

Cyberbullying in India's Capital

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Abstract

Over the period of time, data charges in India are decreasing, infrastructure of data lines is increasing, due to good competition in the market availability of smart phones on cheap rates is also increasing. Other than this, users of social networking sites and mobile Apps are also increasing. Smart phones with attractive data plans are easily available these days to every economic group. Although the facility of getting connected with the world anytime through internet connected device has proved to be a boon for the society, yet it has helped introducing cybercrimes in the society. Cyberbullying is becoming a prominent cybercrime these days. Cyberbullying involves an aggressive behavior of an individual or a group of individuals whose intention is to insult others through social or electronic media. This paper informs the status of this crime in the capital of India, shows the awareness of cyber bullying among different age groups in Delhi and NCR and how much Delhi is getting affected out of it. The paper also gives few ideas to save people from being the victim of cyberbullying.

Keywords: Bullying, Cyber Crime, Cyberbullying

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1. Introduction

1.1 Bullying

Bullying is not a new born evil of the society. It is present since ages. Donegan observed its presence in 1530s too²¹. Olweus added in 1992 that bullying is repeated physical and psychological aggression shown by a more powerful person over a victim who feels it difficult to defend which impacts him/her very badly¹⁸.

In 2011, Wong-Lo and Bullock defined bullying as one of the forms of peer aggression which can damage like conventional aggression does. (Mickie et al, 2011)²².

The bully feels pleasure with a power of superiority in torturing the victim physically or verbally, directly or indirectly through other persons. The victim can be anybody eg- a student in school or college, an employee, a journalist, a beautiful teenager girl etc. bullying creates such an atmosphere in which the victim feels a lot of discomfort. It does not matter if the victim is a small child or

an adult. This feeling of discomfort and restlessness is one of the biggest hindrance in physical and psychological growth and performance of an individual whether it is a child or an adult.

Bullying may involve various other activities like teasing, socially boycott, threatening, stalking, physical violence, sexual, religious and racial harassment etc. in 2008, Mason stated that the purpose of bullying is to create problems physically, emotionally or psychologically for others²⁰.

In 2011, Michel stated that although emerging social networking technology is a boon for the society as a whole as one can connect to others in seconds whereas it is also increasing emotional stress among children as well as adults if it is used too much¹⁹.

Any society having the rat race of millions in which everyone wants to win and be on the top, where the feeling of being the winner crosses all barriers and feeling of help and care for the one who is weak lacks behind, where smart minds take undue advantage of innocents, bullying takes place. And in today's era of information technology and social media, this bullying is more horrific and has termed as cyber bullying.

1.2 Cyber bullying

In 2011 Olthof explained cyberbullying a strategic behavior of an individual who tries to dominate any other individual or a group of individuals²³.

A cyberbully harasses, makes negative comments, insults gives threats to the victims by using electronic and social media.

According to Olweus, (1986, 1993) impact of cyberbullying over victim is very deep and negative. Victims become depressed, sensitive and quiet. They avoid social gathering or joining groups over social media and become shy. Most of the time they are anxious and feel insecure and unhappy. In worst cases, victims become suicidal, immaterial of the fact whether they are children or adult. In this process. They slowly lose contact of their good friends and find no one to talk or discuss about their feelings.

2. Classification of Cyberbullying⁶

Although in this era of social media there may be various innovative ways of cyberbullying but few methods are very commonly used. These are as below:

1. *Harassment*: sending messages through sms, e mail or social media to threaten or to make a mockery or to insult of an individual. Commenting rudely, posting embarrassing pictures which are not acceptable on social media. These acts cause emotional distress.
2. *Denigration* (defamation): sharing false information of anyone over social media which damages victim's reputation in the society. The victim can also be bullied by posting pictures

which insult him/her socially. Bullies use popular websites, social media sites or apps to do such kind of acts. Sometimes people alter the photos of the victim and then post on social media in order to harass him/her.

