

From Love to Leverage: The Criminology of Revenge Porn and Digital Exploitation

Avijit Shukla¹ Aruno Raj Singh²

¹ Assistant Professor, School of Law and Public Policy, Avantika University

² Assistant Professor, School of Law and Public Policy, Avantika University

Abstract - In a contemporary context wherein, digital intimacy has emerged as a pivotal component of modern interpersonal relationships, the occurrence of revenge porn — defined as the non-consensual distribution of private sexual content — represents a troubling advancement in the realm of cybercrime. This research endeavors to examine the criminological dimensions of revenge porn, analyzing the transformation of actions that were once rooted in affection into mechanisms of coercion, humiliation, and control. By assessing offender's motivations, victim's experiences, and societal responses, the study scrutinizes the militarization of trust and consent within digital landscapes. Drawing upon essential criminological frameworks including routine activity theory, feminist criminology, differential association, and labeling theory, the manuscript investigates the socio-psychological factors that drive perpetrators and the systemic barriers that silence victims. Furthermore, the research engages with the influence of digital culture, toxic masculinity, and anonymity afforded by online platforms in sustaining these offenses, emphasizing the frequent intersection of revenge porn with gender-based violence. Through an examination of case studies, insights from victimology, and an analysis of current legal structures, this study advocates for a more sophisticated comprehension of revenge porn not solely as a breach of privacy but as a calculated form of digital exploitation with significant criminogenic implications. The paper concludes by proposing policy and educational measures designed to enhance deterrence, rehabilitation, and victim safeguarding within the broader framework of cybercrime prevention.

Keywords: Revenge Porn, Non-Consensual Pornography, Image Based Sexual Abuse, Labelling Theory, Feminist Criminology, Non-Consensual Adult Content, Routine Activity Theory

Key Words: optics, photonics, light, lasers, templates, journals

1.INTRODUCTION

The digital era has ushered in a phase of unmatched interconnectedness, transforming the landscape of human relationships and interactions. In India, a nation swiftly adopting digital metamorphosis, intimacy now often transpires within virtual domains, facilitated by instantaneous messaging, social networking platforms, and the omnipresent availability of smartphones. This digital intimacy, while presenting novel avenues for connection and articulation, has concurrently engendered innovative forms of exploitation and maltreatment. Among the most insidious of these is the phenomenon colloquially referred to as “revenge porn”—the non-consensual dissemination of private sexual imagery or recordings. This act, frequently executed by former partners, epitomizes a profound treachery of trust and a weaponization of shared intimacy, inflicting significant psychological, social, and economic detriment upon its victims¹. The escalating instances of online harassment and non-consensual image sharing in India accentuate the pressing necessity for a more profound criminological exploration of this issue within the Indian context.

While the designation “revenge porn” implies a singular motive of retribution, the actuality is considerably more intricate. Perpetrators may be propelled by a spectrum of

¹ “Revenge Porn: A Peep into its Awareness among the ...” *Indian Journal of Intellectual Property*, 6 Jul. 2023, <https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/18.01.018.20231103.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

factors, including ire, envy, a compulsion for dominance, financial benefit, or even a misguided endeavor to elevate their own social stature². The act itself transcends a mere infringement of privacy; it constitutes a strategic form of digital exploitation that exploits intimate content to coerce, degrade, and dominate individuals, predominantly women³. This manuscript aspires to investigate the criminological dimensions of revenge porn, surpassing a superficial comprehension to examine its profound roots in human conduct, societal frameworks, and technological progressions, with a particular focus on the Indian socio-legal milieu.

This inquiry will adopt a multi-dimensional criminological perspective to scrutinize revenge porn. We will invoke established theories such as Routine Activity Theory, which elucidates how the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians engenders opportunities for such criminal acts⁴. Feminist Criminology will be pivotal to comprehending the gendered nature of revenge porn, recognizing it as a manifestation of gender-based violence entrenched in patriarchal power dynamics and toxic masculinity⁵. Differential Association Theory will

illuminate how individuals assimilate and adopt behaviors associated with digital exploitation through their interactions with others⁶. Ultimately, Labeling Theory will be utilized to investigate the profound ramifications of societal reactions and labels on both victims and perpetrators, influencing their experiences within the criminal justice framework and broader society⁷.

Beyond theoretical examination, this manuscript will incorporate empirical case law and case studies predominantly from India, alongside pertinent international jurisdictions, to provide tangible illustrations of the legal challenges and responses to revenge pornography. The inclusion of charts, graphs, and data sets will furnish empirical insights into the prevalence, victim demographics, and legal outcomes associated with this offense, with a focus on accessible Indian statistics. By integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence and practical case analyses, this study aspires to contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of revenge pornography as a significant cybercrime with profound criminogenic roots in the Indian context. Ultimately, this manuscript will culminate with policy and educational recommendations aimed at enhancing deterrence, promoting rehabilitation, and fortifying victim protection within the evolving landscape of cybercrime prevention in India.

2. Defining Revenge Porn and Digital Exploitation

The nomenclature surrounding the non-consensual distribution of intimate imagery (NCSII) has undergone

content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁶ Paulin, M. (2021). Revenge via social media and relationship contexts. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 38(12), 3465-3482. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/02654075211045316>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁷ Harper, Craig A., et al. "Development and Validation of the Beliefs About Revenge Pornography Questionnaire." *Sex Abuse*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2022, pp. 748-783. *PMC*, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10399101/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

² Harper, Craig A., et al. "Development and Validation of the Beliefs About Revenge Pornography Questionnaire." *Sex Abuse*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2022, pp. 748-783. *PMC*, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10399101/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³ Gabriel, Katherine. "Feminist Revenge: Seeking Justice for Victims of Nonconsensual Pornography Through 'Revenge Porn' Reform." *Vermont Law Review*, vol. 44, 2020, pp. 849-92. <https://lawreview.vermontlaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁴ Henriksen, Caitlin B. "Tangled Webs: A Test of Routine Activities Theory to Explain Nonconsensual Pornography Victimization." Diss. University of Cincinnati, 2020. <https://cech.uc.edu/content/dam/refresh/cech-62/school-of-criminal-justice/research/2020/Caitlin%20Henriksen%209-22-20.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁵ Gabriel, Katherine. "Feminist Revenge: Seeking Justice for Victims of Nonconsensual Pornography Through 'Revenge Porn' Reform." *Vermont Law Review*, vol. 44, 2020, pp. 849-92. <https://lawreview.vermontlaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

substantial evolution as societal and juridical comprehension of the phenomenon has advanced. Initially, the designation

“revenge porn” attained extensive utilization, reflecting the prevalent motivation of retribution by former associates⁸. However, this designation has been increasingly denounced for its intrinsic biases and inaccuracies. The term “revenge” insinuates that the victim is in some manner culpable or that the action is a defensible reaction to a perceived injustice, thereby redirecting culpability away from the offender. Furthermore, the term “porn” insinuates a consensual or commercial character, which fundamentally misrepresents the non-consensual and exploitative nature of these images⁹.

