

# A Study of the Factors that Influence Cyber Bullying - Perspectives from Bullies

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Received: 01-05-2024

Revised: 15-05-2024

Accepted: 30-05-2024

## ABSTRACT

Digitalisation has opened a lot many doors for people who wish to connect with their friends, relatives, colleagues irrespective of how distant they are physically. It is agreeable to an extent that digitalisation has benefitted a lot of people and help reduce their efforts, but it would be not right to talk about the darker side too. The study started with an initial study of available literature through papers published in Google Scholar, Google Books, and research articles. Accordingly, the research gap was found which helped to frame the research objectives- to identify the traits of bullies through available literature along with studying the reactions of victims and their level of awareness of cyberbullying. Initially it has been talked about the factors which might push a person to become a bully such as ego issues, social environment, upbringing etc. Moving further, various places where cyberbullying takes place has been brought into notice such as educational institutions, workplaces etc. By citing real-life incidents, various reactions of victims have been inferred and observation has also been made on the areas where such incidents have been taking place and how victims are responding to it.

In continuation to this, some findings have also been mentioned based on how globally widespread this heinous act has become. Lastly, to provide with the remedies, some information related to cyberlaws has been tapped and made the readers aware about it.

**Keywords--** Cyberbullies, Victims, Behaviour, Awareness, Reactions, Laws

## I. INTRODUCTION

With more than four billion Internet users worldwide, the online world has become an integral part of daily life and contributes significantly to society. The world of today is totally dependent on technology, and young people are now leading digital lives thanks to the internet. The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has practically affected people. Cyberbullying is one of the main issues brought about by this rapid advancement in technology, which also has many disadvantages. The internet has

emerged as a two-edged tool that has significantly facilitated our daily lives. However, the internet has also given rise to a variety of undesirable habits, such as cyberbullying, which is bullying expressed through electronic means (Chengyan, Shiqing, Richard, Wei, 2021).

Cyberbullying refers to an act wherein one party harasses the other party either physically or through social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook etc.

Harmful bullying includes posting sexual remarks, derogatory comments, threats, rumours etc.

There exist different types of cyberbullying which are as follows:

1. **Persistent Cyberbullying:** The implication of this research is based on the fact that it always exists considering that social media platforms are always accessible to all.
2. **Permanent Cyberbullying:** This kind of social media harassment prevails for eternity, thus leaving a digital remark, which if not brought into notice, doesn't get deleted. This can be haunting for a victim as it might affect him for lifetime which might put an impact on his future as well as present.
3. **Hard to Notice:** This kind of cyberbullying goes unnoticed at times and the bully gets an added advantage in such cases.
4. **Cyber Stalking:** This includes making false accusations and might go into offline form of bullying which is a great threat to the victim.
5. **Trickery:** It is a type of cyberbully where bullies gain trust and confidence of the victims by promising false security. In this case, the bully thus takes advantage of the victim by taking disadvantage of the trust.
6. **Trolling:** The bully in this case posts offensive posts or comments to harass the victim.

Apart from this, there are other forms of cyberbullying

- **Direct Bullying-** It refers to the behaviour which harms is overt, clear, and evident to anybody seeing it and that causes harm, humiliation, or pain. The stimuli is easy to identify, the identities are hopefully known and the victim is aware that he/she is being bullied.

- Indirect Bullying- It may not be recognised as bullying. The victim may not be aware of it until it has already been occurred as it becomes difficult to assess the situation. There are high chances that the event may be carried out anonymously.

Since there are different forms of cyberbullying prevailing at the moment, it is evident that there might be serious effects to the victims of such incidents. Some of the effects might be chronic for some victims while for some, it might be acute (depending upon how the victim perceives and reacts in a particular situation). Undermentioned are few impactful effects of cyberbullying:

1. **Mental Effects:** Those who have been bullied are often found in a state of depression, anxiety, stress,

anger etc. which are often a result of trust issues or loneliness.

