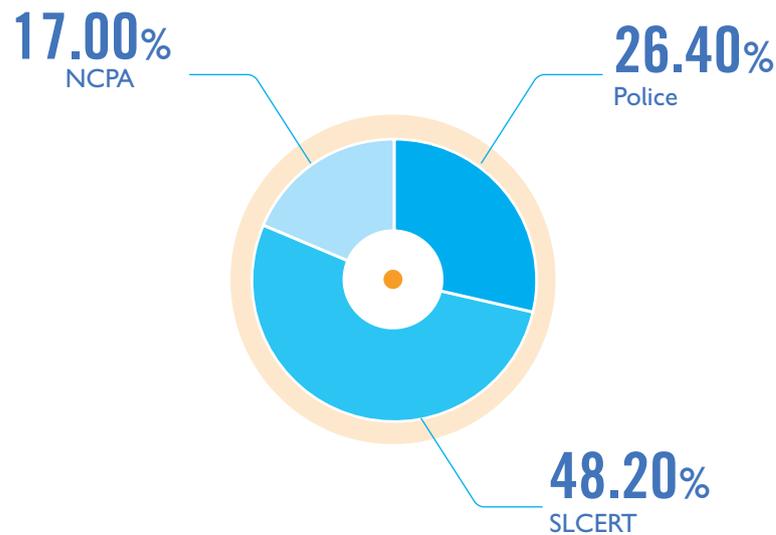


92% of children would not take legal action against the perpetrator.



65% of children found laws against online violence to be in adequate.

Complaining to Legal Authorities



Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Support



Existing Technology Driven Response Mechanisms

In addition to the sociological and legal dimension the study explored the cyber security dimension of online violence against children. The findings revealed that Sri Lanka needs to take new and robust action to curb online violence. The key informants suggested that open source software's can be utilized to track down Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). The study identified that the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) has taken many steps including establishing a cybercrime unit to fight OVAC and introducing a help line etc. However, further improvement has to be made to respond to OVAC efficiently and effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted with an overall goal of understanding the seriousness of the online violence against children in Sri Lanka, thereby national strategies and policies to be informed and designed based on evidence provided by the study. The study especially focused on providing evidence to introduce a National Strategy to address Online Violence Against Children in Sri Lanka as part of the National Child Protection Policy implementation framework. The draft National strategy will be further informed and strengthened by the evidence and recommendations provided by this study. Therefore, our recommendations will be presented within key areas of the “Model National Response Mechanism” introduced by the WEPROTEC Global Alliance.

1. Policy and Governance

Sri Lanka has a progressive governance and policy landscape for children’s protection, however those recommendations for the policy and governance areas cover the following key focus areas a). National level government role and accountability b). Situation analysis and monitoring of the threats and vulnerabilities to children and c). Comprehensive and effective legal framework to investigate offenders and protection of victims.

- 1.1 The National Strategy developed to address online violence should be fully implemented along with the 5 year Action Plan to implement the National Child Protection Policy. The National strategy may be fully incorporated in to the Child Protection Policy Action Plan to create cohesive national strategy to address violence against children in Sri Lanka with an equal emphasis on online violence against children.
- 1.2 The Action Plan to implement the National Policy on Child Protection (NCPA, October 2019) and/ or other child protection policies, strategies should adopt coherent definitions, terminologies and scoping to recognize the increasingly alarming threats and development of crimes committed against children online.
- 1.3 The National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) should facilitate a uniform system to coordinate among the relevant agencies and authorities including the Attorney General’s Department, Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, SLCERT, Sri Lanka Police, all the relevant ministries, private sector actors, UN and Civil society actors to better improve and enforce laws, policies, and procedures to adequately prevent and respond to online violence against children. The actions that

NCPA

Incorporate a Special section on online violence against children to the National Policy on Child Protection.

Introduce technical and legal revision to Penal code sections:

286A, 286B, 288A, 288B, 308, 308A, 360B, 360C, 365, 365A and 365B, 368



SLCERT must function as the focal point for all types of online violence in Sri Lanka



Liability of parents, guardians, caregivers, principals and teachers as well as all adults who have knowledge about OVAC and omitted to protect children from it should be made criminally responsible for non-disclosure of know information.

could be taken include CSAM content removal, online user administration, monitoring, international cooperation, victim support, rigorous punishment and penalties on perpetrators of violence. It is however pointed out that the monitoring of online activities should be done within the limits of legitimate privacy of individuals.

