

Sextortion: The Unseen Menace of the Digital Age

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Abstract

The sinister crime of sextortion has turned into a significant concern of the digital age due to its widespread reach and the vulnerability of the victims of the crime. The crime of sextortion involves coercing the victim to such a stage that they are compelled to share private pictures or monetary benefits to the perpetrators through a variety of stages including social engineering, manipulation, hacking etc. the crime of sextortion intersects with other crime forms such as child pornography, human trafficking, exploitation etc. this paper will focus on the necessary steps required in order to combat Sextortion along with a comparative study of the crime and the modus operandi of the crime in different nations trying to find the gap in the criminal justice system which is contributing in the rapid growth of the particular form of crime.

Keywords: Sextortion, Cybercrime, Digital Space, Digitalization

1. Introduction

The rapid pace of technology advancing in the modern era is becoming an essential component of people's day-to-day lives. As a direct consequence of these improvements, people are becoming more and more reliant on technology with each passing day. The improvements in technology have a significant positive impact on the general development of the state and the world as a whole; nonetheless, with positive growth, a parallel level of corruption and unfair benefit is also advancing in the form of cyber crimes. The rise in the number of people committing crimes online is a blazing illustration of how the unintended benefits of advances in technology are being taken advantage of by the negative elements of society. There are different varieties of cybercrime. However, there are certain types of cybercrimes that are expanding at an alarming rate, and if stringent measures are not implemented with quick effect, there is a risk that society as a whole could suffer irreparable harm. Sextortion is a form of cybercrime which has been in the growth for a preferable time and comprises of fairly a modified concept of crimes which includes sexual favors as well as extortion.ⁱ Sextortion is a crime in which the perpetrator targets their victims using various phishing techniques and catfishes them into giving compromising images or videos. These can then be utilized by the perpetrators in order to blackmail the victims and take undue advantage of their situation.ⁱⁱ The culprit would typically demand that the victims share additional images and more intimate recordings with them before eventually demanding a ransom payment in order to erase the files. The victims may also be asked to provide additional intimate movies with the perpetrator. It is a fact that such crime serve as a breeding place for other forms of crime and the crimes are increasing at an alarming rate. The youth and the children make up the vast majority of users of the internet since children are also to some degree dependent, on the internet for their academic pursuits. Children are the most susceptible to

harm in these kinds of predicaments because they lack the adult approach which would be as form of self-guidance in order to overcome difficulties of that sort. The use of the social media platform is also a huge contributor in the rising of the crime of phishing and sextortionⁱⁱⁱ. The perpetrator would either hack the device or would impersonate to be someone else and earn the trust of the victim in order to get access to the information which would eventually be followed by the blackmailing.

The population of India is roughly 141 crore which is equal to 17% of the total population of the entire world therefore every digital development which India is making is a relevant step towards the development, but there is a subsequent population which is not technologically sound or digitally updated, they become easy targets due to the proliferation of technologies. Sextortion is a crime which is spreading like a forest fire all over the territory of the country and according to reports, every day at least 500 cases of sextortion and not even 0.05 cases are recorded which makes it impossible for the police to combat against a crime of such nature.^{iv} The National Crime Records Bureau reports that in the year 2016, there were 686 cases of sexual exploitation and 569 cases of outraging the modesty of a woman. Despite the fact that in that year, 829 persons were detained for transmitting sexually explicit content only 484 of them had charge sheet filed against them.^v There are multiple factors at play resulting in the non-reporting of cases, one of which is the negative connotation which is associated with the particular crime.

The majority victim profile under the crime of sextortion is the adolescent spending most of their time online and the older people who are technologically challenged. Sextortion, which is a sort of phishing, is also making its roots firmer with each passing day. Phishing is a criminal activity that is constantly on the rise in India. Sextortion is a global threat and it needs to be tackled by the nations in accordance to their own methodologies. The cases of sextortion are of such nature that they demand a speedy recovery and a stringent procedural mechanism to counter the offence of such magnitude.

