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Gender Respect Education: A Proposal to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Serena Patel

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GENDER RESPECT EDUCATION: A PROPOSAL TO COMBAT COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

SERENA PATEL*

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INTRODUCTION

A twenty-three year-old young woman died after being brutally gang raped and beaten for hours in New Delhi on December 16th, 2012.¹ Despite a world-wide outcry over sexual crimes and widespread

* Serena Patel holds a J.D. from UCLA School of Law. While in law school, she was Chief Comments Editor for the UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs, Co-Chair of the International Human Rights Law Association, and participated in the National Moot Court Competition. Serena has a B.A. from UCSD, where she majored in Human Development and minored in Education Studies.

1. *Doctor: Young Woman Gang-Raped in India Dies*, CNN (Jan. 3, 2013, 1:54 PM), <http://www.cnn.com/2012/12/28/world/asia/india-rape-victim/>.

harassment of women in public, similar attacks continue, including the rape of a seven-year-old girl in a train's toilet compartment in August of 2013.² This horrific mistreatment of women and girls is not limited to India or other developing countries.³ Even in the United States, an industrialized nation where women have greater freedom than their counterparts in other countries, rape and sexual assault is still prevalent enough to create a major cause for concern. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice, in 2010, women in the United States experienced 270,000 completed, attempted, or threatened rape or sexual assaults.⁴ Still, this number likely underestimates the extent of the problem, due to the tendency to underreport.⁵ Violence against women and girls "cuts across all social and economic strata and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world."⁶ The World Health Organization's Director-General, Dr. Margaret Chan, described violence against women as a "global health problem of epidemic proportions."⁷

The high prevalence of rape is just one example of violence against women that plagues our worldwide community. Girls also face constant abuse through sexual exploitation as they are trafficked to perform sex work.⁸ Human trafficking is not only an international problem, but also is

2. Madison Park, *India Grapples with Rape and Sexual Violence*, CNN (Aug. 15, 2013, 6:29 AM), http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/15/world/asia/india-rape-problem/index.html?iid=article_sidebar ("Official data in India show that rape cases have jumped almost 875% over the past 40 years—from 2,487 in 1971 to 24,206 in 2011 . . . Statistics concerning rape and sexual violence tends to be underreported because of stigma and cultural factors. It's an inexact science to compare one country's rape statistic to another, because of the tendency to underreport.").

3. *Id.*; see *Nicholas Toddy Pleads Guilty to Rotherham Rapes*, BBC (Dec. 2, 2013, 6:08 AM), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-25184165> (detailing a UK case of a man committing four counts of rape after attacking three women on the same night); *Zanzibar Acid Attack on Trup and Gee: Reward Offered*, BBC (Aug. 9, 2013, 2:16 PM), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23629334> (describing the acid attack on two girls from London while they were volunteering in Zanzibar).

4. Park, *supra* note 2.

5. *Id.*

6. UNITED NATIONS, WORLD YOUTH REPORT 260 (2003), available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/ch09.pdf>.

7. Park, *supra* note 2 (asserting that overall, the World Health Organization estimates that 35.6% of women in the world experience sexual or physical violence, which is likely an underestimate as getting accurate statistics on sexual and physical violence remains difficult due to stigma and underreporting).

8. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: The Situation in the Middle East/North Africa Region*, UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/events/yokohama/background8.html> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013). I am adopting the view that commercial sexual exploitation is a form of violence against women and girls and is akin to rape. See *id.* (acknowledging that there is no

prevalent domestically.⁹ “The United States is the only modern democratic country where the majority of trafficking victims are its own citizens.”¹⁰

Most trafficked children are girls, many of whom already face sexual or physical abuse at home, have run away and end up homeless, making them highly susceptible to exploitation, while others are kidnapped by “pimps” who rape, beat and/or manipulate them until they seemingly voluntarily agree to engage in sex work.¹¹ The federal and state governments have passed legislation to help combat sex trafficking, which henceforth will be referred to as commercial sexual exploitation of children (“CSEC”).¹² The focus has been on the move away from criminal prosecution of child sex workers and treating these youth as victims who are in need of services.¹³ Many organizations, both domestic and international, also provide specific services, such as counseling and residential programs, to intervene and then rehabilitate sexually exploited children.¹⁴ However, there are relatively

regional consensus on defining commercial sexual exploitation of children (“CSEC”) in the law, but mentioning that in some countries it is looked upon as rape); *see also Commercial Sexual Exploitation*, WOMEN’S SUPPORT PROJECT, <http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/content/commercialsexualexploitation/173,172/> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013) (defining commercial sexual exploitation as “part of the spectrum of men’s violence against women and children, which includes incest, rape, sexual harassment and domestic abuse”).

9. Tanya Mir, Note, *Trick or Treat: Why Minors Engaged in Prostitution Should Be Treated as Victims, Not Criminals*, 51 FAM. CT. REV. 163, 165 (2013).

10. *Id.*

11. *See id.* (explaining that several factors are usually present in most instances of commercial sexual exploitation of children: “Usually these victims have personal and family histories of substance abuse and physical or sexual violence. Unstable and abusive home lives prompt some victims to run away, while others leave from group homes, foster homes, or juvenile institutions. These girls are rendered homeless and as a result are extremely susceptible to commercial sexual exploitation. . .”).

