

Cyber Bullying: A Threat to Youth

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ABSTRACT:

Cyber bullying or cyber-harassment is a form of bullying or harassment using electronic means. Cyber bullying and cyber-harassment are also known as online bullying. It has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers, as the digital sphere has expanded and technology has advanced. Cyber bullying is when someone, typically a teenager, bullies or harasses others on the internet and other digital spaces, particularly on social media sites. The study also says cyber bullying report leads to depressive affect, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and somatic symptoms. Perpetrators of cyber bullying are more likely to report increased substance use, aggression, and delinquent behaviors. Cyber bullying-trolling is a crime and it should stop immediately.

KEY WORDS: *Cyber bullying, trolling, effects on young people's mental health.*

INTRODUCTION:

Cyber bullying and cyber harassment are also known as online bullying. Trolling is also a form of Cyber bullying. It is increasing amongst teenagers as we can say that when someone harasses any other person on the internet or on any particular social media site it leads to some harmful bullying behavior like posting rumors, threats etc. Unlike traditional bullying, a new tactic found in cyber bullying is stealing someone's password in order to harass victims. Other forms of cyber bullying include sharing embarrassing or private pictures of the attackers' victims or identity theft. Attackers also share private information and spread rumors about other people. The internet is a place where cyber bullying is very common. Social media sites like – Facebook, Snap chat, Instagram and other common sites. The increasing use of computers led to the invention of the Internet. Studies have concluded that compared to texts and phone calls, social media posts are the most damaging form of cyber bullying. This is why it is considered instead of shaming someone publicly you should get in touch privately and discuss any issues or opinions directly.

The internet and technology have started travelling hand in hand. Technology continues to develop rapidly and is therefore changing our ways of functioning in society. This has brought in new dimensions to our responsibilities as educators and mentors. Doors are constantly opening, bringing more opportunities and at the same time requiring all of us to rethink the ethical use of technology. For example, Internet cell phones and other communication technologies, while providing us with conveniences, also expose people to interactions that put their safety and emotional wellbeing at risk. Teenagers are being exposed to the internet world. The technology and internet are clearly helping mankind, but, with boon comes the bane. When the internet goes into the hands of people

with malicious intent, it is no longer helpful. There are various negative uses of technology. It has led to a rise in the cybercrimes that are being committed. In this paper, the researcher has laid focus on cyber bullying which is a new form of bullying with distinct differences in form, personality, and response.

OBJECTIVES :

- To conduct a study looking at the prevalence and nature of Internet and the people using it , focusing particularly on cyber bullying
- Its potential effects on young people's mental health.
- To examine the need for defining and creating laws on cyber bullying in India and to analysis the awareness of cyber bullying among respondents.

Types of Cyber bullying :

Cyber bullying can happen in a variety of ways, each of which needs to be dealt with differently, it's important that you are able recognize them. Through research we found there are 10 forms of cyber bullying that effect the most-

- **Exclusion-** It is the act of leaving someone out deliberately. Exclusion exists with in-person bullying situations, but is also used online to target and bully a victim.
- **Harassment-** This is a very dangerous form of cyber bullying. It can have serious implications for your child's wellbeing. The messages are generally unkind or malicious, can impact their self-esteem and confidence, and can make them fearful.
- **Outing/Doxing-** It is a deliberate act to embarrass or publicly humiliate your child or a group through the online posting of sensitive, private or embarrassing information without their consent. Outing can happen in a variety of ways and the information revealed can be serious or trivial. Even reading out your child's saved messages on their mobile phone can be considered a form of outing. Personal information should not be shared and if someone reveals private information deliberately be sure your child knows to report it as cyber bullying
- **Trickery** – It is the act of gaining your child's trust so that they reveal secrets or embarrassing information that the cyber bully then shares publicly online.
- **Cyber stalking** - This form of cyber bullying can extend to the cyber bully making real threats to your child's physical wellbeing and/or safety. Cyberstalking can also refer to the practice of adults using the Internet to contact and attempt to meet with young people for sexual purposes. It is a very dangerous form of cyber bullying and can have serious consequences if something isn't done immediately to stop it.
- **Fraping-** It is a very serious offence, which many people believe to be funny and entertaining, but it's not. Impersonating somebody online and ruining their reputation can have serious

consequences. Remember Google never forgets so everything rude or otherwise posted online will never be fully gone, even if deleted.