- 1.4 Sri Lanka is a State party to all the major international human rights instruments related to children. Therefore, Sri Lanka has the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill International Conventions and Agreements. In order to provide national enforcement for such Conventions and Agreements, national laws and policies should be formed and reformed in compatibility with the UNCRC, optional protocol ii and other child rights instruments. Especially, the relevant organs of State should enact effective legislation, amend existing laws and interpret the existing laws to incorporate new developments.
- 1.5 The Budapest Convention should be adopted and recognized domestically without any reservations and must be looked to as basic guidance on matters related to OVAC. The Convention aims to pursue, as a matter of priority, a common criminal policy aimed at the protecting society from cybercrimes, building the capacity of countries to combat cybercrime and functions as a mutual information sharing channel in order to facilitate better law enforcement. The legislature should take prompt action to meet these obligations and make necessary additions and amendments to the law. This should include measures to establish the offences listed in the Convention as criminal offences under the domestic law.
- 1.6 The Constitution of Sri Lanka - a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. However, currently, the 1978 Constitution does not include adequate Constitutional provisions to guarantee the best interests of the Child. It is recommended to introduce a new provision to the fundamental rights chapter to specifically provide for the rights, protection and care of children akin to the provisions included in the Constitutions of South Africa, Nepal and Kenya. Further, as the current provisions on the Directive Principles on State policy are not directly enforceable in courts of law and remains non-justiciable, it is recommended that these duties of the State be amended in the forthcoming Constitutional Amendment to take on a justiciable form.



Establish a ticketing system to track complaints lodged to NCAP. The ticketing system could be manually developed with the support of ICTA, University of Colombo School of Computing or an existing complaint management software such as Zendesk Support Suite or i-Sight Case Management.

- 1.7 The Penal Code – The Penal Code does not adequately and explicitly provide for the protection, prevention and punishments for online related violence as articulated in the Budapest Convention. Therefore, technical and legal revision of Penal Code sections: 286A, 286B, 288A, 288B, 308, 308A, 360B, 360C, 365, 365A and 365B, 368 is important.
- 1.8 The definition of a child should be uniform across the existing legal framework in Sri Lanka. In the event it is not, the technicalities of age will cause a number of impediments to the law enforcement authorities. Therefore, the law should be amended to facilitate this.
- 1.9 “Cybercrimes” are defined generally as crimes committed through the internet using a computer. This includes a wide range of offences against computer data and systems (such as ‘hacking’), computer-related forgery and fraud (such as ‘phishing’), content offences (such as disseminating child pornography), and copyright offences (such as the dissemination of pirated content). The above classifications should be defined and included in the existing legislation to fill the vacuums.
- 1.10 The Computer Crimes Act, No. 24 of 2007 inherently has many deficits to be filled and reformed. As investigatory powers given under this Act are only for the prescribed crimes itemized in it, the Act cannot be applied beyond those provisions. It is a limitation on the investigatory authority of law enforcement for crimes relating to OVAC. Therefore, the act should be reviewed and reformed to allow adequate legal provisions to act upon online violence against children and women.



Establish a uniform system, structure and coordination among the relevant agencies.

Provide international training opportunities to the staff members of the cyber-crime unit of NCPA. These trainings can be obtained from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center, Internet Watch Foundation UK, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States of America and Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online.



2. Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice includes following sub areas a). Dedicated law enforcement b). Judiciary and prosecutors c). Offender management process d). Access to image data base. The following recommendations can improve Sri Lankan criminal Justice process to better response to OVAC.

- 2.1 The Criminal Procedure Code contains some procedural laws that are not child friendly. Particularly, police investigations are done in a traditional manner is not equipped to provide effective responses to OVAC. Existing law enforcement procedures re-victimize children come in contact with law as victims of violence. This does not ensure the best interests of the child since child is further harmed and victimized in the justice process. Therefore, there is a need to amend relevant CPC provisions to be on par with international standards and best practices. Police Officers are bound by Departmental Orders (DOs). These DOs are not sufficiently updated to bring police investigations into a child friendly procedure. Hence, it is recommended the DOs be amended in relation to investigations into matters pertaining to children with a special section on OVAC.
- 2.2 At present, there are multiple actors who play diverse roles in receiving complaints of OVAC. Therefore, a centralized system should be established to receive complaints within the law-enforcement and technical institutions. A coordination mechanism should be established among NCPA, computer crime division of the CID, SLCERT and TRC to be able to effectively respond to the incidents of online violence against children.