12. For instance, there is the federal Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) and many states have also passed laws to combat human trafficking. *See Human Trafficking Laws and Regulation*, DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (last updated July 26, 2012), <https://www.dhs.gov/human-trafficking-laws-regulations>, (last visited Dec. 18, 2013); *see also* Yamiche Alcindor, *Dozens of States Pass Laws to Fight Human Trafficking*, USA TODAY, (Aug. 15, 2013, 6:12 PM), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/14/human-trafficking-state-laws/2652611/> (reporting that, according to the Polaris Project, which is a non-profit established to end trafficking, for the first time, the majority of states in the U.S. have passed significant laws to combat trafficking).

13. Tamar R. Birkhead, *The ‘Youngest Profession’: Consent, Autonomy, and Prostituted Children*, 88 WASH. U. L. REV. 1055, 1056 (2011).

14. *Organizations*, SLAVERY NO MORE, <http://www.slaverynomore.org/organizations/>, (last visited Dec. 18, 2013) (listing some organizations dedicated to combating sex trafficking and rehabilitating victims

few prevention efforts in the United States that are specifically aimed at CSEC.¹⁵

This article emphasizes the importance of the prevention of violence against girls, focusing on CSEC. I use the public health model for addressing the needs of commercially sexually exploited children with the aim of reducing and ultimately eliminating sexual violence against girls. Since the majority of children who are sexually exploited are female, this article focuses on changing the societal views that increase the perception and treatment of girls as lesser beings, or objects that can be traded or sold through activities like sex trafficking. While it is important that girls can empower and protect themselves, the focus should shift from the victims to the actual and potential perpetrators, both pimps and purchasers, who should be taught to respect girls and women rather than believe it is acceptable to rape, sexually assault, sell, or purchase sex from a girl. Part I includes background information about the extent of the problem of CSEC, including the prevalence of child sex trafficking and current efforts and models used to combat the practice. Part II then explains the source of society's perception of girls, which contributes to violence against girls and women. I argue that our culture's objectification of girls, as well as our apathy and trivialization of rape and sexual exploitation, are the main causes of violence against girls and women, including CSEC. Finally, rather than focusing on ways to rehabilitate sex workers, Part III proposes ways to change society's perception of girls and violence against girls by promoting gender respect from a young age. Only once our culture's perception of girls and the way males treat females at all ages has changed, can we eliminate the market for sexually exploited girls.

THERE ARE CURRENT EFFORTS IN PLACE TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM OF CSEC

CSEC is a Significant Problem in the United States

Though there is no exact data on the number of girls who are commercially sexually exploited in the United States, approximately 300,000 youth are "at risk" for commercial sexual exploitation.¹⁶ Since

including: Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), International Justice Mission, Rapha House, Streetlight Phx, Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS), etc.).

15. Tamar R. Birkhead, *The 'Youngest Profession': Consent, Autonomy, and Prostituted Children*, 88 WASH. U. L. REV. 1055, 1106 (2011).

16. Francine T. Sherman, *Justice for Girls: Are We Making Progress?*, 59 UCLA L. REV. 1584, 1606 (2012) (explaining that the most cited study on the issue of commercially sexually exploited girls drew on data of homeless and runaway youth and

many girls who engage in sex work evade authorities and much of the sex trade occurs indoors, it is difficult to pinpoint the scope of the problem.¹⁷ Also, there is no one source to look to for clear data because state and federal databases categorize sex work differently. For example, some states arrest girls engaged in sex work while others treat them as victims.¹⁸ Surprisingly, “[t]he United States is the only modern democratic country where the majority of trafficking victims are its own citizens.”¹⁹

Domestically, many victims of sex trafficking are manipulated into developing a dependent and loyal relationship with their traffickers.²⁰ Pimps approach victims as friends, advance to form romantic relationships with them, and then take advantage of the girls’ innocence and troubled background, convincing them to acquiesce to being sexually exploited.²¹ Victims are also often subject to physical and sexual violence and humiliation.²² The resulting feelings of dependence, addiction, fear and sometimes love emerge, enabling pimps to produce “willing” participants.²³ Girls under a pimp’s control believe they have no choice but to engage in prostitution.²⁴ Comparable to women suffering from battered woman syndrome, these girls are reluctant to report their pimps or seek help because they are either threatened or emotionally attached to their pimp.²⁵ Thus, they become stuck in the world of sexual exploitation.

estimated that approximately 300,000 youth each year are “at risk” for commercial sexual exploitation); RICHARD J. ESTES & NEIL ALAN WEINER, *THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN THE U.S., CANADA, AND MEXICO* 15 (2013), *available at* <http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Commercial%20Sexual%20Exploitation%20of%20Children%20in%20the%20US,%20Canada%20and%20Mexico.pdf> (emphasizing that experts agree that it is very difficult to obtain accurate data defining this problem in part because cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) might be recorded in criminal justice or in child protection systems, or not at all). *See also* Mir, *supra* note 9 (clarifying that “studies approximate that there are between 100,000 and 300,000 minors at risk for or engaged in prostitution in the United States”).