Understanding these challenges, more precise and victim-conscious labels have surfaced, including 'non-consensual adult content' (NCAC) or, in a broader context, 'image-based sexual misconduct' (IBSM). These designations more accurately encapsulate the criminal essence of the act, underscoring the absence of consent and the abusive intent underlying the dissemination of private sexual content. IBSA, in particular, encompasses a broader spectrum of behaviors beyond mere ex-partner retribution, including threats to disseminate images, the creation of deepfake pornography, and the distribution of images for

monetary gain or social status¹⁰. For the aims of this study, recognizing the prevalent term 'revenge porn,' we shall mainly adopt the terminology 'non-consensual pornography' (NCP) and 'image-based sexual abuse' (IBSA) to uphold accuracy and reflect a victim-focused framework.

Digital exploitation, in this context, pertains to the misuse of digital technologies and platforms to inflict harm, exert control, or abuse individuals. NCP forms a crucial aspect of digital exploitation; however, the more extensive category also covers cyberstalking, online harassment, doxing (the sharing of private details), and the invention of unreal profiles to impersonate or discredit people. These actions frequently intersect, with NCP often being part of a more extensive pattern of online maltreatment and domination¹¹. The ease of digital dissemination, the permanence of online content, and the global reach of the internet exacerbate the harm inflicted by these actions, rendering them particularly catastrophic for victims.

3. Criminological Theories and Revenge Porn

Understanding the driving forces behind and the societal elements contributing to non-consensual pornography demands an analysis through diverse criminological perspectives. This section will assertively examine how Routine Activity Theory, Feminist Criminology, Differential Association Theory, and Labeling Theory furnish indispensable frameworks for scrutinizing the issue of revenge porn and digital exploitation.

⁸ Harper, Craig A., et al. “Development and Validation of the Beliefs About Revenge Pornography Questionnaire.” *Sex Abuse*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2022, pp. 748-783. *PMC*, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10399101/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁹ Gabriel, Katherine. “Feminist Revenge: Seeking Justice for Victims of Nonconsensual Pornography Through ‘Revenge Porn’ Reform.” *Vermont Law Review*, vol. 44, 2020, pp. 849-92. <https://lawreview.vermontlaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹⁰ Harper, Craig A., et al. “Development and Validation of the Beliefs About Revenge Pornography Questionnaire.” *Sex Abuse*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2022, pp. 748-783. *PMC*, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10399101/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹¹ Henriksen, Caitlin B. “Tangled Webs: A Test of Routine Activities Theory to Explain Nonconsensual Pornography Victimization.” Diss. University of Cincinnati, 2020. <https://cech.uc.edu/content/dam/refresh/cech-62/school-of-criminal-justice/research/2020/Caitlin%20Henriksen%2009-22-20.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

3.1. Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory, formulated by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, asserts that crime manifests when three components converge in both time and space: a driven offender, an appropriate target, and the absence of an effective guardian¹². Applied to NCP, this theory delivers a persuasive rationale for its prevalence in the digital epoch:

Driven Offender: Perpetrators of NCP are frequently propelled by a spectrum of motivations, encompassing vengeance, rage, envy, a thirst for control, monetary gain, or even a misguided effort to elevate their own social status¹³. The digital landscape furnishes a convenient and often anonymous avenue to act on these motivations. The simplicity with which intimate images can be procured (often consensually shared within a relationship) and subsequently disseminated online intensifies the motivations of offenders who aim to inflict harm or exert dominance.

Appropriate Target: Victims of NCP are generally individuals who have disclosed intimate images to a trusted individual, frequently a romantic partner, under the assumption of privacy and consent. The “appropriateness” of the target resides in the availability of their private images and their susceptibility to exploitation once that trust is violated. Women are disproportionately victimized, rendering them particularly appropriate targets due to prevailing societal power disparities and gendered

anticipations surrounding sexuality and privacy¹⁴. The digital footprint of individuals, encompassing their online presence and social media activity, can also render them more accessible targets.

Absence of Effective Guardian: In the realm of NCP, effective guardians can be interpreted on multiple levels. At an individual level, the victim frequently lacks immediate control over the images once they are shared, particularly if they are stored on another person’s device or uploaded to online platforms. At a societal level, the absence of robust legal structures, sluggish law enforcement responses, and the hurdles of content removal by online platforms contribute to a deficit of effective guardianship. The anonymity afforded by the internet further erodes the perceived risk of apprehension for offenders, thereby diminishing the deterrent impact of potential guardianship¹⁵.

Routine Activity Theory underscores how the routine activities of daily life in the digital age—such as sharing intimate content with partners and participating in online social interactions—forge opportunities for NCP when driven offenders exploit vulnerabilities in the absence of sufficient protective measures. The swift advancement of technology frequently outstrips the development of legal and social safeguards, cultivating a fertile environment for such crimes.

3.2. Feminist Criminology

Feminist Criminology offers a critical framework for comprehending NCP as a manifestation of gender-based

¹² Henriksen, Caitlin B. “Tangled Webs: A Test of Routine Activities Theory to Explain Nonconsensual Pornography Victimization.” Diss. University of Cincinnati, 2020. <https://cech.uc.edu/content/dam/refresh/cech-62/school-of-criminal-justice/research/2020/Caitlin%20Henriksen%209-22-20.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹³ Harper, Craig A., et al. “Development and Validation of the Beliefs About Revenge Pornography Questionnaire.” *Sex Abuse*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2022, pp. 748-783. *PMC*, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10399101/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹⁴ “An Update on the Legal Landscape of Revenge Porn.” *National Association of Attorneys General*, 16 Nov. 2021, <https://www.naag.org/attorney-general-journal/an-update-on-the-legal-landscape-of-revenge-porn/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹⁵ Henriksen, Caitlin B. “Tangled Webs: A Test of Routine Activities Theory to Explain Nonconsensual Pornography Victimization.” Diss. University of Cincinnati, 2020. <https://cech.uc.edu/content/dam/refresh/cech-62/school-of-criminal-justice/research/2020/Caitlin%20Henriksen%209-22-20.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

violence entrenched in patriarchal power structures and societal inequities¹⁶. This perspective underscores that NCP transcends a mere infringement of privacy, representing a manifestation of extensive patterns of misogyny and domination over women's corporeality and sexuality. Principal tenets of feminist criminology applied to NCP encompass:

Gendered Nature of Victimization: Empirical data consistently illustrate that women constitute the predominant victims of NCP¹⁷. This disproportionate victimization mirrors deeply rooted societal norms that sexualize and objectify women, whilst concurrently shaming and blaming them for their own victimization. The act of disseminating intimate images without consent serves as a potent instrument for enforcing patriarchal dominance, punishing women for perceived transgressions, and reinforcing conventional gender roles.

