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Chapter

Digital Children's Right: Human Right Perspective

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Abstract

The utilisation of digital devices and technologies is an integral part of children's daily lives. Besides the multiple opportunities associated to online environment, like education entertainment and communication, it has also been associated with various risks like grooming and cyber bullying. It is therefore important to assess the level of risk, mediation and digital literacy among children as they form the most vulnerable part of the society. We therefore in this chapter introduce a novel approach to analysing digital children's right by viewing it from the human right perspectives, where we focus and extensively discuss on digital child rights as they relate to digital divide, technological access, gender issues, internet opportunities and risks, previous studies, policies and rights, frameworks as well as rights of children as a human right.

Keywords: children, digital children's right, digital literacy, human right, internet mediation, online risk

1. Introduction

Children nowadays spend considerable amount of time online at a young age. Estimates have shown that 26% of the global population is under 15 years of age (Source: Statista.com), and is relishing in the opportunities provided by digital technologies.

Undoubtedly, digital technologies play a vital role in the lives of most children around the world, technological access is rapidly increasing among children and its integration is affecting their lives [1] in both positive and negative ways. By estimate, one in every three digital technology users worldwide is a child [2] and every activity from child protection, governance, economic, health to educational is being significantly changed as a result of technological penetration [3].

Digital devices provide children with levels of access to communication, entertainment and information while also providing an opportunity for self-expression, learning and participation [4, 5]. Digital devices also present a means to communicate, learn and publish to billions of individuals in an extraordinary way [6] that was unthinkable only twenty-five years ago. With all these unparalleled benefits come risks, for example, digital devices have made the creation and distribution of abusive images of children easier and have also presented new opportunities for abusers to contact children. Notwithstanding, multiple intertwining occurring in the lives of children can improve or discourage the use of digital technologies.

The spread of these technologies, specifically the internet, in almost all parts of the world, has been subjected to powerful critical reviews and scrutiny with regards to the

opportunities and challenges brought about by this technological usage and integration. This discussion cover issues such as digital divide, infrastructure, intellectual property, opportunities, quality of information and, risk which are observed at both international, national and local levels (Urs [7]). An area that attract much interest is the influence of digital technology and its massive adaptation among children considering that a lot of children are vulnerable when accessing digital environment [8, 9].

Despite all the attention given, children's digital right is hardly viewed from the human rights dimension and being an encompassing construct, the declaration of human right needs to be associated with digital right of children across the world. Digital access to technology for children is a human right issue on the premise that they are humans too, and the digital access for them is satisfying an appetite by choice, leading to a bounty of legitimate benefits within the realm of their liberty, yet protecting them from possible harm is a rightful necessity. The use of digital technology is a human right in general as suggested by Karppinen [10], so it would not be different in the case of children.

A novel approach to analysing children's digital right is employed in this study by viewing it from the human right perspectives.

2. Global North, Global South and the Digital Divide

The Global North is home to a quarter of the world's population and controls four-fifths of the global income. It encompasses countries like New Zealand, Australia, Israel, United States, Canada, Western Europe, some developed parts of Asia namely Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong. It is home to all the members of the G8 and four-fifths of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. It is characterised as the more developed and richer region of the world [11].

The Global South comprises of Africa, Latin America, Middle East and developing parts of Asia. It is home to three quarters of the world's populations and controls one-fifth of the world income. The Global South is the poorer and less developed region [11].

Since the 1960s, the world has been divided between the wealthy and developed nations of the north and the poor developing and underdeveloped nations of the south. It is evident that digital divides can enhance the already existing social divides between the rich and the poor, rural and urban, children and adults, and between boys and girls [12, 13].

The digital divide is a metaphor used to describe the disadvantage of those who choose not or are unable to make use of the digital technologies [14]. Income is the greatest determining factor of the digital divide globally [15], while other factors such as the telecommunications gap and the quality of regulation also contribute, including behavioural and cultural attitude towards digital technology. Digital divides also exist between genders in both the Global North and Global South. For instance, in most countries in the Global South, girls would normally go directly to their home after school (with the possibility of completely missing school during festive periods) thereby missing after school computer classes. Similarly, boys in the United States are given better opportunities to interact with digital devices than girls [16].

3. Technological access

When digital technologies were first introduced they were perceived as a Global North phenomenon and the expectation was that the users are going to

be adults, however, even though reality has proven otherwise, the perception remains to a certain extent unchanged among regulators, legislators and internet governance [17].

