



Model United Nations of Hamburg 2023

Forum: Commission on the Status of Women

Question of: Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls

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I. Description of the Issue

Sexual exploitation of girls and women is a grave violation of human rights and a global concern. It includes various forms, for example sex trafficking, forced prostitution, child marriage, and pornography, among others. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), approximately 4.8 million individuals are forced into sexual exploitation globally, with women and girls accounting for 99% of victims of the commercial sex industry. UNICEF estimates that around 12 million girls worldwide are married before the age of 18 each year, often resulting in sexual exploitation within that forced relationship. The prevalence of pornography and its impact on sexual exploitation is difficult to quantify precisely. However, a study published in the Journal of Sex Research found that 88% of analyzed scenes in pornography contained aggressive acts, while portraying women as sexual objects.

Physical consequences of victims of sexual exploitation are of higher risks of being infected with a STI and are having a higher chance of an unwanted pregnancy. Psychological consequences include depression, anxiety and PTSD.

Social and economic consequences of the victims include the disruption of education and impairs victims' opportunities for personal and economic development. It perpetuates cycles of poverty, limiting access to education, employment, and social integration.

Sexual exploitation is much more common in LEDC



II. Description of Key Terms

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is defined as the coercion of individuals into performing sexual activities for economic compensation or in exchange for goods or services for the benefit of a third party, who generally manages the compensation received by the exploited and sets her working conditions.

STI/STD

A disease caused by infection with certain bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms that can be passed from one person to another through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, or other body fluids, during oral, anal, or genital sex with an infected partner. These diseases can also be spread through sharing needles, blood transfusions, breastfeeding, or from an infected mother to an infant during pregnancy and childbirth. If not treated, some sexually transmitted diseases can lead to long-term health problems. Also called sexually transmitted infection, STD, and STI.

PTSD

An anxiety disorder that develops in reaction to physical injury or severe mental or emotional distress, such as military combat, violent assault, natural disaster, or other life-threatening events resulting in flashbacks of the traumatic event avoidance of people or places connected to the event.

LEDCs

LEDCs is an abbreviation for Less Economically Developed Countries also known as developing countries.



MEDCs

MEDCs is an abbreviation for More Economically Developed Countries also known as developed or industrialized countries.

CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights.

III. Background Information

Understanding the complex reasons behind sexual exploitation requires a multidimensional approach that considers socio-cultural, economic, and psychological factors. While no single explanation can encompass the entirety of this issue, several key factors contribute to its occurrence:

1. **Gender Inequality:** Deep-rooted gender disparities, unequal power dynamics, and societal norms that devalue women and girls contribute to their vulnerability to sexual exploitation. These inequalities perpetuate a system where women and girls are disproportionately affected.
2. **Poverty and Socioeconomic Factors:** Economic marginalization and limited access to education and employment opportunities increase the risk of exploitation. Poverty-driven desperation often pushes individuals, especially in developing countries, into exploitative situations, such as forced prostitution or trafficking.
3. **Demand and Profit:** The existence of a demand for sexual services, including pornography and commercial sex, drives the exploitative industry. Profit-oriented individuals and criminal networks exploit this demand, further perpetuating sexual exploitation.
4. **Systemic Failures and Corruption:** Weak legal frameworks, inadequate enforcement, and corruption within institutions contribute to the perpetuation of sexual exploitation.



