

Title: Exploring Factors of and Solutions to Internet Facilitated Cybersex Trafficking and Prostitution in Underage Girls in Thailand

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Abstract:

Cybercrimes are a growing threat on the internet; women are often subjected to extraneous harassment and derogatory treatment on the basis of their sex. Further, young girls are overtly sexualized online, especially through social media, given that popularity correlates with sexual appeal, which contributes to an increased demand in pedophilic porn. The internet has become the top market for porn, which often depicts violence toward women, with harmful psychological consequences regarding perceptions of what is acceptable treatment of women. Lastly, the internet has become the biggest facilitator in illegal activities, including sex trafficking, and plays a large role in allowing traffickers to groom, then prey on victims, transport victims, find customers, and sell the services of the victims repeatedly without being caught or punished. In Thailand, female minors are often coerced and manipulated into producing child pornography for abusers over chat rooms, messaging apps, and video call apps, where perpetrators may pay to reward this behavior. This is enabled because of the high poverty rates, difficulty in finding sustainable and well paying entry-level jobs, and high customer demand from older western. The solution is made of two parts: education and action. The educational aspect is intended to raise awareness because it is rare for children to recognize when they are being abused and exploited. Not only will this be added to Thai educational curricula, but also incorporated into other social safety nets and supports, such as public transportation and food welfare programs, to ensure that children who are not enrolled in school will also be made aware. The action-based aspect supports children who are already entangled in abusive online relationships to identify potential (or confirmed) perpetrators through a monetary or welfare based incentive aimed toward the girls, but with an emphasis on their roles as victims without stigmatizing them. This enables the girls to choose to bring the information to the authorities over participating in cybersex and child pornography.