Many children have now integrated technology as part of their daily lives across very diverse geographical and cultural settings in both the Global North and Global South. Children's activities are currently built around mobile phones and the internet to the point where differentiating between the online and offline worlds is very difficult [18].

Multiple organisations have cited the importance of internet access with regards to economic growth and civil right awareness [19] and are currently researching ways to provide internet access to every corner of the globe. Children should be integral component of this activity, not just because of their widespread usage of the internet, but because of the bidirectional process of shaping that occurs between the children and the internet. As at 2009, 75% of children aged 6-17 in some Global North countries are reported to have access to the internet while some underperforming economies like Cyprus and Greece reported 50%, which is less than some Global Southern countries like Brazil with 63% [5].

Internet penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa remains at about 11.5%, which might be attributed to some obstacles that may hinder internet access, including social or traditional factors that may marginalise certain groups (e.g. people with disabilities or girls). Additional factors such as affordability, language and political instability also hamper internet access [16]. About 48% of people around the world use the internet and 70.6% of youth between the age of 15 and 24 are actively online. Approximately 81% of the people in developed countries use the internet, compared to 17.5% of the least developed countries and 41.3% of the developing countries. About 95.7%of youths in Europe access the internet, which far exceeds the level in Africa, which only has a total of 21.8% [6].

Children's access to the internet in the Global South is often community based (e.g. cafes) or through mobile phones with erratic power supply, ethnic challenges, gender and socio-economic issues along with exploitation or harmful consequences, unlike the North where the sources of internet access for children are home and school based plus mobile phones [20]. The most common device children use to go online in the Global South is the mobile phone, which gives by privacy and flexibility but has reduced potential for parental mediation.

The UNCRC guarantees children from both the Global South and Global North equal political, civic, cultural, social and economic rights comprising the right to digital access. Nevertheless, the percentage of technological access is higher in the Global North, although countries in the Global South are catching up. Social imbalance has a significant influence on both access and usage. For instance, rich children in both the Global South and North have better access and usage of digital technologies than their poor counterparts [21].

Problems associated with the internet which are mostly related to the Global North include cyber bullying, grooming and solicitation. It would be a mistake to think that the issue is related to the Global North alone, since the rapid increase in internet access propelled by the penetration of smartphones and increase of broadband is indeed a worldwide phenomenon. Also in most Global South countries, the IFs and HOWs of internet access are not well understood, regardless of knowing what the resultant consequence may be, therefore, bolstering digital technological access to all children around the globe without exclusion and discrimination and at the same time enhancing digital citizenship and responsibility should be the main aim for policymakers interested in promoting opportunities for children.

4. Gender issues

Equal opportunity and gender parity are part of the problems majority of the local and international organisations wish to address, despite the fact that some groups get leeway compared to others. For instance, boys in Indonesia, the Philippines, Ghana and Bolivia have a more secure feeling while utilising internet cafes and probably get more resources to use digital devices than girls [22]. Additionally, the work of Goulds [23] presented to Plan International indicates that 79% of girls in China have unsecure feeling while utilising the web, which is assumed to be restraining their participation online and limit their development.

Various researches have proven that girls below the age of 10 are majorly targeted for actual or potential abuse, where in abusive images girls appear four times more than boys [24]. Wolak et al. [25] state that almost all sexual crimes that occur against kids online are conducted by males, even though in 2009, it was found that ladies in the United Kingdom were abusing boys too. Kleine et al. [12] discover that in a few communities, majorly in the Global South, girls are viewed as women, therefore are married off at an early age. In those communities, a dad can grant technological access to his son but denies his daughter, despite the fact that when presented with technological devices girls utilise the opportunity for education whereas boys mostly indulge in game playing [26, 27]. It was also found that a few families in Pakistan and India do not permit girls to utilise smartphones even for learning purposes while boys are permitted to utilise them to play [8, 9], which is restricting the opportunities that come with technology and at the same time denying the girl child her rights.

The degree to which girls are short-changed has resulted in eventual collapse of a few ventures being produced for girls. For example, a South African project (mobile4girls) that was meant to venture focus on girls could not succeed based on the fact that it never considered the needs or focused on the girls [3]. The gender disparity is almost everywhere. A study in the United States discovers that boys are preferentially trained to be innovative and explore through the use of digital technologies, which present an edge for them over the girls [24].