Nature of Crime:

It is possible to separate the concept of sextortion into its component parts, namely, sexual activity and coercion. Extortion through sexual favors or blackmailing for ransom against any sexual activity or data is two straightforward explanations for this type of criminal behavior. Because computers, data, and the internet have taken over the daily lives of the typical person in our generation, crimes that fall under this category are becoming more and more widespread. The perpetrator of this crime obtains access to incriminating photographs or videos of the victims, which they then use to blackmail them into complying with their demands, which may include the payment of money or the provision of additional information. There are a number of methods by which the offender can gain access to the information; however, the following are the methods that are most commonly used:

On social media, they create a false persona in order to gain the target's trust so that they may then move on to the next step in their plan, which is to gain access to the information that could compromise them. By using phishing to hack into the electronic device of the victim and gaining access to the stored media as well as enhanced access to the webcams, microphones, and other devices, the hacker can gain unrestricted access to the device.

The Union Territory of Ladakh Reorganization (Adaptation of Central Laws) Order 2020 states the following: There has been a new addition of a section, and it has been designated as Section 354E Sextortion. According to the provision, "whoever- being in a position of authority or being in a fiduciary relationship or being a public servant abuses such authority or fiduciary relationship or misuses the official position to employ physical or non-physical forms of coercion to extort or demand sexual favors from any woman in

exchange for some benefits or other favors that such person is empowered to grant or withhold shall be guilty of the offence of sextortion," Any individual who is found guilty of committing the act of sextortion will be punished with severe imprisonment for a time that shall not be less than three years and may extend to five years with a fine.^{vi}

When the same scenario makes its way to the digital world and is associated with other forms of crime like phishing, then not only does the danger level increase, but the magnitude of the offence also increases significantly. This can be interpreted as meaning that sextortion is an offence in which a person uses force and coercion to force another person for sexual favors using his authority and position over that person. The growing rate of Sextortion has come to a point where people are ready to lose their lives out of shame rather than reporting the case. In country like India where sex is already a taboo, such kind of crimes involving sex is also seen as taboo.^{vii}

Comparative analysis

The crime of Sextortion is branching out in different parts of the world, and there are a substantial number of instances for the newly developing crime. Sextortion is more prevalent than a person can actually conceive of becoming, and there are cases for the newly emerging crime. It is not a new crime; rather, it has been in existence for a very long time and been practiced for the purpose of gaining a sexual advantage over the individual. The crime of threatening to share intimate and explicit images of someone else is not a new crime. The advent of the Internet has altered the playing field to a significant degree; criminals are now able to operate on a global scale, and their method of operation has also become more sophisticated throughout the course of time. By conducting a comparison examination between developing and developed states like India, the United Kingdom, and the United States, one would be able to gain a better knowledge of the nature of crime in a variety of nations and economies, thereby obtaining a more comprehensive picture of crime in general.

The technical advancements have compelled us to have a global approach In regard to every little requirement; as a result people are more invested in the internet and the facilities which it has to offer. Taking advantage of the same situation, the crime of sextortion has also branched out its ambit all over the globe. The perpetrators are scattered all over the globe making it a global issue which needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Various countries have formulated a strong legal infrastructure for combating such a crime whereas there are countries where the problem is persisting with a high growth rate yet the authorities are not able to tackle down the key reasons responsible for the growth. A comparison of the major countries of the world where technical advancement has been in the rise is as follows, and we will also see how the governments tackle down the problem of sextortion within their jurisdiction.

