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CHILD ABUSE REPORTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE: ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND CYBER LAWS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital technologies and social media platforms has significantly transformed the nature and scope of child abuse in contemporary society. While the internet has created unprecedented opportunities for communication, education, and social interaction, it has also facilitated new forms of exploitation, particularly against children. Online child abuse manifests through activities such as cyber grooming, dissemination of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), online harassment, and exploitation through digital platforms. Social media networks, messaging applications, and online forums have increasingly become spaces where offenders exploit anonymity and technological tools to target minors. Consequently, the reporting and regulation of such offences have become a critical concern within modern legal systems.

This research paper examines the role of social media platforms and cyber laws in addressing the reporting of child abuse in the digital age. It analyzes the legal framework governing online child protection in India, particularly focusing on the obligations created under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and the Information Technology Act, 2000. The study highlights how mandatory reporting provisions, intermediary liability rules, and cybercrime regulations contribute to the detection and reporting of offences involving children in online environments. It also explores the role played by digital intermediaries such as social media companies in monitoring user-generated content, implementing technological tools for detection, and cooperating with law enforcement authorities.

Furthermore, the paper identifies several challenges associated with reporting online child abuse, including underreporting, jurisdictional complexities, technological barriers, and concerns related to privacy and freedom of expression. The research emphasizes the need for stronger regulatory frameworks, enhanced technological solutions, and improved coordination among governments, law enforcement agencies, and digital platforms. Ultimately, the study argues that effective protection of children in cyberspace requires a comprehensive approach that integrates legal accountability, technological innovation, public awareness, and international cooperation.

Keywords: Child Abuse, Cyber Law, Online Exploitation, Mandatory Reporting, Social Media Regulation, Digital Child Protection.

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I. Introduction

Digital revolution has redefined the ways of communication, sharing of information and socialization in the entire globe. Social networks have been integrated as the place where people communicate, broadcast content and establish communities. Nonetheless, this growth of digital communication has also opened up new prospects of crime, such as children abuse and child exploitation in different ways[583]. Child abuse has no longer been restricted to physical places in the digital era, but it is more pronounced in the areas of online space through social networking sites, messaging programs, game worlds, and online forums. Online child sexual abuse material (CSAM), cyber grooming, and digital harassment[584] have proceeded to pose some serious legal and ethical questions to governments, law enforcement agencies, and technology companies.

The entire availability of the internet has greatly exposed children to abuse over the internet. The internet provides a perfect avenue by which criminals groom, control, and use minors by taking advantage of the anonymity and global nature of the internet. The social internet sites facilitate the speedy transmission of abusive content and in this case, it is hard to regulate or track the content after being published. The availability of such content has therefore been reported and eliminated making it an important aspect of child protection on the internet.

The legal system that governs the issue of child abuse online in India has surpassed laws like: the Protection of Children from Sexual offences act, 2012[585] and the information technology Act, 2000. Such pieces of legislation hold responsible both individuals and intermediaries to report cases of child abuse and avoid the spread of exploitative material. Subsection 19 of the POCSO Act[586] provides a compulsory responsibility on any individual or organization, which is aware of child sexual crimes, to report the issue to the police force. Failure to report of such offences could lead to criminal negligence of Section 21 of the Act.

Moreover, the importance of digital intermediaries who include social media companies, internet service providers, and online platforms in identifying illegal content and reporting them, is gradually being accepted by cyber laws. Jurisdiction and regulatory authorities have noted that the intermediaries should not just delete these harmful materials but should also collaborate with the law enforcers when reporting crimes that pertain to child exploitation.

The growing prevalence of online child abuse cases demonstrates the urgent need for effective reporting mechanisms, robust legal frameworks, and technological solutions. Law enforcement agencies in India have begun implementing specialized mechanisms such as cybercrime portals and coordinated reporting systems to tackle such offences. For example, authorities have directed social media platforms to integrate with centralized reporting systems to enable faster detection and removal of abusive content.

This research paper aims to analyze the role of social media platforms and cyber laws in facilitating the reporting of child abuse in the digital age. It examines the legal obligations imposed on digital intermediaries, the challenges faced in enforcement, and the need for improved cooperation between technology companies and law enforcement agencies.

