

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD TRAFFICKING*

Abstract

The undeniable fact that the world today is a global village is a testament to the pivotal function of information and communications technology in virtually all facets of life and human engagements and interactions. From trade and commerce to sports, politics, administration of justice, diplomacy, education, security and so forth, the list of aspects of human endeavours that have been revolutionised by the evolution and utilisation of information and communications technology is endless. In the wake of the tremendously beneficial developments in information technology is the growing concern about domestic violence and child trafficking that are carried out through its use. These have also brought to the fore the need to examine how information technology has impacted on those deviant activities, and that is the objective of this article. In doing so, the methodology adopted is principally doctrinal, while the approach is interdisciplinary and comparative. It is the finding of this study that information technology has been utilised in perpetration and perpetuation of these vices as it has also been employed in checking or controlling them. It is thus recommended that as information technology is increasingly becoming a double-edged sword, it should be deployed more in curtailing than in facilitating domestic violence and child trafficking through taking proactive measures, faithful implementation of legislative prescriptions and administering deserving and deterring punishment on the offenders.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Child Trafficking, Information and Communications Technology, Role, Fight Against

1. Introduction

Just as ICT has positively impacted communication which enhanced trade, commerce, education, *et cetera*; it has also been manipulated by unscrupulous elements in the society as a tool for the perpetration of incredible criminal activities. This paper has at its core, an examination of the position of ICT in the fight against domestic violence and child trafficking with a view to deepening the discussions on ways of effectively and efficiently using those same tools by which the crimes are committed, to also fight the same malaise. It discusses the critical position of information and communications technology in the perpetration of domestic violence and child trafficking and how the same technology can be effectively deployed to put a curb on what is increasing becoming a global embarrassment and an intractable social malady. More importantly, this article is a contribution in the ongoing discussions on exposing the troubling and increasingly devastating menaces of domestic violence and child trafficking while exploring ways and means of tackling the challenges posed by these vices. These challenges are more topical now when Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is increasingly becoming a double-edged sword in its functions, scope and sophistication. This paper discusses what domestic violence and child trafficking are, ways in which they are perpetrated by the abusers, features which make ICT an ideal tool for perpetrating and perpetuating those criminal activities and the ways in which the same ICT can be used to curb those crimes.

2. Information and Communications Technology

The extensional term for Information Technology (IT) which encompasses the role of unified communications and integration of telecommunication and computers as well as enterprise software, middleware, storage and audiovisuals, that enable users to access, store, transmit, understand and manipulate information, is called Information and Communications Technology (ICT). It also refers to the convergence of audio visuals and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system.¹ Information Technology itself is the use of any computer, storage, networking and other physical devices, infrastructure and processes to create, process, store, secure and exchange all forms of electronic data.² Information Technology is a crucial component of Digital Technology. As a term which is sometimes used interchangeably with Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Digital Technology (DT) includes electronic devices, software systems, and resources that facilitate the creation, storage and management of data.³

Though often interchangeably used, an essential difference between ICT and IT is that while ICT emphasises how digital technologies assist users in handling information, IT, on the other hand, entails the use of computers, networks, computer software and other electronic or digital devices for the management and communication of information. One widely held view is that ICT has tremendously assisted in making the world a global village whereby people in different locations in the world can communicate and share information in such a seamless manner as though they enjoy close proximity of location. It has also enhanced storage, dissemination and management of information. By the same token, ICT has facilitated the perpetration and perpetuation of domestic violence and child trafficking in diverse ways that have challenged its utilitarian value. Technology thus becomes a new medium for old practices.

3. Meaning of Domestic Violence

In its broad but simple description, when there is an abuse of power in a personal or family relationship, such that one person either actually or attempts to control and dominate the other through physical, psychological and/or sexual violence

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¹ <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/> Accessed on 26th October 2023

² <https://www.techtarget.com> Accessed on 27th October 2023.