Control and Power: NCP is fundamentally concerned with power and control. Perpetrators, frequently former intimate partners, employ the images to assert dominance, humiliate, and silence their victims. This control extends beyond the initial act of dissemination, as victims often exist in apprehension of further distribution, online harassment, and social ostracization. The digital domain provides a novel arena for the perpetuation of intimate

partner violence, wherein technology becomes a weapon to sustain power over a former partner¹⁸.

One major concern in NCP cases involves victim shaming, which occurs when attention moves away from the perpetrator's illegal deeds to the victim's choice to create or share private visuals. This narrative, frequently fueled by societal prejudices and a deficiency in understanding pertaining to consent, further traumatizes victims and dissuades them from pursuing justice. Feminist criminology contests these narratives, emphasizing that consent to create or share an image with one individual does not imply consent for its broader dissemination [5].

Toxic Masculinity and Entitlement: Feminist criminology also scrutinizes the role of toxic masculinity and a sense of male entitlement in perpetuating NCP. Certain perpetrators may perceive themselves as entitled to control their partners' bodies and images, particularly following the dissolution of a relationship. This sense of entitlement can be intensified by online cultures that normalize misogynistic behavior and provide platforms for the anonymous sharing of intimate content [3].

By prioritizing the voices of victims and scrutinizing the power relations involved, feminist criminology reveals NCP as a significant type of gender-based violence that calls for comprehensive responses tackling both

¹⁶ Gabriel, Katherine. "Feminist Revenge: Seeking Justice for Victims of Nonconsensual Pornography Through 'Revenge Porn' Reform." *Vermont Law Review*, vol. 44, 2020, pp. 849-92. <https://lawreview.vermontlaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹⁷ Yousif, Nadine. "Texas woman awarded \$1.2bn in revenge porn case." *BBC News*, 15 Aug. 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-66514052>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

¹⁸ Gabriel, Katherine. "Feminist Revenge: Seeking Justice for Victims of Nonconsensual Pornography Through 'Revenge Porn' Reform." *Vermont Law Review*, vol. 44, 2020, pp. 849-92. <https://lawreview.vermontlaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

individual offenders and the extensive societal systems that enable such misconduct.

3.3. Differential Association Theory

Differential Association Theory, posited by Edwin Sutherland, contends that criminal conduct is acquired through interaction with others, predominantly within close personal circles [4]. This acquisition encompasses not solely the methodologies for perpetrating offenses but also the motivations, impulses, rationalizations, and dispositions conducive to legal transgression. Applied to NCP, this theory proposes that individuals may come to engage in such conduct through exposure to and affiliation with others who endorse or partake in analogous acts:

Learning Methodologies: Individuals may acquire the technical dimensions of procuring, preserving, and disseminating intimate images without consent through their social networks. This may entail observing others, receiving explicit directives, or participating in online communities where such information is exchanged.

Learning Motivations and Rationalizations: More significantly, differential association elucidates how individuals obtain the motivations and rationalizations that legitimize NCP. This may transpire through exposure to peer groups that normalize the dissemination of intimate images devoid of consent, or through online forums where offenders share their experiences and validate one another's actions. Rationalizations such as 'she merited it' or 'it is merely a jest' can be assimilated and internalized, diminishing inhibitions against executing the act. The digital milieu, with its capacity for anonymity and the formation of specialized online communities, can amplify these learning processes, engendering echo chambers where deleterious behaviors are reinforced.

Influence of Peer Groups and Online Communities: The impact of peer groups and online communities cannot be overstated. If an individual's close associates or the online

collectives they frequent endorse or even celebrate the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images, the individual is more prone to regard such conduct as acceptable or even desirable. This social learning can yield a gradual normalization of digital exploitation, increasing the likelihood that individuals will engage in NCP themselves.

Differential Association Theory thus accentuates the social context in which NCP perpetration arises, underscoring the significance of comprehending the social networks and cultural influences that mold an individual's attitudes and behaviors towards digital intimacy and exploitation.

3.4. Labeling Theory

Labeling Theory, a fundamental construct in criminology, emphasizes the manner in which societal responses to deviant conduct can affect an individual's self-concept and ensuing behaviors [5]. Labeling an individual as a 'criminal' or 'deviant' can potentially trap them in a cycle where they embrace that identity and persist in the associated behaviors. In the context of Non-Consensual Pornography (NCP), labeling theory is pertinent to both offenders and victims:

Labeling of Offenders: When offenders of NCP are recognized and formally designated through apprehension and prosecution, this can yield various ramifications. For some, the designation of "offender" might function as a deterrent, resulting in desistance from subsequent criminal conduct. However, for others, particularly if the labeling process is regarded as inequitable or stigmatizing, it may culminate in deeper entrenchment in deviant subcultures or a reinforcement of their adverse self-identity, potentially culminating in recidivism. The societal shaming that frequently accompanies such instances, particularly in the digital era, can also serve as a potent, albeit informal, form of labeling.

Labeling of Victims: Perhaps even more significantly, labeling theory elucidates the experiences of NCP victims. Victims are frequently subjected to rigorous societal examination and victim-blaming, wherein they are designated as “promiscuous,” “careless,” or even complicit in their own victimization [5]. This secondary victimization, often perpetuated by media narratives, social media commentary, and even components within the justice system, can lead to profound psychological distress, social seclusion, and an aversion to reporting the crime. The label of “victim” can evolve into a master status, eclipsing other dimensions of their identity and complicating their ability to progress. The transition of phrases like ‘revenge porn’ to ‘non-consensual pornography’ or ‘image-based sexual abuse’ indicates a conscious initiative to lessen victim-blaming and reconsider the discussions on consent and exploitation.

Impact on Justice System Responses: Labeling theory also illuminates how the designation of NCP as a “privacy violation” rather than a “sexual offense” can shape legal and societal reactions. If the act is not perceived as a grave crime, it may result in less stringent legislation, insufficient enforcement, and a dearth of support services for victims. Conversely, a more precise and impactful designation of NCP as a form of sexual abuse can lead to more robust legal protections and more comprehensive victim support.

