Chapter 2:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To understand well about the phenomenon of high internet propensity and cyber deviance among children, it is important to have a structure based on the previous literatures available. This chapter is focusing on the previous studies, reports, writings, and etc. on the issues relating to the study area.

A Report of Radhika P Nair titled ‘India to have the second-largest Internet user base in the world by December 2015’, in yourstory.com, talks about the magnitude of the internet penetration in India. The report says that “India has become the second largest internet user overtaking US and just behind China”. According to reporter, “India to have 402 million internet users by 2015 December”. The report is of the opinion that “the extensive use of mobile phone is responsible for this kind of growth. Ninety-four per cent of users access the Internet through their mobile phones in Urban India. However, 64 per cent also use the desktop or laptop to access the Internet. But 90 per cent of those who use the mobile to access the Internet consider it their primary device for browsing. In rural India, 75 per cent of the users fall in the 18–30 years age bracket, while 11 per cent are younger than 18 and 8 per cent are in the 31–45 years group. In Urban India, 32 per cent of monthly active users are college-going students. Online communication, social networking, and entertainment are the top reasons for accessing the Internet. Only 24 per cent of urban users and 5 per cent of rural users accessed the Internet for online shopping” (Nair, 2015).

In the book ‘Plague of Fantasies’, Slavoj Žižek talks about “how does the ‘Computerization’ affects the hermeneutic horizon of our everyday experience. The experience is based on the three lines of separation: between
‘true life’ and its mechanical simulations, between objective reality and our false (illusory) perception of it; between my fleeting affects, feelings, attitudes and so on; and the remaining hard core of my Self. All the three boundaries are threatened today” (Žižek, 1997).

Žižek says that “technology undermines between ‘natural’ life reality and ‘artificially’ generated reality. In today’s world, living nature is posited as something technically manipulable. Thus natural reality is something that is simulated and thus only ‘Real’ is the basic structure of DNA”. The author also points out a concept called “loss of reality due to difference between ‘true reality’ and semblance which occurs not only in computer generated VR (Virtual Reality) but, in the growing ‘hyperrealism’ of the images due to the influence of media”. He thinks that “the ‘reality’ itself is perceived as a visual hallucination” (Žižek, 1997).

Žižek also lay down “the aspect of MUD (Multiple User Domains) with the help of ‘postmodern’ writers on cyber space that the cyber space phenomenon like MUD renders the deconstructionist ‘decentered subject’ palpable in our everyday experience”. He thinks that “playing with Virtual Spaces enables me to discover new aspect of ‘me’, a wealth of shifting identities, of masks without a ‘real’ person behind them, and thus to experience the ideological mechanism of the production of Self” (Žižek, 1997).

In the book ‘The Parent App: Understanding Families in the Digital Age’, Lynn Schofield Clark draw some attention towards the fact that “ninety-five percent of American kids have Internet access by age 11; the average number of texts a teenager sends each month is well over 3,000. More families report that technology makes life with children more challenging, not less, as parents today struggle with questions previous generations never faced: Is my thirteen-year-old responsible enough for a ‘facebook’ page? What will happen if I give my nine year-old a cell phone?” Lynn with the help of her book tries to provide maximum information that can help “parents to overcome the conflict
of children and digital media/devices”. She is trying to ascertain “what is just
perfect practice for a child when comes to digital exposure”. At the same time,
she reminds the readers that “the book is not a guide for parents but instead a
directive measure to discover the right and wrongs”. She talks about “various
‘risks’ that the children and parents are facing in the digital media. Parents are
concerned about the cyber bulling, sexual predators, social isolation of
children, sexting and other mental disorders of children due to increased
exposure of children to digital media”. She also remarked about some public
opinion such as the “internet is often viewed as the ‘risk amplifiers’ in the
society” (Clark, 2013).

L.S. Clark talks about the four characteristics of digital and mobile media
which was observed by Danah Boyd of University of California that
contributes to making problem behavior.

- “Digital media have introduced persistence to communication: Once
  uploaded onto internet, information can be extremely difficult to
  remove.

- Digital and mobile media are constantly changeable; they are in
  ‘perpetual beta’. It is now relatively easy to replicate, modify and share
  materials online, making difficult for us to distinguish original from
  replicas, and creating new opportunities for those who wish to defame
  or defraud others.

- There is scalability to digital media. What might once have been an
  isolated prank can go viral, whether the person originally posted the
  content is intended this or not.

