



**UNCSSW**  
TOPIC BULLETIN

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CHAIRS

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# Academy Model United Nations

- THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE -

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to AMUN XXII! We are so excited to witness some exciting debate and productive resolutions during our time with you during this conference. My name is Harnoor Sachar, and I will be one of your chairs for CSW. I am a current junior at BCA, in the Medical Science Academy, but my interests vary from STEM to humanities and politics.

Among all these, I am most certainly an activist for human rights and was lucky enough to spend a summer at Cambridge University in England, where I studied female pioneers in politics. As I have discovered through my experiences in debate and Model UN, by amplifying our voice and speaking on important issues, we begin to develop an evolved perspective on the world, which is the key to change.

I cannot wait to see the talent and passion in the conference room, and as your chairs, I hope you know that we are there to help you along the way. I wish everyone the best of luck in your research and preparation. Of all things, I hope everyone attends the sessions with the intention of learning new things and making new friends! See you all in February!

Best,

Harnoor Sachar, Co-Chair, UNCSW  
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Dear Delegates,

My name is Neha Vazarkar and I am honored to be one of your co-chairs for AMUN 2021. I am currently a junior at Bergen County Academies. I started Model United Nations in my freshman year. The more conferences that I went to, the more passionate I was about Model UN. Whether you are new to Model UN or have been to many conferences, I hope that all of you step out of your comfort zone to deliver speeches and create solutions to real global problems. It might be hard at first but it gets easier with time!

I am passionate about UNCSW because there are still so many problems that women around the world face on a daily basis. Many of these women cannot advocate for themselves, so we need to step up and advocate for them. Due to the complicated historical backgrounds that these problems stem from, it is important to come up with innovative and creative solutions to solve many of these problems.

Outside of Model UN I enjoy reading, writing, and drawing. I'm super excited to meet you guys and hear your interesting solutions!

Sincerely,

Neha Vazarkar, Co-Chair, UNCSW  
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# Introduction

The UNCSW is the main global body dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment. It is one of the Economic and Social Councils (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. Founded on 21 June 1946, it was established as a means to promote, report on, and monitor issues relating to the political, economic, civil, social, and educational rights of women. It was uniquely designed to draw attention to women's concerns, especially amongst the growing suffrage movements and gender equality petitions around the world. It marked the launch of a new leadership initiative for women and their fight for equality. The Executive Board of the CSW, composed of 45 Member States that are elected by ECOSOC, has thirteen members from Africa, twelve from Europe, eleven from Asia, and nine from Latin America. However, the UNCSW is one of the few commissions in the UN that does not limit membership simply to governments. NGOs (non-governmental organizations) are also critical members of the

committee, as they can often advocate for countries that are not recognized by the United Nations. They meet annually at a two-week conference to discuss the status of gender equality, identify achievements already made, and evaluate where gaps need to be closed.

One of the main achievements of the UNCSW is the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. After the Beijing Conference, the General Assembly mandated the UNCSW to monitor the implementation of the declaration and to advise the ECOSOC based on its findings. The UNCSW has also helped to found agencies for women such as UNIFEM and INSTRAW.

The Commission adopts multi-year programs of work to appraise progress and make further recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. These recommendations take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme. The 2021 priority theme is Women's full and effective



participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.



## Topic A: Child Marriage and Oppression in South Asia

### Topic History

Over 12 million girls are forced to get married before the age of 18 each year. In South Asia, 3 in 10 girls are married before they turn 18. Child marriage violates the rights of the girls involved, and can happen as a result of many factors based on the communities they occur in. Financial strains, food insecurity, and social or cultural norms are significant contributing factors in child marriage.

As a result of child marriage, many young girls are denied opportunities to learn and grow, causing their development to be seriously compromised. By marrying off girls, which are seen as economic burdens instead of wage earners in many societies, families are preventing themselves from poverty by relieving themselves of the responsibility of one person. Younger girls can often bring higher dowries to the bride's family as well, as they are providing more time to the family and have the opportunity to birth more children. Young girls can also be married off to pay off debts or settle



conflicts. In some traditional societies, marriage and child bearing are the logical result of entering puberty. Younger women are also seen as easier to shape and influence as well.

UNICEF currently has a Sustainable Development Goal to eliminate child marriage by 2030 and a global effort in part coordinated by UNICEF has helped to prevent over 25 million child marriages between 2008 and 2018. In 2012, the International Day of the Girl Child was celebrated for the first time on October 11, with a focus on preventing future child marriages.