In summary, Labeling Theory accentuates the pivotal role of societal responses and the potency of language in molding the experiences of both those who perpetrate and those who are victimized by NCP. This emphasizes the importance of establishing a legal system and a community aware of the risks of labeling individuals and that strives to aid victims rather than inflict additional trauma upon them.

4. Case Analyses: India and Global Perspectives

To provide a concrete understanding of the legal and social realities of revenge porn, this section will examine significant case laws and studies from India and various international jurisdictions. These cases illustrate the diverse legal approaches, challenges in prosecution, and the profound impact on victims.

4.1. Indian Case Laws and Context

India, like many other nations, has grappled with the rising tide of non-consensual image sharing. While there is no single, specific law explicitly defining “revenge porn,” the Indian legal framework addresses various facets of this crime through existing statutes, primarily the Indian Penal Code (IPC) [Now **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita**] and the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000.

One of the landmark cases that brought image-based sexual abuse into sharper focus within the Indian legal discourse is the *State of West Bengal v. Boxi (2018)*¹⁹. In this case, Animesh Boxi was found guilty of distributing intimate images after their relationship ended, marking it as one of the first cases of non-consensual intimate image (NCII) in India²⁰. This case, among others, has paved the way for the application of existing laws to address the digital dissemination of intimate images without consent.

Key legal provisions often invoked in India include:

- **Section 75 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Sexual Harassment):** This section can be applied when the non-consensual sharing of images constitutes sexual harassment, particularly if it involves a demand or request for sexual favors, or any unwelcome physical contact and advances

¹⁹ *State of West Bengal v. Animesh Boxi*, C.R.M. No. 11806 of 2017, Judicial Magistrate, Tamluk, West Bengal, 3 Jan. 2018.

²⁰ “Decoding Indian Laws regarding the Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Pictures and ascertaining the Intermediary Liability.” *KnowLaw*, 19 May 2023, <https://knowlaw.in/2023/05/19/non-consensual-distribution-of-intimate-pictures/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

involving explicit sexual overtures²¹. While not directly addressing image sharing, its broad scope allows for interpretation in cases where the intent is to sexually harass or humiliate.

- **Section 77 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Voyeurism):** This section directly addresses the act of capturing or transmitting the image of a private body part of a woman without her consent.
- **Section 66E of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (Punishment for violation of privacy):** This section specifically deals with the violation of privacy. It states that whoever intentionally or knowingly captures, publishes or transmits the image of a private area of any person without his or her consent, under circumstances violating the privacy of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years or with fine not exceeding two lakh rupees, or with both. This provision is directly applicable to cases of non-consensual image sharing.
- **Section 67 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (Punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form):** This section addresses the publication or transmission of obscene material in electronic form. While the definition of “obscene” can be subjective, intimate images shared without consent often fall under this category, especially if they are deemed to deprave or corrupt persons who are likely to read, see or hear the matter contained in it²².

- **Section 67A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (Punishment for publishing or transmitting material containing sexually explicit act, etc., in electronic form):** This section is more specific than Section 67 and deals with material containing sexually explicit acts. It provides for stricter penalties for publishing or transmitting material that depicts a sexually explicit act or conduct.

Recent developments, such as the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**, have also introduced provisions aimed at detecting the originator of information in messaging applications. This is a crucial step towards identifying perpetrators and those who contribute to the viral spread of non-consensual images, thereby strengthening the investigative and prosecutorial capabilities.

Despite these legal provisions, challenges persist in India, including underreporting of cases due to victim shaming, difficulties in digital forensics, and the transnational nature of online platforms. However, the increasing awareness and judicial recognition of IBSA as a serious offense are positive steps towards a more robust legal response.

4.2. Global Perspectives and Landmark Cases

The global landscape of revenge porn legislation and case law is diverse, reflecting varying legal traditions, cultural norms, and levels of technological advancement. Many countries have either enacted specific laws or adapted existing ones to address this form of digital exploitation. The common thread across jurisdictions is the recognition of the severe harm inflicted upon victims and the need for legal recourse.

4.2.1. United States of America

The United States has seen a patchwork of laws emerge at the state level, with the majority of states now having anti-

²¹ “Is revenge porn a crime in India?” *Nyaaya*, 5 Mar. 2022, <https://nyaaya.org/nyaaya-weekly/is-revenge-porn-a-crime-in-india/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

²² “Is revenge porn a crime in India?” *Nyaaya*, 5 Mar. 2022, <https://nyaaya.org/nyaaya-weekly/is-revenge-porn-a-crime-in-india/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

revenge porn statutes²³. While there is no specific federal law directly criminalizing revenge porn, federal crimes may address some of the conduct involved [4].

One of the most significant recent cases is the **Texas civil lawsuit (DL v. Jackson, 2023)**, where a Texas jury awarded a woman identified only as DL, a staggering **\$1.2 billion** in damages against her former boyfriend, Marques Jamal Jackson²⁴. This landmark verdict, while largely symbolic in terms of collectability, sent a powerful message of deterrence and validated the immense suffering caused by image-based sexual abuse. The case highlighted:

- **Severity of Harm:** The plaintiff's lawyers emphasized that the defendant's actions constituted a combination of psychological abuse, domestic violence, and sexual abuse, leading to profound mental anguish.
- **Intent to Humiliate and Control:** The defendant's alleged message to the victim, "You will spend the rest of your life trying and failing to wipe yourself off the internet. Everyone you ever meet will hear the story and go looking. Happy Hunting," underscored the malicious intent to inflict lasting harm and control.
- **Challenges in Law Enforcement:** The victim's initial struggle to receive assistance from local police underscores a common challenge faced by victims, often leading them to pursue civil remedies.

This case exemplifies the potential for civil litigation to provide a measure of justice and financial compensation

to victims, even in the absence of robust criminal prosecution. It also underscores the need for better training and resources for law enforcement to effectively handle such cases.

4.2.2. United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has been at the forefront of legislating against revenge porn. The **Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (Section 33)** in England and Wales made it an offense to disclose private sexual photographs and films without the consent of the individual depicted and with the intent to cause distress. This was followed by similar legislation in Scotland (**Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm Act 2016, Part 1, Section 2**) and Northern Ireland (**Justice Act 2016, Part 3, Section 51**)²⁵.