2. **Emotional Effects:** The victim often seems to be drained; there is a lack of energy and might often lose interest in various activities. According to a study, the victim enters into a vicious circle of self-doubt, self-blaming and eventually dries out.
3. **Low Self-Esteem:** In various cases it has been seen that such incidents shake the confidence of victims, and they start questioning their self-worth and value due to severe dissatisfaction.
4. **Self-Harming Thoughts:** In severe cases, it has been observed that some incidents are so major and impactful that the victims might take extreme steps such as suicide, self-harm etc. which is a result of loss of hope among them.

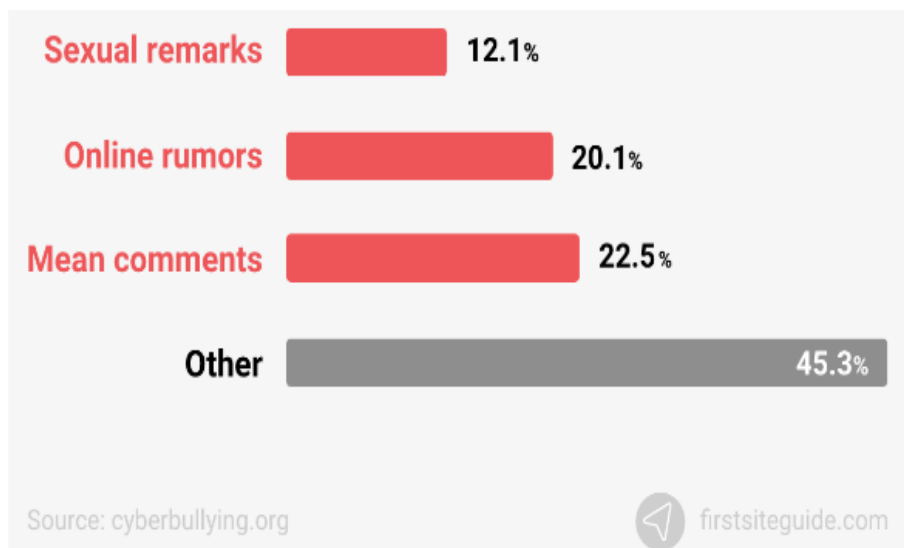


Figure 1: Source- Firstsiteguide.com

### 1.1 Statistics Related to Cyber Bullying (Fig 4.1)

Talking about the statistics, the most trending form of cyber bullying is mean and harmful comments i.e., 22.5% followed by online rumours (22.1%) and sexual remarks (12.1%). Apart from this, there has been a huge jump in the cases of cyber bullying over the years. From 2007 to 2016, there has been a consistent percentage of cases i.e. 34%. However, in 2019, more than 43% of teens has experienced cyber bullying.

According to the studies, it has been inferred that girls are more prone to such kinds of harassments as compared to the boys. While only 6% of the boys reported online bullying, the girls of same age reported 12% of the cases. People belonging to LGBTQ+, especially the youth have also suffered from online harassment. 35% of these were who have been a victim of cyber bullying followed by 58% who have been a victim of hate speech at least

once. The statistics have shown that the most popular social media platform for people to be prone to cyber bullying is Instagram followed by Facebook, Snap chat, Whatsapp, YouTube, and Twitter. (Djuraskovic. 2023)

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To identify traits of bullies through available literature.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the article released by scielosp.org (Bottino et al, 2015) cyberbullying is just a digital form of traditional bullying (such as verbal abuse, aggression, physical assaults etc.) which is performed with the help of electronic devices such as mobile phones, emails etc. and the victims are mostly the teenagers or school students. Before moving forward, it is essential to know about the

origin of cyberbullying. As mentioned in Richard Donegan's publication (Donegan, 2012), everything relates to survival in society. It is often seen that competition exists between people to survive in the environment and outwit each other. Thus, over the few years, things have changed completely, and cyberbullying is used to compete with people in society. An interesting fact here is that the proportionality of bullying depends upon the customs, traditions, and number of restrictions the government puts. For example, in this same publication, Richard Donegan provides a real-life scenario wherein the students of America, of very small ages, are already told to be the one who stands out from the crowd and prove who they are by hook or by crook, which has led to the adoption of negative tactics by such students.

