

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 55362

Title: SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF MINORS: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND PROTECTION OF MECHANISMS

Recommendation:
Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article "Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Minors: Legal Frameworks and Protection Mechanisms" undertakes an extensive and ambitious examination of one of the gravest human rights violations confronting contemporary societies. By combining international legal instruments, Indian statutory frameworks, judicial decisions, and protection mechanisms, the paper seeks to provide a comprehensive socio-legal analysis of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). The topic is unquestionably significant and timely, particularly in light of rising digital forms of exploitation, increasing judicial sensitivity, and evolving criminal justice frameworks such as the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

One of the most notable strengths of the article is its breadth of legal coverage. The author demonstrates strong familiarity with international instruments including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, the Palermo Protocol, the Lanzarote Convention, and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 16.2. This international framing is effectively connected to the Indian legal context through a detailed discussion of the POCSO Act, 2012, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and recent developments under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and

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Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. The paper successfully establishes that India's legal framework is broadly aligned with global child-rights norms and reflects a rights-based constitutional vision grounded in Articles 14, 15, 21, and 39(f).

The article is particularly strong in its judicial analysis. The discussion of landmark cases—such as *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, *Bachpan Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*, *State v. Kuldeep Singh*, *ABC v. State of Maharashtra*, and the historically transformative Mathura rape case—demonstrates a sound understanding of how judicial interpretation has shaped child protection jurisprudence in India. The inclusion of comparative international cases, such as *United States v. Williams* and *Australia v. Smith*, adds value by situating Indian law within a global legal discourse, especially in relation to online exploitation and AI-generated child sexual abuse material. These sections enhance the paper's doctrinal depth and underscore the dynamic nature of child protection law.

Another important contribution of the article lies in its attention to protection mechanisms beyond formal law. The discussion of law enforcement cooperation, international policing, online safety tools, victim rehabilitation, trauma-informed approaches, and community-based awareness initiatives reflects an appreciation of the fact that legal prohibition alone is insufficient. By highlighting underreporting, stigma, lack of trained personnel, inadequate rehabilitation infrastructure, and judicial delays, the paper realistically captures the gap between law on paper and law in practice.

Despite these strengths, the manuscript also exhibits significant limitations that require attention. The most pressing issue is excessive length and descriptive density. While the paper is rich in information, it often reads as a compilation of statutes, cases, and instruments rather than a tightly argued analytical study. Several sections—particularly those outlining international conventions and statutory provisions—are repetitive and could be substantially condensed without loss of substance. Greater analytical synthesis is needed to move beyond description and to clearly articulate the author's original contribution to existing scholarship.

Conceptually, while the article is framed as a critical assessment, the critical engagement remains uneven. The paper identifies challenges such as underreporting and enforcement gaps, but it does not sufficiently interrogate structural causes such as socio-cultural power relations, institutional accountability failures, or the unintended consequences of punitive approaches (for example, mandatory minimum sentences under

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POCSO). A clearer analytical framework—whether grounded in victimology, child-rights theory, or socio-legal critique—would significantly strengthen the manuscript.

From a methodological perspective, the doctrinal and qualitative approach is appropriate; however, the methodology section could be more explicit about selection criteria for cases and sources, as well as the limitations of relying primarily on secondary data. Additionally, the language and style of the manuscript require substantial editorial refinement. There are frequent grammatical errors, typographical inconsistencies, and overly long sentences that detract from clarity and academic polish.

The conclusion effectively reiterates the need for stronger enforcement, awareness, and global cooperation, but it would benefit from a more concise synthesis of the paper's core findings and clearer prioritisation of recommendations.

Overall, the article addresses a critically important subject and demonstrates commendable effort, extensive legal research, and strong normative commitment to child protection. With careful revision focused on condensation, analytical sharpening, and language refinement, the paper has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to socio-legal and human-rights scholarship.

Recommendation: The article is recommended for publication after major revisions, particularly to reduce repetition, strengthen analytical coherence, refine methodology, and improve language and structure.