Sextortion in USA

During the fiscal year 2022 in the United States, the Homeland Security Investigations division received close to three thousand tips regarding sextortion. Although the method of the crime is very similar to the method of the crime, in the United States of America, a repeated pattern of the perpetrators has come to light. When the victim is blackmailed, he or she is asked for more pictures and videos in exchange for the deleting of the previous videos, and at the same time, proposals for physical intimacy are also on the rise. Since minors make up the majority of sextortion victims in the United States, particularly those in the age range of 14 to 17 years old, the Department of Homeland Security has reason to believe that there is a connection between the crime of sextortion and the practice of child pornography. The fact that traditional

sextortion is taking place does not mean that financial sextortion is not also in play; rather, according to the most recent reports of the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, it has been stated that now as much as 79% of predators are involved in financial sextortion rather than receiving more sexual imagery.^{viii} This is despite the fact that traditional sextortion is taking place. In instances like these, the Homeland Security Investigation is the primary investigative agency responsible for looking into the matter. The crime of sextortion is not a new one; rather, the proactive approach taken by the security agencies has resulted in the root cause analysis of the crime, and the security agencies are putting their best efforts, both physically and virtually, in order to fight the crime and eradicate the crime as quickly as possible.^{ix} The United States treats the Crime of Sextortion with the utmost severity, and the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)^x also plays an extremely important part in the process of combating this crime. They offer a helpline for people who are experiencing sextortion, and through that helpline, the general public has the opportunity to report any crime that is taking place with a child. They also have a safety program known as NetSmartz, in which children are educated beginning at a young age in a manner that is acceptable for their age, with the goal of preventing such encounters and beginning the battle against sextortion at a young age. These kinds of activities will help the next generation become better equipped with the cyber capabilities that are necessary to combat the rising tide of cybercrime. When it comes to the sextortion of a juvenile^{xi}, the federal legislation has very stringent regulations in place. If sextortion is committed against a minor, the person who committed the act can be charged with the sexual exploitation of a minor under section 2251 of the 18 US Code. If convicted of this crime, the perpetrator faces a possible sentence of up to 30 years in a federal prison. In addition, there are help lines that can be called in which will immediately notify the FBI of the crime, which will then cause them to begin their investigation.

Sextortion in UK

Sextortion is a widespread criminal activity across the globe, and the United Kingdom is not an exception to this trend. The number of people who have been victims of sextortion in the UK continues to rise year after year^{xii}, shattering all previous records. The nature of sextortion in the United Kingdom is more likely to take the form of revenge porn, in which sexually explicit images and videos are made viral by former partners. Such crimes are increasingly becoming organized sectors, in which the images are subsequently sold on the dark web, where they are used to make pornographic materials and formulate other crimes as well. The United Kingdom's Revenge Porn helpline disclosed that they got 1,124 complaints of sextortion in the year 2020, and that number increased to 4,406 in 2021, which was six times the figure in 2016.^{xiii} According to the data, a criminal gang was the offender in 80% of the cases, while a former partner was engaged in 11% of the cases. Additionally, the majority of the victims who had their photographs made public were women. The authorities have stated that when the helpline was initially created in 2015, they did not expect there to be so many cases of sextortion. However, it is currently alleged that only a small portion of the cases are being reported due to the significant level of humiliation involved in the situation. The authorities added that anytime a victim pays the ransom, the perpetrators receive the impression that the victim is ready to pay the amount and any amount that is required to prohibit the photographs from being released. This gives the perpetrators the incentive to continue holding the victim's images hostage. Sextortion is a crime that is covered by Section 21 of the Theft Act of 1968 in the United Kingdom. The maximum sentence for this crime is one year in jail, but it can go as high as two years. Sextortion has been categorized as a type of blackmail for the purposes of this discussion.^{xiv}

The comparison between the three nations of India, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom provides us with a glimpse of the current scenario of the sextortion, which is at rising, and there ought to be efforts taken all over the world to fight against this crime. Based on the comparison made above, certain facts have been established, including the fact that both nations, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, have certain specific policies that have been indicated in order to restrict the act of sextortion. In order to counteract that specific crime, certain privileges have been granted to the criminals who committed that crime. Sextortion battles play out differently in India than they do elsewhere. Sextortion is now being grouped in with other forms of cybercrime, which has led to an increase in the pace at which the crime is being committed. The rate of expansion of financial extortion in India is the highest in the world, and it is without doubts for this reason that many news sources speculate that India will soon become the extortion capital of the world. The most important reason behind reports making such a statement is that the criminal activity is organized, and surprisingly, in contrast to other states, this criminal activity in India is not organized by intellectuals. Rather, the masterminds who are regulating these crimes originate from economically backwards societies with less education and resources. Even though they had fewer resources at their disposal, these individuals still managed to form an organized crime syndicate. The social stigma that is associated with sextortion is the primary factor that contributes to the fact that cases of the crime are not reported and there are fewer procedures in place to combat it.

