CYBERBULLYING: A VIRTUAL OFFENCE WITH REAL CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract-- **The Internet is a defining factor of modern education. In fact, education has become more accessible and widespread than ever before because of the Internet. Technology is a double-edged sword, where it offers both risks as well as opportunities to the users. It is no longer just a dream that we all are connected to each other 24/7, no matter where we are in the world, we are just at one click away from our loved ones and even the strangers. At one end, the Internet has shrunken the world in a much smaller space full of opportunities to thrive for people with minimal resources along with bringing awareness to important sociopolitical movements and acting as a platform for fundraising for many noble causes; on the other side, it has exposed vulnerable people to a deep dark world of web and bullying while sitting safely in the vicinity of their homes. This paper aims at discussing the problem of cyberbullying prevailing in the society and the solution thereof.**

Key Words: **Cyberbullying, Online-harassment, Online abuse, cyber, bullying, internet crimes.**

INTRODUCTION

The Internet is a characterizing element of modern education. The fact is, education has gotten more widespread and accessible than any other time due to the Internet. Information technology, as we probably are aware, is a two-fold edged sword, where the risk and opportunities are consistently balanced by the users. It is not a big deal that we truly are connected all day, every day, regardless of where on earth, we are simple a single tick away from loved ones and even the outsiders. At one end, the Internet has shrunken the world place digitally with lots of opportunities to flourish for individuals with insignificant assets alongside carrying attention to significant sociopolitical developments and going about as a stage for raising money for some respectable purposes; at the opposite end, it has presented vulnerable individuals to a deep dark world of web and bullying while sitting securely in the region of their homes.

Cyberbullying is characterized by Smith et al. as an "*aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself.*"[1] Mostly the meaning of bullying depends upon three standards: intention to hurt, imbalance of power, and continuance of the act. Cyberbullying likewise can happen coincidentally. The indifferent idea of instant messages, texts, and e-mails makes it difficult to identify the sender's tone – one individual's joke could be another's destructive affront. In any case, a rehashed design is seldom unintentional. If there should be an occurrence of cyberbullying, this turns out to be moderately simple, where the power of a single click is enormous and increase the crowd by thousands, accordingly expanding the embarrassment and effect of bullying dramatically. The extent of cyberbullying is very vast, as far as means just as substance. It incorporates bullying through instant messages, calls, e-mails, social media platform, or just in chat rooms. It changes from posting hurtful words, unfavorable remarks, posting counterfeit data on open discussions or online journals, hacking accounts for personal vendetta to blackmail or death

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[1] 1 . Smith PK, Del Barrio C, Tokunaga RS. Principles of Cyberbullying Research: Definitions, Measures, and Methodology. NYork/Londres: Routledge; 2013. Definitions of bullying and cyberbullying: How useful are the terms; pp. 26–40.

threats. The effect of such acts can be calamitous, particularly for youthful grown-ups, who feel so humiliated constantly that they can't envision surviving the following morning, and end up making extraordinary strides which incorporate mischief to self and infrequently, others. It profoundly mirrors this present reality issues emerging out of the virtual space. Not, at this point restricted to schoolyards or street corners, it has now moved to WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and so on, where online surveys are directed to body shame the person in question and groups are made to spread bogus gossipy tidbits or offer transformed pictures and recordings, to a somewhat tremendous crowd with the power of the Internet, which would not have been so effectively conceivable in the actual world in any case. Cyberbullying likewise varies from traditional bullying in contribution possible secrecy to the domineering jerk and trouble in recognizing the person in question. This joined with the conspicuous absence of observing and guideline in the internet makes the issue more many-sided and arduous to address.

In the Indian context, step by step, because of expanding admittance to technology, modest web plans, and legislators passionately seeking after and pushing the fantasy of "Digital India," the danger of cyberbullying is disturbing and its evaluation and counteraction become considerably more dire. Presently, the greater part of populace approaches the Internet through a PC, a tablet, or generally on a cell phone. The most helpless of this populace are our kids and young people, who are being shot into the internet before they are really fit for figuring out it mentally.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the utilization of phones, texting, email, chat rooms or social networking sites, for example, Facebook and Twitter to hassle, undermine or threaten somebody. Cyberbullying is frequently done by youngsters, who have progressively early admittance to these technologies. The issue is compounded by the way that a domineering jerk can hole up behind a pseudonymous client name, masking their actual personality. This mystery makes it hard to follow the source and urges menaces to carry on more forcefully than they may in a circumstance where they were recognized. Cyberbullying can incorporate such goes about as making threats, sending provocative put-downs or racial or ethnic slurs, gay slamming, endeavoring to contaminate the victim's PC with a virus and flooding an email inbox with messages. More dynamic measures incorporate blacklisting or whitelisting email accounts, changing email addresses, changing ISPs, changing mobile phone accounts and endeavoring to trace the source. Since the utilization of portable and online correspondences has developed so quickly and the crime is generally new, numerous jurisdictions are thinking over cyberbullying laws. Be that as it may, the crime is covered by existing laws against personal threats and harassment.[2]

DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING[3]

According the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "*cyberbullying" was first used in 1998. They define it as "the electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person (such as a student) often done anonymously.*" But as time has gone on and the Internet itself has evolved, so has the definition of cyberbullying.

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[2] https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/cyberbullying
[3] https://online.maryville.edu/blog/what-is-cyberbullying-an-overview-for-students-parents-and-teachers/

Stopbullying.gov defines cyberbullying as "*bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets*", whereas the Cyberbullying Research Center describes it as the "*willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.*" Basically, it's the utilization of electronic correspondence to reflect the manner in which an individual would be harassed in real life, ordinarily by sending messages of a threatening or intimidating nature. Cyberbullying comprises of:

1. Electronic form of contact.
2. An aggressive act
3. Intent
4. Repetition
5. Harm to the target.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CYBERBULLYING

All types of bullying are identified by intention, repetition and hurtful behavior against a person or group. Though there are distinguishing elements to consider when it happens online, which are as:

1. Persistent: It can happen at any time irrespective of the physical presence of the child. It can even happen when the child is at home.
2. Hard to detect: Most of the bullying behaviors are very hard to detect for the adults when it happens through phones and on internet.
3. Anonymous: It can be done without revealing the identity of the offender. Those being bullied over internet may not even know who is doing unacceptable behavior, which makes a child to get hurt
4. Large audience: the hurtful information can be shared easily and quickly to a much larger audience in just few seconds, which makes it continuous and difficult to stop spreading.
5. Easier to be hurtful: it is easy to bully using the technology in spite of larger physical distance. The victim might not recognize the serious hard caused by the offender but could feel the serious real-time pain due to technology.
6. Permanent: When something is shared on the internet. It is often available to everyone present on that platform; they can save it for future references which makes it of permanent even if deleted from the origin source.

FORMS OF CYBERBULLYING

With the growth of technology for last few years, cyberbullying has become and most grave tremendously growing concern. With the use of smart phones, laptops, various social media apps, cyber bullying can be done in many ways, which are even very hard to detect. Some of the forms of cyberbullying are as follows:

1. Online Harassment: It includes sending offensive and abusing messages to a person or group. It is a kind of bullying behavior which is intentional, repeated and permanent in nature and hurt the victim to a great extent.
2. Cyberstalking: It is also a form of cyberbullying/harassment These messages are often offensive and rude, but not threatening in nature. Though it may escalate to threaten the physical safety of the victim. This is a particular attentive form of cyberbullying. It can lead to stalk a person in real world. However, cyber-stalker follows the victim's online activities and use that to threaten or blackmailing them.
3. Exclusion: It is deliberately ostracizing the victim. This includes leaving the victim out of the social media groups, chat rooms, messages, activities or events. This is done to

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exclude the victim from any conversation which may include talks about the victim behind his back.

4. Outing: When the bully publicly shares private pictures, messages or other information about the victim on internet without his knowledge or consent and aimed to shame, embarrass or humiliate the victim.

5. Masquerading: When the bully anonymously or with another's identity harasses the victim. They may either impersonate someone else, use account of a real person or create their face identity on internet.

6. Fraping: It is an act of logging into someone's social media profile and posting inappropriate content using their name and identity. It may create trouble to the victim with family or friends or otherwise embarrass or harm their reputation.

7. Trolling: It is the most common form of cyberbullying. It includes making fun of someone to harm his reputation or otherwise hurt his peace of mine.

8. Trickery: When the bully pretends to be a friend of the victim to get their personal information and later use that data to harass them. Mostly the LGBT community has significantly affected by this form of cyberbullying.

9. Flaming: It is when the offender uses vulgar or violent language to verbally hasras the victims through online messaging.