³ <https://www.igi-global.com> Accessed on 27th October 2023.

or the threat of violence, or by controlling the other person's finances, mobility or social life, domestic violence is the result. According to section 46 of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act⁴ (hereinafter simply referred to as 'VAPPA'), 'Domestic violence' means 'any act perpetrated on any person in a domestic relationship where such act causes harm or may cause imminent harm for the safety, health or well-being of any person.' 'Domestic relationship', according to the same Act (VAPPA 2015), is a:

- relationship between any person and a perpetrator of violence constituted in any of the following ways –
- (a) They are or were married to each other, including marriages according to any law, custom or religion;
- (b) They live or have lived together in a relationship in the nature of marriage, although they are not or were not married to each other;
- (c) They are the parents of a child or children or the person who have or had a parental responsibility for that child or children;
- (d) They are family members related by consanguinity, affinity or adoption;
- (e) They are or were in an engagement, dating or customary relationship, including actual or perceived romantic, intimate or sexual relationship of any duration, or
- (f) They share or recently shared the same residence.

The VAPPA also makes provisions for rights of victims of domestic violence⁵, and penalises such acts as forceful ejection from home⁶, stalking⁷, intimidation⁸, spousal battery⁹, harmful traditional practices¹⁰, attack with harmful substance¹¹, administering a substance with intent¹², indecent exposure¹³, *et cetera*.

4. Meaning of Child Trafficking

A 'Child' according to the Child's Rights Act¹⁴, is a person under the age of 18 years. 'Trafficking' or 'trafficking in persons' is also defined in the Act as -

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the person whether for or not in involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive) in forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions, the removal of organs or generally for exploitative purposes.¹⁵

Section 13 of the TPPEA prohibits all acts of human trafficking in Nigeria. Child trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where a child is trafficked for purposes of domestic labour, armed group, criminal activity and even adoption. Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol¹⁶ defines 'trafficking in person' as 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. In this same Protocol, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18. According to the International Labour Organisation, trafficking is lucrative and fastest growing and second largest criminal industry in the world after drug trafficking. Experiencing such trauma can make it difficult for the children to reintegrate and rebuild their lives in the society again. There are three recognized stages of child trafficking. These are the recruitment, transportation and exploitation stages. At the stage of recruiting a victim, the perpetrators employ diverse methods such as use of force, trick, abduction or even assault before the victim is trafficked. In transportation, the child victim is conveyed to desired destination or destination of the trafficker and then exploited for labour, sexual or other criminal purpose(s) for which the child is being trafficked. The danger is that even if child victims escape from the traffickers, they would face physical and emotional trauma whose impact is usually long such as fear, abuse and stigma.

One of the ways in which human trafficking thrives via the internet is the supply and demand tactics. Under this system, traffickers take advantage of demands such as money, cheap labour services and jobs and employ force, fraud or forceful coercion to lure vulnerable children in order to satisfy their demands. Most times the information about the victim's identity, residential location as well as other personal detail which is readily available on the internet make it easy for the trafficker

⁴2015 (hereinafter, VAPPA 2015). See also section 2 of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, 2017 of Anambra State which came into force on 3rd day of October 2017.

⁵ Section 38, VAPPA

⁶ Section 9, VAPPA

⁷ Section 17, VAPPA

⁸ Section 18, VAPPA

⁹ Section 19, VAPPA

¹⁰ Section 20, VAPPA

¹¹ Section 21, VAPPA

¹² Section 22, VAPPA

¹³ Section 36, VAPPA

¹⁴ See section 277 of the Child's Rights Act, Cap C50 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 with a commencement date of 31st July 2003. See also section 82 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 (hereinafter, TPPEA).

¹⁵ See section 82 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015

¹⁶ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol). Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 May 2000, and came into force on 18th January 2002. This was also ratified by China on 3rd December 2002. See Han, L. (2019) 'New Technologies in Combating Child Trafficking in China: Opportunities and Challenges' *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 3(3), 389 – 414

to exercise power over his/her victims. Children are trafficked for purposes of illegal adoption, forced begging, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and conducting diverse criminal activities. These purposes have been found to be enabled by certain characteristic of information technology.

5. Enabling Features of ICT

There are salient characteristics which make ICT ideal for the perpetration of such criminal offences as domestic violence and child trafficking. These include ease of production and propagation, automation and action from a distance.¹⁷

Ease of production and propagation: Virtually anyone with basic knowledge of the operations of a cell phone can take and upload to the internet images and videos which can even be replicated in multiple times at little or minimal cost. By reason of this relative ease with which that electronic device and/or other similar electronic devices could be used in the production of the images and videos and replication of same in multiple ways, abusers and criminals find it facilitative and appealing to use ICT to carry out their criminal activities.