2. Concept of Child Abuse in the Digital Environment

Child abuse traditionally refers to any act that harms or threatens the physical, emotional,

[583] Caffo, Ernesto, Lisa Asta, and Francesca Scandroglio. "Child abuse and exploitation: What we know about the problem and new perspectives." Online child sexual exploitation: Treatment and prevention of abuse in a digital world. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021. 3-21.

[584] Mladenović, Miljana, Vera Ošmjanski, and Staša Vujičić Stanković. "Cyber-aggression, cyberbullying, and cyber-grooming: A survey and research challenges." ACM Computing Surveys (CSUR) 54.1 (2021): 1-42.

[585] Seth, Rajeev, and R. N. Srivastava. "Child Sexual Abuse: Management and prevention, and protection of children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act." Indian pediatrics 54.11 (2017): 949-953.

[586] Kabasi, Sanjucta, and Shubhankar Kabasi. "The rights of minor victims of sexual offences under the POCSO Act." Issue 1 Indian JL & Legal Rsch. 5 (2023): 1.

psychological, or sexual well-being of a child. With the emergence of digital technologies, the nature of abuse has evolved to include various online forms of exploitation. Digital child abuse encompasses activities such as online grooming, cyberbullying, exposure to sexually explicit content, and the creation or distribution of child sexual abuse material.

Online child sexual abuse material[587] represents one of the most serious forms of digital exploitation. Such material includes photographs, videos, or other digital content depicting minors engaged in explicit sexual acts or subjected to exploitation. The circulation of such material on the internet often occurs through social media platforms, messaging services, or encrypted networks. Once shared online, the content can spread rapidly across multiple platforms, making its removal extremely difficult.

Another emerging form of digital abuse is online grooming. Grooming refers to the process by which offenders establish emotional connections with children through online platforms in order to manipulate or exploit them sexually. Offenders frequently pose as peers or trusted individuals and gradually build trust with victims. Social media platforms provide opportunities for offenders to contact children anonymously, making detection more difficult.

Cyberbullying is another significant issue affecting children in the digital environment. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying[588] can occur continuously and reach a wide audience through online platforms. Victims may experience severe psychological harm, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation.

The digital environment also enables offenders to create fake identities or anonymous accounts, making it difficult for authorities to identify perpetrators. This anonymity allows offenders to operate across different jurisdictions, complicating the process of investigation and prosecution. Moreover, technological tools such as encryption, private messaging applications, and dark web platforms further complicate law enforcement efforts.

In response to these challenges, legal systems around the world have begun to adapt their regulatory frameworks to address digital forms of child abuse. Governments have introduced laws that criminalize the creation, distribution, and possession of child sexual abuse material, as well as online grooming and cyber harassment. Additionally, technology companies are increasingly expected to implement monitoring systems and reporting mechanisms to detect abusive content.

3. Growth of Child Abuse in the Digital Age

The rapid expansion of internet connectivity and social media usage has significantly increased the scale and complexity of child abuse cases worldwide. Millions of children use social media platforms daily for communication, entertainment, and education. While these platforms offer numerous benefits, they also expose children to potential risks from malicious actors.

The digital environment allows offenders to exploit children without physical proximity. Through messaging applications, video chats, and online gaming platforms, offenders can establish contact with children from different geographical locations. This global connectivity increases the difficulty of monitoring and regulating harmful activities.

Reports from law enforcement agencies indicate a steady increase in cases involving online child sexual exploitation. Authorities have observed a rise in the sharing of child sexual abuse material across messaging platforms and websites. Investigations have revealed that such content often originates from international

[587] Steel, Chad MS, et al. "A systematic review of cognitive distortions in online child sexual exploitation material offenders." Aggression and violent behavior 51 (2020): 101375.
[588] Slonje, Robert, Peter K. Smith, and Ann Frisén. "The nature of cyberbullying, and strategies for prevention." Computers in human behavior 29.1 (2013): 26-32.

networks, requiring cross-border cooperation among law enforcement agencies.

Technological advancements have also facilitated the creation of new forms of abuse. For example, deepfake technology[589] can be used to generate manipulated images or videos depicting children in explicit situations. Such developments pose significant challenges for regulators and law enforcement authorities.

Social media platforms play a central role in the digital ecosystem where such crimes occur. Platforms allow users to share content instantly with a global audience. Although many platforms implement community guidelines and moderation systems, the vast volume of user-generated content makes it difficult to monitor every instance of abuse. Consequently, reporting mechanisms become essential for identifying and removing harmful content.