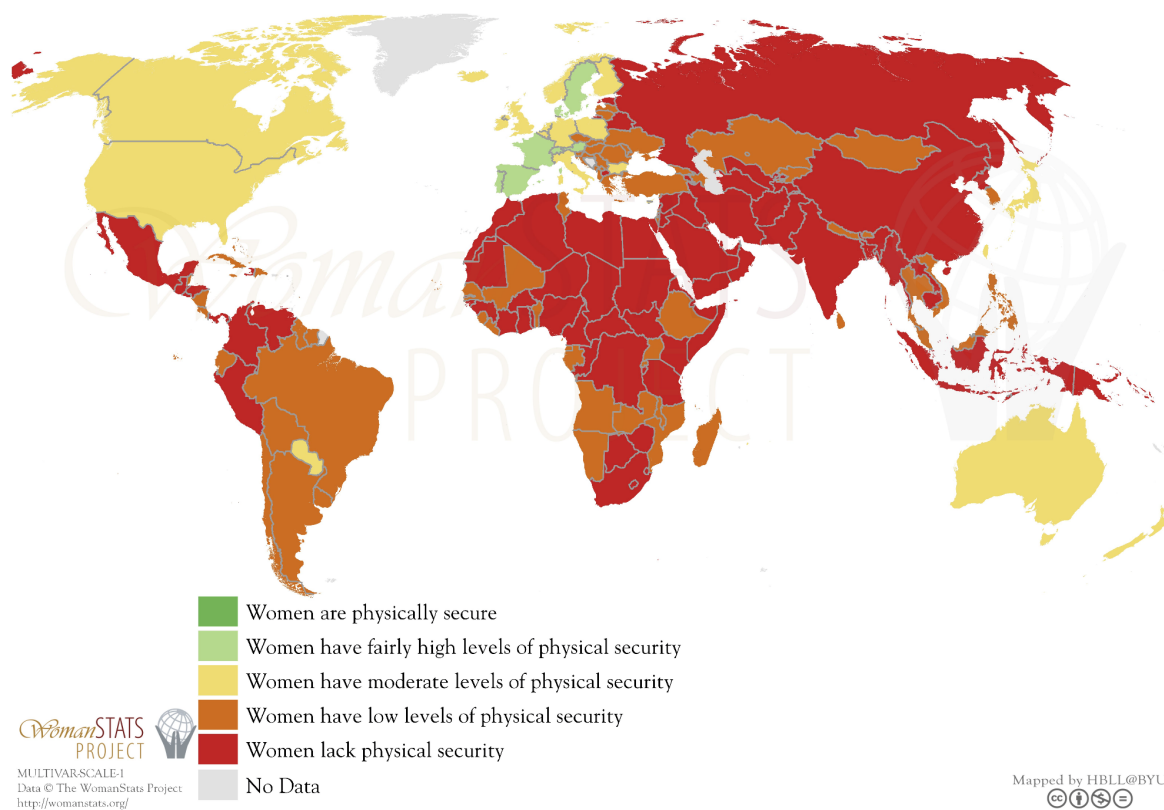
These systemic failures hinder the identification, prosecution, and protection of victims, allowing the cycle of exploitation to persist.

5. **Trauma and Coercion:** Many victims of sexual exploitation experience prior trauma, including childhood abuse or neglect, which makes them more vulnerable to further exploitation. Perpetrators exploit their vulnerabilities, utilizing coercion, manipulation, and threats to maintain control over victims.
6. **Globalization and Transnational Networks:** Advances in transportation and communication have facilitated the expansion of transnational criminal networks involved in human trafficking and sexual exploitation. These networks exploit gaps in legal frameworks and cross-border cooperation, making it difficult to address the issue effectively.
7. **Social Stigma and Shame:** Victims of sexual exploitation often face social stigma, shame, and fear of retribution, which hinders their ability to seek help and support. This social stigma can create a cycle of silence, allowing the exploitation to continue unchecked.

NGOs and civil society organizations play a crucial role in combating sexual exploitation by providing support services to survivors. These services encompass counseling, medical assistance, shelter, and rehabilitation programs. By addressing the psychological, emotional, and physical needs of survivors, these organizations contribute to their healing and reintegration into society as many countries do not have their own support system for the victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Sexual abuse occurs across different settings, including homes, schools, workplaces, and institutions. It is important to acknowledge that sexual abuse can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic background but it is much more commonly happening to young women and girls in LEDCs as can be seen in the graphic underneath.

Physical Security of Women Scaled 2014



<https://www.womanstats.org/newmapspage.html>

IV. Major Countries and Organizations involved

United nations organizations:

- UN Women: Focuses on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, including initiatives to combat violence against women and girls.
- UNICEF: Works to protect children from exploitation, including sexual abuse, through programs addressing child protection and advocacy.
- UNODC: Leads efforts to combat human trafficking and supports countries in implementing comprehensive responses to prevent and respond to this crime.