3. *Flaming*: an attempt of using very offensive language to poke the victim to start an online argument in a group either to enjoy or to harass him/her.
4. *Impersonation*: acting of pretending to be another person for the purpose of entertainment or to harass the victim.
5. *Outing and Trickery*: this is the act of using tricks to cheat or revealing some secrets from the victim to forward it to someone else.
6. *Cyber Stalking*: the act of repeated use of social media or electronic media to harass the victim by sending frightening messages or e mails.
7. *Exclusion*: The act of compelling or creating such for someone to leave a group based on Apps, game sites, social media etc. bullying someone to an extent in a group so that he/she exits from that group on his/her own.
8. Accounts of innocent victims are hacked by bullies.
9. Children become victims of cyber threats and child pornography.

3. Cyberbullying Affecting Capital of India

Geetanjali Kumar, a psychologist working with school children in Delhi, calls the danger of cyber bullying a ticking time bomb. "All it takes for children to be on social media is to

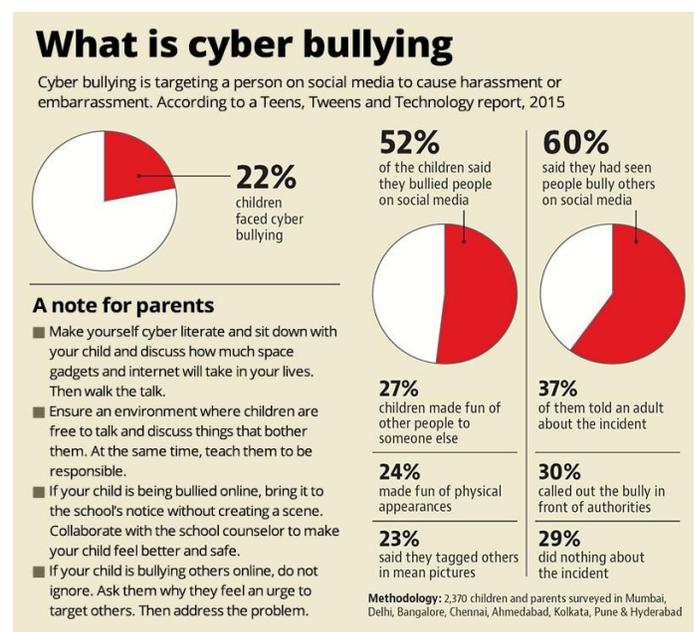


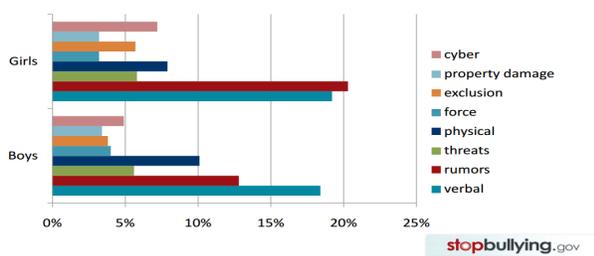
Figure 1. What is cyberbullying?

register with a wrong date of birth. But the sense of power it gives, helps children damaging others and not be sorry about it”⁵.

4. India Ranks 3rd on Global Cyber Bullying List⁶

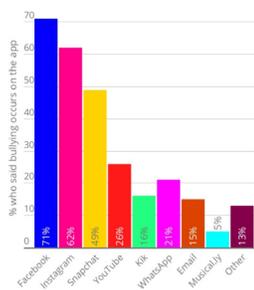
A survey was conducted among 25 countries for checking cyber bullying rate amongst children and India was found on 3rd position whereas China and Singapore defeated India. This survey was done by Microsoft Corporations to understand the condition of cyberbullying against children globally.

Differences in the Types of Bullying Experienced by Boys and Girls (NCES, 2011)



Information source – www.the74million.org
Figure 2. Differences in the types of bullying experienced by boys and girls (NCES, 2011).

Variety of apps used for cyberbullying



Information source – www.the74million.org
Figure 3. Variety of apps used for cyberbullying.

