

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, GENDER AND AFRICAN STUDIES

**Research Topic: Assessing the awareness levels of young girls of the risks to
sexual exploitation posed by use of internet technology in Nairobi.**

Leah Nyambura Gathumbi

ADMISSION NO: N69/71591/07

University of NAIROBI Library

0549390 3

**A Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts in Gender and Development Studies of University
Nairobi.**

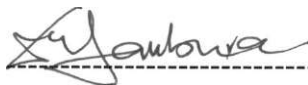
2010

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES
LIBRARY

DECLARATION

This is an original copy of my work and has not been presented to any other university for an award of a degree or diploma.

SIGNED

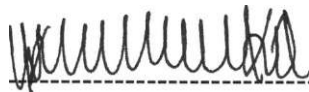


DATED

LEAH NYAMBURA GATHUMBI

This project has been submitted with my approval as a university supervisor

SIGNED



DATED

AUMifii

J.R. WILFRED SUBBO

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND GENDER STUDIES

P.O. BOX 30197

NAIROBI

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my son Jabali Kariuki for the motivation he gave me to push on despite many odds, knowing that he was looking up to me as his role model, and to my husband Mithamo Kariuki for walking with me every step of the way and assuring me that I would do it. It's my hope that they will continue to uphold women's rights.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I want to thank the Almighty God for his grace and favour throughout my studies and more so during this research.

Secondly I want to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of various people who worked and walked tirelessly with me throughout the period of my study and without whom the successful completion of this work would not be possible.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and the guidance provided to me by my supervisor, Dr. Wilfred Subbo for working tirelessly with me even in the face of challenges.

My sincere gratitude goes to all the young girls and other respondents who agreed to participate in discussions and interviews and without whom this work would have been incomplete.

I would also like to appreciate my mother, for believing in me and giving me a chance to get an education and my siblings for supporting and guiding me throughout my education.

My gratitude also goes to my husband Mithamo Kariuki for the encouragement; assistance motivation and the constructive criticism that he offered me that enabled me improve my work. Not forgetting my son Jabali for being a source of my inspiration during the study.

I would also like to thank all the attendants and managers of cyber cafes in the CBD who created time to respond to the questionnaire and for all the discussions that we held with them.

Lastly, all the well wishers and everybody else who contributed to the success of my studies. I wish all of you God's blessings.

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the awareness levels of young girls of the risks to sexual exploitation posed by use of internet technology in Nairobi. The study has been inspired by the upsurge of internet technology and the ease of access to this technology which often does not take consideration to safety of the users especially the vulnerable.

The study was conducted in the Nairobi Central business district which has an area of 4,509 km² and a projected population of 3,138,295.

Qualitative data analysis was carried out as per the study objectives which were well realized and formed the basis for recommendations on how to make internet safe for young girls.

The study concludes that internet technology is a double edged sword. It empowers as much as it predisposes users to various risks especially those with limited knowledge on safety. It actually asserts that the level of empowerment is determined by the knowledge and information on how to connect with the world safely and how to avoid falling prey to fraudsters and other harmful people who prey on the innocent. It also shows how important it is for everybody especially those who are entrusted with protection of children from harm should get involved in ensuring safety.

The study makes several recommendations on how the cyberspace can be made safer through awareness creation and policy formulation on safety.

Table of Contents

Declaration	-	-iii
Dedication		iv
Acknowledgements		v
Abstract—		vi
Table of Contents		vii
Acronyms		ix
List of tables		x
List of charts	-	xi
1.0 Background to the study		
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	2
1.3	Research objectives	5
1.4	Rationale of the study	5
1.5	Scope and limitation	6
2.0 Literature Review		
2.1	Introduction	8
2.1.1.	Theoretical frameworks	13
2.1.2	Relevance of Theory to Study—	14
2.2.1	Assumptions	-15
2.2.2.	Definition of terms	—15
3.0 Methodology		
3.1.1	Introduction	18
3.1.2	Research site	20
3.2	Research Design	20
3.3	Study population	20
3.4	Sample population	20

3.5	Sampling procedure	20
3.6	Data collection methods	21
3.7	Data analysis plan	22
3.8	Ethical considerations	22
4.0	Data Presentation and Discussion	
4.1	Introduction	24
4.2	Characteristics of respondents	24
4.2.1	Distribution by age	25
4.2.2	Distribution by Sex	25
4.2.3	Distribution by Occupation	25
4.2.4	Distribution by Internet sites visited	26
4.3	Knowledge of risks posed by cyberspace	26
4.4	Focus group Discussions with girls	27
4.5	Safety of young women/girls using the net	30
4.6	Interview with cyber cafe managers	32
5.0	Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations and Further Areas of Research	
5.1	Introduction	33
5.2	Summary of findings	33
5.3	Conclusion	34
5.4	Recommendations	36
5.5	Further areas of research	37
	Bibliography	38
	Annexes	40

ACRONYMS

AWID-	Association of Women's Rights in Development
CARE-	An international humanitarian Organization
CSEC-	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CRADLE-	Child Rights Advocacy, Documentation and Legal Centre
ECPAT-	End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking for Sexual Purposes
FGC-	Female Genital Cutting
FGD-	Focus Group Discussion
ICT-	Information Communication Technology
NCBD-	Nairobi Central Business District
UNICEF-	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-	United Nations
USA-	United States of America
WHOA-	Working to Halt Online Abuse

LIST OF TABLES

page no.

Table 1.....	33
Table 2.....	34
Table 3.....	34
Table 4.....	35

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research was aimed at investigating awareness levels of the risks of sexual exploitation faced by young women who use internet technology and other related communication channels in Nairobi. Sexual exploitation of children is unfair/illegal use of children's sexuality for personal gain. It takes many forms including child prostitution, early/child and forced marriages, Female Genital Cutting (FGC), trafficking of children for sexual purposes and child pornography.

Sexual exploitation of children is a problem that has existed for many years the world over. However, in many societies it was not recognized as a violation or a form of child abuse until the end of the last decade when a broad overview of sexual exploitation of children, including the commercial aspect of it, was explored with a view to addressing it. For instance, in Kenya issues such as child prostitution, child sex tourism and trafficking began to have a mention in the very recent past despite the fact that they have been happening for a long time.

Sexual exploitation of children is a broad topic as it takes many forms. This research will limit itself to this vice as it affects young women (13-19 years) in Nairobi. This is because Nairobi is one of the areas that have experienced an upsurge of information communication technologies (ICT) especially in the form of internet and mobile telephony, making it very easy for children especially young girls, to get preyed on. It is also important to note that this age group is in a transition stage from childhood to adulthood. Therefore, in as much as they may feel that they are old enough to make decisions about their lives; they still require protection from any form of exploitation because the law still recognizes them as children.

Some of the most rampant forms of exploitation on the internet include pornography, child prostitution, and trafficking of children for sexual purposes. These forms mostly affect the girls in the age bracket under study and young women. There are other forms of exploitation such as Female Genital Cutting (FGC) and early forced marriages that are disguised as culture. However, these may not have a correlation with the internet and technology. The risk to sexual exploitation

of young girls has increased with globalization which has increased the use of internet technology and made children and young people among the leading users of this technology. As such they are faced with enormous risks that come with the change of lifestyles and exposure to different people of different intentions online. Yet, a majority of them are unaware of the looming danger that comes with interaction with some of the technologies that they use. It is thus necessary to seek an understanding of their awareness levels of the actual risks posed to them through the use of internet technology as well as their protection needs.

1.1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sexual exploitation of children has been defined as "a practice by which a person, usually an adult achieves sexual gratification, financial gain or advancement through the abuse or exploitation of a child's sexuality by abrogating that person's right to dignity, equality, autonomy, physical and mental wellbeing" (Hughes 1999). Sexual exploitation of children is one of the most severe forms of violations that children have to endure and which for a long time had been neglected in many societies. It is said to have been one of the most neglected forms of violations until the last decade of the 20th century when it started being highlighted. The emergence of global campaigns and movements such as End Child Prostitution, Pornography and trafficking for sexual purposes (ECPAT International) was inspired by the glaring gap that existed in terms of providing protection and services to children victims of sexual exploitation.