Automation: There are available today some technologies which specialise in providing documentation and information about the location of a person via the technologies such a person uses. With such technologies, it is possible to know one's location at any given time. In this case, it is incumbent on telecommunication companies, software developers and internet service providers to take measures aimed at protecting the privacy, safety and security of the users of their products and services.

Action from a distance: One no longer needs to be physically present in a particular location to be able to communicate or carry out any activity in any location of interest. For this reason, it is possible for a trafficker and the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence and the victim, to even be in two different countries and still successfully carry out the activities.

6. Ways in which Technology is Used

Just as the list is endless of the ways through which digital technology could be used to achieve any conceivable thing depending on the objective and disposition of the user, there are a number of ways in which ICT has been used by abusive individuals to perpetrate and perpetuate domestic violence. As aptly captured, the use of digital media and devices such as mobile phones, tablets and computers has increased almost in the same proportion that their presence in intimate relationships increased. The benefits in this shift towards technology such as providing new, instantaneous and constant channels for communication, interactions and visibility, has also 'created certain challenges for users when seeking to maintain personal boundaries and independence....'¹⁸ Some of these ways are discussed below.

Control achieved through email account: It is of common knowledge that some girls and women have email accounts set up for them by a male who retains the password to such accounts. By so doing, the male has access to the email account and by extension has control over the beneficiary of the email account. This can be curtailed through change of passwords or creation of new email accounts.

Text message (SMS) monitoring: Instances abound where spouses, intimate friends, partners or family relatives monitor the text messages of their family members or spouses and easily get irked by messages which they believe to be 'love' text messages. Such messages trigger domestic dispute with the attendant violent episodes arising from such disputes. Indeed, it was reported that in Uganda in just two weeks, there were two reports of men killing their wives after accusing the wives of receiving 'love SMSs'. While one of the men beat the wife to death, the other, a Member of the Parliament, shot his wife.¹⁹

Mobile phone tracking and lack of consent: In most countries, mobile service providers also provide the option of tracking another mobile phone. It is quite clear, judging by the way and manner it works, that the consent of the user of the mobile phone being tracked is not first sought and obtained. A person can also be tracked using the Global Positioning System (GPS). This is a network of satellites and receiving devices used to determine the location of something on earth.

Blackmail using intimate photographs and videos: Many women are trapped in violent and abusive relationships for the reason that their husbands or partners have intimate video clips or photographs of them. Such blackmail hinders opportunity to exit violent or abusive relationships and exacerbates the risk.

Cyberstalking: Cyberstalking otherwise known as online harassment is adopted where one person uses technology to follow or harass someone else to the extent that the person being followed or harassed begins to fear for his or her safety. This cyberstalking may take the form of manipulation of a person's photographic images or data/identity theft, spying and monitoring a person's computer or internet use making threatening or false posts on websites, sending repeated threats or false accusations through mobile phones and emails.

¹⁷ 'How Technology is Being Used to Perpetrate Violence Against Women— And to Fight it.' Women's Networking Support Programme: <http://www.apc.org> Accessed on 26th October 2023

¹⁸ Harris, B A & Woodlock, D. 'Digital Coercive Control: Insights from Two Landmark Domestic Violence Studies', *Advance Access Publication* 10 November 2018 (2019) 59, 530 – 550, p. 542. <https://academic.oup.com/bjc/articles/59/3/530/5172990>

¹⁹ How Technology is Being Used to Perpetrate Violence Against Women— And to Fight it.' Women's Networking Support Programme: <http://www.apc.org> Accessed on 20th January 2026

Identity or Data Stealing: Here, a person's face is morphed on pornographic images and posted online usually accompanied by such a person's personal phone number and an invitation to strangers. Some women receive so much threat messages that they even change residence or location or route to and fro work places.

Internet communication: As children are exposed to and have access to the internet, traffickers use the same internet to communicate and recruit victims of child trafficking. For instance, there are web pages which advertise job or study opportunities that do not in fact exist, and even include the photos and profiles of young people. Where the traffickers succeed, some of these victims end up in forced marriages, forced labours and the likes.

