

Leaders of the digital age and profound parents,

Envision your whole life furtively watched by cameras, the footage leaked to the rest of the world. This isn't just a 'what if' scenario, and since 1997, the year social media was started, children had their lives converted into an online document visible to anyone, and everyone. That was the start of 'sharenting' a seemingly harmless shadow that relentlessly followed the lives of children.

I utterly fathom the idea of sharenting, for a parent. It is a way to celebrate milestones, and can be entertaining to respond to other parents. But at what cost? In our digital era, anything you post on the internet is irreversible, thanks to screenshots, and printers. That can make a cute photo of a toddler gunpowder for a bully decades later. It can turn into an annihilating tornado affecting job opportunities. It can even be a tantalising tsunami, causing your children to post videos of their own children. This devastating concoction is not just one life ruined, as it can make generations blinded by fame and glory, into ignoring their children's rights.

As per the United Nations declaration of human rights, we children also have a say in familial decisions, and should be treated with equal importance. We should be free, and not trapped in a cage. Consider pictures of yourself being posted on the internet. Would you be happy? It's the same for us children. By sharing pictures of us, and not asking our consent, we may learn the practice, and start doing it. I am not suggesting that our parents should not lead us, but that they should not overcontrol us. Sharenting is also a way to breach not just your child's but your security.

What's the point of protecting our children in the outside world, if we don't even lay a scratch in the digital realm. Humanity has advanced in many ways, and many of us are outdated, forgetting the facial recognition systems. This breaks the shield covering your child's identity, leaving it open for hackers, and kidnappers. Another aspect is the metadata that comes with posting the photo, like the date at which the photo was taken and the geolocation. This method of identification is an easy way for bullies to find new ammunition.

Sharenting is like a ticking bomb, waiting to burst in front of a child's face. While you as the parent might have forgotten the photos you posted, years later, it could be brought back as a reason to not be selected for a job, or a reason for bullies to devastate your child, or a reason for children themselves to feel powerless, and frustrated. All of this negativity will eventually corrupt your child into a negative person. These psychological impacts don't stop at adulthood, it follows you around, a shadow that can grope into your adulthood. Many children have reported feeling useless and losing the sense of dedication and determination. Though as a parent sharenting provides jubilation, it steals the jubilation of a child.

Though some would say that children are not mature enough to decide if a photo should be posted, I would reply that they aren't mature enough, so how will they learn to be if they are constantly restrained from deciding if a photo should be posted or not. This also does not mean that only the child decides if content should be posted, but that the parent should help the child in his/her decisions.

This brings the fact that children should have the right to veto, and that sharenting without consent is not just harming your child, it's harming you as well. Though the harm, if used carefully, sharenting can be a way to foster your child in digital citizenship. After all, why should you ruin your child's future just for your entertainment.

Thank you for your time.