ECPAT International has conducted studies that have proven that, sexual exploitation of children in cyberspace is rampant. The overriding reason for this as revealed by research is what has been termed as lack of forethought to protect children in planning and expansion of information and communication technology. The recent past has seen an upsurge of information technology which has radically transformed life. This growth has been made even easier by the easy access to internet and related technology, something that was previously a preserve of the well to do. It is now possible to access internet through the mobile phone something that is widely accessible even to young women. Internet technology is also quite easily accessible at home in school and in commercial places at very low rates. This often happens without any supervision whatsoever,

making it difficult for parents and guardians to provide any guidance or protection. Even in situations where parents can supervise the girls like at home, we find that girls are becoming more and more innovative in internet usage that their parents are unable to catch up with them. This has exposed them to risks of exploring a space where there is high demand for sex by adults sometimes in diverse locations who will stop at nothing to have sexual encounters with them.

There are also emerging and growing trends that have become key social networking tools especially for young people. Such services which are mostly interactive are highly valued by young people who find it easier to connect with their peers and be part of a global movement. They include services such as face book messenger, twitter, skype and other interactive services. Such services are one way in which girls are lured into physical meetings under the guise of dating where they end up exploited and abused. The services which mostly give opportunities for users to post personal information and other details such as photographs have been faulted for invading privacy. It also exposes the subjects to harassment and abuse, as their bodies are viewed as public property.

There is another interesting dimension to this problem which needs to be explored; apart from subjecting the girls to the devastating vice of sexual exploitation, ICT also poses a potential danger of involving them in what is now referred to as cyber crime (crimes that are committed with the aid of ICTs such as the internet and mobile phones) as well as violating their other rights such as the right to self expression, communication and innovation using ICTs. Interestingly these crimes are also gendered and seem to affect the girl child more severely. According to a survey conducted by an online safety organization known as "Working to halt Online Abuse" (WHOA) based in the USA, women and girls remain the primary victims of internet abuse even though there is a significant rise in number of women engaging in the crime. The other reason why these services pose a serious threat to young people especially women is the ignorance of what some of the risks that some of the technology could pose to them. Young people are known to take risks and explore new things often with serious repercussions. This presents a risk as they may be connecting with a world that they know little about thereby posing a risk to their security.

There is also the issue of gender; the patriarchal nature of our society predisposes young girls more to sexual exploitation than boys. Patriarchy normalizes subjugation of women and girls in society therefore their cases remain predominantly high. Patriarchy is also responsible for the ever growing phenomenon of objectification of women and girl children which fuels violence against them and has resulted in the media and the internet being the main culprits that expose girls to sexual exploitation especially in the internet.

This has serious implication on the lives of young women. There is evidence which shows how sexual exploitation of children can result in long term emotional and psychological harm to them. The vice also denies them an opportunity to a decent future. In as much as ICTs and globalization have transformed the way we live, they have also posed a real threat to peace, security and enjoyment of human rights for children. The cyberspace, as liberating as it may be, can also lead to serious violations especially of the ignorant and the marginalized groups. Young girls especially in Kenya fall squarely into this categorization. Their age, lack of information and guidance, and fragile social economic status are strong catalysts that lead to their exploitation and abuse. As such, it is imperative to explore the issue in detail so as to determine the risks that they face as well as what needs to be addressed and put in place to ensure their protection from this form of abuse.

In a nutshell, the study was geared towards addressing the lack of forethought on protection of children when expanding the ICT sector as well as availing necessary information and skills to the children to be able to protect themselves from the harm that comes with technology. The study was therefore guided by the following questions;

1. Are young women aware of the risks to sexual exploitation associated with the use of internet technology?
2. To what extent does their awareness protect them from the technology?
3. What are some of the strategies that can protect young women against exploitation associated with use internet technology?

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 Broad objective of the study

To assess the awareness of risks of sexual exploitation facing young women/girls using internet and related technology in Nairobi

1.2.2 Specific objectives

- To hold consultations with young women of ages between 13 and 19 years who use interactive internet technology in Nairobi with an aim of establishing whether they are aware of the risks of sexual exploitation posed by the technology.
- To analyze three main interactive services mainly messenger, face book and skype to determine their safety to the users especially young women.
- To hold consultations with internet and phone service providers to establish their views on the safety of young women using the above mentioned interactive services.

1.3 Justification of the study

Internet technology now plays a significant role in young people's social lives. Through it, they are able to send text messages, use messenger services, share music and videos as well as play online games. This has a big impact on their lives as it makes them socially acceptable as well as opens a myriad of opportunities for them to participate in global affairs and trends. It is also one of the fastest growing medium of communication in the world. Its accessibility has continuously been made easy by the new emerging technologies such as the mobile telephones.

However, in as much as internet technology is viewed as positive development, there are many risks associated with it. The anonymity that makes it possible for people to interact with people they don't know or have never met as well as people who they would not otherwise interact poses a great risk. As a result sexual predators have found this loophole very useful for them which they exploit to lure unsuspecting girls to their end.

According to an online article by the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID), a global feminist NGO, posted on 5th September 2008, the increasing availability of, and ease of

access to personal information online, especially through popular social networks such as Facebook facilitates incidences of cyber harassment, with minority and marginalised groups often at the receiving end of this harassment. Cyber harassment is closely linked to cyber stalking or online abuse. One of the minority groups cited in the article is minors. Sadly, there is no clear data and information that can be used to assess the appropriate measures that need to be taken to protect girls from this vice. Research in this area has largely focused on other factors leaving the area of exploitation and harassment unassessed. It is thus necessary to assess this with an aim of making information available for people considering studying this area.

By focusing on young women, internet cafes and mobile services providers in Nairobi, this study hopes to get a broad picture of the ways in which girls who use internet technology are exposed to sexual exploitation, whether the young women are aware of these risks, what forms of it are more rampant and therefore give an indicator into what form of protection they require.

Owing to the fact that Kenya is still grappling with a workable ICT policy that could be used to protect children and other internet users from violations, the study is deemed timely as it will provide an opportunity to make available useful knowledge that could be used in policy formulation of for further research.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

As anticipated at the proposal development stage, this study experiences several limitations in relation to the scope, sensitivity of the subject matter as well as availability of locally based literature. It was quite a challenge getting information from the respondent's especially young girls who felt it was too invasive of their privacy. The other major challenge was on the scope both geographically and in terms of the interactive technologies used by young girls. It emerged that the topic is too broad and may take a combination of studies and also cover other areas by the study will limit itself to Nairobi despite the country wide growth of internet and related technology which if it were to be explored it would be quite taxing. In terms of literature, there was limited local literature on the subject and therefore the study has largely relied on foreign literature.

The issue under investigation was very sensitive because it borders on private matters that are rarely discussed in public. This presented a challenge in terms of data collection and exploration of the issue as mentioned above.

The other limitation was to do with the growth of ICT in the country and the fact that not many studies have been done in this respect. It was therefore difficult to compare available data as well as have a literature review based on local literature. Thus, the literature reviewed has a significant foreign content.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A situational analysis of sexual exploitation of children in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region, notes that although commercial sexual exploitation of children cannot be easily quantified due to a lack of adequate data and surveillance mechanisms, there is an overwhelming amount of anecdotal evidence that the sexual exploitation of girl children is an extensive global problem. (UNICEF Report). Kenya is no exception to this problem. An estimated 955,206,348 population was said to be accessing the internet in Africa in the year 2000. Out of these, 3000,000 were said to be in Kenya (internet world statistics website). This number had risen to 4,000,000 by November 2009 according to a report by (Mwende Njiraini 2009) on effective regulatory framework for cyber security in Kenya. This is a significant number and has obviously grown bigger. However, it has been difficult to determine the range of it due to unavailability of systemized data on Kenya specifically. Many studies that have been undertaken have targeted Asia and Eastern Europe where the problem is believed to be rampant.

