Unveiling Sri Lanka's Legal Landscape: Combating Cybersex Trafficking using Existing Online Harassment Laws

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The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's existing legal frameworks in addressing cybersex trafficking, specifically analysing how well current laws on online harassment can be applied to combat this issue. The objective was to identify strengths and weaknesses in the legal framework, assess the adequacy of specific laws, and highlight the need for more targeted legislative measures. This doctrinal research was based on its capacity to conduct a thorough analysis of legal texts, legislation, and court opinions. The study indicated that while Sri Lanka has a variety of regulations that deal with online harassment and associated crimes, these laws do not expressly focus on cybersex trafficking. Legislation such as the Online Safety Act No. 9 of 2024, Penal Code 1883, Computer Crime Act of 2007, and the Obscene Publications Ordinance 1927, provide specific rules that may be used to address aspects of cybersex trafficking. Nevertheless, they do not provide thorough and specialised coverage to adequately tackle the problem. The main findings reveal that the existing legal regulations primarily address dishonesty, fraud, and unauthorised access, rather than the wider issues of coercion and exploitation that are inherent in cybersex trafficking. The study highlights that in order to successfully fight cybersex trafficking, it is imperative to combine current laws with more rigorous and precise legislative measures, while also providing more resources, training, and technological expertise to law enforcement. Comprehensive victim support services are essential for effectively dealing with this complex problem.

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