- **Masquerading-** It happens when a bully creates a made up profile or identity online with the sole purpose of cyber bullying someone.
- **Dissing-** It refers to the act of a bully spreading cruel information about their target through public posts or private messages to either ruin their reputation or relationships with other people. In these situations, the bully tends to have a personal relationship with the victim, either as an acquaintance or as a friend.
- **Flaming** -This type of online bullying constitutes of posting about or directly sending insults and profanity to their target.
- **Trolling-** When a bully will seek out to intentionally upset others by posting inflammatory comments online.

Target group of Cyber bullying:

1. Teenager/Adolescents

Anyone can experience bullying or cyber trolling. However, research shows that the teenagers and young adolescents are the most experienced and effected ones. From researches it discovered that females experience more cyber bullying than their male counterparts. According to a study by the PRC, 38% of girls report that they've been cyber bullied, compared to 26% of boys. Similarly, another study found that 36.7% of girls reported being a victim of cyber bullying versus 30.5% of boys in 2016.

The PRC also found that girls 15-17 years old experienced the most cyber bullying at 41%. Further, this same group was the most likely to receive a threatening or aggressive text, IM or email.

2. Females:

The Pew Internet and American Life Project conducted a survey about cyber bullying. Based on their survey(Lenhardt), it was found that girls were more likely than boys to say they have experienced cyber bullying; 38% of girls reported being bullied online compared to 26% of the boys bullied online. The results also indicated that online rumors tended to target the girls more than the boys. Online rumors can include someone making a private email, instant message conversation, text messages, or publicizing any embarrassing photo of the victim without the victim's consent. It can, thus, be deduced that females are easily targeted in case of any cyber-crime, including cyber bullying. It should also be kept in mind that often women are the victim of cyber bullying. Moving slightly away from the age, it is clear that women are the targeted group. They are victimized because the bully thinks women are more susceptible and weak. Hence, his/ her first victim is generally a female.

3. LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to be bullied or otherwise victimized compared to their peers. In research found that they are three times more likely to be bullied online. IN one study, researchers found that 52% of LGBTQ+ youth between the ages of 11 and 22 experienced cyber bullying

multiple times. In the same study, 54% said they were bullied for their sexual identity, and 37% said they had been bullied about their gender identity or expression in the past month.

Reasons behind Cyber bullying:

Studies have examined the reasons as to why the cyber bullies feel the need to bully others and whether or not there are common characteristics between teens who cyber bully. Adolescents who have reported recent problems at school, assaultive behaviors, or report using illegal substances were more likely to cyber bully. Another study found that the teens who cyber bully are in need of social support, have unhappy feelings, and are eager to use drugs. Both male and female teens who cyber bully scored a lower affective empathy score than those who were the victims of cyber bullying and those who were not involved in cyber bullying at all. This suggests that teens who cyber bully often are not affected by the emotions that others feel.

Consequences:

The immediate consequence of cyber bullying is anxiety, followed by withdrawal from society. This withdrawal forces the victim to go into a shell which culminates into depression. The victim does not confide her/ his problems to any person. Studies have also found that there is a link between cyber bully victimization and suicidal thoughts and attempts. This link has been spotted mainly because there is a connection between depression and suicide. There is also a relation between cyber bully victimization and depression. (Bauman, 2013) It has also been identified that cyber bullying actually predicted suicidal ideation, suicide behavior, and suicide attempts in the victim.

Case Study:

Some high-profile cases of cyber bullying have brought additional attention to the issue, influencing some state legislatures, school districts, and law enforcement agencies to take action.