Most of the available literature in this area has been derived from studies and assessments undertaken mainly by child rights organizations in a bid to address the problem. According to a research report by ECPAT international on violence against children in the cyberspace, it is foolhardy for any country/society to imagine that they can block children from cyberspace and therefore prevent them from experiencing the violations there in. This, the report observes is because there are different levels of exposure in different places therefore impossible to prevent children from getting exposed. Besides, internet has occupied a significant place in our daily lives and more and more parents are finding themselves connected to it even at home. Many schools have also embraced internet technology and are encouraging children to learn how to use

It is now a known fact that young people are leading users of the internet, chat rooms, web cams, peer2peer, mobile phones and electronic games either at home, at school or at internet cafes. These technologies bring great benefits and great risks such as risks of sexual exploitation and child pornography, and exposure to sexual predators as well as to damaging images or messages

(ECPAT International 2005) Globalization has also changed the way children are socialized and exposed them to varied lifestyles through the mass media making them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Girl children are especially vulnerable due to the patriarchal nature of our societies that has led to the perception that girls are the property and sexual objects of men.

As internet and other ICTs expand, they make it easier for the abusers and exploiters to work because they enhance access to the children. ECPAT notes that the internet facilitates illegal habits and creates a conducive environment for crimes to be committed against children with little chance of being caught by law enforcement. This is more so because in many countries, there lacks a law that can protect children from this kind of abuse. Furthermore, internet technology provides services that can be easily exploited to con children into situations of exploitation. For instance, chat rooms which are public spaces predispose young girls to abuse and exploitation. In his report on child pornography and the internet, John Cars (2003) notes that pedophiles sneak into chat rooms where they try to persuade unsuspecting children to talk to them. They pretend to be good friends persuading the children to leave the public area and engage on one-to-one chats. Once the girls agree to these requests, the pedophiles strike.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to catch the pedophiles as they always disappear after the act. The lack of clear laws and mechanisms to track down such culprits also makes it difficult for them to be held accountable. In Kenya for instance, there has been a struggle to come up with a comprehensive ICT policy. The suggested drafts seem very elaborate on development of the infrastructure and other necessary conditions to enhance growth in the communication sector. However it is silent on human rights issues and especially the dangers that may face people especially children when using ICTs.² Even when it talks about women and the youth, it does this in relation to enhancing their access and participation in the sector but does not address any issues related to the violations of their human rights. Yet, research has indicated that online violators love the anonymity of emails and other internet services to avoid being caught. A guide

¹ ECPAT is a network of organizations and individuals working together to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

The ECPAT acronym stands for 'End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes'.

² A paper on ICT policy presented by John M. Kandiri, an ICT lecturer at Strathmore university

by ECPAT international on online safety indicates that abusers use pseudonyms in chat rooms and fake email addresses when targeting unsuspecting children to avoid it being traced back to them. These are some of the issues that education and ICT policies should focus on addressing if they are to protect children from abuse.

It will also help us deal with the thin line that exists between freedom of expression on the internet and the real dangers that exist in the guise of social networks.

In as much as social networks are apposite development, there is a need to control and monitor them. In his book "Internet Galaxy" Manuel Castells (2001) notes that social networks over the internet are built on the basis of values, interests, and projects. As such, it is easy for, pedophiles, sexual abusers and exploiters to find a justification to pursue their interests in young girls whom they target for their sexual fulfillment. And they are doing it. According to a report by the Internet Watch Foundation (2007) posted on Child Rights information networks website, there were 2755 child sexual abuse websites hosted internationally during 2007. The existence of such websites has been facilitated by the possibility of such sites to disguise as commercial operations, which frequently hop host companies and regions to avoid detection. These tactics, the report further notes, coupled with the complex multi-national nature of the crimes, mean that only a united global response involving law enforcement authorities, governments and the international online sector will enable effective investigation of these websites, their content and the organizations behind them.

Therefore, the first step towards this collective action would involve assessing the level of vulnerability for young girls and their needs to protection so as to be able to determine an entry point. At this point it is important to note that some of the inappropriate content that children are exposed to is totally unsolicited. It comes to innocent victims through SPAM mail. John Cars (2003), in his report on children pornography and the internet quotes some research findings done by Symantec, a major internet security firm which revealed that more than 80% of the youth received what they themselves considered inappropriate content via email. This and other evidence goes on to prove how much of such material is circulating unregulated posing a huge risk to the children. Unboubtedly , this content plays a significant role in shaping the children's

attitudes towards sex and sexuality. As John notes it also contributes towards objectification and subjugation of women and girls thereby accelerating their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.

Another study on violence against children in the cyberspace by ECPAT international also alludes to this. It observes that access to the internet exposes children and young people to the multibillion dollar industry of "adult entertainment" often with disturbing images. These Images the report notes become their foundation for their understanding of sexual relationships and violence. I move that this has a lot to do with the rising cases of sexual violence against women and girls sometimes even by their peers. It is a dangerous thing to have children to conceptualize sexual relationships based on such twisted facts as they will never be able to respect women's and girls' bodily integrity. Some of the case studies quoted in the said report attest to this. For instance, the report quotes some of the content derived from an interview for a magazine article. The interview which was gauging perceptions on sexual relationships interviewed boys who confessed to having begun viewing pornography as young as age 13. One boy is quoted as asking: "who needs the hassle of dating when I've got online porn"? Clearly, this boy will find it difficult to have mutually respectful relationships with girls and women. He already thinks they are sexual objects.

Sadly, as the problem intensifies, it becomes more difficult to address mainly because of the secrecy and the attitudes that we as a society harbour towards sex and sexuality. Many people are unwilling to engage in an open discussion about the topic. In the process, ignorance thrives and provides a loop hole for exploiters and abusers to strike. As UNICEF observes, *"Sexual activity is often seen as a private matter. Most communities are reluctant to act and intervene in cases of sexual exploitation. These attitudes make children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Myths, such as the belief that HIV/AIDS can be cured through sex with virgin, technological advances such as the Internet which has facilitated child pornography and sex tourism targeting children, all add to their vulnerability"*. (UNICEF website)

Even for people who engage in sexual acts against children such as pedophiles, they are unwilling to open up about it. John Cars argues about a research that was undertaken among pedophiles by the Lucy faithful foundation. According to the foundation, pedophiles have always

been aware of their interest and desire to have sex with children but have not known how to go about it until the internet provided them an avenue to strike. In my opinion, the anonymity that the internet provides and the silence surrounding the issue make it all the more possible for them to thrive. Child abusers and pedophiles have confessed that the internet increases their chances of engaging in the act because it increases their sexual fantasies. It also creates an opportunity for the culprits to engage in other crimes against children.

According to ECPAT international, the UN special rapportuer on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography reported in 2005 that commercial child pornography sites most of them in Eastern Europe were linked to organized crime, child trafficking and prostitution. In our case where young girls have a fascination with online dating and a preference for foreigners, they are at a great risk of getting into contact with such criminals who will end up exploiting and abusing them or worse still, involving them in crime.