- Digital media is defined by search ability. Anyone or anything can be
  Googled through a search engine, and with GPS and visual and voice
  recognition software, it is now possible for nearly anyone to be found
  and identified” (Clark, 2013).
Clark also made a remark that “Parents around the economic spectrum wonder how they can keep informed about the risks that immersion in digital and mobile media may present to their children. Sophisticated systems of communication technology have been employed to control risks, and yet these systems have also contributed to risk. There are risks arises due to the media practices in home. The economic needs of human being generally demands for both the parents to work or work for long hours. This often creates for the non-supervision of children. As per the author, this will also contribute to risk” (Clark, 2013).

Majid Yar, talks about the Routine Activity theory and its application in explaining cybercrime with the help of the article titled ‘The Novelty of Cyber Crime: An Assessment in Light of Routine Activity Theory’ which was a part of European Journal of Criminology. In this article Yar tries to unfold a form of classifying cybercrime as “Computer assisted crime (those crimes that predate the internet, but take on a new life in cyber space for example fraud, theft, money laundering, sexual harassment, etc.) and Computer focused crimes (those crimes that are emerged in tandem with the establishment of internet and could not exist apart from it such as hacking, virus attacks and website defacements). Computer mediated communications (CMC) enables a single individual to reach, interact with, and affect thousands of individual simultaneously. This technology act as a force multiplier, enabling individuals with minimal resources to generate potentially huge negative effects. Routine activity theory explains the crime as a result of more inclination towards a criminal behavior. It emphasis on the Situational aspect of crime and reduces the effect of social and economic contributors. Marcus Felson and Lawrence E. Cohen through this theory focus on the three aspects of crime causation such as availability of a likely offender, a suitable target and absence of a capable guardian” (Yar, 2005).

Yar tries to link this theory with the causation of cybercrime. He laid down certain criticism for “RAT to suite cybercrime causation due to its
spatiotemporal nature”. He says that “the RAT is suitable in explaining the two factors for cybercrimes namely suitable targets and capable guardians”. He also included the factor namely “motivated offender” in cyber space (Yar, 2005).

‘Dangerous Relationships: Pornography, Misogyny and Rape’, a book written by Diana E. H. Russell try to uncover different aspects of pornography. The author started with an attempt to define pornography. She defines pornography as “materials that combines sex and/ exposure of genitals with abuse or degradation in a manner that appears to endorse, condone, or encourage such behavior. Erotica refers to sexually suggestive or arousing material that is free of sexism, racism, and homophobia, and is respectful for all human beings and animal portrayed” (Russell, 1998).

In the chapter named ‘Pornography is No Fantasy’ the author tries to link between the pornography and rape. She quotes the words of a woman’s testimony in the public hearings of 1983.

“…I don’t need studies and statistics to tell me that there is a relationship between pornography and real violence against women. My body remembers…” (Russell, 1998).

Diana in that chapter provides the readers with the results of many studies and researches conducted among the students of USA. According to the studies, “many of them are with the opinion that they will force a partner to indulge in sexual activities if they can get out of legal action”. With these studies she ascertains that “there is relationship between pornography and rape. As we can say that smoking is not only the cause of cancer, nor is pornography the only cause of rape. There are differences in the influence of pornography for different individuals”. She also thinks that “pornography can induce a desire to rape women in males who previously had no such desires, or it can increase or intensify the desire to rape in males who already have felt this desire”. She had
also incorporated some of the public opinions on the effect of pornography in this book (Russell, 1998).

‘Cell Phone Culture: Mobile Technology in Everyday Life’ is a remarkable book with contemporary significance. It is written by Gerard Goggin and published by Routledge. He begins with the change in the pattern of mobile phone usage. “In the mere two and half decades since the mobile phone was first marketed commercially, the cell phone has become much more than a device for voice calls- it has become a central cultural technology in its own right”. He feels that “there needs to be much more documentation and discussion on this point, not least because of the growing cultural importance of mobile technologies. Cell phone pose considerable challenges for moral panic theory as equally do other media today, such as internet. ‘Mobile panic’-cell phone anxieties as a species of moral panic” (Goggin, 2006).

“Cell phones are closely identified with young people like a range of other technologies, young people including children, has indeed been quick adopters of mobile. While they are often give credit for their technical facility dexterity with mobiles, their association with the technology is often regarded as a social problem. Because of their prevalence and availability, their portability, their intricate incorporation into the patterns of everyday life , and, increasingly, their function as media, mobile has posed considerable challenges for the conduct and regulation of private and public spheres, and the boundaries and relationships that pertain to and traverse there” (Goggin, 2006).