Sextortion in India:

Sextortion has been on an upward trend in India during the past many years. An opportunity that is taken advantage of by the perpetrators is the fact that chats of this nature are still seen as taboo in India's tier two and tier three cities. This is because India has a cultural background that makes dialogues of this nature considered inappropriate. Phishing is a form of criminal activity that has spread throughout the entirety of India. The city of Jamtara is known as the "phishing capital of India" due to the fact that one in two people living there are involved in the fraudulent activity of phishing in some capacity.^{xv} Sextortion began as a con where fake messaging was done with a person via social media apps, and then intimate video calls were proposed by them. When the victims agreed for the calls, the in-built screen recorder started doing its job, and later, by virtue of the video, extortion would be made from the victim. The notorious village of Jamtara in India, which gained notoriety on a global scale due to the number of phishing and vishing calls and acts of cybercrime it was responsible for, has also increased both its territorial and financial authority. Sextortion is the new kill^{xvi}, and it goes hand in hand with cyber phishing. After the victims are drawn into the trap and made to believe that the imposters are real and desire to form an intimate relationship, the imposters then conduct an intimate video call session with the victims. The imposters use fake profiles of gorgeous women and men that they have created. After that, the false movies of the attractive women are played while simultaneously recording the victim's screen. This recording is then forwarded to the victim, who is then solicited for money and the scam continues. According to a number of stories, the illegal activity of sextortion is already becoming into an organized industry^{xvii}. These criminals are reportedly now employing attractive women just for the purpose of talking or video chatting with victims so that they can be lured in more easily and so that the con appears to be more genuine. The various branches of organized crime have spread across the entirety of the country like a wildfire. It has been hypothesized that cities such as Mewat and Mathura will emerge as the new hubs for the criminal activity of sextortion.

In recent years, organized crime has gotten so sophisticated that a target is selected, and then the process

of blackmailing and extortion is carried out over the course of a few days, all while that particular victim is kept under constant surveillance. Even if the victim has deleted the numbers and the communication has been severed, the perpetrator will still make an effort to impersonate a police official by using numbers that show caller IDs of police and will attempt to lead the victim to a payment portal under the guise of assisting them in removing their videos from the internet. This will occur even if the victim has deleted the numbers and the communication has been severed. As the quantity and severity of sextortion cases continue to rise in India, the country is quickly becoming the sextortion capital of the globe.

Even after paying \$4,500 to the people who had extorted him, a man who was 29 years old ended his life by taking his own life because he was being blackmailed by sextortion. Because he was unable to deal with the stress caused by the sextortion, a 19-year-old boy from Pune took his own life by jumping off a bridge. Both of these crimes were looked into at this location, and the findings of the investigations eventually led the authorities to a village in Rajasthan known as Gothri Guru Village, which is located in the Alwar District of Rajasthan. Anwar Suban Khan, the ringleader of the criminal enterprise that was taking place in the area, was taken into custody there. During the period beginning in January 2022 and ending in October 2022, a total of 1445 instances of sextortion-based harassment were reported in Pune. The male victims are lured to the criminals' social media accounts by the display photographs of attractive ladies, who then blackmail the victims after they have gained their trust.

Another town in India that is infamous for its extortion practices is Kaithwara. It is known as the Jamtara of Sextortion. In this region, children as young as 12 are involved in the sextortion racket, and the sextortion industry alone generates an average daily income of about 2 crore. Because the system is so well organized, even the old residents of that hamlet do not object to the act; rather, they take part in it and help maintain the health of the local economy.