- 2.3 Cyber-crimes and online violence against children are often taken place in global platforms which requires international cooperation. Therefore, the government of Sri Lanka (especially NCPA and CID) should initiate collaboration and coordination with international mechanisms that tackles online violence against children. This could include international mechanisms such as Interpol, FBI, Internet Watch Foundation, NECMEC, Facebook and other technology and response mechanisms. This will also enable further technical and technological knowledge building in to local mechanisms such as Cyber Crimes Unit at the National Child Protection Authority.
- 2.4 The investigation process of the cyber-crime unit at the NCPA should be further improved by adopting new and technology based methods to investigate online violence against children. It is recommended to update the investigative methods such as using open source VIC hash sets, custom CSAM Search Profiles, Web crawler, on-scene keyword matching, automatically classify images and videos with AI/ML and Photo DNA. The technical advice can be obtained from SLCERT, IWF and INTERPOL.
- 2.5 The National Child Protection Authority and Cyber Crime Unit of the CID should work in collaboration with the Interpol to be able to get support from their international Child Sexual Exploitation data base and respond to incidents flagged by the Interpol in the country.



INTERPOL



IWF
Internet
Watch
Foundation

Initiate collaborations with international organizations that tackle online violence against children. Such as INTERPOL, FBI and IWF. It is important for the cyber-crime unit of NCPA to collaborate with these organizations and share knowledge and technology.

3. Victim support

Victim support is a critical process to be able to effectively support victims of any form of violence including online violence. Victims support focus includes a). Integrated services including after care b). Child protection work force c). Accessible procedures for reporting, referral and remedies d). Child helpline.

- 3.1 The National Child Protection Authority has further strengthened the National Child Helpline (1929) by the introduction of the Child Protection Mobile App, which enables children to easy accessible to reporting incidents of online violence and risks. The law enforcement and after care (victims support unit) of the NCPA and other stakeholders must effectively and efficiently respond to the reported incidents from a victim centered approach.
- 3.2 Significant proportion of the children who experienced some form of online violence informed the impact lasted from few days to months, therefore psycho-social support critical support for victims of online violence. KII also revealed that serious online violence cases had long lasting psychological impact on children, in some incidents online abuse had let to offline violence, blackmailing and commercial exploitation creating further complex issues and impact for children. Therefore psycho-social support to address issues including social norms and stigma should be provided for child victims of online violence.
- 3.3 Available mechanisms for other forms of violence and abuse such as case management, referral should also be utilized to provide family and community based care and protection for child victims of online violence.
- 3.4 High prevalence of sharing Child Sexual Abuse Materials was identified by both the children and key informants, re-victimisation and increased risks are created as a result of CSAM content being shared. Therefore, as part of the victim support the content removal should be prioritized by the authorities.



Introducing an educational reform to include lessons of online violence against children to the existing curriculum of civic studies and making civic studies a mandatory subject.



Introduce online awareness programmes in collaboration with online platforms

- 3.5 The key informant interviews revealed that the employees of the cybercrime unit of NCPA requires further training on case management, use of new technologies , software's ,storing and post management of evidence. Therefore it is recommended to provide international training opportunities to the staff of cybercrime unit. These trainings can be obtained from Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center, Internet Watch Foundation UK, Federal Bureau of Investigation, NECMEC and Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. The State Ministry of Women and Child Development should may request the support of SLCERT and Ministry of Defense in order to collaborate with the mentioned organizations.

4. Societal

Societal recommendations focus on creating an environment where violence can be prevented through support mechanisms, education and empowering children. This includes a). Education programmes b). Children's participation c). Preventing offenders committing crimes again through offender supports.

- 4.1 Majority of the children proposed to include lessons on online violence against children to formal education. Children identified Civic Studies to be the most appropriate subject for this purpose. The State Ministry of Women and Child Development and specifically NCPA could coordinate with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to develop the curriculum. The curriculum should cover areas such as the prevalence of online violence, types of online violence, legal measures that can be taken against online violence, and methods of lodging complaints. The curriculum can be introduced to grade nine as over forty five percent of children who were interviewed in the study had first used the internet between thirteen and fifteen years of age.



Conduct awareness programmes for children and parents.



Increase the awareness and sensitization of educators through training programmes.



Upgrade the investigation methods used by the cyber-crime unit. It is recommended to Update the investigative methods such as using open source VIC hash sets. Custom CSAM Search Profiles, on-scene keyword matching, automatic classification of images and videos with AI/ML and Photo DNA.