5. Delhi Police Study for Cyberbullying⁸

There was a survey done by Delhi Police in which it was found that cyberbullying supports so many other crimes also, like, stalking, molestation and rape etc. It’s a sad affair to know that most of such crimes happen in public schools of Delhi in which

80% OF INDIAN NETIZENS HARASSED ONLINE: SURVEY

An online survey commissioned by Symantec Corporation has found that **80% of adult Indian** internet users have suffered some form of online harassment. The security software company's antivirus business Norton conducted the survey in India in the months of May & June this year. Here are some of its findings:

8/10 have suffered some form of online harassment

Most common forms of harassment: **Abuse and insults**

63%

59%
Malicious gossip and rumours

45%
Threats of physical violence

44%
Cyberbullying

45%
Cyberstalking

Highest threats of physical violence were reported by victims from:

- Mumbai **51%**
- Delhi **47%**
- Hyderabad **46%**

(Source: Norton by Symantec; No. of respondents: 1035)

Information source - Oct 05 2017: The Times of India (Delhi)
Figure 4. 80% of Indian netizens harassed online: Survey.

students’ family’s economic background is good and they can afford easy access of social networking sites and groups.

Records of Delhi Police disclosed the facts that between the years 2014 and 2017, around 508 such cyber crime cases have been registered out of which 244 cases were registered under IT Act with IPV and 26 cases were of sexual harassment.

6. Objectives of Research

The effects of cyberbullying are very brutal to the victims emotionally and socially. In this research the following objectives have been considered:

- To create the awareness of cyberbullying among the people of Delhi & NCR as it is a new terminology and it can be widely seen across the nation.
- To identify the reasons of doing cyberbullying.
- To find out the characteristics of people who tend to be a victim of cyberbullying.
- To understand the various aspects of cyberbullying and how it is affecting the lives of victims.
- To have a thorough understanding about cyberbullying and find out feasible solutions for victims to come out of it so that they should not suffer any more in their lives.

7. Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives, a questionnaire having 9 simple questions related to cyberbullying was prepared. The questionnaire was filled by 2014 participants between the 15 to 62 years of age. All the participant were residents of Delhi & NCR. For data collection 10 schools, 5 undergraduate colleges, 5 post graduate colleges, 10 private organisations were visited which were situated in different locations of Delhi & NCR. The participants were also invited to fill the questionnaires online through Google forms.

8. Analysis

Out of all 46 responses were found incomplete and hence not included in the analysis of the data. Therefore, the sample size for the study remains 1968. The analysis of data is as below:

1. Participation in research gender-wise

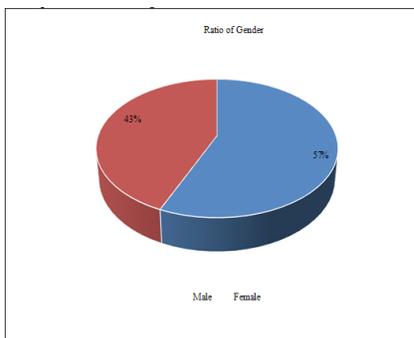


Figure 5. Participation in research gender-wise.

2. Participation of different age groups in research

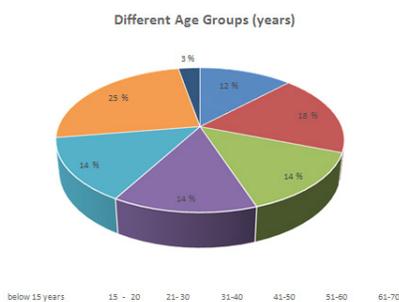


Figure 6. Participation of different age groups in research.

3. Respondents who were victims of cyberbullying

When briefed about cyberbullying to the respondents through supporting literature given, 72% respondents agreed that they faced problem of cyberbullying in some or the other way, 26% of the people never experienced such a problem and 2% were not able to decide whether they had this problem or not.