5. Internet opportunities and risk

The instant internet growth joined with readily as well as cheaply accessible information have presented large portion of children to utilise the internet, to either search through multiple documents as well as databases or browsing. The convenience and ease to access the immense accumulated data and information is integrating the internet and the World Wide Web in to an integral part of common individuals' daily activities. Freedom of expression and speech brought by the internet has given courage to populace, to the extent that even the marginalised individuals can freely conduct different types of business as well as publish various contents [28, 29].

One can find every sort of stuff on the internet, all the user needs is the appropriate searching methodology. It provides conducive atmosphere for all kinds of marketable from activist to terrorist agenda, from buyers of products or ideas to infatuations [30], this inherent strength has already turned the internet into an avenue of training terrorists, extremists as well as criminal organisations [31]. Our lives have been assimilated by the internet producing a noteworthy shift in the manner in which we form communities or associate [1]. All geographical boundaries have been eliminated by the internet, to the degree that your roommate or office colleague is a click away, likewise a person in another country or city.

A number of children view the internet as a source of learning & playing [32]. Therefore, numerous kids search the internet looking for experience [33] and friendship [34, 35]. There is an increase of 5.7% in the world internet users from 2016 taking the total to approximately 3.6 billion, [36] of which substantial percentage is assumed to be children.

As the internet availability increases, access to images and videos that are questionable and also misuse among children is progressively expanding [37] and turning into a matter that worries numerous guardians and parents [35, 38]. A case of inappropriate use of the internet is surely cyber-bullying, where laptops and smartphones are utilised to harass and intimidate children [39, 40]. Contrary to conventional bullying, cyber-bullying follows casualties anytime, anywhere [41].

The worst problem associated with the internet is its age-blindness, regards children and adults as equivalent, and only occasionally treating children in conformity with their "evolving capacity" as required by the CRC in Article 14 [42]. While the internet provides chances to learn as well as communicate via means that just were impracticable just a decade ago, it additionally has some costs that few parents as well as certain groups think are useless. For example, the presence of numerous online risks like, many forms of manipulation and exploitation, misinformation, grooming, hate speech, cyber-bullying and child trafficking are sections that attract great worry [38]. The greatest confounding element is how to mark a boundary as to what constitutes a risk online, a typical instance is when a child is exposed to pornography as it presents a discussion regarding whether this is in connection to the child getting knowledge about sex early or maybe other elements. Subsequently, making both defining and measuring the accompanying harm a difficult task [43]. Additional confounding issue is in connection with the procedure children figure out when a message online from an outsider is an initial step toward grooming or a cordial move. This has made drawing an unmistakable line between risk and opportunity extremely difficult, as it can obviously take away the "risky opportunities". Another issue is that of clarity with respect to who is at fault if children experience online harm, especially at sites that are multi-owned.

Risks online encountered by children are often classified based on content, conduct and contact [5]. Content risks are used to explain those risks linked to illegal item viewing such as pornography. Conduct is related to online children's behaviour, for instance downloading contents that are illegal. Contact refers to the risks linked to harmful communication or harassment like grooming or bullying. During the design phase of these classifications, researchers plainly state that children do not always occur as the victims, they may likewise be the offenders and that exposure to online risks does not necessarily imply harm, since kids have a method to develop shield that may lead to risk elimination [5].

Drawing a line between the activities that lead to risks and those that lead to opportunities on the internet is not easy [44], therefore, making effort towards understanding the difference between risk and harm is clearly necessary. Initially, researchers focused more on probable harm and technologically aided risks associated to children's privacy, safety and information overload but this focus more recently shifted to opportunities related to children's digital technology utilisation [45]. It is in this regard that children's digital right was reviewed.

Children from the Global South can rarely access the internet at home, and are more likely to go online via cybercafés where the possibility of encountering inappropriate content, and offline/online solicitation are high. Economic conditions, parental knowledge and awareness and weak regulatory procedure can further aggravate the risk and the possibility of harm. Another area of concern is that children do not consider the people they contact as strangers but rather as virtual or online friends [46, 47].

As stated by the European Union, the more parents use the internet, the more internet skills they acquire and the better opportunities they have to mediate their children's internet usage [48]. This is largely because of the increased tendency that children will report more upsetting or unwanted content or contact to guardians or parents who understand the internet, since parental mediation has consistently been depicted as very effective method of risk reduction, enhancing resilience and improving digital literacy among children [49].