Governments and international organizations have recognized the need for stronger digital governance to protect children from online exploitation. Initiatives such as centralized reporting portals and international cooperation mechanisms aim to facilitate faster identification and removal of abusive material. For instance, Indian authorities have encouraged social media companies to integrate with specialized reporting platforms that enable real-time takedown of illegal content involving minors.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain in ensuring effective reporting and enforcement. Many victims hesitate to report abuse due to fear, stigma, or lack of awareness. Additionally, the cross-border nature of digital crimes often complicates investigations and legal proceedings.

4. Importance of Reporting Child Abuse Online

Reporting plays a critical role in combating child abuse in digital environments. Timely reporting enables authorities to identify victims, remove harmful content, and prosecute offenders. Without proper reporting mechanisms, abusive content may continue to circulate online, causing further harm to victims.

Mandatory reporting laws are designed to ensure that individuals and institutions take responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse. These laws impose legal obligations on professionals such as teachers, healthcare workers, and social workers, as well as on organizations that may encounter evidence of abuse. In the context of digital platforms, intermediaries such as social media companies are increasingly expected to detect and report abusive content.

Effective reporting systems must be accessible, efficient, and responsive. Users should be able to report abusive content easily through online platforms or government portals. Once a report is filed, authorities must act promptly to investigate the matter and take appropriate legal action.

Public awareness is also essential in encouraging reporting. Many individuals may encounter abusive content online but may not know how to report it or may underestimate its seriousness. Educational initiatives and awareness campaigns can help inform users about the importance of reporting child abuse and the legal consequences of failing to do so.

Ultimately, reporting mechanisms form the foundation of an effective child protection system in the digital age. By enabling rapid identification and removal of abusive content, reporting systems help prevent further victimization and contribute to a safer online environment for children.

5. Legal Framework Addressing Online Child Abuse in India

The increasing prevalence of child abuse in digital spaces has compelled governments to strengthen legal mechanisms aimed at protecting children from online exploitation. In India, a combination of criminal statutes, cyber laws, and child protection legislation collectively regulate offences related to online child abuse

[589] Mahmud, Bahar Uddin, and Afsana Sharmin. "Deep insights of deepfake technology: A review." arXiv preprint arXiv:2105.00192 (2021).

and establish obligations regarding reporting and investigation. Among the most significant laws addressing this issue are the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. These statutes provide the legal foundation for identifying, reporting, and prosecuting offences involving child exploitation in digital environments.

The Indian legal framework recognizes that the internet has transformed the nature of sexual offences against children. Traditional legal provisions dealing with physical abuse have been expanded to include digital offences such as online grooming, dissemination of child sexual abuse material, and cyber harassment. The law also places emphasis on mandatory reporting, recognizing that early detection and reporting are essential to prevent further harm to victims.

In addition to domestic laws, India also participates in various international initiatives aimed at combating online child exploitation. International cooperation is particularly important because cybercrimes often involve offenders operating across national boundaries. Therefore, effective enforcement requires coordination between domestic authorities, international law enforcement agencies, and digital service providers.

6. Mandatory Reporting under Child Protection Laws

One of the most important legal mechanisms for combating child abuse is the concept of mandatory reporting. Mandatory reporting refers to the legal obligation imposed on individuals and institutions to report suspected cases of child abuse to appropriate authorities. This obligation is particularly relevant in digital environments where harmful content may be encountered by social media platforms, internet service providers, educators, or members of the public.

Under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO), mandatory reporting plays a central role in ensuring that offences against children are promptly brought to the attention of law enforcement authorities. Section 19 of the Act requires any person who has knowledge or apprehension that an offence under the Act has been committed to report the matter to the police or a special juvenile police unit. The provision applies broadly to individuals, institutions, and professionals who may come into contact with evidence of abuse.

Failure to report such offences constitutes a punishable offence under Section 21 of the Act. This provision emphasizes the seriousness with which the law treats the concealment or non-reporting of child sexual abuse. The purpose of mandatory reporting is to ensure that cases are not suppressed due to social stigma, fear of retaliation, or institutional negligence.