17. Sherman, *supra* note 16, at 1606 (noting that in 2009, girls made up 78% of arrests for prostitution and commercialized vice in the United States, totaling 1092 arrests).

18. *Id.*

19. Mir, *supra* note 9 (further explaining that according to estimates by researchers, the average age of a child who enters prostitution in the U.S. is between 12 and 14 years).

20. *Id.*

21. *Id.*

22. *Id.*

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. *Id.*

Furthermore, there has been a rise in the involvement of street gangs in CSEC.²⁶ Gangs find prostituting teen girls to be a bigger source of money than drugs or weapons, which cannot be resold over and over again like one girl can.²⁷ They recruit girls in a similar manner as “traditional pimps” by targeting vulnerable girls, such as those who have run away from home, and using violence, affection, and drugs.²⁸ Then these gangs maintain control through fear and manipulation.²⁹

The ways in which young girls are recruited and trapped into a life of commercial sexual exploitation by men who believe selling girls is simply another way to make money highlights the argument that these particular men view and treat these girls as objects. It is evident that the beliefs of these men are contributing to the expansion of CSEC, making CSEC a serious problem in the United States.

Current Efforts to Combat CSEC Are Not Sufficient to Prevent CSEC

There have been efforts to help solve, or at least combat, the problem of CSEC. The federal government passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (“TVPA”) in 2000, which was most recently amended in 2008.³⁰ The TVPA identifies trafficked minors as victims deserving of protection, including protection from detention.³¹ Most states have passed laws using various definitions and a range of penalties to hold the various players in the prostitution industry, including “pimps,” “johns,” and the sex workers themselves, criminally liable.³² Yet, more recently, in line with TVPA and

26. Matt Zapotosky, *Gangs in Northern Virginia Increasingly Selling Children for Sex*, WASH. POST (Sept. 29, 2013), http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-09-29/local/42510660_1_gang-leader-gangster-crips-gang-members.

27. *See id.* (explaining that the Mara Salvatrucha street gang has found prostitution so profitable that they are almost stepping away from traditional violence to focus on their underground prostitution business).

28. *Id.*; *see also* MICHEL DORAIS & PATRICE CORRIVEAU, *GANGS AND GIRLS: UNDERSTANDING JUVENILE PROSTITUTION* 35-36 (Peter Feldstein, trans., McGill-Queen’s Univ. Press 2009) (asserting that “street gangs involved in the sex market use misrepresentation, blackmail, and coercion as recruitment strategies. . . [and] a powerful form of technique pioneered by religious cults known as ‘love bombing,’ in which a girl is showered with affection as a means of manipulating her into doing the gang’s bidding”).

29. Zapotosky, *supra* note 26.

30. Sherman, *supra* note 16, at 1607.

31. *Id.*

32. *See* U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, *TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT* 339 (10th ed. 2010) (“Traffickers were also prosecuted under a myriad of state laws, but no comprehensive data is available on state prosecutions and convictions. Forty-two states have enacted anti-trafficking statutes that use varying definitions and a range of penalties.”); Birkhead, *supra* note 15, at 1067 (“[T]hose who promote prostitution or

the movement to decriminalize the offense for minors, a few states have also passed Safe Harbor legislation, designed to acknowledge that commercially sexually exploited children are victims and provide them with an escape from exploitation through appropriate services rather than criminal prosecution.³³ For instance, New York's "Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act" ("SHA"), passed in 2007, defines youth under eighteen who engage in sex work as "sexually exploited child[ren] and gives family court judges the discretion to convert juvenile delinquency petitions for prostitution offenses into petitions alleging that the child is a 'person in need of supervision.'"³⁴ Another bill, passed in Washington in 2010, goes a step further by including a specific funding source to provide specialized services for sexually exploited youth.³⁵

Moreover, organizations, such as the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking ("CAST"), Streetlight Phx, Girls Educational & Mentoring Services ("GEMS"), Treasures Ministry, Faces of Slavery etc., focus on intervention and rehabilitation for sex workers in the United States.³⁶ For example, CAST provides long-term services including social services, legal services, and outreach and training, while Streetlight Phx provides long-term, safe housing to victims, and GEMS provides a spectrum of services focusing on rescue and restoration of sexually exploited girls.³⁷

While these laws and organizations provide intervention and rehabilitation services, there are very few prevention efforts in the United

induce or entice others into prosecution [are] the 'pimps'[and] those who solicit or patronize prostitutes are the 'johns.'").

33. Sherman, *supra* note 16, at 1607; Mir, *supra* note 9, at 167 ("[S]even states have passed Safe Harbor legislation, which identifies minors as victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Safe Harbor laws are victim-centered, in that they intend to decriminalize prostitution for sex trafficking victims and provide them with specialized services, such as crisis intervention, safe placement, and other assistance that meets the needs of sexually exploited children. The overarching motivation behind passing Safe Harbor statutes is that the majority of minors engaged in prostitution are victims of sex crimes, and thus deserve legal protection and treatment through social services, rehabilitation, or supervision.").

