Understanding Cyber Bullying: Motives and Deterrents

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of modern technology, cyber bullying (use of e-mail, cell phones, text messages etc.) has increased in India. Easy access to internet, cheap mobile phones, and virtually no law to stop the abuse of school children by their fellow classmates, the problem of cyber-crime among children and young adults have increased. According to a survey, conducted in 2012, 53% of Indian children between 8 and 17 years have been bullied online. The Global Youth Online Behavior Survey conducted by Microsoft ranked India third in cyberbullying of children. (after China and Singapore). Cyber bullying is a virtual offence with real consequences. The motives for cyber bullying can vary from gaining satisfaction from hurting the victim whom the perpetrator might dislike or be jealous of, feeling better about themselves, revenge for perceived provocation by the victim or just for fun where they are not be concerned about the effect on the target. However, anonymity is major contributor to cyber bullying as the perpetrator feels that his identity cannot be revealed. Like traditional bullying, it is intentional and repetitive and has psychological and physiological effect such as development of negative self-esteem in the victim ,somatic problems, anxiety, social withdrawal and isolation which in turn can lead to school absenteeism, academic problems, depression and aggressive acts (homicidal or suicidal). Parents, being less enlightened about modern technology than adolescents and young adults, are often in the dark about the horrific experiences of their children and are unable to provide the necessary support. The present article focuses on the internal and external motives of cyber bullying and how adults (parents and teachers) and peers can effectively intervene to prevent cyberbullying.

Keywords: Cyber Bullying, Motives, Deterrents.

Cyber bullying is defined in legal glossaries as actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm another or others. Use of communication technologies for the intention of harming another person use of internet service and mobile technologies such as web pages and

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discussion groups as well as instant messaging or SMS text messaging with the intention of harming another person.

Examples of what constitutes cyber bullying include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, or humiliate the recipient. The actions are deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior intended to harm another. The most current research in the field defines cyber bullying as "an aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself". (Smith & Slonje, 2007)

Cyber bullying has been defined by The National Crime Prevention Council: "When the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person".

A cyber bully may be a person whom the target knows or an online stranger. A cyber bully may be anonymous and may solicit involvement of other people online who do not even know the target. This is known as a 'digital pile-on'. The practice of cyber bullying is not limited to children and while the behavior is identified by the same definition when practiced by adults, the distinction in age groups sometimes refers to the abuse as cyber stalking or cyber harassment when perpetrated by adults toward adults. Common tactics used by cyber stalkers are performed in public forums, social media or online information sites and are intended to threaten a victim's earnings, employment, reputation, or safety. Behaviors may include encouraging others to harass the victim and trying to affect a victim's online participation. Many cyber stalkers try to damage the reputation of their victim and turn other people against them. Cyber stalking may include false accusations, monitoring, making threats, identity theft, damage to data or equipment, the solicitation of minors for sex, or gathering information in order to harass. A repeated pattern of such actions and harassment against a target by an adult constitutes cyber stalking. Cyber talking often features linked patterns of online and offline behavior.

COMPARISON TO TRADITIONAL BULLYING

Certain characteristics inherent in online technologies increase the likelihood that they will be exploited for deviant purposes. Unlike physical bullying, electronic bullies can remain virtually anonymous using temporary email accounts, pseudonyms in chat rooms, instant messaging programs, cell-phone text messaging, and other Internet venues to mask their identity; this perhaps frees them from normative and social constraints on their behavior. Additionally, electronic forums often lack supervision. While chat hosts regularly observe the dialog in some chat rooms in an effort to police conversations and evict offensive individuals, personal messages sent between users (such as electronic mail or text messages) are viewable only by the sender and the recipient, thereby outside the regulatory reach of such authorities. In addition, when teenagers know more about computers and cellular phones than their parents or guardians, they are therefore able to operate the technologies without concern that a parent will discover their experience with bullying (whether as a victim or offender). Another factor is the inseparability of a cellular phone from its owner, making that person a perpetual target for

victimization. Users often need to keep their phone turned on for legitimate purposes, which provides the opportunity for those with malicious intentions to engage in persistent unwelcome behavior such as harassing telephone calls or threatening and insulting statements via the cellular phone's text messaging capabilities. Cyber bullying thus penetrates the walls of a home, traditionally a place where victims could seek refuge from other forms of bullying. Compounding this infiltration into the home life of the cyber bully victim is the unique way in which the internet can "create simultaneous sensations of exposure (the whole world is watching) and alienation (no one understands)." For youth who experience shame or self-hatred, this effect is dangerous because it can lead to extreme self isolation. One possible advantage for victims of cyber bullying over traditional bullying is that they may sometimes be able to avoid it simply by avoiding the site/chat room in question. Email addresses and phone numbers can be changed; in addition, most e-mail accounts now offer services that will automatically filter out messages from certain senders before they even reach the inbox, and phones offer similar caller ID functions. However, this does not protect against all forms of cyber bullying; publishing of defamatory material about a person on the internet is extremely difficult to prevent and once it is posted, many people or archiving services can potentially download and copy it, at which point it is almost impossible to remove from the Internet.