In the digital context, mandatory reporting has significant implications for online platforms and intermediaries. Social media companies, messaging platforms, and online service providers may encounter instances where users upload or share content depicting child sexual exploitation. When such content is detected, platforms are expected to take immediate steps to remove the material and notify relevant authorities.

Mandatory reporting provisions are intended to create a system of shared responsibility among individuals, institutions, and digital intermediaries. By requiring all stakeholders to report suspected abuse, the law seeks to establish a comprehensive mechanism for protecting children from exploitation.

7. Cyber Laws and Regulation of Online Content

The digital nature of online child abuse requires legal mechanisms that specifically regulate electronic communication and internet-based activities. In India, cyber offences are primarily governed by the Information Technology Act, 2000, which provides the legal framework for

addressing crimes committed through electronic means.

Several provisions of the Information Technology Act are relevant to offences involving online child exploitation. Section 67B of the Act specifically criminalizes the publication, transmission, or browsing of material depicting children engaged in sexually explicit acts[590]. The provision prohibits the creation, distribution, and consumption of such content in electronic form. Individuals found guilty under this provision may face imprisonment and financial penalties.

The Information Technology Act also regulates the role of intermediaries such as social media companies and internet service providers. Under Section 79 of the Act, intermediaries may receive conditional immunity from liability for user-generated content if they comply with due diligence requirements. However, this protection is not absolute. If intermediaries fail to act upon receiving knowledge of illegal content, they may lose their safe harbor protection and become liable for facilitating the offence.

To strengthen regulatory oversight, the government introduced the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021[591]. These rules impose specific obligations on social media platforms, including the requirement to establish grievance redressal mechanisms, remove unlawful content within specified time frames, and cooperate with law enforcement agencies during investigations.

The intermediary rules also require platforms to appoint compliance officers, nodal contact persons, and grievance officers responsible for addressing user complaints. In cases involving child sexual abuse material, platforms are expected to act swiftly by removing the content and reporting the matter to appropriate authorities.

These cyber regulations reflect the evolving recognition that digital intermediaries play a crucial role in maintaining online safety. By imposing due diligence obligations on platforms, the law aims to prevent the spread of harmful content and ensure that digital services do not become channels for criminal activities.

8. Role of Law Enforcement and Cybercrime Reporting Mechanisms

The enforcement of laws relating to online child abuse depends heavily on the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms and the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate cyber offences. Recognizing the increasing complexity of cybercrimes, the Indian government has established specialized cybercrime units and digital reporting platforms.

One of the most important initiatives in this regard is the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, which allows individuals to report cyber offences, including cases involving child sexual exploitation and abuse. This portal enables victims, parents, and members of the public to submit complaints electronically, thereby facilitating quicker responses from law enforcement authorities.

Specialized units within the police system have also been created to investigate cyber offences involving children. These units often work in collaboration with digital forensic experts to trace online offenders and collect electronic evidence. Digital investigations[592] may involve tracking IP addresses[593], analyzing metadata, and recovering deleted files from electronic devices.

Another important aspect of enforcement is international cooperation. Because online child abuse networks often operate across national boundaries, law enforcement agencies must coordinate with foreign authorities and international organizations. Collaborative efforts

[590] Manoj, Daniel, et al. "Behind the screens: Understanding the gaps in India's fight against online child sexual abuse and exploitation." Child Protection and Practice 4 (2025): 100088.
[591] Guha, Sumeet, and Shreya Matilal. "Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021-A Reassessment of the Contours and Limits." NUJS J. Regul. Stud. 8 (2023): 32.
[592] Wilson-Kovacs, Dana. "Digital media investigators: challenges and opportunities in the use of digital forensics in police investigations in England and Wales." Policing: An International Journal 44.4 (2021): 669-682.
[593] Aravind, T. Nithesh, A. Mukundh, and R. Vijayakumar. "Tracing IP addresses behind Vpn/Proxy servers." 2023 International Conference on Networking and Communications (ICNWC). IEEE, 2023.

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enable investigators to track offenders who operate in multiple jurisdictions and to dismantle organized networks involved in child exploitation.

However, despite these initiatives, several challenges continue to affect the effectiveness of enforcement. Limited technological resources, lack of specialized training among investigators, and delays in cross-border cooperation may hinder the timely investigation of cases. Moreover, encrypted communication platforms and anonymous networks often make it difficult to identify offenders.