Notable cases in the UK include those involving public figures, which have helped raise awareness and highlight the severity of the crime. For instance, the cases involving reality TV personalities like **Georgia Harrison** have brought the challenges of prosecuting revenge porn to public attention [4]. Harrison's experience, where her ex-boyfriend was prosecuted and imprisoned, demonstrated that while justice is possible, the process can be incredibly difficult and emotionally taxing for victims.

4.2.3. Other Jurisdictions

- **Malta:** Article 208E of the Maltese Criminal Code (2016) punishes the non-consensual disclosure of private sexual photographs or films with intent to cause distress, emotional harm, or harm of any nature, with penalties including imprisonment and fines²⁶.

²³ Nigam, Shradha. "Revenge Porn Laws across the World." *Centre for Internet and Society*, 25 Apr. 2018, <https://cis-india.org/internet-governance/blog/revenge-porn-laws-across-the-world>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

²⁴ Yousif, Nadine. "Texas woman awarded \$1.2bn in revenge porn case." *BBC News*, 15 Aug. 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-66514052>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

²⁵ Nigam, Shradha. "Revenge Porn Laws across the World." *Centre for Internet and Society*, 25 Apr. 2018, <https://cis-india.org/internet-governance/blog/revenge-porn-laws-across-the-world>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

²⁶ *Ibid*

- **Germany:** While not having a specific “revenge porn” law, Germany utilizes the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Art Copyright Law. The GDPR protects personal data, and the Art Copyright Law (Section 22) allows individuals to object to the unauthorized dissemination of their photographs. Civil remedies, including cease and desist orders and compensatory damages, are available.²⁷ A 2014 ruling by the Bundesgerichtshof (BGH) affirmed that consent to take intimate photos does not imply consent for their dissemination.
- **France:** The Digital Republic Act (2016) in France grants individuals the right to oppose the use of their personal data. Revenge porn can be sanctioned with imprisonment and substantial fines.²⁸
- **Australia:** Various states in Australia, including New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Victoria, have enacted legislation to address revenge porn.²⁹
- **Canada, Philippines, Israel, Japan:** These countries have also implemented or adapted laws to combat the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, reflecting a growing global consensus on the need to address this form of digital exploitation.³⁰

These case analyses and legislative overviews demonstrate a global trend towards criminalizing non-consensual image sharing, though approaches and penalties vary. The challenges remain in effective enforcement, cross-border jurisdiction, and addressing the underlying societal attitudes that enable such abuse.

²⁷ Nigam, Shradha. “Revenge Porn Laws across the World.” *Centre for Internet and Society*, 25 Apr. 2018, <https://cis-india.org/internet-governance/blog/revenge-porn-laws-across-the-world>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ *Ibid*

5. Data and Statistics: Prevalence, Demographics, and Impact

Empirical data is crucial for understanding the scope and impact of revenge porn. While comprehensive global statistics are still emerging, available data consistently points to a significant prevalence of non-consensual image sharing, with disproportionate effects on certain demographics. This section will present key statistics and insights, supported by the datasets and visualizations generated earlier.

5.1. Prevalence and Victim Demographics

Studies indicate that millions of individuals worldwide have been victims of non-consensual pornography. In India, a survey by Cyber & Law Foundation found that **27% of internet users aged 13 to 45 have been victims** of such acts³¹. Another survey in 2020 indicated that **67% of women reported experiencing online harassment**, with a link to revenge porn³². Furthermore, a 2010 cyber-crime survey revealed that **18.3% of women were unaware they were victims** of revenge porn³³. While specific comprehensive national statistics on revenge porn are still emerging in India due to the lack of a distinct legal definition, data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2017 showed that almost **6.7% of**

³¹ “Revenge Porn Or Non-Consensual Pornography.” *India Law Offices*, 17 Apr. 2023, <https://www.indialawoffices.com/legal-articles/revenge-porn-or-non-consensual-pornography>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³² “Understanding and Preventing Revenge Porn in India.” *LinkedIn*, 3 months ago, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/understanding-preventing-revenge-porn-india-guide-parents-kb-0ebgc>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³³ “Revenge Porn: A Peep into its Awareness among the ...” *Indian Journal of Intellectual Property*, 6 Jul. 2023, <https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/18.01.018.20231103.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

cyber-crime cases registered were for the motive of sexual exploitation³⁴.

In the United States, a 2016 study found that **10 million people, or 2% of Americans, reported being victims of non-consensual porn**³⁵. A larger 2019 study suggested that this figure might be even higher³⁶.

India	2010 (Cyber-crime survey)	18.3% (women unaware of victimization) ³⁹
India	2017 (NCRB Cyber-crime cases)	6.7% (cyber-crime cases for sexual exploitation) ⁴⁰
USA	2016	2% (of population) ⁴¹

Table 1: Revenge Porn Prevalence in India and USA

Country	Year	Victims (Percentage of Internet Users/Population)
India	2023 (Cyber & Law Foundation Survey)	27% (internet users aged 13-45) ³⁷
India	2020 (Survey on online harassment)	67% (women reported online harassment linked to RP) ³⁸

³⁴ Deb, A. (2020). The Case for a New Statutory Regime Addressing Revenge Porn in India: Exploring the Disputed Terrain From a Feminist Perspective. *SSRN*, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3884351. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³⁵ "An Update on the Legal Landscape of Revenge Porn." *National Association of Attorneys General*, 16 Nov. 2021, <https://www.naag.org/attorney-general-journal/an-update-on-the-legal-landscape-of-revenge-porn/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³⁶ Henriksen, Caitlin B. "Tangled Webs: A Test of Routine Activities Theory to Explain Nonconsensual Pornography Victimization." Diss. University of Cincinnati, 2020. <https://cech.uc.edu/content/dam/refresh/cech-62/school-of-criminal-justice/research/2020/Caitlin%20Henriksen%2009-22-20.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³⁷ "Revenge Porn Or Non-Consensual Pornography." *India Law Offices*, 17 Apr. 2023, <https://www.indialawoffices.com/legal-articles/revenge-porn-or-non-consensual-pornography>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

³⁸ "Understanding and Preventing Revenge Porn in India." *LinkedIn*, 3 months ago, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/understanding-preventing-revenge-porn-india-guide-parents-kb-0ebgc>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

Victim demographics consistently show a clear gender disparity, with women being overwhelmingly more likely to be targeted. For instance, a 2022 study in the United Kingdom revealed that:

- **27% of female victims** of image-based sexual abuse were aged 30-39.
- **15% of female victims** were aged 21-29.
- **10% of female victims** were 16 or younger.