Why Cyber bullying is Different
Kids who are being cyber bullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, kids who are cyber bullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior. Cyber bullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night. Cyber bullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source. Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

Children in India are Worst Victims of Cyber Bullying
A recent Microsoft study has found that over half of the Indian children who surf the Internet face cyber bullying, getting threatened or being harassed online. According to Microsoft's 'Global Youth Online Behavior Survey' of 25 countries, India ranked third with 53% of respondents (children aged between 8-17) saying they have been bullied online, behind China (70%) and Singapore (58%). The survey focused on how kids are treating one another online and whether parents are addressing online behaviors. In India, the survey found that more than five in 10 children surveyed said they have experienced what adults might consider online bullying. Globally, the survey indicated that while children want to talk to parents about the issue, only 29% of the children said their parents have talked to them about protecting themselves online. The survey said it was important for adults (parents and school officials) to discuss the issue with the children and provide guidance on how to identify and respond to a range of online behaviors from online meanness to bullying and beyond. Indian cyber law is still ineffective in delivering

cyber crime convictions, even as cyber fraud continues to increase. The year 2013 has seen a lot of events as far as cyber law jurisprudence in India are concerned. It has been an eventful year that demonstrated how cyber legal challenges are increasingly becoming relevant. As per the Google's Transparency Report, 2013, in the case of India, the number of user data requests rose by 16 per cent to 2,691 in January-June this year from 2,319 in the same period in 2012. As per the information reported to and tracked by Indian Computer Response Team (CERT-In), a total number of 308,371 websites of which 78 belonged to government were hacked between 2011 and 2013 (up to June). Hackers of the Pakistan Cyber Army (PCA) breached and defaced seven websites owned by the Indian government.

METHODS USED

Manuals to educate the public, teachers and parents summarize, "Cyber bullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using a cell phone or the internet." Research, legislation and education in the field are ongoing. Cyber bullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mails or text messages harassing someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender. It may also include public actions such as repeated threats, sexual remarks, pejorative labels (i.e., hate speech) or defamatory false accusations), ganging up on a victim by making the person the subject of ridicule in online forums, hacking into or vandalizing sites about a person, and posting false statements as fact aimed a discrediting or humiliating a targeted person. Cyber bullying could be limited to posting rumors about a person on the internet with the intention of bringing about hatred in others' minds or convincing others to dislike or participate in online denigration of a target. It may go to the extent of personally identifying victims of crime and publishing materials severely defaming or humiliating them. Cyber bullies may disclose victims' personal data (e.g. real name, home address, or workplace/schools) at websites or forums or may use impersonation, creating fake accounts, comments or a site posing as their target for the purpose of publishing material in their name that defames discredits or ridicules them. This can leave the cyber bully anonymous which can make it difficult for the offender to be caught or punished for their behavior. Though, not all cyber bullies use anonymity. Text or instant messages and emails between friends can also be cyber bullying if what is said or displayed is hurtful to the participants. Some cyber bullies may also send threatening and harassing emails, instant messages or texts to the victims. Others post rumors or gossip and instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target. The recent use of mobile applications and rise of smart phones have yielded to a more accessible form of cyber bullying. It is expected that cyber bullying via these platforms will be associated with bullying via mobile phones to a greater extent than exclusively through other more stationary internet platforms. In addition, the combination of cameras and Internet access and the instant availability of these modern smart phone technologies yield themselves to specific types of cyber bullying not found in other platforms. It is likely that those cyber bullied via mobile devices will experience a wider range of cyber bullying types than those exclusively bullied elsewhere.