By and large, the upsurge in internet use all over the world has increased children's vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, studies in this area have revealed high vulnerability to further exploitation among children who have had a history of exploitation. Like aforementioned, girls with a history of sexual exploitation are at risk of further exploitation and abuse. They easily fall prey to the perpetrators of the vice as they already feel lonely, isolated and have low self esteem and confidence. In our Kenyan situation, there are many girls like this. A study done by the Child Rights Advocacy, Documentation and Legal center (CRADLE), a Kenyan child rights organization in collaboration with CARE Kenya in December 2006 indicates that girls between the age of 15 and 19 years are more at risk of beihg sexually exploited and abused. This is because of social cultural and economic factors such as the fact that they are young and inexperienced and therefore unable to determine ill intentioned people, economic difficulties forcing them into situations where they are compromised and a search for identity that often lead them to the wrong people. Although this does not limit the victims to internet usage being a vulnerability factor, it's an indicator as to the situation of this age group when it comes to sexual exploitation of whatever nature.

2.1.1 Theoretical frameworks

The Radical feminist theory

In assessing the situation of young girls in the use of internet and related technology, this study sought to use the radical feminist theory to explain the reason why sexual exploitation of girls is rampant in our society. This theory emerged in the 1960s in the United States in response to the sexism experienced by women working within the civil-rights and antiwar movements. Some of the earliest proponents of the theory include L.Parpart, M.Patricia Connelly, V.Eudine Barribeau. To date the theory remains relevant in assessing sexuality and issues to do with sex between men and women. The theory will be instrumental in explaining why it is common for women and girls to be sexually exploited. Some feminist theorist such as Shulamith Firestone (1970), have argued that women's subordination is rooted in their biology, that is, their reproductive physiology. Many radical feminists argue that women's subordination is rooted in male control over women's fertility and sexuality, that is, over women's bodies.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose to go by the argument that relates women's subordination to male control over women's sexuality. In many instances we see how patriarchy and male dominance works hard to keep women's sexuality in check. For instance, Female Genital Cutting (FGC), in as much as many people would want us to believe it is a cultural practice, is mainly meant to control women's sexuality by curtailing their sexual urge and preventing them from expressing their desires as well as seeking sexual fulfillment. Yet, many societies use it as a way of cultural identity while many women who perform the cut benefit from it economically.

Culture is also used to objectify young women reducing them to sexual objects of men and making it difficult for them to protect themselves from violations and abuse.Ponography that is so rampant on the internet, for instance, is one way that girls and women get objectified. It contributes a great deal towards shaping negative attitudes towards women's sexuality by making them look like sexual objects that can be used and dumped at will. Hence the rapid increase of sexual exploitation of young girls.

2.1.2 Relevance of the theory to the study

The radical feminist theory facilitates an understanding of the role that female objectification plays in undermining girl's/young women's ability to exercise autonomy and protect their bodily integrity when it comes to deciding on issues of their sexuality. This has been found to be a contributing factor to the girls being trapped through ICTs as they are often not armed with adequate information to ward off male attention. The fact that many societies including Kenya have made issues of sex and sexuality a taboo topic also contributes to this situation. It makes it difficult for girls to discuss and explore various ways through which they may find themselves in situations of exploitation. Creating an environment where sex and sexuality is discussed openly would give rise to a process of learning by young girls and ultimate empowerment so that they are able to protect themselves from abuse.

The radical feminist theory alludes to this by arguing that procreation and sexuality, which have been seen as private issues, are in fact political issues in as much as they are fundamentally organized by male power. Relegating these practices to the private realm delegitimizes women's struggle to change them. Radical feminists have declared that **"the personal is political."**(L.Parpart, M.Patricia Connelly, V.Eudine Barriteau Theoretical perspectives on Gender and Development).

It is only recognizing and appreciating this that we will be able to challenge authorities to create a conducive environment for girls and women to enjoy their rights. By linking sexual exploitation to politics and demanding a legislative framework to protect exploitation through internet technology, a major milestone will be achieved.

This theory links with the empowerment approach which seeks to give women and girls power to self confidence, self awareness and to cause change in their lives. Empowerment is development by the people and therefore people must participate in it for them to benefit. For young girls to be able to protect themselves from sexual exploitation, they need to be empowered to make informed decisions regarding their sexuality. It requires raising their consciousness, education

and change of organizational structures to facilitate them to make the right choices regarding their sexuality.

The empowerment approach also facilitates the realization of sexual rights of young girls. By accessing them to basic rights such as the right to information, education, and protection as well as accessing them to the resources that they require to realize their human rights and development. The empowerment approach will be an instrumental approach in the study. It will also facilitate a gender analysis of the group under study in relation to the problem they are faced with and therefore provide an opportunity to make recommendations that will ensure they are protected from the risks that they face. This way, they will also be in a position to detect and ultimately avoid sex predators that prey on them on the internet.

The ultimate form of empowerment that this study strives for also includes, enabling women and girls to positively explore internet and other forms of technology for their own growth and development and without fear of being exploited, abused or intimidated within the cyber space as well as being involved in criminal activities due to ignorance.

2.2.1 Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Young girls using internet technology in Nairobi risk being sexually exploited.
2. Young girls using internet technology are ignorant of the risks presented by such technology.
3. There is need to avail information that will enable the girls understand the risks that they face when using internet.

2.2.2 Definition of terms

- Sexual exploitation: In this research, sexual exploitation will be defined as "a practice by which a person, usually an adult achieves sexual gratification, financial gain or advancement through the abuse or exploitation of a child's sexuality by abrogating that person's right to dignity, equality, autonomy, physical and mental wellbeing" (Ala, Hughes. 1999).

Children: Children are defined as per the UN Convention on the rights of the child of 1989, article 1 and the Kenyan children's act to mean any person below the age of 18 years.

Pornography: Pornography has been defined as employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or stimulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct (National Clearing house on child Abuse and Neglect information 1996) Pornography as defined in this research also means films, videos, magazines, writings, photographs, computer images and any other material containing sexually explicit images be they of adults or children.

Trafficking: This refers to the transport, harboring or sale of persons within national or across international borders through coercion, force kidnapping, deception or fraud for purposes of placing persons in situations of forced labor or services such as forced prostitution and domestic servitude.

Female Genital Cutting: This is the collective name given to traditional practices that involve the partial or total cutting away of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genitals, whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. It has also been called "female genital mutilation" or "female circumcision." (women's health, gov)

Child prostitution: This is an act of involving children in sexual acts in exchange for money or other considerations including food, affection, shelter, and clothing. In this case, child prostitution will be viewed as benefiting other people as well therefore exploitation of children's prostitution.

- Internet technology: This refers to knowledge and tools used to connect to a world wide network of computers for purposes of communication.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Introduction

Issues of sexual exploitation are sensitive in nature. Many people are unwilling to discuss matters to do with sex and sexuality openly. This is one of the main reasons why sexual exploitation is becoming rampant. When sex and sexuality is not discussed, there is a big chance that young people will not have information that will enable them protect themselves from abuse. There is also a chance that they will get confusing messages on the subject and will sometimes act as a result of misconception thereby risking exploitation.

This study therefore adopted methodologies that allowed openness during discussions to ensure that it gathers as much information as possible which can be used to create awareness or form a basis for further research into the area.