4. Victim of cyberbullying: Role of gender

When asked in the questionnaire that the cyberbullying is considered to be gender specific, 92% respondents answered that cyberbullying is not gender specific and both genders equally suffer due to it. 2% believe that the females are more vulnerable to cyberbullying whereas 6% respondents were not able to decide any answer for this question.

5. Reasons for getting victimized

In response to the question, due to which reasons people got cyber bullied, 5% respondents indicated that innocence and extremely polite with others got bullied online. 22% confirmed that people who are extrovert in nature got bullied and 41% believe that introvert and quiet people become victimised more as compared with others whereas rest of the 31% respondents say that anyone can become victim to cyber bullying.

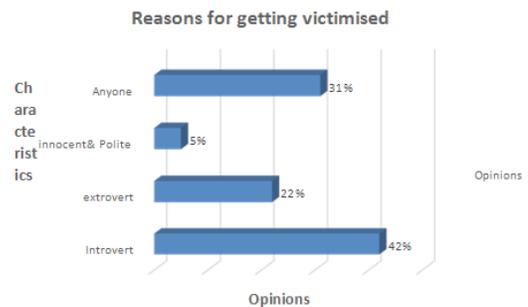


Figure 7. Reasons for getting victimised.

6. Reasons for people to be a cyberbully

When asked about the probable reasons which provoke for getting engaged in cyberbullying, 55% respondents shared their opinion that instant anger is the cause, 48% mentioned that jealousy is the reason, 39% believe it to happen due to relationship break ups, 28% said that it happens due to religious rivalry. Jealousy, Relationship problem and aggression which are all commonly found in the youth of the nation and thus they must be handled with love and affection if they are going through a bad phase or else the cyber bullying situation may strongly prevail in the society.

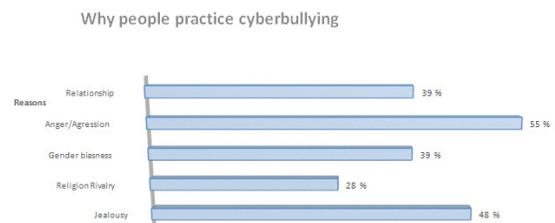


Figure 8. Reasons for people to be a cyberbully.

7. Effects of Cyberbullying on normal life

It can be seen in the graph below that majority of the respondents believe that cyber bullying affects the normal life of the person badly. The graph is made upon the responses collected by the respondents.

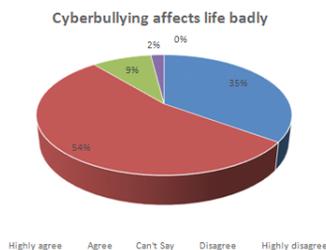


Figure 9. Effects of Cyberbullying on normal life.

8. Effects of cyberbullying on victims

A question was included in the questionnaire to assess the impact of cyberbullying over the victims and 94% of the respondents believed that individuals if cyber bullied, will get affected emotionally and mentally badly whereas 62% felt that cyber bullying may also affect the social health of the victims. 33% participants felt that these incidents might affect the physical health of the victims.

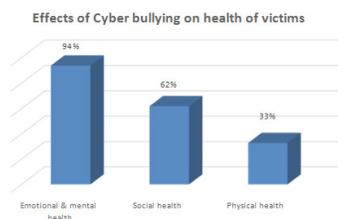


Figure 10. Effects of cyberbullying on victims.

9. Helping hands of the victims

It can be seen that the majority of the respondents believe that the schools, Institutions, family and friends can help the cyber bullying victims and it is a very positive sign for our entire nation. It was evident from the data that 93% of the respondents told that there was not any policy formed by the school/college/institutions for the safety of the victims while 7% were unable to answer it. Nobody confirmed that they have such policies in their institutions.

7% of the respondents who maintained that they would report the incident to the institutional authorities in case they ever get cyber bullied while 73% of cyber victims did not disclose it to anybody. 20% of the respondents feared that their reporting about being bullied will make them a subject of entertainment and fun for others.