- 4.2 Thirty two percent of the children interviewed in the study were unaware about the prevalence of online violence against children in Sri Lanka. Majority of these children were girls (nearly fifty seven percent). Children interviewed in the study identified the lack of awareness of online violence as a major factor that makes children vulnerable. Therefore, the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), Department of Probation and Child Care Services, Children's Secretariat, private sector and civil society organisations should continue to increase awareness among children.
- 4.3 Understanding children's experiences and listen their views is a critically important in all settings, children's views should be accounted in all policies and procedures as a principle approach to address online violence. Further research should be conducted to deep dive in to children's experiences on online platforms to understand risks, vulnerabilities and solutions.
- 4.4. NCPA, Children's Secretariat and the Department of Probation could explore the possibility of producing short instructional videos using reported cases in Sinhala and Tamil Languages. These can be played as advertisements on online platforms and at awareness raising programmes at school level.
- 4.5 The findings identified Facebook, Whatsapp, Messenger, Instagram, Google and YouTube to be the most frequently used online platforms by children. National Child Protection Authority and the State Ministry of Women and Child Development should request platforms such as Facebook and Google in order to advertise on these platforms free of charge. ICTA, SLCERT and non-governmental organizations who has ability to connect globally can aid NCPA and the ministry to coordinate with online platforms as they already have established working relationship with platforms such as Tech-coalition.

- 4.6 Children identified lack of supervision by parents (64%) as a key factor that exposes children to online violence. In addition, majority of the children stated that they would not confide in a parent as they lack knowledge of online usage and as they are afraid of further victimization by their parents.

Therefore it is important to integrate parents into awareness programmes conducted at schools and taking measures to increase the awareness of parents. The awareness programmes should enlighten parents on telltale signs of online violence, web applications and websites that are frequently used by children, working on building close relationships with children, supervising the internet usage of children without infringing on appropriate use of the internet, methods of support victimized children, refraining from further victimization of children, taking appropriate legal action, supporting children in the post case management period and the impacts of online violence. The State Ministry of Women and Child Development should seek the support of SLCERT and ICTA to develop content.

- 4.7 Only 5.1% of children who were interviewed in the study stated that they would inform a teacher as they are afraid of victimization and breaching of confidentiality. Therefore, teachers should be provide adequate training and information to better skilled to approach issues such as online violence. This may include ethical approaches, protecting privacy and confidentiality, creating an enabling environment to discuss issues impacting children, empathizing with victimized children and ways of which they can provide support and referral. The NCPA should collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, specifically with the National Institute of Education for these purposes.

5. Industry

Private sector actors including app developers, internet service providers, social media platforms and many other actors in the industry are key to effectively address online violence against children more than any other issue impacting children. The industry focus recommendations includes a). Local removal and blocking CSAM b). Reporting Child sexual abuse and exploitation c). Innovative and technological solutions 4). Corporate social responsibility.



Provide secure and dedicated hardware such as technically appropriate servers, offline storing devices, computers and internet connections to the cyber-crime unit of NCPA.

- 5.1 The findings of the study revealed that the internet service providers (ISP's) of Sri Lanka do not play a significant role in the battle against online violence. The KII's revealed that NCPA and non-governmental organizations have to go through a long legal process to gain access to phone and internet use records. As the ISP they have a responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing their customers and therefore should be made a key stakeholder in the fight against online violence. Therefore, it is recommended that NCPA should collaborate with the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) and introduce new regulations to make ISPs responsible for supporting authorities to obtain phone records and internet usage histories more efficiently. NCPA can obtain the technical expertise of SLCERT and ICTA Sri Lanka when collaboration with TRCSL).
- 5.2 Global technological industry actors and service providers should cooperate with local authorities through their in-country or regional hubs to effectively and efficiently address online violence against children, especially removing/blocking CSAM and other harmful content, pages and websites.



NCAP should collaborate with the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission and introduce new regulations to swiftly obtain phone records and internet histories.

6. Media and Communication

Media, social media and other communication platforms can play a major role in educating, campaigning and influencing to prevent and protect children from OV, similarly these platforms can also contribute to further vulnerable children. Media and communication should focus on a) Ethical and informed media reporting and b). Universal terminology.

- 6.1 All stakeholders including media should use technically accurate, contextually relevant (local language) and universal terminologies in all media, communication and campaign work to ensure issues of online violence is accurately recognize in all settings.
- 6.2 65.6% of child participants believed that media does not report incidents of online violence ethically. KIIs also revealed that media is sensationalizing the incidents of online violence and report inaccurately. Therefore, media personals should be provided with training and reference materials to improve ethical reporting. NCPA should further extend their Media ethics guideline to include online violence specific areas and facilitate trainings for media personals.
- 6.3 All child participants and key informants believed that media can play a vital role in educating, challenging social norms and sensitizing mass. Media institutions and child protection stakeholders should improve their collaboration and cooperation to use media more effectively.