To address these challenges, governments must invest in advanced digital forensic capabilities and strengthen partnerships between law enforcement agencies and technology companies. Improved cooperation between these stakeholders is essential for detecting and reporting online child abuse effectively.

9. Role of Social Media Platforms in Reporting Child Abuse

Social media platforms have become central actors in the digital ecosystem where online communication and content sharing occur. Platforms such as Meta Platforms, Google, and X Corp. host billions of users who generate vast amounts of digital content daily. While these platforms provide opportunities for communication, learning, and social engagement, they also create environments where harmful activities, including child abuse and exploitation, may occur. Consequently, social media companies play a crucial role in detecting, reporting, and removing abusive content involving minors.

Most major social media platforms have established community guidelines that prohibit the posting or sharing of content related to child sexual exploitation. These platforms employ content moderation systems that combine automated technologies with human review to identify harmful material. Artificial intelligence tools[594] are increasingly used to scan uploaded content and detect patterns associated with child sexual abuse material. When such content is identified, it may be automatically removed, and the account responsible may be suspended or reported to authorities.

Another important responsibility of social media platforms is providing user-friendly reporting mechanisms. Users who encounter abusive content must have the ability to report such material easily. Reporting tools typically allow users to flag suspicious posts, images, or accounts. Once a report is submitted, the platform's moderation team reviews the content and determines whether it violates the platform's policies or relevant laws.

In many cases, social media companies also cooperate with law enforcement agencies. When credible evidence of child exploitation is detected, platforms may share information with authorities to assist in investigations. This cooperation is particularly important in identifying offenders who operate anonymously or across multiple jurisdictions.

Despite these efforts, social media platforms face significant challenges in monitoring and controlling harmful content. The sheer volume of user-generated content makes it impossible to manually review every post. As a result, platforms rely heavily on automated detection systems. However, these systems are not always accurate and may sometimes fail to identify abusive material or mistakenly flag legitimate content.

Moreover, offenders often attempt to evade detection by using coded language, private messaging services, or encrypted platforms. These tactics complicate the process of identifying and reporting illegal activities. Therefore, while social media companies play a vital role in protecting children online, their efforts must be supported by strong legal

[594] Owan, Valentine Joseph, et al. "Exploring the potential of artificial intelligence tools in educational measurement and assessment." Eurasia journal of mathematics, science and technology education 19.8 (2023): em2307.

frameworks and effective collaboration with governments.

10. Technological Measures for Detecting Online Child Abuse

Technology plays a crucial role in combating online child exploitation. Digital platforms increasingly rely on advanced technological tools to detect and prevent the circulation of abusive content. Artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, and digital fingerprinting techniques are widely used to identify child sexual abuse material on the internet.

One of the most commonly used technologies is image hashing, which creates unique digital signatures for known abusive images and videos. When new content is uploaded, the system compares it with existing databases of illegal material. If a match is detected, the content can be automatically blocked or removed. This method helps prevent the repeated circulation of previously identified abusive content.

Artificial intelligence systems are also capable of analyzing patterns of user behavior to detect potential grooming activities. For example, algorithms may identify accounts that frequently contact minors, send inappropriate messages, or attempt to move conversations to private communication channels. Such patterns may indicate attempts to exploit children online.

Another important technological tool is automated moderation. Platforms use machine learning models to analyze text, images, and videos uploaded by users. These systems can identify potentially harmful content and flag it for human review. Although automated moderation significantly improves the speed of detection, it cannot entirely replace human judgment.

Despite the advantages of these technologies, several limitations remain. Offenders continuously develop new methods to evade detection, including altering images, using encryption, or communicating through temporary messaging services. These tactics require constant updates to detection systems and continuous monitoring by platform operators.

Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding privacy and surveillance. Automated monitoring systems often analyze user-generated content, which may raise questions about the balance between protecting children and safeguarding individual privacy rights. Policymakers must therefore ensure that technological solutions are implemented in ways that respect fundamental rights while effectively addressing online abuse.

11. Challenges in Reporting Online Child Abuse

Although legal frameworks and technological tools exist to combat online child abuse, several challenges continue to hinder effective reporting and enforcement. These challenges arise from legal, technological, social, and institutional factors.

One of the most significant challenges is underreporting. Many cases of online child abuse remain unreported due to fear, stigma, or lack of awareness among victims and their families. Children may be reluctant to report abuse because they fear retaliation from offenders or embarrassment in social settings. In some cases, victims may not fully understand that they are being exploited.