9. Conclusion

A Tech Desk article in Indian Express highlights this Alarming situation that 50% Indian youths have experienced cyberbullying (Tech Desk, 2014).

“Bullying is a community issue!” and that while schools are a very important part of finding solutions to bullying, they can’t do it alone. Bullying happens to pre-schoolers, to adults in the work-place, in government, our legal system, in the media we connect with and even to our senior citizens. We need to talk about bullying as a community health and wellness issue in addition to the traditional focus as an education issues (Nigam Chayyanika 2017).

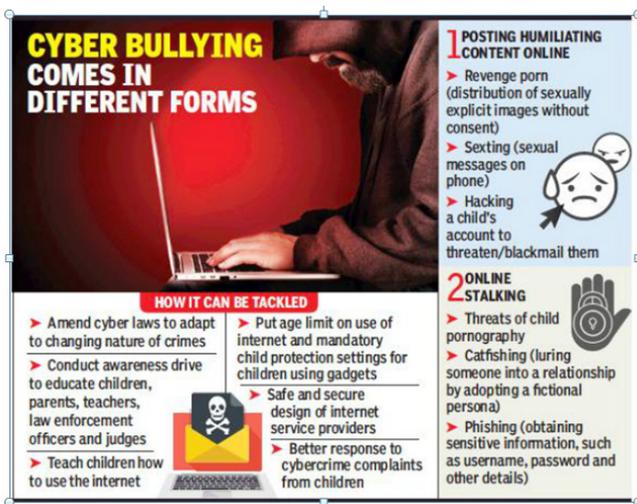
McAfee conducted a study in which it was found that 50% of youngsters in India have experienced cyberbullying in some or the other ways.

With the increased accessibility of Internet and smart phones to children and youth of the country, cyber crime is also equally increasing. And cyberbullying is affecting the psychological health very badly. Depression, mood disorders, insomnia and the feeling of guilt are primary symptoms that can be seen in the behavior of the victims.

Most of the victims don’t even share their problems with anybody which increases their stress level and guilt and makes their mental and emotional condition even worse. It’s need of the hour that institutes, colleges, universities and schools should start awakening programs of cyberbullying for students and parents both separately. Workshops should be arranged by educational institutions so that people will be aware of this evil of the society and will be more aware of cyber laws and safety measures.

10. Safety Measures

To keep themselves safe, users of social media may be suggested not to add unknown and strangers to their account, to be careful with the privacy setting provided by the social networking sites. Respecting cyber laws, not making account on unknown sites, blocking the abuser are also few of the methods to keep safe online. If there are a series of calls or the calls are part of a bigger picture of bullying then this may amount to harassment which is an offence under the 1997 Harassment Act. Making anonymous or abusive phone calls is also a criminal offence under section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 (Negi Surabhi, 2016).



Information source – Times of India, 5 March, 2018

Figure 11. Cyberbullying comes in different forms.

11. Limitations

People were not supportive in sharing their experiences over the topic selected for study as the topic is very sensitive. The trust factor of the people was very low. Even after ensuring that comments and experiences of the victims will not be shared in public and their identities will be kept secret, most of them were hesitating sharing their experiences. Therefore, collecting a reasonable amount of response which was required for the study was really a big challenge for the research team.

Time allotted for this study was another challenge. The study was done through the samples collected from limited Institutions of Delhi & NCR due to lack of time.

Moreover, better results can be obtained if the same study can be conducted nationwide. A more appropriate approach would have been to collect data from different institutions from different states of India to make study more appropriate and useful for the nation.

12. Opportunities for Further Research

This study can be done on larger scale after doing segmentation of institutions. Separate studies state wise on school kids, college youth, working professionals, age and gender will give more fruitful results. More studies can be conducted based on interviews of the victims which will be helpful to get an idea of behavior and characteristics of bullied people and victims of cyberbullying.

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Annexure-I

Cyberbullying in India's Capital

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