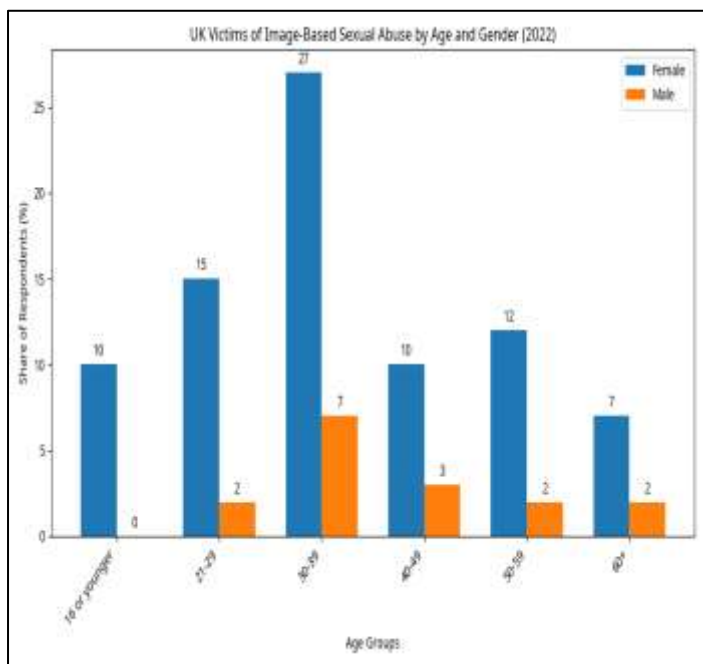
Conversely, the highest share of male victims (7%) was in the 30-39 age group, with significantly lower percentages across other age brackets [10]. This data underscores the gendered nature of the crime, aligning with the tenets of feminist criminology.

Figure 1: UK Victims of Image-Based Sexual Abuse by Age and Gender (2022)

³⁹ "Revenge Porn: A Peep into its Awareness among the ...". *Indian Journal of Intellectual Property*, 6 Jul. 2023, <https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/18.01.018.20231103.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁴⁰ Deb, A. (2020). The Case for a New Statutory Regime Addressing Revenge Porn in India: Exploring the Disputed Terrain From a Feminist Perspective. *SSRN*, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3884351. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁴¹ "An Update on the Legal Landscape of Revenge Porn." *National Association of Attorneys General*, 16 Nov. 2021, <https://www.naag.org/attorney-general-journal/an-update-on-the-legal-landscape-of-revenge-porn/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.



UK Victims of Image-Based Sexual Abuse by Age and Gender (2022)

Source: Statista⁴²

These statistics highlight the vulnerability of young women to image-based sexual abuse, emphasizing the need for targeted prevention and support initiatives. The data also reinforces the argument that NCP is a gendered crime, deeply intertwined with broader issues of gender inequality and violence against women.

5.2. Impact on Victims

The ramifications of non-consensual image dissemination on victims are substantial and multifarious, extending significantly beyond the preliminary infringement of privacy. Victims frequently encounter severe psychological, emotional, social, and financial ramifications. These consequences can be enduring and incapacitating, influencing every facet of their existence.

- **Psychological and Emotional Distress:** Victims routinely report enduring profound sensations of

shame, humiliation, betrayal, and indignation. Many people endure extreme anxiety, major depressive disorder, PTSD, along with suicidal ideation. The incessant apprehension that the images may resurface or be perceived by new individuals engenders a pervasive sense of vulnerability and a forfeiture of control over their own narrative. The sensation of being perpetually exposed and scrutinized can precipitate social withdrawal and seclusion.

- **Social and Reputational Detriment:** The propagation of intimate images can result in considerable harm to a victim's reputation, both personally and professionally. Victims may endure ostracism from peers and relatives, bullying, and harassment. Their academic or vocational prospects can be severely compromised, as employers or educational institutions may perceive the existence of such images online as indicative of their character or judgment. The permanence of online content implies that these reputational injuries can endure for years, rendering it challenging for victims to reconstruct their lives.
- **Financial and Economic Repercussions:** Victims may incur substantial financial burdens in their endeavors to eliminate the images from the internet, encompassing legal expenses, fees for online content removal services, and costs associated with altering their identity or relocating. Moreover, the reputational damage may culminate in job termination or challenges in obtaining employment, resulting in economic distress⁴³.

⁴² Dixon, Stacy Jo. "UK revenge porn victims by age and gender 2022." *Statista*, 10 Apr. 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1319889/uk-victims-of-intimate-image-abuse-by-age-and-gender/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

⁴³ Gabriel, Katherine. "Feminist Revenge: Seeking Justice for Victims of Nonconsensual Pornography Through 'Revenge Porn' Reform." *Vermont Law Review*, vol. 44, 2020, pp. 849-92. <https://lawreview.vermontlaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06-Gabriel.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

- **Deterioration of Trust:** The betrayal of trust by a former partner, often an individual with whom the victim shared a profound emotional bond, can precipitate a significant incapacity to trust others in subsequent relationships. This deterioration of trust can extend to institutions, including law enforcement and the judicial system, particularly if victims perceive that their concerns are not afforded due seriousness or that they are subjected to victim-blaming⁴⁴.

5.3. Offender Motivations

While the phrase “retaliatory pornography” suggests a singular impetus, offenders of non-consensual image dissemination are propelled by a multifaceted interplay of psychological, social, and at times, economic determinants. Comprehending these incentives is imperative for formulating efficacious prevention and intervention methodologies.

- **Retaliation and Reprisal:** This represents perhaps the most frequently perceived impetus. Subsequent to a dissolution of a relationship or a perceived affront, an offender may seek to penalize, degrade, or exact retribution upon their former associate. This motivation is often invigorated by animosity, envy, and a yearning to reclaim authority or assert supremacy following the conclusion of a relationship.
- **Authority and Control:** Beyond mere revenge, numerous offenders are motivated by an aspiration to exert authority and control over their victims. The act of disseminating intimate imagery serves as a formidable instrument to

intimidate, coerce, and manipulate. This is particularly pertinent in instances where non-consensual pornography forms part of a broader tapestry of domestic abuse or intimate partner violence, wherein the offender endeavors to sustain dominance even subsequent to the termination of the relationship.