Many victims of internet crime find it hard to disclose due to complicity and shame until images are discovered by law even in the Global North [37], which might have led to the implementation of strict measures and a reduction in the level of risk or even protection for those whom have later become victims.

Different types of risk exist for different societies; for example, children in Kenya are willing to meet strangers if they will give them some minutes on their phones [50] or the use of internet cafes which are deemed to be hazardous and expose children to adults who use pornography or drugs [48]. Nevertheless, it is the second most used source of internet in the Global South. The weak state structure in many Global South countries and wide-spread poverty can cripple children's legal and social protection, which will therefore increase their vulnerability [24].

The borderless nature of technologies like the internet makes it difficult for agencies or government to address what has now become a highly integrated and broadly scattered set of interests, similarly, its global nature has made imposing highly restrictive internet regulation a difficult task. As active agents, children will continue to indulge in risky behaviour online despite the awareness of the risks because of their exploratory nature, misplaced confidence and self-belief.

It is of vital importance that governments develop child friendly and accessible reporting systems as strongly recommended by the Committee on the right of a child and there is a need for awareness programs in most of the Global South countries [51]. For example, the Research Institution Plan India [52] in their report stated that over 90% of the participants are unaware of where to report online sexual exploitation and abuse.

The utilisation, vulnerabilities and conduct of children online vary with age. While ICT cannot be seen as a creator of crimes, it has given all forms of old crimes a new dimension [24]. It would consequently be a mistake to believe that all children are comfortable or equally proficient in the digital environment [48].

There is limited research on children's digital rights. Among the little number of researches, very few attempted to present a common view into children's view on risk and privacy in the digital settings and the usage procedure as well as knowledge of online protection apparatus [53]. A cross-section of studies has proposed ways in which children's well-being as well as the risk of harm have been extended by the internet [54].

6. Previous studies

The OECD [55] noted that most researches on ICT and digital right were conducted in and on the Global North, with lots of projection with regards to the way children use the digital environment in Global North and how they use them in the Global South. The impediments to children gaining access to digital technologies are completely different, most of the legislations and policies come from the Global North, therefore missing the explicitness needed in research and hence leading to problems during the adoption process in the Global South. SaferNet Brazil, thinkuknow website, the Slovak Safer Internet Centre and Hands for Children

Venezuela are examples of initiatives in countries in the Global North and Global South that are now trying to secure their children online.

Given that most researches on risk and usage have been conducted in the Global North, the transfer of findings to other cultural and socio-economic settings must be approached with discretion. Nevertheless, there is sufficient research fact in the Global South to predict potential dangers and patterns [50]. No research evidence has been found to support the assertion that the internet endangers children. Nonetheless, genuine risks can be associated with the internet. However, there exist adequate scientific facts to suggest a pattern for potential problems in the Global South. Encouraging studies on the rights of children's in the digital world in the Global South requires genuine thought, as it will enable the scholars in the Global North with an avenue to comprehend their very own characteristics, albeit studies presently emerging in the South [56].

End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), in their work with children in some Global South countries to create awareness on safety and the responsibilities of internet service providers and also governments in ensuring better online protection for children, noticed that children have a unique perspective in planning and skills as well as in support mobilisation and are more up-to-date when it comes to the latest technology. This assertion is corroborated by other initiatives in Africa [16].

'Early Adopter' are those countries who were first to encounter the problem and tried to solve it long before others had access to ICT. However, adopting their best practice might be hazardous because of the difference in usage (due to culture and language) and adoption (like landline before mobile in the North and mobile before landline in the South). Another question is related to the extent that policies and research designed for Global North in relation to the Global South. For example, Livingstone and Haddon [5] propose a "ladder of opportunities" which raised the question as to whether the ladder takes a different pattern when implemented in different cultural settings.

7. Policies and rights

The UNCRC was the first treaty that viewed children as right holders [57]; it was also the first to perceive children's right to privacy as a fundamental right [58]. Nevertheless, UNCRC is a less active mechanism to turn to with regard to children's digital technology preventive practices.

It may not be rational to assume that all children are confident or proficient in the digital world [48] and the rapidly evolving and transnational nature of the internet providers and online services is limiting the powers of states to establish online children's right under their area of jurisdiction [8, 9]. Hence most responsibilities for children's digital right fall on companies and intermediaries.