In addition to Mewat and Bharatpur, more sextortion cases have recently been recorded in the city of Mathura. Sextortion is quickly becoming Mathura the new center of activity in Uttar Pradesh. The preceding trend makes it very evident that there is an organized syndicate operating in the area of sextortion, and that the main cities with the most populous areas are the ones that are being targeted. It will be simpler to locate low-cost labor and operating capital in a city with a higher population density, which means that cities will become more populous. Sextortion is turning into a hydra-like criminal enterprise in India; whenever one mastermind is brought to justice; ten new masterminds emerge from the shadows to take their place and ramp up their criminal activity.

The image that India already has abroad for its involvement in Jamtara has already raised a number of doubts about the current cyber laws and the capabilities of the state's police force. A blow has been delivered to the Indian Legal System and the cyber security of the state as a result of the proliferation of sextortion as a new type of criminal activity and the comparison of several places to Jamtara in terms of the revenue earned from sextortion. When a new form of cybercrime begins to generate revenue, India quickly becomes a leader in that form of cybercrime, not only on a regional level but also on a global level. This phenomenon occurs frequently. This cyclical pattern has caused a great deal of damage to the integrity of the state's legal system, and this phenomenon needs to be put an end to as soon as possible in order to prevent further damage.

Statistical data:

The crime of sextortion is at a growing stage which can be assessed by the data of cybercrimes and the growth rate of the cybercrimes in India from the year 2016 till the year 2021.

The data of the crime is only available when the crime gets reported and the necessary steps are being taken by the authorities. In a country like India where the awareness of the people in regard to the cyber-crime is so less than mere reporting of the crime is not being done which actually does not let the crime to be listed in the records. Even after less reporting of the crime, the crime is rising statistically according to the NCRB reports.

In the year 2021, a total of 52974 cases of cybercrime has been reported and maximum of such cybercrimes are financial frauds and second position goes to sexual exploitation with a striking number of 4555 and particularly 2883 cases for solely extortion.^{xviii} Which means the crime against women in regard to sextortion ads up to 7438 which makes approximately 15% of the entire recorded cybercrime?^{xix}

The rate of cybercrime and specially activities under the crime head of sextortion has been increasing g at a fast rate. In the year 2020 the number of registered cybercrimes was 50035 and in one year that number has increased to 52,974. It is a sure fact that if the people are more aware of the crime and collectively think of eradicating the crime, it would not be late that the crime magnitude would come at a manageable level.

The above data states the reported magnitude of the offence and the growing rate of cybercrimes, whereas when it comes to crimes involving sexual exploitation and the sexual harassment of a particular person irrespective of the gender, India is a country where it is a huge taboo and people rather than complaining about the wrong, take actions within their guilt. There are several instances where due to the fear of social stigma which the victim and his/her family will need to face, due to the sextortion the victim chooses to end his/her life. The need of reporting such cases is required but what is more essential need of the hour, is educating the youth that such instances may happen due to the negligent use of internet and the methods by which the people can stay safe and away from such perpetrators. The legal provisions are somewhere not being adequate when it refers to the present scenario of India, and there is a need of a stringent approach of the judiciary and the legislature in order to combat such a growing mayhem.

Present legislations:

Presently the term sextortion is not defined under the legislature rather it is a modified concept in which the two crimes of sexual harassment and extortion has been incorporated. In India the crime rate is raising every day in accordance to this particular offence since people are spending more time online and the changes in the lifestyle are also indicators for the rise of such crimes. The Information Technology Act 2000 is the primary legislation for combating the crime of sextortion in the online platform. The various penal provisions of the IT Act 2000 regulate the crime and the offences under this act, especially section 66 which defines various offences like identity theft and other subsidiary offences, but the clear picture is, there is no specific provision to deal with the internet sextortion which has been growing alongside phishing in the rural areas of the country.