Interpol:

Interpol is an international law enforcement organization that facilitates cooperation among police agencies worldwide. They work to combat transnational organized crime, including



trafficking and sexual exploitation, by exchanging information, coordinating investigations, and supporting member countries in their efforts to address these crimes

Amnesty International:

Conducts research, advocacy, and campaigns to address human rights violations, including sexual abuse and exploitation, and holds governments accountable for their responses.

United States:

The U.S. government has implemented legislation to combat sexual exploitation, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). It has established agencies like the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) to provide support to survivors and coordinate efforts to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation. The U.S. The Department of State releases an annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which assesses governments' efforts in addressing trafficking and provides recommendations for improvement. but there are still about 15.000 to 50.000 women and children forced into sexual slavery.

United Kingdom:

The UK government has enacted laws to combat sexual exploitation, including the Sexual Offences Act and the Modern Slavery Act. The government has also implemented awareness campaigns and initiatives to prevent sexual exploitation and provide psychological support to victims.

Germany:

The German government has introduced legislation to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation, including the Act to Improve the Fight Against Human Trafficking and the Protection of Victims. It has established specialized units within law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cases of sexual exploitation.



Sweden:

The Swedish government has implemented the Sex Purchase Act, which criminalizes the purchase of sexual services and aims to reduce demand for sexual exploitation. It has established support systems, including social services and specialized units within law enforcement, to provide assistance to survivors and prosecute offenders.

Iran:

Iran serves as a source, transit, and destination country for sex trafficking and forced labor. Traffickers target Iranian girls aged 13-17 for sale abroad, while younger girls are subjected to domestic service before being forced into child sex trafficking. Reports indicate an increase in the transportation of girls from Iran to other Gulf States for sexual exploitation. Organized criminal groups kidnap or purchase children, including immigrants, and coerce them into begging and street vending, using physical and sexual abuse, drug addiction, and even selling them for as little as \$150. Dozens of Iranian girls are trafficked to Pakistan daily, where they are sold as sex slaves, with many already experiencing rape within 24 hours. There have been allegations of government officials' involvement in the trafficking and abuse of women and children. Runaway girls are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, as they lack stable homes. In Tehran alone, an estimated 84,000 women and girls are engaged in prostitution, both on the streets and in brothels.

Afghanistan:

Sexual exploitation in Afghanistan is influenced by factors such as chronic instability, structural gender inequality, and a climate of impunity. The monitoring and reporting of sexual violence are hindered due to limited access to services for survivors. In 2020, the United Nations documented 271 cases of sexual and gender-based violence, with 18 cases verified as conflict-related sexual violence. The Taliban was responsible for acts of conflict-related sexual violence against girls, while members of the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, and Afghan Local Police were also implicated. Instances of bacha bazi, the sexual abuse of young boys by powerful men, were reported. COVID-19 containment measures likely contributed to a decrease in reported incidents and access to services. Although progress has been made in implementing laws and establishing specialized prosecution offices and response units, challenges persist. "Virginity testing" remains



unprohibited, there is a low conviction rate for violence against women and girls, and impunity prevails. Concerns have also been raised regarding the treatment of women in Pul-e-Charkhi women's prison in Kabul, particularly those held in prolonged pretrial detention linked to alleged ties with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasa

V. Timeline of Events

1948	Adoption of the Human rights by the UN
1978	Adoption of CEDAW
1993	The UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna recognizes violence against women as a human rights violation, including sexual exploitation and trafficking.
2000	The UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, also known as the Palermo Protocol
2000-2010	The global advocacy movement against human trafficking gains momentum, leading to increased awareness and action
2015	establishment of the SDGs with SDG 16.2 Protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence
2015-2023	Ongoing efforts are made to strengthen national laws and policies addressing sexual exploitation, including the criminalization of buyers and the protection of victims.

VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Efforts to combat sexual exploitation have seen progress through various measures implemented at local, national, and international levels. Legislative and policy measures have



been adopted to address this issue. Many countries have enacted laws criminalizing various forms of sexual exploitation, including trafficking, prostitution of minors, and child pornography. International agreements, such as the United Nations Palermo Protocol, have provided a framework for cooperation and coordination among nations to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation. Awareness campaigns, educational programs, and training initiatives have been implemented to raise public consciousness, challenge societal attitudes, and educate communities about the dangers of sexual exploitation. NGOs and civil society organizations play a crucial role in providing support services, including counseling, shelter, and rehabilitation, to survivors of sexual exploitation and abusive relationships. Collaborative efforts between governments, law enforcement agencies, and NGOs have improved victim identification, prosecution of abusers, and victim protection. Moreover, initiatives focusing on poverty alleviation, gender equality, and socioeconomic development aim to address the root causes of vulnerability to sexual exploitation. While significant progress has been made, continued efforts are required to strengthen legal frameworks, enhance prevention strategies, and ensure comprehensive support systems for survivors.

VII. Possible Solutions

1. **Strengthening Laws:** Implementing and enforcing further robust legislation against sexual exploitation is vital as the frameworks existing right now are clearly not effective enough to counteract sexual exploitation. This includes criminalizing all forms of exploitation, providing appropriate penalties, and addressing the demand side of the equation.
2. **Increased International Cooperation:** Enhancing international collaboration with legal frameworks can help combat transnational networks involved in sexual exploitation. The exchange of information, coordination of investigations against sex trafficking and extradition agreements contribute to a more effective response.
3. **Comprehensive Sex Education:** Incorporating comprehensive sex education in school curricula can empower individuals with knowledge about consent, healthy relationships, and their rights, thereby reducing vulnerability to exploitation.



4. Media: Promoting media literacy programs can help individuals critically analyze and challenge harmful media messages that perpetuate objectification and normalize sexual exploitation.

5. Accessibility to Support Services: Because of the fact that formerly sexually exploited individuals are much more likely to be victims of sexual exploitation again it is extremely important to develop programs focused on survivor rehabilitation and socioeconomic reintegration is essential for breaking the cycle of exploitation and promoting long-term recovery and independence.

6. Counter acting Poverty: Tackling the root causes of exploitation necessitates efforts to alleviate poverty and promote economic opportunities, particularly for women and girls. Livelihood programs, microfinance, and vocational training can enhance financial independence and reduce vulnerability to exploitation for the individuals.

7. Promoting gender Equality: Integrating the promotion of gender equality, access to education, and inclusive economic development within sustainable development agendas would contribute to the prevention of sexual exploitation.

VIII. How to prepare as a delegate

In order to debate this subject, all delegates should be aware of the importance of providing equal opportunities through quality education. The delegates need to be educated about their countries' current situation/status, including social, economic, and political aspects. More precisely, all delegations shall be aware of the effect they may or may not have on the issue, and need to know about initiatives and laws established. Moreover, it is also important to take an exact look at the position of other countries, since that will help in the debates. As a delegate, strive to always establish new and improved solutions for your country, but above all for the world. please send in your papers and draft resolutions to the email address above with the deadline being on 09/08/23.

- What role does my country play in sex trafficking?
- How common is sexual exploitation of women and girls in my country?
- What is my country already doing against the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse?
- Does my country have a high gender equality and why is that the case/ not the case?



- Is my country involved in human trafficking and is my country enforcing countermeasures against that?

IX. Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Establishment of Protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence as a SDG in 2015 which establishes that this topic is not yet resolved, and it still has to be worked on.

UN Resolutions:

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material 2020 (HRC)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/162/07/PDF/G2016207.pdf?OpenElement>

Women Peace Security 2000 (SC)

https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC_ResolutionWomenPeaceSecurity_SRES1325%282000%29%28english_0.pdf

X. Useful Links and Sources

- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2022/addressing-vulnerabilities-children-sale-and-sexual-exploitation-framework>
- <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2019/World-survey-on-the-role-of-women-in-development-2019.pdf>
- https://www.unodc.org/res/human-trafficking/2021the-protocol-tip_html/TIP.pdf