7. Pre-Disposing Factors

Humanitarian crises and fear of parents are some of the factors which pre-dispose children and make them susceptible to child trafficking. How are these possible? Violent conflicts and natural disasters are some of the humanitarian crises which result in children being separated from their families making them targets for traffickers. In other instances, traffickers prey on fear of parents and false promises of brighter future for their children. In that fear, parents hand over their children and even wards either for money or in the hope that their children will have a better life with more opportunities and even escape from poverty.

No doubt, ICT has offered and continues to offer many benefits to humanity through its evolving and dynamic nature. With respect to technologies deployed in checking child trafficking, the use of location tracking technologies in child protection products concomitantly raises concerns about the security and privacy of the child. It has also raised concerns about the right of the child to freedom of movement and participation.

The technological advancement and appropriate utilisation of data generated from appropriately deployed ICT contribute to improved child's rights. The technology can also be part of the problem. Some of the technologies used are discussed below. There is the use of online data which improve the research on child trafficking. The internet and social media are used in creating awareness aimed at preventing child trafficking. For instance, there is an NGO in China which offers online and offline tracking assistance for reuniting victims of trafficking with their families, cooperating with public security agencies and private companies. It is called *Bao Bei Hui Jai* (the English Language equivalent is 'Baby Come Home').²⁰ The BBHJ is reputed to have established a civil data base of victims of child trafficking and other missing persons through its website.²¹ It also has about 280,000 volunteers across China. The new technologies now have a large databank of victims of child trafficking based on which they operate. The information and materials published on the website of BBHJ came from data collection comparison mechanism. In this mechanism, tens of thousands of persons grouped as either 'victims' or 'original families' were posted on the BBHJ website and are accessible for public consultation, including photographs and bio data of missing children, including year and place of disappearance, description of specific characteristic of the person or family and of the incident. The core feature for a successful match between the family and the victim is that both sides post information on the website, and if either side notices the information posted by the other side or with the assistance of the volunteers, messages can be connected together and a match is made possible. BBHJ adopts an H-shaped operating model where victims of child trafficking who are adults, social welfare institutions and police and/or other persons who have lost contact with their families post notice of victims of child trafficking to the BBHJ on the one hand. On the other hand, families whose children or relatives were abducted, or who once abandoned but wanted to re-contact their children or who have lost contact with their family members for some reasons also post the relevant information to BBHJ. Now BBHJ post the information of both sides online and organize volunteers to compare the information from both sides and conduct offline search.²² A major challenge to this mechanism is that it requires participation of both sides – victim and family – and the possibility of information from both sides not matching in specific details. Such instances are: information on time of abduction, age of victim when incident happened, etc. Another limitation is that it can only assist victims whose families are equally looking for them. This difficulty is minimized by the application of new technologies such as DNA test and facial recognition. In order to improve on prevention, protection and prosecution of child trafficking offences, certain models have been developed. These models are discussed below.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Facial Recognition Technologies: Although with the passage of time a child victim of trafficking grows into someone markedly different from who he or she was at the time of the incident or different from the photo presented by the family of the victim, AI system equipped with the data base and facial recognition technology automatically integrates the traces of time and match a child with the adult he has grown into.²³ This is called cross-age facial recognition technology. For this technology to work, the victims on the one side upload their photos while parents of missing children also upload photos of their missing ones while the cross-age AI facial recognition is deployed for comparison and matching. This is more objective and accurate than the mechanism which relies solely on match made by volunteers and hampered by

²⁰ Hereinafter 'BBHJ'. Han, L. (2019) 'New Technologies in Combating Child Trafficking in China: Opportunities and Challenged for Children's Rights', *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 3(3) 389 – 414, p.10

²¹ <http://baobeihuijia.com/index.aspx>. Accessed on 16th March 2024

²² Han, L. (2019) 'New Technologies in Combating Child Trafficking in China: Opportunities and Challenged for Children's Rights', *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 3(3) 389 – 414, p.11

²³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/peoplesdaily/article-4492814/Man-33-finds-parents-help-facial-recognition.html> Accessed on 10th June 2019.

discrepancies in information provided by victims and families. One shortcoming of this mechanism is that by uploading photos of suspected victims of child trafficking, the right to privacy of the child whose photo has been taken and uploaded without his or permission has been infringed.