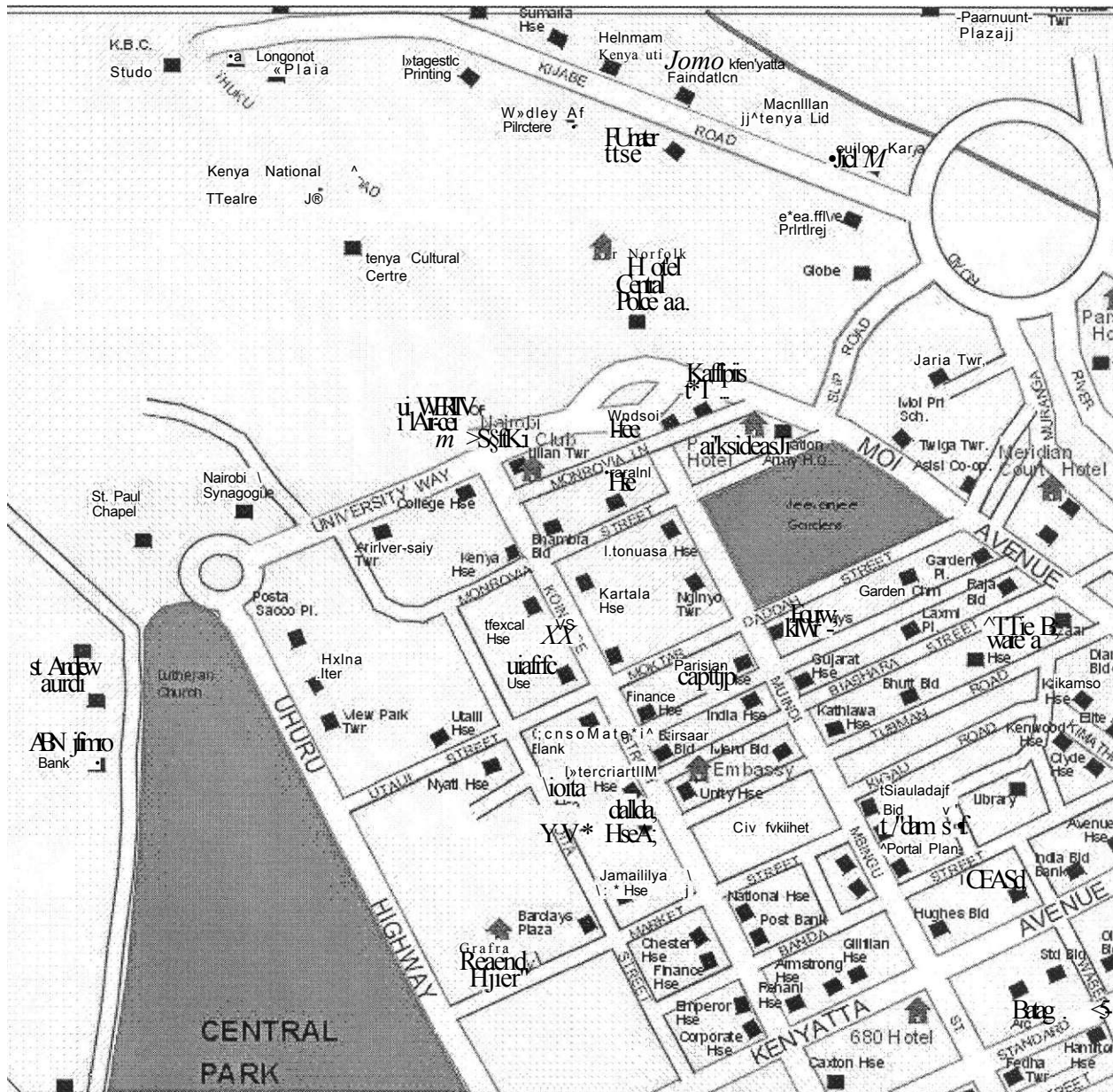
3.1.2 Research Site

Nairobi is the Capital of and largest city in Kenya. The city and its surrounding area also form Nairobi Province. The name "Nairobi" comes from the Maasai phrase *Enkare Nyirobi*, which translates to "the place of cool waters". The city was founded in 1899 as a simple rail depot on the railway linking Mombasa to Uganda, the town quickly grew to become the capital of British East Africa in 1907 and eventually the capital of a free Kenyan republic in 1963(Wikipedia). It is estimated to have a population of 3,138,295 within an area of 4,509 km²

Nairobi is now one of the most prominent cities in Africa politically and financially Home to many companies and organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the UN Office in Africa, Nairobi is established as a hub for business and culture. The Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE) is one of the largest in Africa, ranked fourth in terms of trading volume and capable of making 10 million trades a day. The Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network (GaWC) defines Nairobi as a prominent social centre. (Wikipidea)The city also has

the largest population accessing the internet and other emerging technologies. The Central Business District (CBD) has the highest concentration of internet cafes that are open to people from diverse backgrounds including the target of this study making it the most suitable area for this study.

A map of the NCBD



3.2 Research Design

This study was cross-sectional and exploratory in nature. It sought to explore how globalization and the growth of ICT impacts on the lives of young girls and how it can be made safe for them through legislation and regulation of what they access and who they interact with within the cyber space.

The study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data focusing on young girls, men and women in the ICT sector.

3.3 Study Population

As aforementioned, the study focused on young women living in Nairobi, men and women in the ICT sector as well as parents and guardians of the girls. The study also sought to get the views of service providers as well as the general public on the issue under exploration and their suggestions on how internet technology can be made safer for children.

3.4 Sample Population

The population that was studied was that of young women of ages between thirteen and nineteen years living in Nairobi who use internet technology and adult men and women who work in the ICT sector. A total of 80 girls were interviewed while a total of 50 internet cafe workers were interviewed.

3.5 Sampling procedure

The sampling procedure involved a combination of simple random as well as snowball. Girls who were interviewed who have had experiences of exploitation were asked to recommend others that they knew who can also be interviewed. These were the girls who participated in the

FGDs. The service providers were randomly sampled based on the location of their businesses within the NCBD.

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 Focus group discussions-These were done during the open discussions with the target age group of girls. Because of their age, gender and experiences, the selected participants were able to provide rich experiences of what they had encountered while using the internet and what they think could have posed a risk for them to be exploited. They were also useful in assessing how many of them have fallen prey to the vice and therefore facilitate the process of establishing what protection needs that they had. The researcher facilitated the Group Discussions using a guide (see attached) so as to ensure she captured the experiences of the girls. An assistant was engaged during the FGDs to assist in note taking. A total of four FGDs consisting of 10 members per groups were conducted.

3.6.2 Desk research-A desk research mainly involved reviewing documents that had information on the risks to sexual exploitation posed by the use of internet. These included research and survey reports as well as internet sites that could provide hints or links to such information. Policy documents such as the ICT policy were also reviewed so as to establish how it works to protect children as well as how it enables service providers respect the rights of users

3.6.3 Case Histories-This involved collection and documentation of case studies from girls who have faced the risk of sexual exploitation when using the internet or mobile phones. The case studies were used in the analysis of the situation as well as tangible evidence depicting the situation of young girls.

3.6.4 Interviews

These were targeted at internet and mobile telephone service providers. 50 commercial places were sampled for the interviews where two respondents were interviewed in each place. The interviews were purposed at establishing the trends witnessed in those premises among the study population who seek the services. The respondents were drawn from Nairobi central business

district (NCBD) where there is a high concentration of internet cafes and therefore a high concentration of users.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative aspect focused on content and trends analysis and interpretation of data. The presentation was done in form of a narrative report. The quantitative aspect focused on numbers which were analyzed using inductive data analysis method and presented in form of tables and charts.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the research subject, care was taken to ensure ethics were followed to the letter. Ultimate confidentiality was observed in regards to the people sampled for purposes of data collection. No information provided was diverted to any other persons for any other reason apart from the research. The informants/respondent were assured in advance that any information they provided would not be linked to their names and that it would be treated with anonymity and ultimate confidentiality.

Consent was sought from all the participating parties in all the methods that were applied to collect data. This will be one of the initial exercises conducted when the research team met the participants. The researcher did not under any circumstances proceed with the research before being cleared to go to the field by the university or without a permit to conduct research.

The purpose of the research was explained well in advance and respondents were asked to sign any a consent form (see attached) with a view of making them process as well as have a better understanding of the exercise. The respondents were also be prepared well in advance on the nature of questioning to expect including the degree of sensitivity of the subject to prepare them for the exercise.

Regarding colleagues in the research or in social sciences, care was taken to avoid listing any authors in the research proposal and report without their permission, proper acknowledgement or any thing that may amount to acts of plagiarism. Further, no work was attributed to any person who did not make a contribution to the research.

