Cyber Bullying: A Growing Concern In India

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Abstract:

In the 21st century internet has become a part and parcel of people's life. It has played a significant role in connecting the entire world. But there are devastating results which occur due to misuse of internet by the people. In recent years cases of cyber bullying in India are increasing. This paper deals with the definition of cyber bullying, its types and cases of cyber bullying reported from throughout the country. The paper delves deeper into the causes, consequences and prevention of cyber bullying.

Keywords: Cyber bullying, types of cyber bullying, causes, effect, prevention

Introduction:

In this digital era, the internet has made our life easier and comfortable. Everything is just at our fingertips. Due to the availability of internet it is easier to access any information regarding any topic or it can be used for social interactions as all these activities can be done at any place and at any time.

Technology has given a lot of benefits to the world but along with the opportunities there are certain risks that can be devastating for children as they can indulge in negative activities such as sharing shameful pictures, threatening someone, spreading rumors, stalking someone, making fake identity of someone, sharing the mobile number of someone in adult website, online bullying etc. Such activities are known as cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is a kind of harassment which is done to cause harm to a victim with the help of electronic devices, such as mobile phones or laptops or through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. This is carried out to harm a person's reputation in society and causes psychological and emotional suffering to the victim. Every year in India the cases of cyber bullying keep on rising. A survey conducted by McAfee Corp in 2022 revealed that 85% of the children have reported that they were cyber bullied. Spreading false rumors, being excluded from groups and name calling were highest form of cyber bullying reported in India. In the survey it

was also found that girls between the age group 10-16 years were most vulnerable online. They face higher rates of sexual harassment.50, 035 cases of cybercrime were reported in India as per the data of NCRB, 2020.

Cases of Cyber bullying in India:

- In 2018 a 21 year old girl in Kerala became a victim of trolling on social media for selling fish after college to raise money for her education and to meet the basic needs of the family.
- In another case in 2018 an 18 year old girl studying law in Kerala received threats over her Facebook poem on menstruation.
- In 2016 a 23 year old MBBS student committed suicide as he was cyber bullied over a Facebook post.
- In Karnataka in 2018 where a Hindu women killed herself after facing harassment on WhatsApp over her friendship with a man from another religion.
- A 15 year old boy was arrested by Delhi Police in 2020 in connections with the "Bois Locker Room" where they share photos of minor girls and exchange lewd comments on Instagram app.
- Another incident occurred on 26 June 2014 where a 17 year old girl committed suicide after her male friend with his other friends morphed her photos and posted on Facebook along with her mobile number.
- A girl from Delhi was stalked by a Facebook user whom she had befriended on the site in 2017.
- A 24 year old man from Chennai committed suicide as he got trolled and ridiculed by his friends and strangers for uploading videos on TikTok dressed up in women attires.

Types of Cyber bullying:

Smith & et.al(2018) classifies cyber bullying based on the usage of media such as mobile,chatrooms,websites,SMS,e-mails etc.Riebell & et.al(2009) categorized cyber bullying based on its action like online harassment(it involves sending offensive or threatening messages to someone repeatedly through email,SMS or using chat room),denigration(sharing morphed photos of someone purposively to humiliate them or spreading false rumors about them),trickery(bully will first befriend with other person and after winning their confidence they share the victim's private information to others),doxing(sharing someone's private or sensitive information in public or cause harm or to humiliate the victim) and exclusion(intentionally excluding someone from the online group or chats).There are other types of cyber bullying which include masquerading(bully hacks the account of the victim and sends hurtful comments to others that seem to be coming from the victim),impersonation(creating a fake profile of the victim and sends hurtful messages to others in order to hurt the victim) and flaming (it usually took place in chat room or done through instant message where bully engage in inappropriate language).

Causes of Cyber bullying:

Although the exact reason why people indulge in cyber bullying is unknown. There can be a number of reasons like:

- Some bully others to take revenge. Being a victim themselves at some point of time makes them think that harassing others is normal.
- To boost their ego, they indulge in bullying.
- Some individuals bully others as they are attention seekers.
- Peer pressure can also lead to bullying others.
- Low self-esteem of the bully.
- Lack of parental supervision.
- Lack of empathy

- Some bully others based on difference of opinion or sense of superiority.

Effects of Cyber bullying:

The following are the effects of cyber bullying:

- **Psychological effects** –The victims of cyber bullying may experience wide range of negative emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, panic, anxiety etc.
- **Physical effects** – The person can complain of headache, stomache, feels tired, restlessness, backaches etc.
- **Emotional effects** –It involves the feeling of shame, guilt and embarrassment. Victim may have trouble in forming social relationships. They might feel lonely and isolated.
- **School related** – The victim might feel lack of motivation towards learning. They might not be able to concentrate on their studies which will ultimately hamper their academics.

Prevention:

Below are the numbers of ways through which cyber bullying can be prevented:

- Always use strong passwords.
- Whenever using social media platform like Instagram, Twitter, Snap chat etc. turn on the privacy settings.
- Never reveal one's personal information to the stranger on online social media platforms.
- Always think before posting anything on the internet.
- Always log out from the public devices.
- Report any kind of cyber bullying at cyber cell.
- Never retaliate to bully. Make sure to keep all the record of the incident by taking the screenshots of messages, e-mails, photos or images.
- Never accept friend request from strangers.
- Never click on the link sent by the strangers as it might contain some virus that is designed to collect your personal information.

Conclusion:

Cyber bullying is a global issue. It involves the use of digital technology to harass or threaten individuals. It can have serious consequences for victims. Awareness campaigns, reporting the cases to the cyber cell, open communication between parents and children can play a significant role in preventing it.

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