



## CYBERBULLYING: CAUSES &amp; REMEDIES

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**ABSTRACT**

The present time is the era of computers and internet and it is extremely difficult to imagine any type of work without it. Today, internet is used in almost every field. The faster we all are moving towards the digital world, the faster the cases of cyberbullying are increasing. In the present times, technology has immense benefits but at the same time it also brings some side effects. While today's children are easily becoming internet friendly, they are also unknowingly becoming victims of many types of side effects. Some people misuse the internet to cause physical and mental harm to other people, which is called cyberbullying. In simple words, harassing a person on the internet with obscene language, pictures and threats is called cyber bullying. This article discusses some common aspects related to cyber bullying. In this article, while reviewing the current literature related to cyber bullying and various aspects related to the causes and remedies of cyberbullying have been discussed.

**KEYWORDS :** Cyberbullying, Internet, Technology etc.

**INTRODUCTION**

Information and communication technology has become an integral part of our daily life. It has changed the way we communicate, make friends, share updates, play games, shop, etc. Technology has impacted most aspects of our daily lives. In today's time, along with the advancement of technology, human dependence on the internet is also huge. Through the Internet, it has become easy for humans to reach every corner of the world by sitting at one place. In today's time, everything that a person can think of can be accessed through the internet. With the development of the Internet and its benefits, the concept of cyber bullying has also evolved. Our new generation is getting exposed to cyberspace at a very young age. More and more children are spending most of their time playing online games, making friends and using social networking sites. In fact, access to social networking, online games, shopping etc. through smart phones has become quite widespread. Cyberspace actually connects us to billions of online users around the world. With the increasing use of cyber space, cyber-crimes have also increased at a very rapid pace. Cyber bullying is one of the most common threats on social networking sites these days. Cyber bullying is a cyber crime that can happen to anyone at any time in this digital world. The bully can be an acquaintance, friend, relative or even an unknown person whom we know on social networking sites. Or meet him online on a gaming portal and make him a friend. Intentionally harassing someone through social networking sites using the internet or sending threatening messages, photos/videos is called cyber bullying. The bully may use text messages, emails, web pages, chat rooms, social media platforms, etc. Cyber bullying has a negative impact on the physical, mental, emotional and psychological life of children. Children are at greater risk because they are using cyberspace with limited understanding of the dangers and safety measures associated with cyberspace. The children are still in the experimental age group. They want to experiment, learn new things and use new technologies. Although experimentation is a good way to learn, it is equally important to provide appropriate guidance to children so that they can protect themselves from the adverse effects of cyber technology.

**Meaning of Cyberbullying**

Cyber bullying is a kind of online ragging. This is exploitation through internet. In this, threatening someone, spreading rumours against him, making lewd comments and hateful statements, obscene language, misuse of photos etc. are

done. Bullying is also a new popular method of extorting money by luring people into the trap of online games. If symptoms like sudden increase in depression, fear of social events, fear of computer or mobile, increase or decrease in sleep and appetite, violence or extreme pessimism are seen in children, then you should understand that something is wrong. Talk to them and understand their problem. Many students become depressed and start thinking of committing suicide.

Cyberbullying is one of the cyber threats faced by children and youth. Although anyone can be affected by cyber bullying, children easily become victims of cyber bullying due to their limited understanding of cyber threats.

Cyberbullying is the act of deliberately harassing or intimidating someone by sending rude, mean or hurtful messages, comments and images/videos using the internet or mobile technology. Text messages, e-mails, social media platforms, web pages, chat rooms etc. are used by a cyber bully to intimidate others.

The problem of cyberbullying emerges as a person's feeling of jealousy, lack of positivity and tolerance in their social relationships. It affects problem behaviour that is inappropriate or negative. There are many types of consequences of cyber bullying towards children. These can be in the form of physical, emotional and psychological consequences which affect not only the academic performance of the students but also their daily life to a large extent. Some examples of cyberbullying are as follows:

- Posting indecent/obscene photographs of the victim.
- Sending rude, mean and hurtful messages to someone.
- Making rude and offensive comments on social networking sites.
- Deliberately harassing and scaring someone by sending material like pictures, videos.
- Sending lewd messages, pictures and videos by cyber bullies to intimidate others.
- Using chatrooms of social networking sites to harass, intimidate and bully people.

**Related Studies to Cyberbullying**

Baruah, H., Dashora, P & Parmar, A. (2017) conducted research on the Impact of Cyberbullying on Psychological Health of Adolescents. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of cyberbullying on the psychological

health (depression, anxiety and self-esteem) of adolescents in Ahmedabad city, Gujarat state. In the present study, 240 students (120 boys and 120 girls) from class 7 to 12 were included as a sample. In this research, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale 1965 and Beck Youth Inventories 2005 were used to collect data.

The findings of the study revealed that 14.17% students were involved in cyberbullying in their lifetime and 6.67% students were involved in cyberbullying in the last 30 days and these students had low psychological health. In this study, cyberbullying and psychological health were found to be significantly related to each other.

Garaigordobil, M. & Machimbarrena, J. M. (2019) conducted a study on Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying/Cyberbullying: Connections with Emotional and Behavioural Problems and Childhood Stress. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between victimization and perpetration of traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The sample for this study included 1993 students aged 9 to 13 years, of which 49.8% were females.