- **Monetary Benefit:** In certain instances, offenders may disseminate intimate imagery for financial gain, either through direct sale of the images or by utilizing them for blackmail and extortion. This commercial motive underscores the exploitative essence of the crime and its intersection with other variants of cybercrime.
- **Social Standing and Infamy:** Some individuals may disseminate intimate images to attain social standing, notoriety, or acceptance within specific online communities. This may involve sharing imagery with acquaintances, publishing them on forums, or participating in online collectives that advocate for the non-consensual propagation of private content. This motivation is frequently associated with a quest for validation, a sense of belonging, or a misguided endeavor to exhibit masculinity or sexual prowess.
- **Sexual Satisfaction:** Although less prevalent as a primary motivation, certain offenders may derive sexual gratification from the act of disseminating intimate imagery without consent. This may correlate with voyeuristic inclinations or a desire to assert sexual dominance over the victim.
- **Deficiency of Empathy and Dehumanization:** A prevalent underlying factor across various motivations is a profound deficiency of empathy toward the victim and a propensity to dehumanize them. This enables offenders to rationalize their conduct and minimize the detriment they inflict, perceiving the victim as an object rather than a human being endowed with feelings and rights.

⁴⁴ Harper, Craig A., et al. “Development and Validation of the Beliefs About Revenge Pornography Questionnaire.” *Sex Abuse*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2022, pp. 748-783. *PMC*, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10399101/>. Accessed 12 June 2025.

- **Ignorance or Misapprehension of Consent:** In certain circumstances, offenders may genuinely misinterpret the concept of consent, believing that prior consent to capture or share images within a relationship extends to their public dissemination. This underscores the critical necessity for education regarding digital consent and the legal ramifications of non-consensual image dissemination.

Comprehending these diverse motivations is essential for devising comprehensive prevention strategies that address not only the legal repercussions but also the psychological and social factors that propel individuals to perpetrate these deleterious acts.

6. Legal Frameworks and Challenges

The legal response to revenge porn and image-based sexual abuse has been a rapidly evolving area, with jurisdictions worldwide grappling with how to effectively criminalize and prosecute these offenses. While significant progress has been made, numerous challenges persist, particularly concerning jurisdiction, evidence collection, and victim support.

6.1. Evolution of Legislation

As discussed in Section 4, many countries have moved to enact specific legislation targeting non-consensual image sharing. This evolution reflects a growing recognition of the unique harms associated with this crime, which often fall outside the scope of traditional sexual offense or privacy laws. The shift in terminology from “revenge porn” to “non-consensual pornography” or “image-based sexual abuse” has also influenced legislative efforts, leading to more precise and victim-centered legal definitions.

However, the legislative landscape remains fragmented. Some countries have comprehensive laws, while others rely on adapting existing statutes, which may not fully

address the nuances of digital exploitation. The lack of a unified international legal framework poses significant challenges, particularly when perpetrators and victims reside in different jurisdictions or when content is hosted on servers in countries with less stringent laws.

6.2. Challenges in Prosecution

Prosecuting NCP cases presents a unique set of challenges for law enforcement and judicial systems:

- **Jurisdictional Issues:** The internet’s borderless nature means that perpetrators, victims, and the servers hosting the content can be located in different countries. This complicates investigations, as it requires international cooperation, which can be slow and resource-intensive. Extradition treaties and mutual legal assistance agreements may not always cover these specific offenses, creating legal loopholes.
- **Evidence Collection and Digital Forensics:** Gathering admissible evidence in NCP cases often requires specialized digital forensic expertise. Images and videos can be easily deleted, altered, or re-uploaded, making it difficult to trace their origin and prove intent. The ephemeral nature of some online content, coupled with encryption and anonymizing technologies, further complicates evidence collection.
- **Anonymity and Identity of Perpetrators:** While some perpetrators are easily identifiable (e.g., ex-partners), others may operate under pseudonyms or use anonymizing services, making it challenging to ascertain their true identity. This anonymity can embolden offenders and make them feel immune from prosecution.
- **Victim Cooperation and Re-victimization:** Victims of NCP often face immense psychological distress and fear of re-victimization, which can make

them reluctant to report the crime or participate in legal proceedings. The process of recounting their experiences and having their intimate images presented in court can be incredibly traumatic, leading to secondary victimization within the justice system itself. This highlights the need for trauma-informed approaches and robust victim support services throughout the legal process.

- **Lack of Training and Resources:** Many law enforcement agencies and legal professionals lack adequate training and resources to effectively investigate and prosecute NCP cases. This can lead to delays, mishandling of evidence, and a lack of understanding of the unique dynamics of digital exploitation.
- **Freedom of Speech Concerns:** In some jurisdictions, laws against NCP have faced challenges based on freedom of speech arguments. However, courts have generally upheld these laws, recognizing that the non-consensual dissemination of private intimate images does not constitute protected speech and that the harm to victims outweighs any such claims.

6.3. Victim Support and Legal Recourse

Beyond criminal prosecution, victims of NCP require comprehensive support and various avenues for legal recourse. This includes:

- **Content Removal:** One of the most immediate needs for victims is the removal of the non-consensually shared images from online platforms. Many platforms have policies against NCP, but the process of reporting and removal can be cumbersome and slow. Organizations like the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) provide valuable resources and support for victims seeking content removal.

- **Civil Remedies:** As demonstrated by the Texas civil lawsuit, civil litigation can provide victims with a means to seek damages for the harm they have suffered. This can include compensation for emotional distress, reputational damage, and financial losses. Civil lawsuits can also serve as a deterrent and hold perpetrators accountable even when criminal prosecution is not feasible.
- **Restorative Justice:** In some cases, restorative justice approaches may be considered, focusing on repairing the harm caused to the victim and facilitating dialogue between the victim and offender. This can be particularly effective in cases involving former partners, where the goal is to address the underlying issues and prevent future harm.
- **Psychological and Emotional Support:** Access to counseling, therapy, and support groups is crucial for victims to cope with the trauma and psychological impact of NCP. These services can help victims process their experiences, develop coping mechanisms, and regain a sense of control over their lives.
- **Advocacy and Policy Reform:** Victim advocacy groups play a vital role in raising awareness, lobbying for stronger laws, and advocating for the rights of victims. Their efforts have been instrumental in shaping legislative reforms and improving support services.

7. Policy and Educational Interventions

Addressing the intricate dilemma of revenge pornography and digital exploitation necessitates a multifaceted strategy that amalgamates robust legal structures with comprehensive educational programs and proactive policy measures. These measures should aspire to deterrence, rehabilitation, and, most critically, victim safeguarding, with a particular emphasis on the Indian context.