Child Abduction Emergency Alert Platform: This measure focuses more on curbing child trafficking, prevention of the crime and protection of the children through rapid response mechanism to child abduction and disappearance. In China one of such alert platforms called Child Abduction Emergency Alert Platform was launched by the Chinese Ministry of Public Security on 15th May 2016.²⁴ Here a mobile application named *Tuanyuan* (the English language equivalent of which is 'family unification') is deployed whereby anti-trafficking police officers upon receipt of child missing or child abduction report broadcast the alert immediately to the Alert Platform. The alert message contains vital information of the missing child including photos, physical features, time and place of incident. The information is posted to other related Apps and in a matter of minutes, the information spread both within the location of incident and far beyond. One major shortcoming of the alert system is that it relies on the internet and smartphones. This implies that one who does not have access to the internet or smartphone cannot receive the alert. Closely related to this is that where the co-operating App platforms do not put up the notifications, the promptness of the alert system may not achieve its objective.

DNA Data Base: Under this, a national Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) databank dedicated to anti-trafficking is established and maintained. Its main function is to trace the original family of trafficked children by genetic testing analysis. When a suspected victim of child trafficking is identified either through Police initiative or reporting to the Police, the blood sample of the suspected victim is collected and put in the DNA databank for comparison. Blood samples of parents whose children are missing are also collected and put in the databank for comparison. Microsoft and its partners have also developed technologies applied towards combating child trafficking including, PhotoDNA, Child Exploitation Tracking System, Computer Online Forensic Evidence Extractor and Guardian APP²⁵. Similarly, the United Nations Organisation has adopted Protocols or international treaties aimed at curbing child trafficking and similar crimes. These protocols include i) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (CRC-OPSC);²⁶ ii) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (Palermo Protocol).²⁷

8. Curbing Domestic Violence and Child Trafficking

Falling into the category of persons considered, albeit arguably, as getting the short end of the stick for being either mothers or potential mothers, female lawyers under the auspices of the International Federation of Women Lawyers²⁸ as well as other human and child rights activists, are leading the campaign against the hazard posed by the aberrant activities of persons who engage in the vices of domestic violence and child trafficking. One essential feature of the role of ICT in curbing domestic violence and child trafficking is that just as it could be employed to facilitate the crimes, it could also be utilised in curbing them. Discussed below are some of the ways of curbing these crimes.

- i) Taking cognizance of new methods of recruiting victims of child trafficking and taking measures to develop targeted awareness-raising campaigns and specialised training for law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners on such topics as use of technology in child trafficking.
- ii) Technology-based solutions such as data scanning tools and data aggregation which facilitate automatised information analysis in aid of investigations to counter the crimes. These methods must be strictly in compliance with human rights and privacy rights.
- iii) Leveraging new technological advancements such as virtual teachings thereby reaching wider audience and increasing the possibility of exchange of good practices.
- iv) Integrating in the developed strategies ways of addressing the connection between technology and trafficking child-sensitive perspectives.
- v) High standard of cybersecurity such as privacy by-designs and safety by-design in digital services and products that children use so as to minimize exposure of children to the risk of trafficking.²⁹
- vi) Appropriate policy, legislative and operative measures to prevent child trafficking, protect victims of trafficking, prosecute offenders and co-ordinate national and international stakeholders.
- vii) Observing and maintaining human rights standard in all measures of combating child trafficking is the key. That is to say that it should always be kept in proper perspective that protecting and fulfilling the rights of the child should not be sacrificed on the altar of expediency of combating child trafficking. Thus, the primacy of the human rights of trafficked children should always be at the core of all measures aimed at preventing and combating child trafficking; and protecting and assisting victims.
- viii) Actions taken to combat child trafficking should also incorporate measures aimed at avoiding dissemination of the information about the victim in order to protect the identity of the child.

²⁴ <https://www.amberalert.gov/about.htm>. Accessed on 3rd January 2019.

²⁵ *ibid.* p5

²⁶ Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 May 2000 and came into force on 18th January 2002. This was also ratified by China on 3rd December 2002. Han, L. (2019) 'New Technologies in Combating Child Trafficking in China: Opportunities and Challenges' *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 3(3), 389 – 414.