Child marriage is present in most societies throughout the world, but is more prevalent in developing countries. South Asia comprises over 40% of all child marriages, mostly due to the large population and history of child marriages in the society. Child marriage in South Asia is often weaved with other societal problems such as sex trafficking and dowries, making it difficult to tackle one issue without addressing the others. India has

taken significant steps in preventing child marriage, such as criminalizing child marriage in 2006. In the Indian state of Bihar where child marriages are most prevalent, the state government sent social workers around the state to bring awareness to priests that they must sign declarations confirming that both bride and groom are of age before the wedding is conducted. However, there is still a long process before child marriage is officially eliminated, as many of these marriages often go unreported and are now even more undercover as a result of intense policing.

Child marriage causes young girls to be separated from their families at a young and critical developmental age. They are unable to get suitable opportunities as they are expected to take on the roles of older women, such as running a household instead of learning through school and play. Girls without an education are three times more likely to get married before the age of 18, and girls that had education are often forced to drop out once they become



married. There are major health risks associated with child marriage as well. Most teen girls are not prepared to handle pregnancy and motherhood emotionally and physically. Complications relating to birth and pregnancy are the largest cause of death globally for girls between the age of 15-19. These young girls are also scared to speak up about their rights relating to their body, leading to a higher risk of domestic and sexual abuse from their partners.

Child marriage creates a dangerous situation for the young bride and her family, causing emotional damage that can last a lifetime. Poverty is not only a leading cause for child marriage but is also continued as a result of it. The uneducated women who were unable to fulfill their entire potential are unable to help their family economically, perpetuating the poverty cycle once more.

## Current Situation

The rate of child marriage in South Asia has been declining from 63% in 1985 to 45% in 2010, with the majority of the decline in marriages occurring before 15. However, a large problem still remains in child marriages happening for girls between the age of 15-18, so larger awareness must be garnered on the negative effects of older adolescents getting married. Bangladesh, which has the highest rate of child marriage in South Asia only has a small fee or one month jail time for conducting or failing to prevent a child marriage. In Nepal, a father only paid 25 NPR and spent 3 nights in jail for selling his 13 year old daughter into a child marriage. Furthermore, laws are already lenient on offenders, but enforcing these regulations on a local level leads to even less prosecution. Currently, many people view child marriage as a family issue that law enforcement should not get involved in, which further motivates people to continue the process. Women are forced to become pregnant soon after the wedding, hopefully with a boy, to





prove their fertility. Soon, they are expected to have more kids in a small space of time, deteriorating their health.

Overall, it is clear that child marriage has many devastating effects on the young girls that it impacts, especially in South Asia. From deteriorating health to perpetuating the cycle of poverty in the family to commodifying women, South Asian women are forced into a system that will significantly worsen their situation.

## Country Policy

While this topic focuses on South Asian child marriage practices, child marriage occurs all around the world, therefore, many countries have stances on the issue. Member nations of the African Union, such as Algeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, and Ethiopia have all signed the LEADS approach, which is a campaign that aims to end child marriage on the continent. As of 2016, 6 out of the 192 countries in the world do not state a minimum age for marriage.

These are Saudi Arabia, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Somalia, and Yemen. In India, the government has implemented many policies to stop child marriage but it is common in more rural communities.

While some countries do have an age minimum of 18, there are some exemptions to this rule which can allow child marriages to continue. For example, in Australia people below the age of 18 can marry with judicial approval. In Iraq, Jamaica, and Uruguay, child marriages are allowed as long as the parents approve. In countries such as the Philippines and Tanzania, there are different requirements based on the religion the bride and groom follow. And in Bangladesh and Sudan, ages are different based on gender, with the minimum age for girls being younger.

In developing countries such as Afghanistan and Albania, while minimum age requirements are set, they are often broken in rural communities where forced marriages are common. Turkey, Mali, Sudan, and Cameroon are



some of the countries currently developing policies to combat the practice. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, two regions where the practice is relatively common, do not have national plans developed to ensure no more child brides.

## Questions to Consider

What are the reasons child marriage take place?

What are the consequences of child marriage on women?

What can countries do to ensure regulations are being followed?

What are the social implications of child marriage?

How has the situation changed due to COVID-19?



## Topic B: Online Harassment of Women

### Topic History

Ever since the uprise of media, various minority groups have been subject to hate and harassment. A large group that falls under this category is women, especially those who are verbal and active on their platforms. A few examples of the online harassment women face on the daily include rape threats, cyberstalking, blackmail, and more. The internet is considered a critical space for marginalized populations, especially because the spread of information and posts is so rapid. However, women have been unable to feel safe, even behind their screens, and their online oppression is often overlooked in discussions of female harassment. “Online violence against women is an overt expression of gender discrimination and inequality that exists offline. Online, it becomes amplified,” says Jac sm Kee of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), a Global Fund for Women grantee partner.

If social media apps and websites continue to grow, women need a transformation so that they are



guaranteed a safer space, rather than more exposure to threats and harassment. There are certain subgroups, such as female activists and journalists, that are especially affected by hostility in online environments, as it interferes with their freedom of speech and job profile. Evidently, online assault has more than just one effect, as it trickles down to various aspects of a woman's life. The most important aspect, however, is the overall impact online harassment can have on the safety of women, especially considering that many virtual threats turn into physical attacks and incidents.