Bullies tend to be more outrageous (Phelan, Yu & Davidson, 1994), more autocratic, yet are great leaders. Parents play an important role in shaping those people by checking on them as to for what use they are being given the technological devices. Some of them might use electronics for judicious and productive uses, while others might bully and humiliate others. (Hinduja et al, 2013) Research have shown that lack of parental attention towards their kids increases the risk for them to be a bully and behave accordingly compared to those under the confined supervision of their parents.

A large population of teenagers and children are seen to have drowned themselves into the technology even before they are ready for it psychologically. This statement can be supported with the help of the following example. (Srivastava, 2012) Ishan Baggins (name changed), a 21-year-old student from Bhopal, who indulged in cyberbullying, says, "A friend of mine was not on Facebook. So, one day, when I was bored, I made a fake profile in his name. We uploaded some of his embarrassing pictures, posted funny comments on girls' photos and hilarious put-up statuses. This example can very well explain the lack of knowledge and immature behavior among teenagers and hence these thoughts and action lead to such negative outcomes.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

After taking two case studies into consideration, the behaviour of bullies was analysed which were a result of certain factors like ego, anger issues etc. Real life case studies were taken as a source of observation as the judgement of the case law had facts from both the parties i.e., representative of bullies and that of victims which made the analysis more concise and epigrammatic. A qualitative research or say case based research, to be precise was conducted in order to reach an observation related to the particular finding. Case based research

includes past real-life events which helps researchers to substantiate their objectives and draw conclusions.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 *Suhas Katti v/s State of Tamil Nadu (Rathour)*

In the case of "Suhas Katti v/s State of Tamil Nadu, 2004", it was the first case in India on sending and posting obscene messages on the internet. The case had two parties wherein the victim's family friend was the accused who allegedly chose online trolling as one of the resorts to deal with the rejection faced by the victim.

According to the case, the accused wanted to marry the victim to which the victim refused. The victim got married to someone else and soon that marriage deteriorated after a certain period. As a result of refusal, the accused started circulating and sending messages on Yahoo messenger groups and posted pornographic content on various online platforms.

The deterioration of marriage ended up in a divorce. Seeing this as an opportunity again, the accused again tried to contact the victim.

As a result, the woman filed a complaint due to online humiliation faced by her.

The judgement, undeniably went in the favour of the victim "under section 67 of the information technology act, the accused is found guilty of the offence committed by him, for which he must be convicted and sentenced to 2 years of rigorous imprisonment, a fine of Rs. 500/- under section 469 of the Indian penal code, and for the offence committed by him under section 509 of the Indian penal code, the accused is sentenced to 1 year of simple imprisonment, with a fine of Rs. 500/- under section 469 of the Indian penal code, And, under section 67 of the Information Technology Act 2000"

"The accused has been sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of Rs. 4000/-. The accused must pay the payment and be imprisoned at Chennai Central Prison. Despite all of these objections, the proofs were presented to the Court. The harasser's IP address was the same as the accused."

### 4.2 *State of Odisha v/s Jayanta Kumar Bose (Gajendragadkar)*

The case between "State of Odisha v/s Jayanta Kumar Bose" is related to cyber-porn which shows how women often get victimized in the online world.

The case is about a person named Biswajit Pattanaik who files a complaint in Baseli Sahi Police Station, Puri who alleged that he got a message on his telephone saying "Hello Suchitrarani", "Got your listing on DesiHunt". Soon the informant came to know that two fake profiles were created on DesiHunt.com which is a pornographic site, wherein one of the profile names was "Wife sharing group" under the name of the informant's

wife Smt. Suchitrarani Pattanaik and the contact numbers from which he received the message were of the informant himself.

The informant was a journalist by profession, but he kept shut because of the popularity he had and widespread social media presence.

After scrutinizing on his own, the informant doubted that the person behind all of this could be “Jayanta Kumar Das, Managing Partner of one AKJK Enterprises of Nabakaleba, Puri Town who was lending loans to private persons and has cheated the innocent poor people by grabbing their valuable properties using muscle power for the sake of granting loans”.