CYBER BULLYING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Cyber bullying can take place on social media sites such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter. By 2008, 93% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 were online. In fact, youth spend more time with media than any single other activity besides sleeping. There are many risks attached to social media cites, and cyber bullying is one of the larger risks. One million children were harassed, threatened or subjected to other forms of cyber bullying on Facebook during the past year, while 90% of social media-using teens who have witnessed online cruelty say they have ignored mean behavior on social media, and 35% have done this frequently. 95% of social media-using teens who have witnessed cruel behavior on social networking sites say they have seen others ignoring the mean behavior, and 55% witness this frequently. The most recent case of cyber-bullying and illegal activity on Facebook involved a memorial page for the young boys who lost their lives to suicide due to anti-gay bullying. The page quickly turned into a virtual grave desecration and platform condoning gay teen suicide and the murdering of homosexuals. Photos were posted of executed homosexuals, desecrated photos of the boys who died and supposed snuff photos of gays who have been murdered. Along with this were thousands of comments encouraging murder sprees against gays, encouragement of gay teen suicide, death threats etc. In addition, the page continually exhibited pornography to minor.

Law Enforcement: Cyber bullying, Cyber talking and Electronic Harassment

A majority of states have laws that explicitly include electronic forms of communication within stalking or harassment laws. Most law enforcement agencies have cyber-crime units and often Internet stalking is treated with more seriousness than reports of physical stalking.

School

The safety of schools is increasingly becoming a focus of state legislative action. There was an increase in cyber bullying enacted legislation between 2006–2010. Initiatives and curriculum requirements also exist in the UK (the of sted eSafety guidance) and Australia (Overarching Learning Outcome 13). In 2012, a group of teens in New Haven, Connecticut developed an app to help fight bullying. Called "Back off Bully" (BOB), the web app is an anonymous resource for computer, smart phone or iPad. When someone witnesses or is the victim of bullying, they can immediately report the incident. The app asks questions about time, location and how the bullying is happening. As well as providing positive action and empowerment over an incident, the reported information helps by going to a data base where administrators study it. Common threads are spotted so others can intervene and break the bully's pattern. BOB, the brainchild of fourteen teens in a design class, is being considered as standard operating procedure at schools across the state.

Protection for Victims of Any Age

There are laws that only address online harassment of children or focus on child predators as well as laws that protect adult cyber stalking victims, or victims of any age. Currently, there are 45 cyber stalking (and related) laws on the books. While some sites specialize in laws that protect victims age 18 and under, Working to Halt Online Abuse is a help resource containing a list of current and pending cyber stalking-related United States federal and state laws. It also lists those states that do not have laws yet and related laws from other countries. The Global Cyber Law Database (GCLD) aims to become the most comprehensive and authoritative source of cyber laws for all countries.

Position of law in India

Year 2013 also witnessed the implementation of the Indian National Cyber Security Policy. The Policy, although it came a bit late in the day, aims to provide the legal basis for promoting the cause of cyber security in India. However, the National Cyber Security Policy, still at the time of writing, remains a paper document as it has not yet been effectively implemented. The year 2013 has seen great increase in the incidence of cyber crimes in India. This becomes specifically apparent from the fact that Norton report has described India as the ransom ware capital of Asia Pacific. As more and more people take to the internet, cyber crimes and mobile crimes will only continue to increase at an alarming rate. However, the fact remains that Indian cyber law is still ineffective in terms of delivering appropriate cyber crime convictions. Further, cyber fraud continues to increase with dramatic force in India. As per one Norton report, more than Rs 50,400 cores was lost by Indians during 2012 on cyber fraud itself and that trend showed no signs of lessening. Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 continues with its infamous run. Various cases under Section 66A were registered in the country. In February 2013, a Palghar court closed the case against two girls who were arrested for posting a comment on Facebook on the bandh after the death of Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray on November 17 last year. It was only after the Palghar case that an Advisory was issued by the Government to take the prior permission before the registration of cases under Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. Social media as a phenomenon has grown by leaps and bounds in 2013. However, with the passage of time, 2013 has exhibited that the Information Technology Act, 2000 is not capable of effectively addressing the legal, policy and regulatory concerns generated by the use of social media in India. India also saw a dramatic increase in cyber bullying cases in the year 2013 in not just educational institutions but even schools. A study by tech giant Microsoft on cyber bullying across 25 countries last year found over half of Indian children who surf the Internet face cyber bullying, get threatened or are otherwise harassed online. The 2013 state elections were the most tech savvy elections to date. The increased use of social media in elections gave rise to the debate of how to regulate social media in the context of elections. This is all the more relevant as the Indian Information Technology Act, 2000 does not provide any assistance in this regard.

Effects of Cyber bullying

Cell phones and computers themselves are not to blame for cyber bullying. Social media sites can be used for positive activities, like connecting kids with friends and family, helping students with school, and for entertainment. But these tools can also be used to hurt other people. Whether done in person or through technology, the effects of bullying are similar. Cyber bullying can be very damaging to adolescents and teens. It can lead to anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Also, once things are circulated on the Internet, they may never disappear, resurfacing at later times to renew the pain of cyber bullying.