34. Birkhead, *supra* note 15, at 1068.

35. *See id.* (providing further examples such as Illinois, whose Safe Children Act passed in August of 2010, "decriminaliz[ing] prostitution for all youth under eighteen, including repeat offenders, and add[ing] the category of prostituted minor to the definition of abused youth" and Connecticut, whose Safe Harbor Act became law in October 2010, "decriminaliz[ing] prostitution for those under sixteen and creat[ing] a presumption that sixteen- and seventeen- year-olds were 'coerced' into committing the offense").

36. *Organizations, supra* note 14.

37. *Id.*

States that are specifically aimed at CSEC.³⁸ However, The My Life, My Choice Project (“MLMC”) in Boston is one such prevention model.³⁹ This survivor-led nonprofit provides gender-specific counseling and mentoring services as well as curriculum, training, and case coordination for providers.⁴⁰ MLMC has a ten-week session for at-risk teen girls that is “aimed at conveying the knowledge, skills, and shift in attitude necessary to decrease the likelihood of entering into the commercial sex industry” with “curriculum focus[ing] on the tactics of the recruitment process, the brutal realities of the Life, and the importance of recognizing one’s own vulnerabilities.”⁴¹ The project approaches teen sexuality with more openness rather than shame and evasion, which is a critical step that federal, state, and local governments should take when considering the best practices to prevent CSEC.⁴² More projects like MLMC would be helpful in combating CSEC, but if an organization wants to completely prevent CSEC it should make getting rid of the commercial sex industry itself a top

38. Birkhead, *supra* note 15, at 1106 (“[T]he issue is usually treated within the broader context of child safety, internet safety, or human trafficking, [with] mixed results. The NetSmartz Workshop . . . is an interactive educational tool sponsored by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, which is focused on teaching children basic practices of Internet safety with the goals of preventing victimization and increasing children’s self-confidence while online.”).

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.*

41. *See id.* at 1106-07 (“The project also offers programs for staff at group homes that house troubled youth, as well as for those at middle and high schools, juvenile detention centers, residential treatment facilities, and community-based agencies. MLMC trains adults who work with these populations to identify prostituted girls, recognize the manipulative strategies of pimps, and provide the appropriate response and referrals. With funding from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (“OJJDP”), MLMC reached over 700 girls in Massachusetts by the end of 2010, and its comprehensive curriculum, which is focused solely on preventing commercial sexual exploitation among youth, is being used in agencies across the United States.”).

42. *See id.* at 1107-08 (“Calling for . . . a more comprehensive health education program for . . . middle- and high- school students . . . that provides accurate information on contraception, safe sex practices, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and the continuum of sexual orientation,” rather than abstinence only education. “In addition, teachers, administrators, police officers, and social workers must coordinate to identify youth who may be vulnerable to involvement in the sex trade. This at-risk cohort includes those who have a history of sexual abuse and involvement in child protective services, who have a reputation for being sexually active with multiple partners, whose families have suffered job loss or displacement from their homes or neighborhoods, and who have disengaged themselves from school or extracurricular programs. Referrals to mentors, drop-in centers, and peer-to-peer counseling services for this population should be routine.”).

priority. Though the market for commercial sex could be eliminated if no one was willing or forced into participating, the focus should shift to eliminating the perpetrators who sell and buy sex. The burden should not be on children to prevent themselves from becoming victims. Without the industry or market for young girls and women, girls would not need to be mentored and taught the skills and shift in attitude to keep themselves from being recruited. The source of the problem of CSEC should be targeted in order to prevent CSEC rather than children being taught how to prevent themselves from being commercially sexually exploited.

The Public Health Model is the Best Model for Preventing CSEC

Multiple models have been considered to address the harms caused by commercial sexual exploitation, including the Stages of Change, Harm Reduction, and Public Health Models.⁴³ These models all take into account different complexities of the needs of youths and their families, recognizing that traditional social services and brief interventions aren't sufficient to overcome the power that pimps and street culture have over youth engaged in sex work.⁴⁴

The Stages of Change Model ("SCM") focuses on addressing "problem behaviors" in the health care context.⁴⁵ The SCM is divided into five stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance and relapse prevention.⁴⁶ Originally designed to help patients overcome addictions, this model is applied to CSEC by incorporating the stages of exploitation.⁴⁷ For example, the model accounts for how a child feels when she has been newly recruited, which would be the precontemplation stage of exploitation, compared to when she has been beaten to the point that she has sought protection from service providers, which would be the contemplation or preparation stage of exploitation.⁴⁸ Children can be guided through the stages of change by motivational interviewing, which is a "collaborative process designed to strengthen motivation for change through engagement, empowerment, therapeutic

43. KATE WALKER, CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL, ENDING THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: A CALL FOR MULTI-SYSTEM COLLABORATION IN CALIFORNIA 1, 26 (2013), *available at* http://www.youthlaw.org/fileadmin/ncyl/youthlaw/publications/Ending-CSEC-A-Call-for-Multi-System_Collaboration-in-CA.pdf.

44. *Id.*

45. *Id.*

46. *Id.* at 27.