While designing policies for the rights and well-being of children in the digital world, skills, risks and access should be kept in mind. Additionally, children are not a homogeneous entity therefore the risks and opportunities of internet usage can be categorised according to their place of access, digital skill level and age; in addition to the special considerations to the most vulnerable children such as ethnic minorities, rural or poor, migrants, those with physical disabilities and others with special needs [37]. Numerous actors responsible for children's positive internet usage and safety (civil societies, private and public) have an imperative undertaking to formulate policies that are balanced, inclusive and factual. Be that as it may, the facts on which these policies base are very rare, particularly in the Global South.

Going by the consistent frame of reference, an overall framework as well as assessment of the issues linked to technologies as they correspond to children's rights is always confounding when we view that the lives of children rely upon confusing and conflicting government strategies and legal principles [59]. For example, to protect children against pornography and hate speech, a few countries have embraced harsh regulatory practice like blocking, monitoring and filtering some internet contents. Nevertheless, these nations ought to be careful about the probability of unforeseen outcomes; for example, in Kenya where pornography punishment extends to children and high percentage of the children were seen to search, view and download pornographic videos and images [50].

The freedom attached to the internet has had an important positive political and social effect in most parts of the world, which has led to authoritarian and conservative governments mostly from the Global South perceiving the internet as something they need to control, unlike countries like the UK who are allowing the ICT industry to self-regulate, or the USA which relies on cooperate social responsibility.

While policy frameworks such as the EU Agenda for the Right of the Child, the Council of Europe Recommendation on Empowering Children in the New Information, the European Commission's Strategy for a Better Internet for Children, and Communication Environment and so on are ever present in the Global North, the same cannot be said in the Global South.

To cope with the ever-increasing technological developments, Europe has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach with a strong dependence on self-regulation by the international regulatory bodies and forms of governance to tackle the global and complex nature of the internet. On the other hand, the US depends strongly on the Federal Trade Commission (and, to a lesser extent the Federal Communication Commission). Most of the countries in the Global South have embraced rigid regulatory practices like filtering, blocking and monitoring public access to online contents.

Various policies have been designed like the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Right of the Child on the Sales of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography which defines child pornography and insists on governments creating child friendly legal proceedings and was ratified by all but 43 UN members with 42 of them from the Global South [60]. The Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, supplements the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (The UN trafficking protocol), which also defines trafficking and that children or their parents cannot consent to being trafficked. The Council of European Convention on Cybercrime first treaty was designed to address crimes committed via the internet encouraging a common criminal policy as its main goal to globally tackle computer related crime. Although designed by Europe, other non-European Global North countries are members, whereas South Africa is the only country from the Global South. The Council of European Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse's (Lanzarote Convention) first international instrument that addressed all forms of sexual violence against children, which may occur within or outside the family, like grooming. The convention was aimed at preventing and tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of children [61]. All the conventions were either designed by the United Nations with various states of implementation or by Global North countries, which makes the adaptation of these policies by Global South countries vulnerable to failure.

In 2006, the UN Secretary-General study on violence against children recommended the strengthening of efforts to tackle the use of ICT for the sexual exploitation of children, by educating parents and children with regards to the dangers involved, punishing the perpetrators, distributors and consumers of the online child

pornographic content and at the same time, encouraging the ICT industry to implement global standards for child protection. However, the final communiqué of the G8 meeting in 2011 made reference to children as potential victims of exploitation, sexual abuse and trafficking, therefore calling the international fora to enhance their cooperation while tackling internet governance [62]. Nevertheless, numerous legal jurisdictions mostly from the Global South failed to criminalise grooming or tackle child pornography [22], while the European parliament and council adopted a directive on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, which replaced the council's 2014 framework to criminalise any form of child exploitation and abuse and also mandated the removal and optional blocking of those website hosting contents among member countries. Singapore, Australia, Canada, UK and US introduced legal actions against grooming [63]. In 2008, Brazil also amended the statute of children and adolescents [64]. Japan passed series of laws on digital child protection and example of other legislation includes the Philippines Cybercrime Prevention Act 2012, South Africa's Protection against Harassment Act 2011 and Argentina's grooming law.

The European Commission's Safer Internet (now Better Internet for Kids) implementation of child digital rights not only requires adherence to the rights and values, but also children's empowerment and participation so that their societal engagement innovation and creativity can be encouraged. Countries that adopted the EU safer internet policies now teach internet safety to children in schools [65].

