

Cyber-bullying, Cyber-stalking and Sexism: A Case Study of Women Students of Delhi University

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PROJECT MENTORS

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Research Objectives and Methodology

1. Our research on cyber-crime was aimed at tracing questions of the security and safety of young college-going women in the cyberspace.
2. The research was based on secondary readings the issue of cyber-stalking. Web articles on the same were also consulted.
3. Our online survey was carried out by random sampling and circulated amongst the students of Delhi University (particularly women).
4. 204 responses were received from the age group 18-25 years, and an analysis was drawn by the team, based on the same.
- 5. The project worked with the premise that cyber-stalking and cyber-bullying are rapidly growing phenomena, that a bulk of the victims are women students, and that official reporting of the matter is often minimal.**

Introduction: Defining Cyberstalking and Cyberbullying

Crimes facilitated by the internet and information technology are known as cyber crimes.

Cyberstalking is defined as the use of the internet or any other electronic means to harass an individual. It is usually committed with the intention of intimidating the victim and extracting benefits from him/her.

Cyberbullying refers to bullying or harassment of any kind which is inflicted through electronic or communication devices such as computers, mobile phones, laptops, and usually involves text messages, phone calls, e-mails, instant messages, social media platforms, or chat rooms.

Cyber defamation is another form of crime that includes posting defamatory content about someone on the internet or sending defamatory messages.

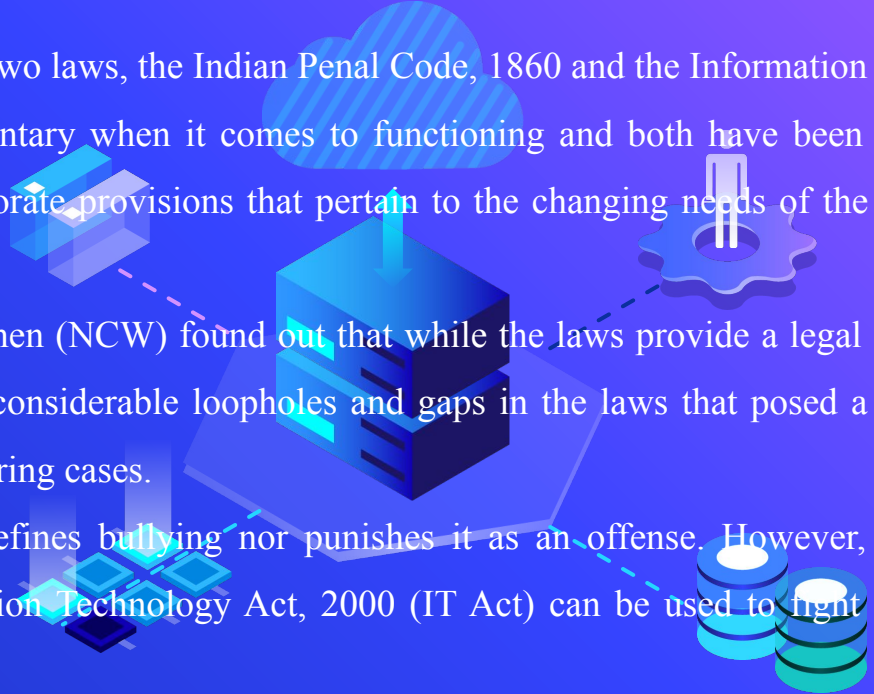
Email spoofing is third kind of cyber-crime that is conducted under the garb of a fake identity, making it difficult for the victim to ascertain who the person is.

Cyber pornography is defined as the graphic, sexually explicit subordination of females that is degrading or abusive to the victim, and most importantly, committed without their consent.

Cyber hacking involves hacking into the social media accounts of targeted persons and accessing their personal information and later misusing such information for different negative purposes.

Key Cyber Laws and their Fault-lines

- Cyber-crimes in India are addressed majorly by two laws, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Information Technology Act, 2000. The laws are complementary when it comes to functioning and both have been amended several times over the years to incorporate provisions that pertain to the changing needs of the society.
- Significantly, the National Commission for Women (NCW) found out that while the laws provide a legal remedy to victims of cyber-crimes, there were considerable loopholes and gaps in the laws that posed a challenge when it came to tackling crimes or hearing cases.
- The Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC), neither defines bullying nor punishes it as an offense. However, various provisions of the IPC and the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act) can be used to fight cyberbullies.
- To address these issues, the NCW organized the 2nd consultation to review laws on cyber-crimes. It was important to make the existing laws more gender-sensitive, while at the same time identifying and correcting inadequacies in the present framework that hindered the justice delivery mechanism.



- Several sections of the IPC including 354A and 292, deal with offences related to cyber morphing, defamation, pornography etc and carry a punishment of upto 3 years in addition to a hefty fine. Cyber stalking has been termed as an act of sexual harrasment under article 354D of the IPC and the perpetrator can face a term ranging from 3-5 years coupled with a hefty fine.

- There have been some landmark cases in the field of cyber crime which have been impactful. The Manish Kathuria case was the first cyber stalking case that was tried in india. The perpetrator stalked a woman called Ritu Kohli through online sources and then abused her by sending vulgar and obscene messages.

- Indian laws such as the Indian Penal Code and the IT Act have provisions on various cyber offenses. It is important to take preventive measures such as not sharing private data with someone on the internet, not communicate with unknown people, and contact the local police or cybercrime authorities and provide them with every information that will help In catching the perpetrator.

Under the IPC, Section 354A and Section 292, deal with offenses related to cyber morphing, pornography, cyber defamation, etc. These offenses carry a punishment of up to 3 years, accompanied by a hefty fine. Provisions on sharing images or videos of a woman engaged in an intimate act, without their knowledge and consent are covered under Section 354C. The term of serving a sentence can go up to 7 years if the accused is convicted for a second time. Section 354D states that Cyber Stalking is an act of sexual harassment and the offender can face jail term ranging 3-5 years coupled with a fine as per the IPC.

Case Study of Women Students of Delhi University

OUR DATA COLLECTION THROUGH AN ONLINE SURVEY AND OUR

ANALYSIS CENTERED ON THE FOLLOWING:

1. Usage of Social Media and its impact on social well-being
2. The Case of Fake Accounts
3. Victim Perpetrator Relationship
4. Psychological Impact
5. Data Privacy and Redressal Mechanism
6. Response of the Police
7. Legal Mechanisms

Some Digital Gyaan

1. How to keep a relatively low profile
2. Importance of updating your software
3. Need to hide one's IP address
4. Maintaining good digital hygiene
5. Avoiding disclosing sensitive information

KEY LEARNINGS

The project has been a very pleasant and learning experience to all of us. This was something very personal to all of us because we have seen cyber-stalking and cyber-bulling around us and have been hearing about it. This has not only helped us understanding the problems of others but also made us aware citizens who know what to do incase something of this sort happens to us. It has made us realise about some policies and acts of the Judiciary which can help us and people around us if they are cyber attacked.