47. *Id.*

48. *Id.*

relationship building, and determination of individual goals.”⁴⁹

Similar to the final stage of the SCM, the Harm Reduction Model (“HDM”) was originally designed for people who are addicted to psychoactive drugs and aims to prevent relapse considering the great dangers and health risks associated with CSEC.⁵⁰ HDM differs in that it focuses on the prevention of harms associated with a particular behavior rather than the prevention of the behavior itself and targets the individuals who continue to engage in the problematic behaviors despite the associated harms.⁵¹ The HRM accepts that youth will be exploited and may be unable or unwilling to leave the exploitative situation and instead follows the belief that any positive change in behavior is useful.⁵² For instance, programs following the HRM model would educate children about safe sex and protection to prevent potential harm to their health and increase their options for self-determination, autonomy, and control with the aim of lessening exploitation by empowerment or self-assertion.⁵³ Some exploited girls support the HRM because they believe “it ‘would allow them to care for each other safely and empower them to make safe choices’ [as] [t]he goal of the HRM is to create a supportive environment [and] reduce harm in order to improve the youth’s quality of life, which will eventually lead to empowerment.”⁵⁴

However, the SCM and HRM do not adequately contribute to the necessary effort to eliminate CSEC. Society needs to combat the source of the problem as CSEC “results from a combination of factors including, but not limited to: individuals who buy, sell and are sold for sex; societal views of prostitution; hypersexualization of youth portrayed in the media; and community factors.”⁵⁵ Thus, the public health model (“PHM”) is the best approach because it examines societal causes of the problem and develops intervention strategies not only for the victims but also for the families, communities, and, significantly, for the perpetrators.⁵⁶

49. *Id.* at 27-28 (“Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), a survivor-led empowerment organization for exploited girls and young women in New York, [which] adapted the SCM to address the behaviors associated with CSE. GEMS’s adaptation of the SCM includes information on how a child might typically present at each stage. . . . [and] goals for counselors, stage-by-stage, and statements of encouragement that counselors may employ.”).

50. *Id.* at 28.

51. *Id.*

52. *Id.*

53. *Id.*

54. *Id.*

55. *Id.* at 28-29.

56. *Id.* at 29.

The PHM emphasizes four areas to address in managing a social problem: “1. utilizing evidence-based research to develop law, policy, and programming; 2. preventing the identified harm from occurring; 3. addressing behaviors and societal views that increase the harm; and 4. engaging key stakeholders who can contribute to addressing the health issue.”⁵⁷ This model first identifies a problem, addresses it by exploring the problem’s root causes, and then aims to prevent the causes from occurring by reshaping public views.⁵⁸ Applying this model to CSEC, the focus is on identifying risk factors so that early intervention can reach at-risk youth before traffickers do.⁵⁹ I agree with the researchers who support the PHM and believe that addressing public views or behaviors that cause and aggravate CSEC and engaging key stakeholders to address these issues will help us get closer to the goal of preventing human trafficking.⁶⁰ Thus, the PHM is the preferred model and should be adopted to combat one of the most significant sources of the problem of CSEC: the perception that women and girls are worth less than men.

THE DEVALUATION OF FEMALES STEMS FROM OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

Throughout history, women and girls have been marginalized. Discrimination against women and girls has deep historical and cultural roots.⁶¹ Since boys have traditionally been valued more than girls in many cultures around the world, harms, such as “female infanticide, inadequate food and medical care, physical abuse, genital mutilation, forced sex and early child birth” have led to the death of many girls.⁶² Additionally, girls face scrutiny with regards to their sexuality and behavior because the monitoring and setting of moral and cultural standards, especially the policing of girls’ sexuality, is conducted in public, private and through the media.⁶³ This historical perception of women as less valuable and hyper-sexualized beings has contributed to the objectification and, subsequent, mistreatment of women in our society today. Since some men adopt this perception of women and girls, they do not have a problem with selling or

57. *Id.*

58. *Id.* (“The PHM generally identifies a problem and addresses it by exploring the problem’s root causes. Once potential causes of the problem are identified, the public health approach aims to prevent the causes from occurring by reshaping public views. Thus, changing societal views of CSE will prompt changes in social behavior.”).

59. *Id.*

60. *Id.*

61. UNITED NATIONS, *supra* note 6, at 251.

62. *Id.*

63. *Id.* at 250.

purchasing sex from girls and become perpetrators of CSEC.

Besides this historically influenced perception of females, there are a myriad of cultural factors that influence the way society treats females ranging from the media's portrayal of women to society's tendency to underestimate rape and commercial sexual exploitation. To a certain extent, there is a "rape culture"⁶⁴ in the United States because sexual violence against women is treated with apathy and sometimes even promoted through the trivialization of sexual assault and proliferation of sexually explicit jokes.⁶⁵ For example, the social phenomenon of #rapeface, in which pictures of people with "awkward smiles" are labeled "#rapeface" on Instagram and other social media websites, is one way that our society is actively minimizing the significance of rape.⁶⁶ Even children are uploading pictures of "awkward smiles" and labeling them #rapeface because they think it is a funny game, when in reality the label first was used in 2008 to indicate the expression on a man's face before he rapes a woman.⁶⁷ Likewise, the way students sometimes use the word rape to indicate their performance on an exam, by saying phrases such as "that final raped me," is another way our society makes light of rape and is becoming desensitized to the meaning of rape. Even if there is no malicious intent, when people use the word rape in a casual manner or while joking around, the issue of sexual assault is being normalized, creating a climate in which rape is accepted.⁶⁸ "To be indifferent to the

64. *Rape Culture*, MARSHALL UNIV. WOMEN'S CTR, <http://www.marshall.edu/wcenter/sexual-assault/rape-culture/> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013) ("[Defining rape culture as] an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence against women is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. Rape culture is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the objectification of women's bodies, and the glamorization of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women's rights and safety.").