The researchers were careful to ensure proper interpretation of the data collected and present it in an accurate manner to avoid distortion of facts. Extra care was taken to avoid publication of data that was not collected during the research exercise as well as doctoring of data.

Lastly, in order to ensure that no issues of ethics are overlooked, the researcher sought advice on the same from the university supervisors on the issue of ethics.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings. The data from which the analysis is done was collected through an in-depth questionnaire administered to internet cafe owners, managers and attendants as well as Focus group Discussions (FGDs) undertaken with girls under study. It is worth to note that observations and informal chats were also done especially in the internet cafes during the interviews. A desk review of available data on the subject was also undertaken to corroborate the information given as well as informal discussions with parents and guardians on the topic.

The survey covered a total of 50 internet cafes in the Nairobi Central Business District (CBD) and 40 girls of ages between 13 and 19 who participated in the FGDs. Four FGDs of 10 participants each were conducted. Generally all those interviewed and participated in the FGDs ranged between 13 and 45 years of age.

The characteristics and attributes of respondents for both young girls and internet service providers include: gender, age, occupation and internet sites visited. These attributes were deemed necessary in the analysis as they help deduce perceptions, attitudes and ability to engage through modern technology which could predispose the girls to some of the risks that are experienced in the cyberspace. It was also an important determinant of the girl's level of awareness of the said risks.

4.2 Characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
13-19	40	40.0
20-30	38	38.0
30-40	8	8.0

40-50	14	14.0
Total	100	100

Source: Field work October 2009

In the above table, 40 young girls of ages 13-19 were interviewed, 38 internet providers of ages 20-30 responded, 8 providers of ages 30-40 responded while 14 providers of ages 40-50 responded.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	60	60.0
Male	40	40.0
Total		100.0

Source: Field work October 2009

Table 3: Distribution by occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
None	10	10.0
Student	30	30.0
Internet cafe attendants	40	40.0
Internet cafe managers	6	6.0
Internet cafe owners	4	4.0
Other users	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field work October 2009

10.0 percent of the respondents did not have any explicit occupation. They were mainly girls who are out of school and looking for occupation. In the above table, 40 young girls of ages 13-

19 were interviewed, 38 internet providers working in the cyber cafes of ages 20-30 responded, 8 providers of ages 30-40 responded while 14 providers of ages 40-50 responded. 30.0 percent were girls in secondary school, 40 percent were internet cafe attendants, 4.0 percent were internet cafe owners, 6.0 percent are employed internet cafe managers and 10 percent other users.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by the sites visited

Site visited	Frequency	Percentage
Face book	98	98
Messenger	95	95
Twitter	6	6
Skype	1	1
Tagged	1	1

Source: Field work October 2009

4.3 Knowledge of risks posed by the cyberspace

This analysis relates directly to the broad research objective which is on assessment of awareness levels. It also relates to specific objective 1 and 3 which sought to hold consultations with users and providers of internet. In a bid to establish awareness levels of the risks posed by the cyberspace among young girls who use internet, the researcher enquired from both the service providers and users what sites they visit, how long they take on the sites and whether they think those sites are good for them. 98 % of the respondents said that young girls under study use face book and messenger services concurrently on a daily basis. 6.0 percent use twitter in addition to face book and messenger while only 1.0 percent use skype and tagged. In response to the respondents, the girls spend between 30 minutes and 2 hours at any given time. The average time spent is two hours with only two respondents citing that some girls go up to 3 hours.

All the service providers reported that the girls request for privacy when using these sites as they are normally looking for male partners or chatting with those they have already met online. Quite

a number of the girls view pornographic material hence the need for privacy as they are afraid of being sighted by other users. Only about 10% of the girls request for help from the attendants to block the sites that they find offending or unwelcome online buddies who try to make advances to them.

3% of the service provider's admitted to not taking an interest in the chat messages that young girl's send/receive from their computers. Some of the reasons given for this include; privacy as a business policy, some girls demand for privacy while others feel it's really not their business to meddle in the private affairs of their clients. About 8% of the providers admitted to spying on the girls as they are interested to know what keeps them glued to the computers for long hours. About 3 % get to see the messages after the girls have left the sites when they forget to close or when the girls get stuck and need assistance.

A significant number of respondents (60 %) indicated that girls are actually violated by some of the people they interact with through the internet. Asked to clarify how they are able to do this, these were some of their responses; *"Some of the girls get emotional and start crying when chatting, others seek assistance to disable their accounts while others try to conceal everything they do. Some of the girls suddenly look very scared especially after viewing dirty photos of themselves on the net. Most of the girls openly share photos and personal information on the net with strangers only to learn later that these have been used to violate them "*.

This was also confirmed when one of the attendants assisted the data collectors to see some of the chat messages exchanged between a 17 year old girl and a male online friend which had explicit content in it.

4.4 Focus Group Discussions with the girls

The FGDs were conducted with the intention of realizing research specific objective 1 which was to hold consultations with the girls to assess their levels of information and awareness.

From the discussions, 70% of the girls who participated in the FDGs admitted to not being aware of any risks posed by the internet. They also said that they had been introduced to the interactive

websites by friends who enticed them to the idea of meeting so many friends and being part of a global network: *"You know, you have to keep with the times! There is no way my friends will be discussing things on face book and me lam just seated there saying nothing just because of fear. Besides, those guys can't catch you. You are online not physical!"*

This statement confirmed an assertion that had been made earlier by one of the internet cafe attendant; "Initially the girls start the relationships on the basis that it is only on line and therefore safe. However, some of the online relationships actually become a reality where girls end up with people they barely know who end up abusing them physically."

90 percent of the girls in the FGD confirmed having face book and messenger accounts. About 70 percent also confirmed that they used twitter in addition to face book and messenger on a daily basis. Some of the reasons they gave for using the mentioned networks include: looking for guys/dates, being part of the global network, wanting to fit in with their peers, to keep updated with gossip and all. A partly 5 % of the girls said that they liked face book as they get to learn current affairs while a majority of them said they wanted to meet cute guys. On the issue of safety, the girls said that at the point of joining, they never really think of it in those terms. Only after they have experienced unpleasant people is when they start getting a sense of insecurity.

Regarding the type of friends they invite into their network the researcher asked whether they scrutinize the profiles of people who invite them and these were some of their responses: "No, we don't have to. All you need to see is the photo, current city and social status. Then you are cool". The girls further explained that is not always possible to scrutinize the people you engage with as some people will get your address online and can decide to write to you whether or not you are interested in them. "You know, in face book, you don't have to invite people to be your friend. They can just connect to you through your other trusted friends."

Another girl retorted; "in fact, once you like the face and social status, all you need to do is send your photo so that you also entice them to like you. We actually don't think what you are saying about photos being used badly is true!" Some of these guys are really cool. They can even help you go abroad

During the discussions about 30% of the girls confirmed that they had met anonymous people who promised to assist them travel abroad but didn't think it was any cause for alarm. About 35% of the girls also confirmed having met online dates with whom they shared their photos and as a result wanted to meet them physically. Most of these dates are based abroad. Another 20% of the girls said they didn't fear being found out by other people as they had internet enabled phones which they didn't share with anyone and therefore are able to access any sites. The issue of fraudsters masquerading as agents who assist people to travel abroad also featured prominently in informal discussions with adults who reported having had experiences with people who tried to con them. This also confirmed a preliminary parallel study undertaken by a Kenyan NGO in the 2009 which showed that the mobile phone is the most popular way of accessing face book, twitter and other interactive networks among children of 12-19 years of age (Preliminary results of an ongoing study by CRADLE 2009).

The discussions also confirmed the suspicion that there is a lot of sexual harassment meted on young girls and women online. Quite a number of girls admitted that some guys had asked them for phone or internet sex. "Some of them are really blunt. One asked me for internet sex and I told him I don't know what that is. He said he would teach me how to go about it. All I needed was to have earphones on. I got so scared since I started imagining he could see me. This is the time I knew this thing could be dangerous.