Although the internet and social media are recent developments in history, many incidents of harassment online have been recorded and witnessed. Unfortunately, despite the small time frame, this behavior has been normalized, and because online tags and private accounts allow abusers to feel safe and protected, the treatment tends to be worse than what is seen in person. Online harassment campaigns have been active since 2003 and have only

increased since. Things peaked around 2017 when deaths began to occur due to threats received online.

Over the course of two decades, the ability to communicate over the internet has advanced. While chat rooms and old technology could easily be tracked, the platforms have improved privacy settings, so that people can reach out to others while releasing limited information about themselves. This also applies to apps that do not record chats and media, and it "disappears" after it is sent.

Internationally, there have been various cases of such abuse of the internet and online communication. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, two teens had private photos taken by a boyfriend, which were posted on Facebook without consent. A young girl in Bosnia and Herzegovina was stalked and photographed, and her stalker followed her online claiming they had a "forbidden love". A human rights activist's address was leaked in Pakistan, and the blog it was posted on encouraged people



to kill her; consequently, she and her husband were targeted in a shooting a month later. These stories may sound like extreme cases, but in a 2012 survey, 89 percent of local domestic violence programs reported that victims were experiencing intimidation and threats by abusers via technology, including through cell phones, texts, and email. All of these scenarios have the potential to turn into the human and civil rights violations that have occurred in the past, which is why action is so necessary.

## Current Situation

Online harassment continues to present itself more and more often, as various new social media platforms emerge. While many female empowerment campaigns have also taken flight online, new forms of abuse have also emerged. Online abuse includes a diversity of tactics and malicious behaviors ranging from sharing embarrassing or cruel content about a person to impersonation, doxing, stalking, and electronic surveillance to the

nonconsensual use of photography and violent threats.

Doxing is a common type of threat, in which a woman's personal information, including address, phone number, etc, are released to the public, often after being hacked. Gender-based slurs are also common, and while not considered a "threat", they encourage normalized sexism and misogyny and put down women in the largest community in the world. There are even more extreme cases of harassment, such as rape videos, which are used to shame or extort innocent victims and have resulted in deaths by suicide in the past. Sexual objectification is also incredibly popular, both in real life and online. However, online, a woman has no voice, because they are talking to a protected and secure account, rather than a person. Many predators create explicit photos or use their photos without consent on other, often unsafe, websites, putting the woman's life in danger.

Not all harassment is conducted by predators, however, or at least the



type of predator that we assume. Shaming is also a common type of attack, that is often seen amongst teenage girls, in which girls are ridiculed for their choice of clothing or photography, insinuating a sexual intention. This often goes hand in hand with sexual or non-consensual photography. Regardless of the type of harassment, the overall danger for women on the internet has increased, and we are currently dealing with an issue that has the potential to threaten and hurt 51% of the population, especially as media and technology expand day by day.

## Country Policy

Online harassment is certainly a global issue, and different countries have taken various approaches, if any, in combating the problem. China, for example, with the most internet users in the world (688 million), has created uncensored platforms that leave many women susceptible to abuse. A 2016 poll conducted by women-focused media platform Jianjiao showed

that almost 88% of female internet users in China experienced some kind of abuse. Specifically, China's "human flesh search engine" allows people to team up and publicly humiliate online targets, especially social minorities. The country, while boasting its censorship capabilities, has no specific law against cyberbullying.

Russia and other eastern European countries have a similar issue with cyberbullying, but for a very different reason. It is suspected that the authorities are involved in making online threats through patriotic websites and phone calls. There are certain propaganda laws in place that also inhibit activist groups and minority protests.

Western European countries, such as the UK, are much more advanced when it comes to anti-harassment campaigns and regulation of online abuse of women. However, while the laws are stricter, social media users do not consider this enough. According to a study by Amnesty, only 23% of Facebook and 19% of Twitter users rated the platforms'



response in addressing online abuse or harassment as adequate, versus 41% and 43% who considered it inadequate.

Although different countries are dealing with this issue differently, if at all, and it often depends on their economic and social development, there are also international efforts taking place in order to mitigate the issue globally. For example, organizations like International Federation of Journalists encourage media organizations and journalists' trade unions worldwide to take concrete steps to eradicate online trolling and make clear to women journalists subject to abuse that they will not be left alone. Much of the regulation lies in the hands of governments willing to establish laws to enforce a stricter online environment that protects women and their freedom of speech.

## Questions to Consider

On which types of platforms are women most susceptible to harassment?

Which types of online attacks and harassment are most common and why?

What type of control do countries have on online communication and which kinds of restrictions/movements can encourage a safer space?

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### Topic A

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