65. *Id.* (providing more examples of rape culture including: blaming the victim; "trivializing sexual assault ('Boys will be boys!');tolerance of sexual harassment; inflating false rape report statistics, publicly scrutinizing a victim's dress, mental state, motives and history; gratuitous gendered violence in movies and television; defining 'manhood' as dominant and sexually aggressive; defining 'womanhood' as submissive and sexually passive; pressure on men to 'score', pressure on women not to appear 'cold,' assuming only promiscuous women get raped; teaching women to avoid getting raped instead of teaching men not to rape" etc.).

66. Sandra Hawken Diaz, *Talking to My Son About #Rapeface*, HUFFINGTON POST (Oct. 21, 2013, 12:28 PM), http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/sandra-hawken-diaz/rapeface-meme_b_4136653.html (describing the trend of #rapeface being used by the author's adolescent son and his friends).

67. *Id.*

68. *Id.*

word rape is to be indifferent to the prevalence of rape.”⁶⁹

Moreover, our culture puts an emphasis on teaching girls how to change their behavior, dress, and attitude in order to prevent themselves from being raped rather than teaching men not to rape. This way of thinking is another indicia of a rape culture.⁷⁰ The newly created line of “underwear and shorts for women that can’t be cut, ripped, or pulled down,” known as “Anti-Rape Wear,”⁷¹ is an example of this philosophy that women need to protect themselves from rapists. While it is important for women and girls in our current society to take precautions to protect themselves, since rape and sexual assault is a reality, the focus should shift from the potential victims to the perpetrators. Victims should not have to take responsibility for preventing the actions of perpetrators. Women should not have to wear special, high-tech clothing to protect themselves from rape. Instead, men should be taught not to rape in the first place.

Our culture’s objectification of girls, apathy and trivialization of rape as well as insistence that girls should protect themselves in order to prevent rape are indicia of a rape culture in the United States. The resulting, culturally influenced perception of females as lesser beings, deserving of less respect than males is one of the most significant causes of CSEC. This is why the cultural practices and beliefs that create this perception of females needs to change, in order to prevent CSEC and other forms of violence against women and girls.

GENDER RESPECT EDUCATION IS A POTENTIAL WAY TO COMBAT THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE ELIMINATION OF CSEC

In order to correct this perception of girls as deserving of less respect than men and prevent their subsequent mistreatment, society’s views of girls and women must change. My proposal adopts the methodology of the Public Health Model as it addresses the problem of CSEC by exploring the problem’s root causes and aiming to prevent the causes from occurring by reshaping public views. Since the perception of females as lesser beings is

69. *Id.*

70. *Rape Culture*, *supra* note 64.

71. See Theresa Collington, *Anti-Rape Wear: Clothing to Prevent Rape?*, 10 NEWS (Nov. 8, 2013, 2:21 PM), <http://www.wtsp.com/news/topstories/article/343775/250/Anti-Rape-Wear-Clothing-to-prevent-rape-> (describing Anti-Rape Wear, which includes underwear and shorts that have a lock and combination only the wearer knows in order to prevent potential attackers from being able to remove the underwear/shorts. Meant to frustrate attackers and prevent rape, interestingly, critics have pointed out it may anger attackers and lead to victims being killed instead of raped).

a main cause of CSEC, gender respect education is a potential way the problem of CSEC can be prevented. Once society stops trivializing violence against females and learns to respect women and girls, violence against females, including sexual exploitation and rape, will decrease. Although this change might take a while to implement, it is necessary and should be effectuated by teaching and promoting gender respect to children of both sexes.

The Focus of Prevention Efforts Should Shift From the Victim to the Perpetrator

Currently, there are efforts to educate and increase awareness about CSEC, including MLMC, which was mentioned previously, and other curricula and school-based programs.⁷² These programs usually involve educational programs in addition to training for adults.⁷³ They look to survivors for input, create referral opportunities to CSE-specialized programming, and often target specific populations and geographic areas that are deemed to be at greater risk.⁷⁴ By providing services to girls who exhibit signs of vulnerability to sexual exploitation, the hope is that girls will be saved before they enter the world of CSEC.