In another FGD, one girl narrated how she had become a victim of stalking as a result of an online engagement. According to her, she gave out personal details including her phone number and physical address and the guy started stalking her. "This guy used to follow me up everywhere. He could see me but I couldn't see him. Sometimes he would call me and say; I have seen you cross the road where are you going? This went on for a bout two weeks then it stopped. It was really scary!

In yet another case, young girls narrated of how she almost lost money to fraudsters who had conned her into believing that they could do a deal for her to travel abroad and only got to know that it was fake after she confided in a relative while seeking assistance to send the money.

Two 19 year old girls who had finished school and were looking for an occupation narrated of how they almost became victims of fraud after they visited a website that purported to link people to jobs. Once they sent their application, they responded telling them that they had qualified for a job interview which would take place in Mombasa and therefore they needed to send a certain amount of money by bankers' cheque to cater for their meals and accommodation during the interview. The interesting thing is that the girls had done this at different times through the same website and the terms were exactly the same.

These cases illustrate some of the dangers looming in the cyberspace and not only for those who use interactive sites but also those who use the internet for genuine causes. They also show the danger of interacting with people who are unknown to them without caution. Some of the girls said they had been harassed at one time or the other but didn't share it with anyone for fear of victimization or reprisal

4.5 Safety of young women and girls using the internet ;(*m their own words "*)

This section captures responds two research specific objective 2 which analysis the main interactive services to determine their safety. It captures some of the responses in verbatim as recorded during the interviews.

"I have actually never imagined that the phone my daughter uses could open up opportunities for her to interact with the world without my knowledge. Iam now curious and would line to know some of the spaces that she access".-A parent during a discussion on internet safety.

I dint know that my phone could do so many things until my teenage daughter got a hold of it".- A parent during a discussion on internet safety.

'I thought by allowing my children to explore internet Iam empowering them to learn many interesting things. It has never occurred to me that buying my daughter an internet enabled phone could actually be harming her"-A parent during a research findings dissemination meeting by the CRADLE.

"Now I understand why my daughter would do anything for me to buy her an internet enabled phone. There is a whole world that they are exploring out there that we know little about." A parent during a research findings dissemination meeting by the CRADLE.

Anything you put online is permanent on some of these social networks," "Somebody can easily take that photo of your child and manipulate it in whatever way that they want."-Mark Matunga, Education and Citizenship Program Manager with Microsoft East Africa LTD.

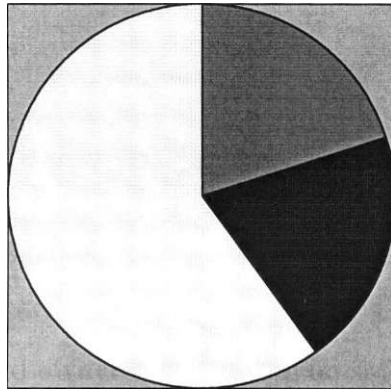
4.6 Interview with cyber cafe owners

A majority of the managers and owners of internet cafes displayed a laissez- faire attitude towards the safety of girls and young women. According to them, they are running businesses where they have a willing buyer willing seller relationship; "You cannot tell me to block some sites just because the girls will access them. Where are their parents and what are they doing giving them all that money to spend all that time in the internet. For me it's a business. It's not my responsibility to protect them. Besides, we have a privacy policy in our cafe. You cannot start looking at what sites the clients are visiting. You could be accused of violating their privacy"

Another interesting dimension is the shift from the use of public cyber cafes to mobile telephone. Although only 20% of the girls in the FGD had access to internet enable mobile phones, the internet providers feel that a significant number of children are now accessing

Internet enabled phones which have become quite affordable hence no need to visit cyber cafes where their privacy may not be guaranteed.

Cafe managers and owners responding on safety



- Blocking sites
20%
- Monitoring sites
20%
- Leaving it open
60%
-

The above table attests to the aforementioned laissez-faire attitude among the cafe owners. Only 40% of the respondents actually block, regulate or monitor sites that are deemed to be harmful to the young people. Some of the sites that they felt were unsuitable are those that have pornographic content and those that have often been reported to have fraudsters preying on users.

This is attributed to a weak ICT policy that governs the industry. A desk review of the ICT policies available, there is no specific clause on protection of people especially the vulnerable from violations. Available literature shows that it would be difficult to regulate content on the internet and any protection measures must be a consensual approach between internet users and providers. "We seek to develop positive cooperative relationships with ISPs and other information technology industries in order to find answers to the problems of sexual exploitation of children" (ECPAT 2006). In Kenya, there has been efforts to come up with an ICT policy for some time now. However, this has not delivered policy that will ensure protection of all children from abuse. The recent past has seen the NGOs/civil society organizations begin campaigns on internet safety. A conference to promote internet safety for children was undertaken in December 2009 spearheaded by CRADLE, a Kenyan NGO and Microsoft. This therefore means that Kenyans have an opportunity to engage in the campaign and join the campaign to promote safety of children.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREA FOR FURTHER STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

From the findings, some conclusions have been drawn forming the basis of recommendations;

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study confirm the existing deep fear that internet technology is not always safe especially for girls and those who are not adequately informed to be able to eschew the risks experienced in the cyberspace. It also attests to the fact that very few of the girls and young people accessing the cyberspace are aware of the looming dangers that it presents.

The findings also respond to the study objectives laid out at the onset. On the objective 1 which set to hold consultations with the providers and users of the internet, it was clear that often, the girls get into the cyber space through peer pressure and with good intentions only to be confronted with the risks that they rarely anticipate.

Over 50 % of the respondents think that the safety of the girls online can not be guaranteed because of various reasons; some of them who share their photos have them manipulated to make pornography. Further, there are a lot of foreigners dangling nice things to lure the girls who end up accepting those offers due to naivety. Some girls reported having received online death threats especially when they get suspicious and request for deactivation, some of the girls are scared of sharing their unpleasant experiences therefore end up suffering alone.

Male online buddies are always trying to exploit them sexually and even in cases where there is no physical abuse, the girls suffer psychological trauma and anguish. Some girls have been conned of their money by being tricked into sending money to crooks on line. "Most of these tricksters promise to facilitate the girls to travel abroad and take advantage of the girl's naivety. "This only responds to the research question that the girls don't have adequate information to enable them take precaution when using the internet.

According to an ICT expert who works for Microsoft who commented on the interviews, sometimes these things happen in a very subtle way; "For instance, when you quarrel with your teenage daughter and you send her to her room/ground her as punishment and she has an internet enabled phone, o you ever think of what she is going in that room. Chances are she is already connected to several people and she is enjoying the conversations so much that she doesn't need to get out of there. This is how it happens"

On specific objective 2 which analysis the interactive internet services, it is clear that Kenya is at a level where technology is an inevitable reality.

Most young people in the urban centers especially Nairobi cannot avoid technology. They spend long hours on the net exploring and discovering.

Many young people use interactive technologies often with little or no guidance at all and therefore their safety cannot be guaranteed. The amount of time spent on these sites is also worrying and has actually begun to take toll on the young girls. Some of the girls in the FGDs admitted that they are addicted to face book and that they have been in trouble either with teachers or parents because of it.

Parents and other adults don't realize how risky it is to leave the young on the loose without guidance on some of the technologies that they use. This came out clearly during the consultations with internet cafe attendants and owners who indicated that they are least bothered by what the young people are accessing online.

There is no clear cut policy on safety and protection of the vulnerable groups who use internet technology. As such, it is difficult to determine the extent to which well wishers and other interested persons could go in taking protective measures on behalf of those needing protection.