‘The Psychological World of Teen-ager – A Study of Normal Adolescent Boys’ is a book of Daniel Offer published in the year 1969 describes the psychology of teen aged people. He has emphasized on the “rebellion behavior” of teenager. “Rebellion manifested itself most clearly in early adolescence, at ages twelve and thirteen. In some, the ability to control their impulses was less developed only when rebellion acts involve violation of the law and ethics of the society at large can they be said to constitute delinquency” (Offer, 1969).
The article ‘Cyber Crime- a Global Concern’ of V. Paranjape tries to uncover the reasons behind cybercrime. He thinks that “capacity to store data in comparatively low space, ease of access, complexity, negligence, and loss of evidence are the reasons which make cybercrime a challenging task” (Paranjape, 2007).

Paranjape has also classified cyber criminals in his article and are

1. “Children and adolescence between the age-group of 6-18 years
2. Organized hacktivists
3. Professional hackers/crackers
4. Discontented employees” (Paranjape, 2007).

Paranjape thinks that “most armature hackers and cyber criminals are teenagers. The simple reason for this kind of delinquent behavior pattern among children is seen mostly due to the inquisitiveness to know and explore things. The other possible reason for the behavior can be to prove themselves outstanding amongst other fellow children in their group. The reason may be psychological as well. These cyber criminals may also commit cybercrimes without really knowing that what they are doing is a wrongful act” (Paranjape, 2007).

The article ‘A Basic Approach to Understand Cyber Stalking’ written by Rufus D, B. Muthu Sundari, V. Muthuselvam and Beulah, is a clear understanding of various aspect of cyber stalking. In the abstract itself, it is said that “Information technology is a double-edged sword with advantages and disadvantages”. The authors laid down some facts about cyber stalking such as “perpetrators may be present friends, past lover or stranger. The veil of anonymity can encourage stalking. There can be single or multiple events of stalking by both known and unknown perpetrators. The cyber stalking may lead to offline stalking too” (Beulah Shekar, 2010).
In this article, they have noted down “some of the peculiar kinds of cyber victims with more risk such as women, minors, Newbie, minority group members, special ability groups, frequent users of pornographic and other restricted sites, those who joined an online group without knowing the genuineness, and children who have lack of parental watch in their activities” (Beulah Shekar, 2010).

In the cover story titled ‘The Blue Babies of the Web’ of Cara Tenenbaum, from the ‘From the Lawyers Collective’ journal, draw some lights to pornographic sites and its usage. “With reference to a survey conducted by US, it is estimated that more than 100,000 web sites are associated with child porn. The US, like most of the world, has recognized that the children need extra protection”. In this cover story, the author cited a remarkable case of Ashcroft Vs Free Speech Coalition and the verdict of US Supreme Court in this case. Justice Kennedy, the judge made a judgment while considering this case as “there are many things innocent in themselves; however, such as cartoons, video games, and candy that might be used for immoral purposes yet we would not expect those to be prohibited because they can be misused”. He also added that “The mere tendency of speech to encourage unlawful act is not a sufficient basis for banning it”. The Indian scenario of banning pornography is also mentioned in this book. “The law to protect child pornography in India is considered to be a nice task, but indeed there are lots of cases of child trafficking, kidnapping, child labor and sexual abuse of children are reporting from India”. The author made a remark that “India has to deal with pornography and child pornography in specific. It is equally important to protect the children from viewing pornographic contents. In this area where the Indian law still has a lot to catching up to do” (Tenenbaum, 2002)

In the book titled ‘Crimes of the Internet’ edited by Frank Schmalleger & Michael Pittaro, famous Criminologist and Cyber Criminology expert, K. Jaishankar published a theory to deal with the cybercrime and its reasons. It is
named as Space Transition Theory. It explains the causation of cybercrime incidents. The main points of the theory are:

1. “Persons, with repressed criminal behavior (in the physical space) have a propensity to commit crime in cyberspace, which, otherwise they would not commit in physical space, due to their status and position.

2. Identity Flexibility, Dissociative Anonymity and lack of deterrence factor in the cyberspace provides the offenders the choice to commit cybercrime.

3. Criminal behavior of offenders in cyberspace is likely to be imported to Physical space which, in physical space may be exported to cyberspace as well.

4. Intermittent ventures of offenders in to the cyberspace and the dynamic spatio-temporal nature of cyberspace provide the chance to escape.

5. (a) Strangers are likely to unite together in cyberspace to commit crime in the physical space.

(b) Associates of physical space are likely to unite to commit crime in cyberspace.

6. Persons from closed society are more likely to commit crimes in cyberspace than persons from open society.

7. The conflict of Norms and Values of Physical Space with the Norms and Values of cyberspace may lead to cybercrimes” (Jaishankar K., Space Transition Theory, 2008).