Although these strategies notably try to end CSEC, some organizations have recognized that it is more appropriate to target the perpetrators, those who sell and those who purchase sex from young girls. Attacking the perpetrators and the demand side of the problem is one way of moving away from the promotion of a “rape culture” in the United States. There are campaigns to end demand, including diversion programs that educate men arrested for seeking the services of sex workers and shaming practices that publicize the identities of those arrested for soliciting commercial sex

72. See Walker, *supra* note 43, at 40-41 (mentioning other curricula and school-based prevention programs developed in Atlanta, Sacramento, and Seattle, including “Atlanta’s Project P.R.E.V.E.N.T. (Promoting Respect, Enhancing Value, Establishing New Trust)), [which] was designed to strengthen skills, help youth identify support networks, and provide youth with positive opportunities in the community, and [was] implemented in small groups in high-risk Atlanta neighborhoods. In Sacramento, CSE survivors developed a group to raise awareness around sexual exploitation and provide preventive information to middle school-aged youth. In Seattle, the “Powerful Voices Powerful Choices” program targets female and female-identified youth between ten and seventeen years of age to promote positive relationship skills and reduce vulnerability to intimate partner violence and commercial sexual exploitation”).

73. *Id.*

74. *Id.* (explaining how some of these strategies target specific populations and geographic areas where youth may be more vulnerable to exploitation, while others are provided to all students without regard to risk factors).

“through news outlets, law enforcement websites, billboards, [and]. . . other forms of media.”⁷⁵ For example, two jurisdictions, one in Connecticut and the other in Illinois, have implemented educational programs for young men and boys in an attempt to deter commercial sexual exploitation and the purchase of commercial sex.⁷⁶

The organization “Men Against Prostitution and Trafficking” (“MENAPAT”) also acknowledges that men are the problem and must take responsibility to help provide the solution.⁷⁷ MENAPAT is an independent political action committee and growing network of men dedicated to holding other men accountable for CSEC and, significantly, is trying to initiate “a cultural shift that will no longer look upon the exploitation of women and girls as acceptable.”⁷⁸ The Defenders USA, a coalition of men seeking to fight sex trafficking⁷⁹, acts in a similar manner to change the

75. *Id.* at 41-42.

76. *Id.* at 42-43 (giving the example that “[in] Connecticut, the Department of Children and Families partnered with the Connecticut Juvenile Training School to create ‘Man UP: A Youth Series to Transform the Male Perspective of Women and Its Impact on Sexual Exploitation.’ The program includes ten one-hour sessions challenging ‘the boys to end the demand that perpetuates the sexual exploitation of women and children by defining and reshaping what manhood means to them.’ Although the Man UP program was only recently implemented as a pilot project in May of 2012, it has demonstrated promising results. Currently the Man UP program is provided at the Training School only, but the Department is developing a ‘facilitator’s curriculum guide’ to provide the program to a wider audience in additional locations. The Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE) has developed an interactive curriculum for high school boys called ‘Empowering Young Men to End Sexual Exploitation.’ Since the curriculum was first implemented in 2010, over one thousand students have completed the course. The curriculum educates ‘young men about the harms of prostitution and enlist[s] them as allies in the movement to end violence against women and girls.’ The curriculum consists of four 45-minute sessions discussing healthy relationships, gender-based violence, social norms of masculinity portrayed by peers and the media, and CSE. Young men completing the curriculum have reported changes in their thinking about commercial sex and a willingness to share what they have learned with other men”).

77. *Men Against Prostitution and Trafficking, Inc.*, GUIDESTAR, <http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/11-3723593/men-against-prostitution-trafficking.aspx> (last visited Dec. 27, 2014).

78. *Men Against Prostitution And Trafficking – MENAPAT*, CHANGE.ORG, http://www.change.org/organizations/men_against_prostitution_and_trafficking_-_menapat (last visited Dec. 27, 2014).

79. *The Defenders USA: The Men of Shared Hope*, SHARED HOPE, <http://sharedhope.org/join-the-cause/become-a-defender/> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013); see Ed Ouellette, *How Men Can Help Stop Sex Trafficking*, HUFFINGTON POST (Feb. 19, 2013, 1:32 PM), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/19/how-men-can-stop-sex-trafficking_n_2717977.html.

perspective men have about the commercial sex industry. This group of men takes a pledge not only to abstain from engaging in the commercial sex industry, but also to take immediate action to protect loved ones from the market and hold other men accountable by contacting the authorities when they notice suspicious behavior indicating sexual exploitation.⁸⁰ MENAPAT and The Defenders are correctly taking the focus away from a victim-centered perspective to preventing CSEC by targeting the perpetrators, both the men willing to sell young women as well as the men who purchase sex. They have realized that “[t]o end sex trafficking, we need to hit the root cause: Men purchasing women and girls for sex. It’s simple economics. If men demand paid sex with children, traffickers will aggressively seek to supply it.”⁸¹

Gender Respect Education Should Be Implemented in Schools in Order to Prevent the Development of Future Perpetrators of CSEC

While it is significant to identify youth who are at-risk for exploitation and provide services and support before they become victims, changing society’s views about women and girls, which will hopefully lessen the market for sex work over time until it is basically eradicated, will eliminate the need for these intervention services and better combat the proliferation of CSEC. In order to change society’s perception of women and girls, I propose that children of both sexes should be taught gender respect from a young age.

One way this could be achieved is through school-based curricula or trainings that progress from the time children enter school to the time they finish high school.⁸² Curricula should be tailored to students based on their

80. See Ouellette, *supra* note 79 (telling the story of how a young man identified that his female friend was in a dangerous situation with a man who was befriending her in order to recruit her into a trafficking ring. First he convinced her to work as a dancer at a strip club to pay for college and then tried to take her to Arizona under the pretense of visiting his parents for Christmas, which caught the girl’s friend’s attention and led him to contact the authorities, saving her from entering a sex trafficking ring).