7.1. Legislative and Policy Recommendations in India

- **Uniform Legislation and International Collaboration:** While India possesses existing statutes that address facets of non-consensual image dissemination, there exists a pressing necessity for more uniform and comprehensive legislation specifically designed to accommodate the intricacies of digital exploitation. This would expedite investigations, prosecutions, and content removal, surmounting the challenges presented by the internet's borderless character. Enhanced international collaboration mechanisms are likewise essential, particularly when offenders and content servers are situated beyond Indian jurisdiction.
- **Explicit Definitions and Victim-Centric Lexicon:** Indian legislation should embrace explicit, victim-centric terminology such as “non-consensual pornography” or “image-based sexual abuse” to eschew victim-blaming and accurately mirror the essence of the offense. Definitions ought to be sufficiently expansive to encompass evolving manifestations of digital exploitation, inclusive of deepfakes and other manipulated media.
- **Compulsory Content Removal and Platform Responsibility:** Statutes should stipulate that online platforms and service providers operating within India expeditiously eliminate non-consensually shared intimate images upon notification. Platforms should also be held accountable for the failure to implement effective reporting and removal mechanisms, potentially through civil penalties or regulatory oversight. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, represent a step in this direction; however,

their enforcement and breadth require ongoing enhancement.

- **Augmented Law Enforcement Training and Resources:** Indian law enforcement bodies necessitate specialized training in digital forensics, cybercrime investigation, and trauma-informed methodologies to address NCP cases. Adequate resources, including dedicated cybercrime units and forensic instruments, are imperative to competently investigate and prosecute these transgressions. Cooperation between law enforcement, technology enterprises, and victim advocacy organizations can also enhance response capabilities.
- **Protection Orders and Civil Recourse:** Legal frameworks should furnish easily accessible protection orders that prohibit the dissemination of intimate images and facilitate their immediate removal. Fortifying civil recourse, including the capacity to seek substantial reparations, can empower victims and provide a formidable deterrent against offenders, as evidenced in international cases.
- **Criminalization of Threats to Disseminate:** The act of threatening to disseminate intimate images should be overtly criminalized, as such threats can be as psychologically detrimental as the actual distribution and are frequently employed as instruments of coercion and control.

7.2. Educational and Prevention Strategies in India

Education constitutes a fundamental pillar of any efficacious strategy to counteract revenge pornography and digital exploitation in India. These initiatives ought to target a diverse array of audiences, ranging from youth to legal practitioners and the general populace.

- **Digital Literacy and Consent Education:** Holistic digital literacy programs should be

assimilated into educational curricula throughout India, instructing young individuals regarding online security, privacy configurations, and the legal and ethical ramifications of disseminating intimate content. Importantly, these programs must underscore the notion of digital consent—that permission to create or share an image with one individual does not necessarily entail consent for its broader circulation. This educational initiative should extend beyond educational institutions to encompass parents, educators, and community organizations, leveraging extant initiatives and formulating new ones.

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Extensive public awareness campaigns are requisite to destigmatize victims and transform societal perceptions away from victim-blaming in India. These campaigns should underscore the significant detriments incurred by non-consensual pornography (NCP), accentuate that it constitutes a grave offense, and advocate for reporting. They should also contest detrimental gender stereotypes and foster respectful online conduct, addressing the distinct cultural intricacies that may contribute to victim-blaming.
- **Perpetrator Intervention and Rehabilitation Programs:** For individuals who have participated in non-consensual image dissemination, intervention and rehabilitation programs are imperative. These programs should confront the fundamental motivations, such as anger management, deficits in empathy, and distorted convictions regarding consent and gender roles. Restorative justice methodologies could also be examined to facilitate accountability and redress harm.
- **Training for Professionals:** Beyond law enforcement, professionals likely to encounter victims of NCP—including healthcare

practitioners, counselors, educators, and legal aid personnel—necessitate specialized training to identify, assist, and refer victims appropriately. This training should concentrate on trauma-informed care and comprehending the unique challenges confronted by victims of digital exploitation within the Indian context.

- **Collaboration with Technology Companies:** Technology corporations possess a pivotal role in averting NCP. This encompasses the design of platforms with privacy and safety considerations, the implementation of robust reporting mechanisms, the utilization of artificial intelligence and machine learning to identify and eliminate non-consensual content, and collaboration with law enforcement and victim support organizations. Proactive measures, such as the creation of hashing databases for known NCP images, can avert re-uploading.

8. Conclusion

Revenge porn and digital exploitation constitute a significant challenge in the modern digital milieu, transmuting actions once anchored in affection and trust into formidable instruments of coercion, humiliation, and control. This inquiry has explored the criminological dimensions of this unsettling phenomenon, drawing upon established theories to elucidate its intricate origins and devastating repercussions, with a particular focus on the Indian context. Routine Activity Theory has demonstrated how the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians generates a conducive environment for such transgressions. Feminist Criminology has emphasized the profoundly gendered nature of non-consensual pornography (NCP), unveiling it as a manifestation of patriarchal power dynamics and a form of gender-based violence. Differential Association Theory has illuminated the social learning processes through which individuals acquire the motivations and

techniques for executing these acts. Finally, Labeling Theory has elucidated the profound and often re-victimizing impact of societal reactions and labels on both offenders and, more acutely, on victims.

Through case analyses from India and across the globe, we have observed the varied legal responses and the persistent obstacles in prosecuting these offenses. The landmark Texas civil lawsuit and the evolving legislative landscape in India and the UK exemplify a growing global acknowledgment of the gravity of image-based sexual abuse and the urgent necessity for effective legal remedies. In India, the application of the Information Technology Act and Indian Penal Code sections, along with recent regulations on intermediary liability, signifies a progressive, albeit challenging, legal trajectory. However, issues surrounding jurisdiction, evidence collection, and victim cooperation continue to present significant impediments.

The data presented on prevalence and victim demographics unequivocally illustrates the disproportionate targeting of women and young individuals, both globally and specifically within India, reinforcing the assertion that NCP is not merely a privacy infringement but a strategic form of digital exploitation with profound criminogenic underpinnings. The psychological, social, and economic burdens on victims are substantial and enduring, necessitating comprehensive support systems.

Looking ahead, a holistic approach is imperative. This encompasses fortifying legislative frameworks through uniform statutes, clear definitions, and obligatory content removal policies that hold platforms accountable, with a specific emphasis on the Indian legal and social milieu. Equally essential are comprehensive educational initiatives that promote digital literacy, underscore digital consent, and challenge victim-blaming narratives, tailored

to the Indian cultural context. Furthermore, perpetrator intervention programs and enhanced training for professionals are critical components of a robust response. By integrating these policy and educational interventions, we can aspire towards a future where digital intimacy is safeguarded, trust is maintained, and the weaponization of private content is effectively deterred, ultimately protecting individuals from the profound harms of revenge porn and digital exploitation in India.