Through the online article part of ‘Pornography and Virtual Infidelity’ series of the ‘Focus on the Family’ journal titled ‘The Stages of Pornographic Addiction’ the author try to unfold the aspects related to pornographic
addiction. The author thinks that “pornography is not the only ingredient in addiction. Those who are addicted to pornography have some kind of emotional opening that allows the addiction to really take root. We need not to inject any drugs to get addicted. Porn industry is a great business and the owners are not mind that you are addicted to it. But they seek more often the users go back to them so that they can fill up the sites with new images that excite you, and arouse you”. In this article the author quoted the lines of Dr. Victor Cline that “the sex and pornography can be a more difficult addiction to break than cocaine” (Gene McConnell, 2009).

The book ‘Kids Online: Protecting your Children in Cyber space’ of Donna Rice Hughes and Pamela Campbell, talks about the four stages involved in pornographic addiction. The four stages are “Addiction, Escalation, Desensitization, and Acting out sexually” (Donna Rice Hughes, 1998).

In ‘The Stages of Pornographic Addiction’ a part of ‘Pornography and Virtual Infidelity’ series of the ‘Focus on the Family’ journal, introduction of a new step is mentioned which was excerpted from the Dare to Dig Deeper booklet "Toxic Porn", by Gene McConnell and Keith Campbell. In this, “first step is ‘Early exposure’ and then the steps such as Addiction, Escalation, Desensitization, and Acting out sexually follows” (Gene McConnell, 2009).

In a study published by Patrick F. Fagan, titled ‘The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family and Community’, the author clearly talks about the effect of pornography on children. “Pornography viewing leads to a loss of interest in good family relations, Pornography is addictive, and neuroscientists are beginning to map the biological substrate of this addiction. Users tend to become desensitized to the type of pornography they use, become bored with it, and then seek more perverse forms of pornography. Men who view pornography regularly have a higher tolerance for abnormal sexuality, including rape, sexual aggression, and sexual promiscuity. Prolonged consumption of pornography by men produces stronger notions of women as
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commodities or as “sex objects. Pornography engenders greater sexual permissiveness, which in turn leads to a greater risk of out-of-wedlock births and STDs. These, in turn, lead to still more weaknesses and debilities Child-sex offenders are more likely to view pornography regularly or to be involved in its distribution” (Fagan, 2009).

“Many adolescents who view pornography initially feel shame, diminished self-confidence, and sexual uncertainty, but these feelings quickly shift to unadulterated enjoyment with regular viewing. The presence of sexually oriented businesses significantly harms the surrounding community, leading to increases in crime and decreases in property values. Pornography hurts adults, children, couples, families, and society. Among adolescents, pornography hinders the development of a healthy sexuality” (Fagan, 2009).

In the online article titled ‘5 Effects of Pornography’ by Janie Lacy, describes the effect of pornography on adolescents. She is of the opinion that “Exposure to pornography in adolescent years can come about accidentally or not. A majority of adolescents become exposed to pornography accidentally on the Internet. While the initial reaction may be disgust or shame that can quickly change to fascination and enjoyment. Pornography can bring about a curiosity in the adolescent that can lead to the intentional search of material. The more access an adolescent has to a computer, the easier it will be for him/her to access the material. This is why it is important, as parents, to have filters on your computers and have your children supervised while on the computer. This can be as simple as having them in the same room with you while being on the computer” (Lacy, 2012).

In the study titled ‘The Detrimental Effect of Pornography on Teenagers and Society’ by Umar Mohamed Iyoob retrieved from scribd.com, the author discusses various aspects of teenagers into pornography. The author quote a study conducted among teenagers. According to that study, “early exposure to pornography is related to greater involvement in deviant sexual practice,
particularly rape. The habitual consumption of pornography can result in a diminished satisfaction with mild forms of pornography and a correspondingly strong desire for more deviant and violent material. Pornography also facilitates child molestation” (Iyoob, 2008).

“More exposure to non-soft pornography, leads to learn a dangerous message by teenagers. Sex without responsibility is acceptable and desirable. The chances of sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) among children can be a consequence of pornography. Increased rate of child pornography can also be an after effect of excessive use of pornography” (Iyoob, 2008).

According to a study published in Journal of Information Technology Impact titled, ‘Exposure of Children and Teenagers to Internet Pornography in South Western Nigeria: Concerns, Trends & Implications’, by O.B. Longe et. al, it was reported that in Nigeria, “Children are not supervised while accessing internet. Children are exposed to pornography at an earlier age of 10 years and parents are either unaware or not worried of the contents that their children access” (O. B. Longe, 2007).

Based on the studies and reports, it is clear that there is a lack of proper scientific study on the aspect of high internet propensity and cyber deviance among children. Not even a single study is been done so far with respect to cybercrime and children in the state of Kerala. This is found to be a research gap which was identified with respect to the stated literature.