   These various forms of cyberbullying often overlap, and the bully may use or combine multiple tactics to hurt their target.

EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is especially guileful on the grounds that it attacks the home where kids regularly have a sense of security, and it is steady and inevitable since victims can be reached consistently and in all spots. A student may feel a range of emotions in the event that they are the target of a cyberbully. These are a few words to depict the sentiments and feelings that cyberbullied teenagers may insight[4].

1. Overwhelmed: It feels like crushing, when being target by cyberbullies. It feels like the entire world knows what is going on with the victim. Sometimes the kids feel like the situation is out of their control and it causes stress on their mind.

2. Powerless: The victim feels powerless and vulnerable to deal with the cyberbullying and feel unsafe with it. This is because of the reason that the cyberbully can invade the homes of the victim at any time of the day through internet. The victim feels the bullying is everywhere. So many times, the bully is anonymous and the targeted kids do not have any idea from where they are getting this pain and hurt.

3. Humiliated: Cyberbullying is of permanent nature. Kids feel exposed every time. The large audience that has knowledge about the bullying can result into gross feeling of humiliation.

4. Worthless: bullies often target the victims who are most vulnerable. Targets feel helpless and intense dissatisfaction with their individuality that result into being doubtful about their worth and value. That may lead into harming themselves in anyway. They feel their life worthless.

5. Vengeful: Sometimes the victims of cyberbullying get angry about the behavior happened with them and attain revengeful behavior. This is a very dangerous aspect of

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[4] The Real-Life effects of cyberbullying on children- https://www.verywellfamily.com/what-are-the-effects-of-cyberbullying-460558

cyberbullying as is tends to continue the bullying victim cycle.

6. Disinterest: When cyberbullying is continuous, the child tends to feel disinterest in his routine activities and feel distress and hopeless. They spend less time with their family and friends an even in school activities.

7. Isolated: The child after being a victim of cyberbullying feel alone and isolated. He tries to avoid the phone calls and social network sites and sometimes even try to avoid school groups and avoid communication with others.

8. Depressed: Victims of cyberbullying often feel anxiety, depression and other stress-related issues. And lowers their self-esteem and self-confidence.

9. Physically sick: After being cyberbullied, victim often experience headaches, stomachaches or other physical ailments. Stress of being bullied may also cause stress related decease like stomach ulcers and skin conditions.

10. Suicidal: It increases the risk of suicide attempt by the victim. Kids that are constantly bullied through text messages, e-mails, social media, and other digital medium, often begin to feel hopeless. They may even begin to feel like suicide is the only way to escape this pain.

HOW TO REPORT CYBERBULLYING

A cyber-crime written complaint shall be registered with the cyber-crime cell of the city. A cybercrime comes under global jurisdiction and can be registered in any cyber cell of India irrespective of the place where it was originally committed. If there is no access of cyber cell then a FIR could be lodge at the local police station. In case the complaint is not accepted there, the commissioner or the judicial magistrate could be approached.

The other way to file a cybercrime is online portal available. Government provides an online portal on www.cybercrime.gov.in to file the complaints related to cyberspace. After input all the relevant information there the competent authority looks into the matter and contact the victim for further proceedings.

Again, A complaint could be registered on the corresponding platform where the offence was committed. The steps for the same are clearly mentioned on every social media platform. However, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube have a strict and clear redressal mechanism to protect its users from online abuse and cyber-crimes.

CONCLUSION

As our interests in ICT framework develop our vulnerability to harm through attacks by insurgents/terrorists with objective to immobilize and incapacitate everyday exercises of the country is becoming real. Such harm would make short and long-haul misfortune economy. We have numerous exercises from US activity to secure our digital framework, while planning and implementing India's ICT foundation. It is recommended that the current and arranged ICT framework of the country, both out in the open and private space be examined by a group of experts under aegis of NDMA to propose reasonable operational courses of action to limit their vulnerability to saw assaults by hostile components and cataclysmic events. This would involve thorough specialized investigation of current and arising remote and wired ICT frameworks. The expert group should discover and suggest appropriate blend of redundancies in the basic ICT frameworks supporting the administration structure of the country. The engaged investigation of the vulnerability and their protection, would prompt suggestions that would stay away from duplication of exertion and, hence, affordable at public level. The thought that fiascos can be totally managed by technical and scientific

capacities alone would be excessively pompous. The most consecrated segment in any such endeavor is participation from all users to ensure appropriate solution for the welfare of the humanity.

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