Another challenge involves jurisdictional complexity. The internet enables offenders to operate across multiple countries, making it difficult for national authorities to investigate and prosecute crimes. Differences in legal systems, evidence standards, and extradition procedures may delay investigations and hinder the prosecution of offenders.

Technological barriers also present significant difficulties. The use of encrypted communication platforms prevents law enforcement agencies from accessing messages or identifying offenders. Similarly, anonymous accounts and virtual private networks can conceal the identity and location of perpetrators.

Social media companies themselves face operational challenges in moderating content. The vast volume of user-generated data makes comprehensive monitoring difficult. Even with advanced detection technologies, harmful content may remain online for extended periods before being identified and removed.

Another challenge relates to the balance between regulation and freedom of expression. Governments must ensure that measures designed to prevent child abuse do not lead to excessive censorship or violation of privacy rights. Overregulation may also place significant compliance burdens on technology companies, particularly smaller platforms.

Finally, there is often a lack of coordination between different stakeholders involved in combating online child abuse. Effective prevention requires collaboration among governments, technology companies, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and international bodies. Without strong coordination, reporting mechanisms may become fragmented and less effective.

12. Need for Legal and Policy Reforms

Given the evolving nature of digital technologies, existing legal frameworks must continuously adapt to address new forms of online child abuse. Policymakers must develop comprehensive strategies that integrate legal regulations, technological solutions, and educational initiatives.

One important reform area involves strengthening the accountability of social media platforms. Governments may require platforms to implement more robust monitoring systems, improve transparency in content moderation, and cooperate more effectively with law enforcement agencies. Clear legal standards regarding intermediary liability can help ensure that platforms take proactive measures to prevent the spread of abusive content.

Another critical reform involves improving reporting mechanisms. Governments should establish centralized reporting systems that allow individuals to report online child abuse easily and anonymously. Such systems must ensure that complaints are promptly investigated and that victims receive appropriate support services.

Education and awareness programs also play a vital role in preventing online exploitation. Children, parents, teachers, and community members must be educated about the risks associated with online platforms and the importance of reporting suspicious activities. Schools can incorporate digital safety education into their curricula to help children navigate the online environment safely[595].

International cooperation must also be strengthened. Because online child abuse networks often operate globally, effective enforcement requires collaboration between countries. International agreements and joint investigations can help dismantle organized networks involved in child exploitation.

Finally, governments should invest in specialized training for law enforcement officers and digital forensic experts. Investigating cybercrimes involving children requires advanced technical skills and resources. Strengthening institutional capacity will enable authorities to respond more effectively to emerging threats in the digital environment.

13. Conclusion

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed the nature of child abuse and created new challenges for legal systems worldwide. In the digital age, child exploitation increasingly occurs through online platforms where offenders can interact with victims anonymously and distribute abusive content on a global scale. Social media platforms have therefore become critical actors in detecting and reporting online child abuse.

[595] Patterson, Anastasia, Leah Ryckman, and Cristóbal Guerra. "A systematic review of the education and awareness interventions to prevent online child sexual abuse." Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma 15.3 (2022): 857-867.

Legal frameworks such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and the Information Technology Act, 2000 provide important mechanisms for addressing online exploitation and imposing obligations on individuals and digital intermediaries to report offences involving children. These laws reflect the recognition that protecting children in the digital environment requires both legal accountability and technological innovation.

Social media companies play a significant role in combating online abuse by implementing content moderation systems, developing automated detection technologies, and cooperating with law enforcement agencies. However, the effectiveness of these efforts is often limited by the vast scale of online activity, the use of encryption and anonymity by offenders, and the cross-border nature of cybercrime.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines strong legal frameworks, advanced technological tools, effective reporting systems, and international cooperation. Governments must ensure that regulatory measures strike an appropriate balance between protecting children and preserving fundamental rights such as privacy and freedom of expression.

Ultimately, protecting children in the digital age is a shared responsibility that involves governments, technology companies, law enforcement agencies, educators, parents, and society as a whole. By strengthening reporting mechanisms and enhancing cooperation among stakeholders, it is possible to create a safer online environment where children can benefit from digital technologies without being exposed to exploitation or harm.

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