The study's findings show that students who have higher scores on perpetrating cyberbullying also have higher stress levels. This study emphasizes the importance of prevention and intervention in bullying situations to reduce psychosis-related problems.

Shaikh, et. al. (2020) conducted a study on Cyberbullying: A Systematic Literature Review to Identify the Factors Impelling University Students Towards Cyberbullying. The purpose of this study is to review the related literature to know the factors of cyberbullying among university students so that the problem of cyberbullying in university can be reduced by knowing the underlying reasons.

This study reviewed 32 studies out of a total of 7939 reviews. In this research, most of the studies were included from the year 2017 to 2019. This study reviews several factors such as social, cognitive, personal, psychological, and environmental factors that predispose an individual to cyberbullying. Research findings indicate that aspects of cyber-crime involve individuals' personal, social-cognitive, psychological and environmental factors as both antecedents and consequences.

Gondal, M. & Siddiqui, F. (2022) conducted a study on Cyberbullying in Higher Education Classrooms: Causes, Effects and Solutions. The objectives of this study are to find out the causes and effects of cyber bullying in higher education classrooms. In this study, 20 students from graduation level were selected as sample through convenience sampling method and interview method was used to collect data. The findings of the study show that one of the major reasons acknowledged by the majority of students related to cyberbullying is the use of digital technology and social media sites.

**Causes of Cyberbullying:**

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone of any age (from children to adults) or background. Few core causes of cyberbullying cases are as follow: (According to Amos, Z., 2023)

**1. Mental Health Challenges:**

Generally, people consider the victim of cyber bullying to be a person experiencing mental illness. Often the person who bullies has some kind of insecurity or low self-esteem. For example, a boy who is secretly gay acts out his internalized homosexual fear by bullying a gay classmate. Bullies try to distract others and themselves from things they feel insecure about.



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/2dus88tw>

**2. Lack of Empathy:**

The bully's physical distance from the victim causes his lack of empathy. When individuals do not understand how their actions affect others they are more likely to engage in cyberbullying.



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/5n956nt6>

**3. Online Anonymity:**

The Internet is a popular tool for cyberbullying because it allows users to hide their identity from others. As a result, cyber criminals feel comfortable saying and doing things that they would not dare to do in their real lives. This makes it easier for individuals to engage in such negative behaviours.



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/3z7cht2k>

**4. Social Media Addiction:**

One factor that promotes cyber bullying is a person's easy access to social media and the internet. Social media addiction is causing mental health problems to the individual which can promote cyber bullying behaviour in them. Excessive use of social media increases exposure to negative content and also damages a person's real-world relationships and self-worth.



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/439cepzx>

### 5. Racism, Sexism and Homophobia:

One real cause of cyber bullying is people's hatred towards certain groups. Cyberbullying most often involves instances of race, sexism or homophobia. Generally, no ordinary person will face cyber bullying as much as an actor or a public figure. It targets people who are beyond their control.



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/yc7dmtpp>

### 6. Offline Bullying:

One cause of cyber bullying is offline bullying. People who were afraid to engage in offline bullying now bully people through cyber bullying and the main reason for this is the anonymity of the internet. To avoid getting into trouble due to offline bullying, they bully by hiding their identity on social media.



Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/5eprkmyw>

### Remedies for Cyberbullying Education:

It is necessary to increase people's awareness about cyber bullying and provide education to individuals so that they do not misbehave with any other person online or offline.

#### Digital Literacy:

Digital literacy means a person's understanding of how to use the Internet. Digital literacy can help a person understand and avoid engaging in cyberbullying behaviour.

#### Reporting Mechanism:

Social networking sites or online platforms provide a facility for the user to report the incident of cyber bullying so that the person can immediately report any incident on the platform.

#### Legal Resources:

Some legal provisions have also been made to protect against cyber bullying. To more strongly enforce the law against cyber bullying to hold cyber criminals accountable for such abuses committed by them.

#### Guidance & Counselling:

Cyberbullying affects children emotionally. Therefore, providing guidance and counselling services to help the victim adjust to the emotional impact of cyber bullying.

#### Promote Healthy Online Environment:

Encouraging a healthy online communication, positive interaction, empathy etc. among people.

### Suggestions:

- Don't accept friend requests from any unknown person on social networking sites. Only be friends with people you know offline on social media.
- Never share your personal information on social networking sites.
- While using social media, you should maintain privacy (Strong Passwords) so that the posts made by you are limited only to people related to you.
- If you see any comment, post, photo or video on Facebook/Instagram or any other social sites in which you are trolled, then you can report it on those social networking sites. The team of social networking sites will block the content or the account of that person.
- If someone is harassing you on social media, immediately inform your parents about it.
- If someone misbehaves with you on the internet, you can take legal action against him and file a report in your nearest cyber cell.

### CONCLUSION

India has become the third largest user of the Internet. Today, a large population of India uses some social networking platform but people lack knowledge about the use of social networking sites due to which incidents like cyber bullying happen with them. While at present every person can easily express his views to others through the Internet, there can also be a risk of cyber bullying if the Internet is not used carefully. Therefore, the findings of the above studies also show that the main reason for cyberbullying is the use of digital technology and social media. Cyber bullying has a negative impact on a person's psychological health. Prevention and intervention are necessary to reduce the problems of cyber bullying. It is important for any person to exercise caution while using social networking sites or the Internet, hence promoting a safe digital communication and preventive measures to protect against cyber bullying requires a combination of community efforts and legal provisions.

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