Countries like USA and UK definitely have better infrastructure in comparison to the Indian legal structure for the crime of Sextortion. The other countries are serving helpline numbers and other modes by which the victims can directly contact the authorities and accordingly the action can be taken. The main agenda is to increase the access of the victims to the authorities, whereas in India the concept itself is a taboo and thus the victims are not comfortable to talk, which makes the perpetrators more eager to commit the crime. The lesser cases get reported the more increase in the crime rate shall be observed the mechanism is such that these cartels work at the grassroot levels and operate from villages in the outskirts where the law and order is not so prompt as the cities and metropolitan areas.

There are multiple legal statutes at play when the crime of sextortion comes in the picture, legislative acts like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005^{xx}, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act 2013^{xxi}, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986^{xxii} and POCSO Act 2012^{xxiii}. All these acts come together to assess the criminology under the umbrella of sextortion. It is more suggested that the essential criteria to be brought down under one legislative approach which would penalize the crime of sextortion in a separate manner which for now is not in action. In order to make a fruitful legislative approach it is necessary that we keep certain requirements in mind, the offence is against a woman and such kind of offences certainly are a blow to the social status of the woman and in order to combat that, the body of rules should also contain the necessary actions which would accelerate the awareness and the education of the mass in regard to the crime of sextortion and the remedies which can be offered to the victims at multi-level.

If the law will direct the authorities and make sure that certain steps are being taken for the awareness of the people, then it will be easier on the part of the mass to get away from the stigma and let the victims get their share of justice.

The crime is a hybrid of the crimes of sexual harassment and extortion and while creating a remedial approach for the crime the same needs to be taken under consideration. Currently the crimes are handled under different heads and therefore creating a confusion, whereas there must be a comprehensive legislation for the crime of sextortion and other subsidiaries which come along with that crime.

Suggestive measures

Sextortion is a form of criminal activity that has spread throughout India to the point where it is even practiced in rural and suburban areas. Not only the victims, but also the operational headquarters are located in the outskirts of the village at such a deep level, that a person who resides in the village is unable to even conceive of the possibility that a crime of this sort may earn revenue of such a nature. In a very short amount of time, this criminal activity has dispersed its seeds across India to such a degree that India will soon take the lead as the most prominent nation in the world for the practice of financial extortion. When a crime has its origins so deeply ingrained in a culture, it requires a more concerted effort to remove than when the crime itself is relatively isolated incidents. It is also necessary for the process of eradication to begin at the most fundamental levels, such as in villages and panchayats.

Awareness is the first criterion that needs to be satisfied in order to meet the requirements, and the majority of those who are victims of this particular crime are generally unaware that a crime of this nature even exists or that it constitutes a separate offence altogether. The general public needs to be educated about the nature of the crime so that the offenders will have a harder time duping them into believing their lies. A correct awareness of what should be done and what should not be done could be of great assistance to the general population given that sextortion involves a recurring method of operation and the functions are comparable in the majority of cases.

The awareness must include certain points like:

1. Understanding of the offence and the method of the operation of the perpetrator.
2. Education about cyber space and the internet
3. Educate the people on how to recognize the sextortion behavior.
4. Not to share intimate pictures and indulge into video calls of explicit nature.
5. Not to open unknown links and irrelevant mails.
6. Using updated software.

Reporting: Following the realization that a crime has been committed, the next most important action is to report the incident. If a crime does not get reported, there is a good probability that the person who committed it will do it again, but this time they will be more assured in their actions. People have been dissuaded from reporting this crime as a direct result of the social stigma that is associated with it. As a direct result of this, this crime has become organized in many unorganized areas of the community. Reporting the crime and taking the appropriate legal action are both required to be done in the event that sextortion or another crime of a similar nature takes place.