The Megan Meier Case (1992 – 2006, United State)

Brief summary of the case: One of the high-profile cases receiving significant or wide-spread attention nationwide involved the victimization of a 13-year-old girl named Megan Meier. Megan was an eighth-grade student at a middle school in Missouri who befriended what she thought was a 16-year-old male peer named Josh Evans. However, “Josh” turned out to be a rival female peer’s mother who was impersonating Josh and communicating with Megan on MySpace.com. The mother, Lori Drew, built a relationship with Megan only to tear it apart with an array of malicious and derogatory messages on the social networking site. This harassment continued for a short time, ultimately leading Megan, who already suffered from a lack of self-confidence and mild depression, to commit suicide by hanging herself in her bedroom.

The Ryan Halligan Case (1989 – 2003)

Another case that received heightened attention from the local and national media was the victimization of Ryan Halligan. Ryan was bullied at school and on the internet, with most of the harassment occurring online. Ryan was subjected to harassment by his peers including the spreading of rumors that Ryan was homosexual.

It became such a problem that Ryan did not want to go to school. Ryan committed suicide at the age of thirteen (Stover, 2006). His father, John Halligan, was quoted as claiming that he does not solely blame the Internet for his son's death, but it "amplified and accelerated" his son's depressed state, which ultimately resulted in Ryan taking his own life

The Logan case (1990 – 2008) and Hope Witsell case (2009)

Brief summary of the case: Jessica Logan was an 18-year-old Sycamore High

School senior who sent nude photo of herself to her boyfriend, but the Cincinnati Enquirer reported that the photo was sent to hundreds of teenagers in at least seven Cincinnati area high schools after the couple broke up. According to the University of Alabama's cyber bullying website, the cyber bullying continued through Facebook, MySpace and text messages. Jessica hanged herself after attending the funeral of another boy who had committed suicide.

A little more than one year later, 13-year-old Hope Sitwell hanged herself after a picture of her breasts that she "sexted" to her boyfriend was shared amongst students at six different schools in area of Ruskin, Florida, friends and family told CNN. Hope never told her parents about the "HopeHater Page" that was started on MySpace that led to additional cyber bullying.

The Tyler Clementi Case (2019, United State)

Facts of the case: : It was during the summer after his high school graduation that 18-year-old Tyler Clementi began sharing that he was gay. Clementi's roommate during his freshman year at Rutgers University, Dharun Ravi, used a webcam in September 2010 to stream footage of Clementi kissing another man. According to the Tyler Clementi Foundation, the teenager learned through his roommate's Twitter feed that he had become "a topic of ridicule in his new social environment." On September 22, 2010, Clementi committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge.

Rithika Sharma Case (2017-18, India)

Facts of the Case: Rithika Sharma (name changed), who studies at a prominent Delhi school, went to the police after being stalked by a Facebook user whom she had befriended on the site a month ago. She had given her cellphone number to the man who was later found to be using a fake name, photo and phone number.

Experts say cyber bullying and cyberstalking are increasingly becoming a daily problem for the city's schoolkids with people using electronic communication like emailing, social networking and texting to harass or pursue them. Decision: Delhi Police has been launching cyber safety awareness programmes in schools in which students are informed to avoid giving personal information online to anyone they don't know.

Manav Singh's death Case (2020, India)

Manav Singh was a 17-year-old boy from Gurugram. He was studying in the 12th grade when he was accused of sexual assault by his classmate, Bhavleen Kaur on social media. This accusation surfaced as trending all over Twitter and Instagram. According to the police, on May 4, 2020, Manav jumped off the balcony of his flat located on the 11th floor of Carlton estate residential complex. Manav allegedly committed suicide after his friends began harassing him on social media platforms for being named in Kaur's "MeToo" Instagram post. Kaur alleged that she was molested

by the teenager in the basement of her apartment complex two years ago. She wrote that she has revealed it now because she was tired after having kept it a secret for the last two years. The police initiated an investigation under Section 174 to enquire and report on the suicide as per the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc). It was later discovered that the accuser had deleted her messages. The allegations were never substantiated as Kaur never came forward. Manav Singh's parents moved an application before Gurugram police seeking thorough investigation of the matter and filed a complaint against the accuser. Gurgaon Court issued a notice to the police for filing a Status Report. The police filed his status report and, on July 15, 2020, issued a notice to Instagram and Snapchat for production of documents.