It should be noted that international treaties can only provide an action framework, but states have to implement them at national levels, which may require the development of policy appropriate laws, preventive strategies, child protection measures and victim support for children. According to Chinn and Fairlie [15], one third of the internet penetration will be closed if Global South counties employ the same regulatory practices as the US.

8. Frameworks

To promote the benefits of the internet at insignificant risk for children, there is a need for a global framework and internal response and there is the need for policy makers to understand that for a reduction in digital child abuse and a boost in benefits, a harmonised international action and global policy framework is required. The framework should encompass an ethical inspiration and a strategic vision for public empowerment.

When it comes to children's digital world protection, the private sector has to play an important role of designing a framework that will be global, given its fundamental nature. And, as stipulated by the business and human rights guiding principles implemented in the United Nations framework [24], this sector has the authority to implement new instrument as well as design program for safer internet utilisation among children. Nonetheless, the private sector till date has not designed any global framework [24].

As indicated by Asthana [59], adding as a new category "participation right" (act and be heard), and expanding the rights to "provision" (access to food, clean water, shelter and health care) and "protection" (against exploitation, violence and harm), to the existing children's rights, UNICEF has designed a system currently referred to as 3P's.

Gasser & Cortesi [7] propose actors' perspectives as well as issues to be the themes for debate when it comes to the design of children's digital rights framework. They proceed with further explanation that perspectives can be split into different parts: political, which involves political parties integrating digital children's rights

into their respective campaign; intellectual, which draws researchers from diverse fields researching on the link within digital technology as well as social perception among children for them to gestate the right framework [8, 9]; legal, which involves enacting policies and creating laws; children's perspective which involves seeking children's opinions.

A report on Child Safety Online by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre [24] on the other hand, proposed the accompanying key approaches for legislation framework and law enforcement design, having four primary objectives of promotion of rehabilitation and recovery procedures for exposed or abused children, reduction in access to online harmful material, abolishing all impunity tendencies from the abuser and promoting children's resilience and empowerment.

In a government survey conducted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), it was found that the primary problem is associated protecting children online, which prompted the design of statistical framework for online child protection for digital child protection measurement [55]. Similarly, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) within its national framework has created a means for multi-actor policy debate, with child protection issues discussed frequently and various stakeholders as participants from national, regional and global level [2].

Notwithstanding, the framework chosen by either the children or the researchers, effective or right focused or alternative viewpoint, the things that should attract attention are the political as well as intellectual engagement to go after the compliance and implementation of the framework.

9. Right of the child

Previous years have seen an array of laws, policies and practices, frameworks and comprehensive strategies focusing on the rights of children in the digital world established, analysed as well as recommended in few instances [7]. Nonetheless, children's digital rights significance was not limited to international but national, and with the shift in focus by previous research to opportunities as the core from risk and protection [8, 9] with digital participation recently included, children's digital right is currently part of numerous internet bills which are part of the international rights [66]. Moreover, even though children are not particularly specified by some bills, but instead utilise universal phrases like "a person" or "every-human", some particularly focus on children, for instance iRight [66].

With the current online risks faced by children, concern from the public, policy makers and researchers are now entrusted with obligations of remodelling children's rights, especially the ones certified to cater for the "digital age" by the UNCRC, which include rights to provision and participation. Generally, among the maiden laws centred on internet drafted by a country was in the United States, where they aim to protect children against improper exposure to online contents [67]. The 1996 Communication Decency Act is an obvious example, which focused on reducing exposure to internet contents that are indecent for children.

According to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2016/679), children now require more online protection than ever before, hence the need for a data approach for subjects that are not age-blind. Consequently, the GDPR in its attempt to bring forth the desired protection, provide a wide range of changes while operating on personal but appropriate data of children [68]. Nevertheless, the absence of apparent interpretation of the concept is a serious challenge even in the nations of the Global North. For example, the lack of clear definition to children data consent, as even directive 95/46/EC does not plainly spell the required consent age for the children [68].

The association of different multi-partner children's digital rights methodologies has expanded over the years. The Internet Governance Forum has evidently turned into a basic platform for developing as well as discussing accepted procedures with respect to children's digital technology access and utilisation. Moreover, the Committee on the Rights of a Child in 2014 shows commitment at the international level, by dedicating a complete day to discuss child rights and digital media, amid which they focused on online children engagement [7].