²⁷ Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 15th November 2000 but came into force on 29th September 2003.

²⁸ This is an English Language translation or equivalent of its original name -*Federacion Internacional De Abogadas* -

²⁹ <https://www.wvi.org> Accessed on 27th October 2023

- ix) Use of more than one SIM card. In order to avoid domestic violence, one SIM card is used either at home or when one is with a controlling spouse or relative. The other or others are shared with those who could raise suspicion when the spouse or relative is present. This other line or lines is/are activated in the absence of the spouse, relative or any other person who could react with some violence upon becoming aware of either the communication or relationship with the victim of the violence. Technology-facilitated aggression or violence between friends and intimate partners could be curbed in this manner.
- x) Creating awareness on how to use electronic devices such as mobile phones when chatting so as to minimize the risk of easily becoming victims of violence or harassment when using those electronic devices and the internet.
- xi) It is also the duty of government to ensure that laws and policies are in place to respond to the new trends in domestic violence and child trafficking.
- xii) Rights activists use mobile phones, the internet and other technologies to enhance their campaigns and advocacy mobilisation, expand network, prevent violations and support rehabilitation and healing process of survivors. Dedicated telephone hotlines are also set up to provide assistance.
- xiii) Participatory video production whereby women and young girls talk about the issues and challenges they face in their communities and survival efforts in the form of 'digital stories'. This helps to bring to the civic arena rarely heard voices. These digital stories give the participants the opportunity to talk about their experiences or experiences of someone else who has been through similar experiences. From such stories, others could learn how to avoid or cope with such abusive behaviours.
- xiv) Modification of online behavior including change of passwords, closure of accounts, collection of evidence and learning about safety settings. In the case of ex-partners facing stalking, vulnerability increases by the amount of information shared online and refusal to change online behaviour. Understandably, the reluctance of victims of domestic violence to withdraw from or change their online communities is informed by the fact that those were their sources of connection, comfort and support, and they would not easily want to lose them.

Other measures include: providing safe havens for trafficked children; providing counselling and vocational training to help children recover; re-uniting trafficked children with their families; empowering children with knowledge on safe migration practices; building community awareness; co-operating with authorities to identify and prosecute traffickers; strengthening the overall protective environment for children in their local communities. It is pertinent to underscore the point that anti-trafficking measures should not impinge on the rights of the child. To that end, the following must be integrated in such measures: the best interest of the child, right of the child to be listened to and taken into account, child's right to privacy and non-discrimination. Where, however, the best interest of the child victim conflicts with those of other persons or group of children, the weight of the interest of all parties should be balanced on a case-by-case basis.³⁰

9. Conclusion

Advancements in technology have made Information and Communications Technology an innovative player in the fields of both perpetrations, on the one hand; and prevention, protection and prosecution of perpetrators of the crimes of domestic violence and child trafficking, on the other hand. The good news about the role of information technology in domestic violence and child trafficking is that the same technology that enabled them can also be used to impede them or at least considerably reduce them. Child trafficking is actually a violation of the rights of a child. Indeed, a violation of human rights. The new technologies such as DNA data base and facial recognition conduce to and enhance family reunion if the workability of the mechanism is proper; while the alert platforms assist in reducing the risk of a child being violated. The 3Ps paradigm of the domestic violence and child trafficking which is the prevention, protection and prosecution discussed herein, is enhanced as well as hampered by the same ICT depending on the motive and manner of application by the user. To that extent, information technology has played the role of a veritable tool in the hands of the abusers, victims and justice administration system. It, therefore, behooves those who are involved in the fight against domestic violence and child trafficking, indeed everyone - to ensure that Information and Communications Technology is employed more in achieving the 3Ps paradigm rather than deployed negatively towards achieving deviant objectives. This is for the reason that anyone could be affected by either of these two hydra-headed monsters thereby compelling the need for collaborative efforts of all for the benefit of the society and humanity.

³⁰ <https://undocs.org/CRC/C/GC/14> 'General Comment No. 14(2013) on the rights of the child to have his or her best interest taken as a primary consideration (art.3, para.1)', CRC/C/GC/14, para.39.