Kids who are cyber bullied are more likely to:

     Use alcohol and drugs

     Skip school

     Experience in-person bullying

     Be unwilling to attend school

     Receive poor grades

     Have lower self-esteem

     Have more health problems

Frequency of Cyber bullying

The 2008–2009 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) indicates that 6% of students in grades 6–12 experienced cyber bullying. The 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey finds that 16% of high school students (grades 9-12) were electronically bullied in the past year.

Research on cyber bullying is growing. However, because kids' technology use changes rapidly, it is difficult to design surveys that accurately capture trends. The psychological and emotional outcomes of cyber bullying are similar to those of real-life bullying. The difference is, real-life bullying often ends when school ends. For cyber bullying, there is no escape. And, it's getting worse. Read on to get the facts.

1. Nearly 43% of kids have been bullied online. 1 in 4 has had it happen more than once.
2. 70% of students report seeing frequent bullying online.
3. Over 80% of teens use a cell phone regularly, making it the most common medium for cyber bullying.
4. 68% of teens agree that cyber bullying is a serious problem.
5. 81% of young people think bullying online is easier to get away with than bullying in person.
6. 90% of teens who have seen social-media bullying say they have ignored it. 84% have seen others tell cyber bullies to stop.
7. Only 1 in 10 victims will inform a parent or trusted adult of their abuse.
8. Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.
9. About 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out 10 say it has happened more than once.
10. About 75% have visited a website bashing another student.
11. Bullying victims are 2 to 9 times more likely to consider committing suicide.

PREVENTIONS:

Parent

This is what parents can do to prevent Cyber-bullying:

Don't let your children have a computer in their room; put the family computer in a public place.
Make sure you know your child's passwords.
Make an account on the site in which the child is signing up for to get a feel for the site.
Restrict children to certain parts of the website.
Do not rely only on parental controls.
Make sure they know that if there is something online that makes them scared, uncomfortable, or worried, to tell an adult.

Student

What can a student do to stop cyber-bullying?
Make sure your profiles are private and never share any personal information with anyone.
Keep your passwords to yourself. Do not give anyone your password unless it is your parents.
Don't answer nasty, threatening messages. It just makes it worse. Tell an adult about it.
Don't open messages from unknown user-names. It could be a bully.
Don't share information you wouldn't want someone to know.
Don't send mean messages. It makes you a bully yourself.
Help others that are getting bullied.

Teacher

What can a teacher or guidance counselor do to stop cyber-bullying?
- Make your students aware of the consequences cyber-bullying can have for both the victim and the bully.
- Insure the students that it is not "tattling" to tell a teacher of they are aware of a case of cyber-bullying.
- Insure students confidentiality if they tell a school authority about a case of cyber-bullying so that the student is more likely to make others in greater power aware and ready to deal with the situation.
- The teacher should be trained to deal with situations dealing with cyber-bullying so they are prepared by looking for certain signs and triggers of bullying or cyber-bullying.
-The teaching staff should focus on a healthy social climate in the school so bullying in any forms is less likely to occur.

Principal

What can a principal do to help stop Cyber-bullying?
1. A principal can say that the students aren't allowed to bring electronic devices in the school, unless it is property of the school.

2. A principal could also make the rules on Cyber-bullying also stricter; also the principal can enforce the rules so when it happens the principal gives him the punishment.

3. A principal should make everyone aware of the consequences of bullying

4. A principal should also make his/her school should make every one read and sign the discipline code and acceptable use policy. So the students who do commit cyber-bullying acts will get into even more trouble because they signed a contract.

5. A principal can stop cyber-bullying by getting permission from their parents when they are in school to monitor what they are saying on their phones and testing on school grounds.

6. A principal can also talk to the teachers after the day is over so they can see if any thing is suspicious in the class.

In conclusion, with the expansion of the Internet and social networking technologies cyber-bullying is becoming more common and more severe. The information presented in this research paper should give people a better understanding of what a cyber-bully is, how harmful they can really be, and how to prevent cyber-bullying from happening. This paper can be used to help victims realize they are not alone and should not give into a bully's dangerous behaviors. This research paper is to inform society about what has been going on lately and how unacceptable and dangerous it is. Kids are killing themselves over photos, web posts, and videos posted by bullies using the Internet. Cyber-bullying is technology powered and will only get worse as technology becomes more widespread. Hopefully, this paper will help to inform today's youth and parents. If you see any kind of bullying happening in front of you, stop it if possible, and then report.

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