Survey Analysis:

For the present study, a survey was conducted on each issue among people. Pie chart and Percentage method has been used to determine the responses of the samples. 500 respondents were taken in the consideration for the study through Google form.

The survey was conducted in the age section 18 to 40. Out of 500, most of the responses from the age group 18 to 25 (66%) and 26% responses from the age 25-30 and 8% responses from the age 30-40.

Survey opinion about social media

Out of 500 people, 48% of people think social media are great platforms to stay connected with friends and family who lives far away. 32% people also think can be use to share opinions, showcase their talents, it has also become a great place for online community, support, and love. It has brought people all over the world closer together and holds messages of hope and inspiration and 16% people think social media helps to collect data and information.

40% people think social media have both positive and negative side and it depends on how you use it. 8% people think social platforms are fun entertaining, great place for time pass, 6% think it is fun and also time killer, time consuming and 2% person think its only fun and 4% people think social platforms are boring, overrated and unuseful.

Survey opinion about Cyber bullying-trolling

Out of 500 people, 47% people think bullying and trolling online is harmful, not tolerate able for our mental health, bad rather worst thing to do. It is very effective and terrifying and its increasing day by day. 6% people think it's very real and everyone of us faces this at a point and 8% people think mostly young minds get affected by trolling and bullying. 20% people think Cyber bullying-trolling is a crime and its stands against our community standards. It should stop immediately at any cost. 9% people think everything has merits and demerits. Cyber bullying trolling is fun when you can take these things sportingly. Out of 6% think it is fun when you know the limit otherwise it can be very dangerous for other person, 6% people think trolling and bullying leads to depression, anxiety. It creates mental distress in person and can take someone's life. 8% people think Cyber bullying-trolling is very serious matter and Government should look into it. We should not take it lightly.

CONCLUSION:

Cyber bullying-trolling, is thus, a huge problem that need control. This problem can be effectively controlled by non-legal or indirect legal controls. The main reason behind cyber bullying is the power to remain anonymous. This turns the meek into bullies who harass people online behind their mask of anonymity and in the privacy of their homes.

Cyber bullying still strongly exists in India and a growing problem in today's society impacting the quality of life for adolescents. Findings contribute to the already existing research demonstrating that cyber bullying is a growing problem that needs to be addressed. Through this study we found that young adolescents are the most effect and bullied one Than the older generations. Trolling in sarcastic way is fun but there should be a thin line of limits and it can be dangerous and causes life . The report says that 50% people had seen friends, family or someone being bullied online. The study also says cyber bullying report leads to depressive affect, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and somatic symptoms

Mostly 75 % of the cases were reported in last two years against cyber bullying. Some of the cases are unsolved and mostly cases were not reported. The person who is bullied sometimes undergoing depression, trauma and were sometimes leads to suicides. In India sometimes the narrow mindset they never reported a cases especially if a girl harassed by a boy online. Research has demonstrated that cyber bullying victimization and perpetration have a significant detrimental impact on adolescents. Girls and LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience cyber bullying but it's a risk for all young people, and it impacts the wellbeing and mental health of anyone affected.

Other than being dependent on technology for prevention of cyber bullying, teachers, parents, and students themselves need to take measures to prevent such offence. There can be advertisements on the effects of cyber bullying and its concept. Anti-ragging cells and also posters in the school can help to prevent it. School authorities should make students understand the concept of cyber bullying, its consequences and effects. They should teach cyber ethics to the students and impart knowledge of laws against cyber bullying.

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