5.3 Conclusion:

That internet and related technology is extremely empowering is not in doubt. However, the level of empowerment is determined by the knowledge and information on how to connect with the world safely and how to avoid falling prey to fraudsters and other harmful people who prey on the innocent. It also shows how important it is for everybody especially those who are entrusted with protection of children from harm should get involved in ensuring safety.

Observation, discussions and interviews revealed that often parents actually encourage their children to access the cyber space without giving due regard to safety issues. Many parents admitted to being ignorant or not taking a keen interest in the internet. Because of the pressures of everyday life, many parents/adults only use the net on a limited scale and to do basic things such as sending emails or checking up information on the internet. As a result, they are ignorant of the myriad of services available online.

Some are out rightly technophobic and would rather not venture into unknown territory. This has continuously given the young people an upper hand in matters of technology as they are more adventurous and curious. In the process, they sometimes find themselves treading on dangerous grounds. Thus it is imperative for all concerned including policy makers, parents, service providers and the general public engage to engage in an awareness creation campaign on the gains and dangers that face users of internet technology. To do this it means that everybody needs to engage with those technologies so that they can gain knowledge that will facilitate them to educate others and be able to propose safety measures

tity
•for y

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the fore going, there is need to take steps to ensure that the situation is improved if not reversed so that young girls, children and other vulnerable groups can participate in the growth of technology with minimal risks of being violated. Some of the safety measures that can be taken include the following;

1. There should be an age limit to some of the interactive technologies to ensure that children are not preyed on. The experts in the industry should find a way that would work with people's DNA to verify the ages of those accessing sites that are deemed unsafe specifying the suitable sites for them. This was mainly emphasized during discussions with service providers and parents.
2. Efforts should also be made both at home and commercial places including mobile telephones to blocking pornographic sites. Providers and users found to be violating this rule should be punished by law to deter sex pests and predators from targeting young innocent minds.
3. Awareness campaigns should be carried out by all sectors; schools, providers, parents and ICT industry in a bid to advice young girls and other people on what sites to access. Many girls appeared ignorant of the lurking dangers in the net.
4. Cyber cafes should take individual responsibility and stop people from accessing such sites. They should also advice parents who allow their children to access such sites by giving them too much money to spend on the internet.
5. Efforts should be made to encourage girls to seek advice and guidance on how to use the internet properly; there should special education on internet violation in schools.
6. The government should also crack the whip by facilitating an ICT policy that has clauses on protection of people's rights including children and the vulnerable groups like young women and girls. It should also crackdown on all cyber cafes that allow young girls to access such inappropriate sites, and ensure the policy is implemented and closely monitored.
7. The government through the ministry of information and communication should facilitate the profiling of all the in appropriate sites and make them public so that people can be sensitized to avoid them.

5.5 FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

Technology evolves every day. To be able to keep up with it, one needs to continuously learn how it works. This calls for continuous research into emerging technologies. Since this is a broad area, the recommendations will be limited to interactive technologies. These technologies have a great potential to empower as much as they can expose people to many risks. It would therefore be important to undertake a thorough analysis of the benefits and risks that they pose to be able to plan better.

There also a need to study the existing policies on technology especially in relation to safety and protection of the vulnerable groups so as to be able to make practical proposals on improving them.

Bibliography

ECPAT International (2005) Make -IT -Safe- a fact sheet on IT safety for children and young people. Bangkok.

ECPAT International (2000) Protecting Children Online-A practical guide on child protection. Bangkok.

John. Cars (2003) Child abuse. child pornography and the internet. London. The Children's Charity.

Karlen, Helena and Christina Hagner (1996) Commercial Exploitation of Children in some Eastern European countries. New York: ECPAT-USA.

L.Parpart, M.Patricia Connelly and V.Eudine Barriteau (2001) Theoretical perspectives on Gender and Development.

Manuel, C. (2001) The internet Galaxy. New York: Oxford University Press.

Richard, J. Estes (2001) The sexual Exploitation of children: A working guide to Empirical Literature. Philadelphia.

Shulamith Firestone (1970), in the Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution.

The CRADLE (2006) a Report on the status of Human Trafficking in Kenya. Nairobi: CRADLE.

United Nations (1989) The Convention on the Rights of the children. New York: UN.

Relevant Internet sites visited

[http://www.crin.org/docs/20080417_iwf_annual_report_2007_\(web\).PDF](http://www.crin.org/docs/20080417_iwf_annual_report_2007_(web).PDF)

<http://www.cyber-rights.org/reports/child.htm>- A report on human rights issues in the cyberspace

<http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?apc=r90501-e96137-1> -A report on gender issues in use of technology

www.cyberstalkd.org- Report assessing cyber crimes among women

www.internetworldstats.com -Report on internet accessibility in different countries

www.unicef.org-A report on child protection issues

www.ecpat.net- Reports on violence against children in the cyberspace

www.awid.org - A report on gender issues in the cyberspace

<http://epic.org/privacy/gender>- Reports on personal privacy on the web

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-27444-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html- A report on gender issues by OXFAM

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nairobi> -Information on Nairobi

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nairobi> -Information on Nairobi

6.0 ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Dear participant

My name is Leah Nyambura Gathumbi a Master of Arts student in Gender and Development studies at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on risks to sexual exploitation posed to young girls who use internet technology in Nairobi that will last two months. This is to inform and assure you that the information you share with me will be purely for academic purpose and will remain confidential.

I would also like you to know that your participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw from the process at any time. You can also request that any information you give be withdrawn from the report if you are uncomfortable with it.

If you agree to participate, you will either respond to a questionnaire or in a Focus group discussion.

Please sign below as a sign of your acceptance to participate and also as your consent to volunteer in the study. A copy of this form and a summary of the findings will be given to you when the study is complete.

Signature of the participant.....Date

Signature of the researcher.....Date

ANNEX 2

Focus Group Discussion questions guide.

Research topic-What are the risks to sexual exploitation facing young girls in Nairobi? How can they be avoided?

October-November 09

Identification Variables

Sex of participant

Location

Age of participant

Occupation of participant

Date of FGD

1. When did you start using the internet?
2. What are some of the sites that you visit
3. Do you use chat rooms and messenger services?
4. Are you on face book? Have you posted your photo?
5. Whom do you chat with?
6. Do you think it's safe to chat with people you don't know on face book, messenger/twitter?
7. Do you check profiles of people before you make them your friends on face book?
8. Have you ever dated online? Have you ever met an online date physically? How did you relate
9. Has an online date ever asked you for sex or suggested it? How did they put it?
10. Have you ever felt like an online friend could be dangerous to you in terms of trying to take advantage of you or rape you?
11. Do you watch pornography or nudity on the internet
12. When you feel threatened by online friends do you ever discuss with anyone?
13. Do you ever respond to anonymous emails or text messages on your phone?

ANNEX 3

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INTERNET USERS IN NAIROBI CBD

BIO DATA OF RESPONDENT:

Name (Optional)-/ Initials

Age group (tick as appropriate) 20-30 • 30-40 • 40-50 •

Designation

Name of Cyber Cafe

Location of business (House & Street/Lane)

1. How many young girls (13-19 years) do you provide service to in a day?
2. What internet sites do the girls prefer accessing? (Probe for use of Face Book/ Messenger/ Skype/Chatting/ Games.
3. How many hours do they spend on the net? (Probe for reasons)

4. Do you think those sites are safe for the girls? Why?-
 - a. Do you take an interest in the chat messages that young girl's send/receive from your computers? Please give details.-

b. Are there instances when girls/young women request for privacy/closed spaces when they chat?(probe for reasons)

5. How can you tell a girl who is violated through internet?

6. Have you ever encountered girls who have been sexually violated through the internet in your cyber cafe? Yes • NoD. (Please explain what you did and why)

7. What do you think you can do to help protect them from this type of violation?

8. What else do you think should be done to help young women who are addicted to the internet? _____

9. What sites is your cyber open to? (Probe for blocking of pornographic websites in your business)? please provide more information——