Pundits have examined the regularisation as well as the all-inclusive terminologies backing the UNCRC, describing the ideas and debate on harmful effects of capitalism and children's rights on the lives of the Global South children [69]. Studies have shown that the idea of a right-bearing free autonomous person is not synonymous with the way of life of children in underdeveloped nations [59]. Kids in the underdeveloped countries largely live in extended families, villages as well as in communities, rather than in nuclear family as it is in the developed countries [50]. Accordingly, the 2013 – 2014 suggest plans that place rights, flexibility as well as value as core part of the UNICEF agenda [22] in the least developed nations.

As depicted in the existing studies, children's digital rights are a long way from accomplishment in spite of the striking development in both access and digital literacy. Kids are for the most part mentioned in terms of protection, whereas provision and participation rights are excluded. All the same, utilisation of children's digital rights ought not to be limited only to the values and rights of kids as people, but empowerment and participation of users that are children as well. Scientists keep on demonstrating that numerous educational, interactive and participatory aspects are still utilised [56], and at the same time, thought for framework development as well as techniques focusing on the advancement of children's rights in the present-day world and endeavours be made by various sectors to implement and equally advocate the guidelines set around by the Committee for the Rights of a Child (CRC), such as Ombudsmen.

10. Digital right of children is human right

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (UDHR) adopted (as sacrosanct) document composed by the United Nations General Assembly on the 10th day of December 1948 in Paris is the basis for subsequent proclamations of human rights globally and locally by member states and their territories, upon which the contemporary matters of human rights are being approached. The 30-article document makes explicit the right every human being is entitled to, which should not for any reason be deprived or violated by any individual or government [70]. Article 1 of the declaration clearly states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". This captures children as human beings with full rights, digital right inclusive. Article 2 goes on to pronounce that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". The last part of the article rules out any ground for discrimination, hence the alignment of children's digital right to the general human rights. Article 3 clarifies, that, "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". The right to digital access for human beings including children is one of the many things required by human life, at the same time a catchment area of liberty that ought to be prioritised [8, 9].

As rationally argued by Hospers [71], right being a moral principle sanctioning man's freedom of action based on choice, only right to life is fundamental, all other rights are its affixed subordinates. The right to engage in self-generated action for

self-sustenance and all that is required by the nature of every rational being for the support, fulfilment and enjoyment of the life are also rights, of which right to digital access is one. Human rights issues have multidimensional faces but all lead to realisation of the ultimate right to life.

For the avoidance of ambiguity, the United Nations in 1989 convened the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), an iconic landmark in the history of children's right. It was clearly defined that rights of the child are legitimate sector of universal human rights. It was a celebrated treaty that emphasised on the idea that children are human beings with their own rights, and must be allowed to grow, learn, develop and flourish with dignity like every other adult. Against this background, children are equally members of family and community with appropriate rights and responsibilities independent of any individual's pleasure [72]. This follows their being humans and subject of their own rights. In addition, children have some peculiar rights as demanded by their special needs [73]. By the convention, the right of children is equally human right, because they belong to human family and with special needs, so they deserve more considerations as rights than adults. Digital right of children is most rationally therefore closely aligned to general human rights as declared by the United Nations.

11. Conclusion

Although information age has brought forward different types of citizens with distributed responsibilities and different perspectives as stated by Hermes [74], the accompanying challenges are worrisome especially to children, hence the necessity to protect them. However, restricting online time as a means of preventing cyber victimisation and cyber bullying is practically infeasible because of the digital nature of the children. This makes the development of means that will attract the interest of the children very important.

Right denotes obligation and vice versa. The fact that society is obliged to cater for the children's needs necessarily warrants that those needs are human rights indeed which therefore makes it paramount that policy makers, researchers and societies at large develop how to moderate these online activities and at the same time striking a balance where children are allowed to go online to satisfy their needs without engaging in harmful activities. It would therefore be safe to claim that the digital right of children is a human rights issue, not because it is specifically mentioned in the United Nations declaration, but because it is depicted by inference. It is one of the fragments that constitute the wholesome human rights. Children are humans, and therefore their right, of any sort, makes list of the general human rights [75]. The mention of "human" does not preclude children as it connotes only the specie, not age.

There is a paucity of research on parental internet mediation with special reference to those that tried to evaluate its effectiveness even in the Global North [76]. So also parental mediation as the act of parents interacting with children on media use but little is known on how certain factors like neighbourhood or cultural norms affect children's internet usage habits and resultant risks.

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