81. *Id.* Nevertheless, it is important to note that focusing solely on boys and young men may have the effect of demonizing males, which may make them less receptive to change. Merely blaming males alone perpetuates the problematic notion that all men do not know how to treat women respectfully, when that is not the case. We have to acknowledge the role that men play in the sex work industry while being careful not to stigmatize all men. Thus, I propose gender respect should be taught to both boys and girls.

82. Though critics may argue that teaching values, such as respect, is not the responsibility of teachers and should be handled by parents at home rather than in schools, not all children have a stable home life and parents or guardians capable of teaching them these important principles. Schools have historically taught civic values and have a responsibility to prevent bullying, so teaching gender respect and preventing

age. For instance, the lessons taught to younger children, starting in kindergarten, should focus on simply respecting their classmates regardless of gender. Children should be presented with a positive message to encourage them to treat one another with respect as opposed to messages of blame focused on negative aspects of their behavior, or particularly male behavior. Negative messages that stigmatize certain behaviors are less likely to encourage students, in this case boys, to embrace the lessons of equality if they are made to feel they are the ones at fault. Positive messages are more effective teaching tools than negative ones. Then, as students get older, the message should also mature. Discussions with middle school and high school students should include issues regarding sex, like the importance of consent. These lessons could be integrated into sex education classes, which are already commonplace in most public schools.

More specifically, teachers can integrate lessons of gender equality into their everyday lessons. The Teaching Tolerance Project by the Southern Poverty Law Center already has a plethora of classroom resources to teach lessons on topics ranging from race and ethnicity to gender expression and sexual orientation.⁸³ For example, one lesson provided on their website, entitled “What We Learn From Women and Girls” focuses on gender equity.⁸⁴ The purpose of that lesson is to teach students about the contributions women have made in the past, encouraging students to explore the positive impact women have on their own lives and their community today.⁸⁵ Associated classroom activities and projects can be adapted for students in different grade levels and integrated with different subjects, such as reading and language arts, math and technology, science and health, etc.⁸⁶ This exercise can influence the way students perceive the role of women in society and the amount of respect they deserve, which should be equal to that of men.

Dr. Michele Borba also promotes the incorporation of teaching respect in schools with her book “Building Moral Intelligence.”⁸⁷ She purports that the more students are aware of how the ways people show each other

bullying based on gender is a natural extension.

83. See *Classroom Resources*, TEACHING TOLERANCE: A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER, <http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013).

84. *Id.*

85. *Id.*

86. *Id.*

87. See Michele Borba, *35 Activities Your Students Can Do To Learn Respect*, MICHELE BORBA, <http://www.micheleborba.com/Pages/BMI05.htm> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013).

respect look and sound, the more likely they are to incorporate those behaviors in their daily lives.⁸⁸ Dr. Borba describes thirty-five activities students can do to learn the meaning and value of respect, such as giving a sincere compliment to someone every day for a week and making a list of people you think are respectful.⁸⁹ These activities can be tailored to ensure that students explore and recognize that females are deserving of and should be treated with equal respect as males.

Additionally, schools can implement gender respect training through school assemblies and workshops. Teach Anti Bullying, Inc. is an organization that provides services such as speaking engagements, school student assemblies, parent/teacher workshops, anti-bullying policy development for school districts, etc. in order to combat the pervasive issue of bullying and school violence.⁹⁰ The lessons and strategies used by Teach Anti Bullying, Inc. could be adapted to focus on gender respect in particular and schools could hold workshops in which students learn, discuss, and practice the importance of treating each other equally and with respect. This method could be seen as similar in some ways to sexual harassment prevention training for adults in the workplace.

Just as the majority of youth today have been ingrained with the lesson not to start forest fires by Smokey the Bear, starting at a young age, gender respect should become a common way of thinking. This shared sense of equal respect will hopefully make men less likely to even consider committing violence against women and girls, such as commercial sexual exploitation. It should be a norm to treat females as equals compared to males, deserving of the same level of respect.

CONCLUSION

Violence against women and girls, such as commercial sexual exploitation, is a significant problem both in the United States and around the world.⁹¹ However, commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls does not have to be accepted as a part of our reality. Just because females have historically and currently are still perceived as less valuable and less deserving of respect than men, we can change this negative perception and prevent their resulting mistreatment. Gender respect can be taught to youth starting at a young age through school curriculum and programs, promoting

88. *Id.*

89. *Id.*

90. *See Our Services*, TEACH ANTI BULLYING, INC., <http://drclaudiocerullo.com/contact-us/> (last visited Dec. 18, 2013).

91. *The Situation of Girls and Young Women*, *supra* note 8, at 260-62 (stating that approximately 2 million girls between the ages of five and fifteen are introduced into the commercial sex market each year).

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and reinforcing the norm that women should be treated as equals of men. Though gender respect education would be helpful in combating CSEC in the United States, it could and should also be adapted and implemented worldwide. Most countries could benefit from similar strategies for changing the perception of females through gender respect education in order to end the discrimination and mistreatment of women and girls.