Helpline: We have seen that in countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, there are hotline lines that allow the victim to directly contact the agency that is dealing with such an infraction. This makes the segregation of the crime more efficient, and as a result of this, it is easy to trace the perpetrators back in time. People in India are reluctant to go to police stations and file complaints; therefore, if there were a helpline number and the investigation could be conducted in a more streamlined manner, then there would be a greater number of people reporting the offence; and whenever there is a greater number of people reporting an offence, there are harsher steps taken in order to fight such crime more effectively. In India, such an initiative could actually help a large number of people. People in India are not willing to go to police stations and file complaints.

Harsh punishments: The crime of sextortion, as well as the crimes that are related with it, ought to be punished with severe imprisonments, which should also be served over a longer period of time. Because the crime was committed by more than one individual and took place on several different levels, the legal system has the responsibility of ensuring that all of those who were involved in the crime are appropriately punished in accordance with the deterrence theory of punishment. This will ensure that the various organized criminal sectors are brought to their knees.

When there are victims of a crime, there are certain things that the victims must do to ensure that the consequence of the crime is not a punishment for the victim. Even if the crime of sextortion can be controlled with some suggestive measures, there are certain things that the victims must do whenever they are prey to the crime.

1. The victim must stop all contacts with the perpetrator.
2. The victim should recognize the access provided to the perpetrator and stop that access immediately.
3. The victim must contact the police
4. The victim should not delete any conversations done with the perpetrator
5. The victim must share the incident with someone close and safe for the required moral support.
6. The victim should not pay any sum to the perpetrator or fulfill any of his\her demands.

In order to get a head, start on the fight against sextortion, you can follow the procedures that were just discussed. Even though there is a social stigma attached to it, proper reporting of the crime is necessary in order to make the solution to the crime successful, and at this level, the measures that were discussed above would always assist the victim in receiving adequate justice.

The victims must also be prompt about reporting the act in the nearby police station or the cyber cell. Though the cyber cells in India need some rigorous improvements but still there are several methods by which the victim can reach out to the authorities. The cyber cells have recently activated helpline numbers which can be considered in case of a cyber-attack either sextortion or any sort of phishing attacks.

Conclusion

Sextortion, a malevolent and ever-growing form of cybercrime, presents a serious threat in the digital la-

andscape. This paper has delved into the intricate details of sextortion, examining its nature, prevalence and devastating consequences while emphasizing the urgent need for effective legal measures to combat this pervasive evil. Through this exploration, it becomes clear that sextortion demands a comprehensive response from individuals, law enforcement agencies, policymakers, and society as a whole. The pervasiveness of sextortion is deeply concerning as it preys upon the vulnerabilities and fears of individuals, exploiting the very technology that has brought forward the unprecedented connectivity.

The perpetrators use a variety of tactics in order to coerce the victims utilizing the anonymity and the vast reach of the internet to target individuals and across borders and demographics. Sextortion not only harms the immediate targets but also has far reaching societal implications intersecting with other crimes such as child exploitation, human trafficking and cyber bullying. One of the crucial pillars in combating sextortion lies in the development and implementation of robust legal framework. Legislators must recognize the severity of the crime and enact specific laws that explicitly criminalize extortion ensuring that all the necessary essential elements of the crime is being fulfilled under that definition. This legal response must be accompanied by a prompt and active enforcement by the authorities and other law enforcement agencies. The legal enforcements however are not the only solutions which would affect the crime, education and awareness are a crucial step in order to prevent or mitigate this crime. The effects should focus on the individuals with the knowledge and skills especially with the young people. Schools, parents and online platforms with heavy crowds must focus on educating the people about the threats and the security concerns which are to be considered in the internet usage.

International co-operation and co-ordination are vital to address the global nature of sextortion. Governments and law enforcements agencies must strengthen collaboration sharing information expertise and resources to facilitate effective cross border investigation and prosecution. There should also be efforts focusing on building capacity in developing countries, ensuring that no jurisdiction become a safe heaven for sextortionists. In conclusion, sextortion presents a grave threat to the digital age, inflicting immense harm on the individuals. By adopting comprehensive approach at an international level and at the domestic level, the people can be provided with a safer digital space and the criminal could be provided with the proper deserved punishment in accordance to the law.

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