

Challenges and Risks in Protecting Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment

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In the digital age, children are increasingly engaged with technology, which presents both opportunities and significant risks to their rights and wellbeing. This study analysed the challenges and dangers of protecting children’s rights in the digital environment, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of legal frameworks such as Sri Lanka’s Online Safety Act 2024. The study aimed to identify specific threats, including exposure to harmful content, privacy violations, cyberbullying, and sexual exploitation, while evaluating existing measures and proposing improvements. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were gathered through surveys of parents, educators, and children, while qualitative insights were obtained from interviews with key stakeholders. The analysis revealed a significant prevalence of online risks, alongside critical gaps in legal protection and challenges in enforcing existing laws. The findings highlight the need for stronger legal frameworks, targeted educational programs, and more effective enforcement mechanisms to safeguard children’s rights online. Policy implications include recommendations for cross-sector collaboration and the prioritization of child-centered technology design. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding children’s digital safety and advocates for a multifaceted approach to protect this vulnerable population in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Keywords: *children’s rights, digital environment, Online Safety Act 2024, cyberbullying, legal frameworks, digital literacy, policy recommendations, technology*