In 2008, the informant released an article called “THE PRAJATANTRA” featuring illegal activities performed by Jayanta Kumar Das. This outraged Jayanta Kumar Das and he appeared with a gun in front of the informant and started using cuss words and harsh language. Soon, the informant filed a case against him, and he got penalised under the following sections:

- “Sections / 292, 465, 469, 500 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which includes forgery, 2 forgeries for harming reputation, publication of obscene content, defamation”.
- “Sections / Section 6(c)/66C/67/67(A) of the Information and Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008, which includes the offence of identity theft, sending of 3 offensive messages, identity theft, publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form and publishing or transmitting of material containing sexually explicit act, etc., in electronic form”.

Based on the electronic evidence, the testimony of the witnesses, and the reports, the court found the accused guilty and rendered a verdict in the prosecution's favour.

The court noted that the relevance and admissibility of the evidence shall be put to test later in relation to the claimed offences during the period of evidence appreciation. The court interpreted several points that were raised during the proceedings as follows: Because the inconsistencies in the testimony of the prosecution witnesses were minor, the evidence cannot be disregarded as the defence suggested.

Based on the above case studies, a few observations related to the behaviour of bullies have been noticed. Talking about the above case, it is evident that the bully used aggression as the defense mechanism to cope up with his overwhelming emotions. Apart from that, it has been noticed that bullies are often unsatisfied with what they have and thus, they end up being the incubator of wrongful doings in the society as they try to seek attention, resolve self-esteem issues etc.

In the cases presented, the accused's wrongful doings on various media platforms say how much of an egoistic person such kind of people are. Just to satisfy their

ego issues, they often end up taking such steps. Moreover, due to their impulsive behaviour, bullies show signs of being self-centred and are expected to go beyond certain limits to prove themselves. They are of the opinion that they are always right and are less likely to accept their defeat or accept that they have done something wrong.

There are some cases wherein people often bully others in order to take revenge or for pleasure. Talking specifically about cyber-porn, people often take such paths to fulfil their sexual desires which are a result of such thoughts hovering in their minds.

In their revengeful mode, they cross limits and end up ruining the lives of people. It can also be inferred that the bullies of such kind consider themselves to be superior to others and won't leave any stone unturned until they achieve what they are doing, even if it involves such acts of harassments, obscenity etc.

Thus, it can be concluded from the case studies that to resolve their ego issues, people often forget about symbiotic relations they have had in the past with the victimized party and become revengeful in nature, thus humiliating the person in numerous ways and victims often get cyberbullied in various forms. Nowadays, such cases have become common, and it has become easier for bullies to track people down as the world is shifting towards digitalization and hence, increasing number of cyberbullying cases.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study showed that the rates of cyberbullying cases are increasing daily, and it is widespread not only in India but also spreading globally. Cyberbullying has spread to such an extent that there are different forms of cyberbullying which people have experienced. Some of the examples are Cyberstalking, Harassment, Cyberporn etc. The study was conducted to know the reasons behind such heinous acts which take place in today's world. The major reason that was found was the behaviour of the people and the ability to react to different situations. For example, people might be egoistic, short-tempered in nature and often it is seen that if they aren't able to achieve something, they try to minimise that thought of failure by taking actions in the wrong direction. To prevent or minimise such cases of cyberbullying, various cyberlaws have been implemented by the governments of different countries. The study, in minority, included how many people are aware of such laws and how many know what the suggested approach by legal institution and the government is such cases are expected to grow in the coming years as the advancement of technology is taking place at a rapid pace and the risk factor, eventually increases. It becomes thus necessary, if not all, but some, to have an awareness about the protection laws and

procedures which could help people out whenever in distress.

## VI. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The available literature didn't focus completely towards the behaviour of the bullies with suitable examples. The study can be conducted with a large sample to give more accurate results and finding. A study on awareness of cyberbullying among parents can also be conducted.

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