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CYBER SAVAGERY- A CHALLENGE TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT
In India women are worshiped as goddess, Devi, Mata, etc. but reality shows a bleak and worsening picture of this. Every day, women around the world, no matter their nationality, age, culture, and income face some kind of harassment, whether it is domestic violence, SathiPratha, acid-attack, rape, eve-teasing, sexual harassment, dowry death, molestation, kidnapping, female infanticide etc. This is profoundly harming women, people around them, and society as a whole.
Invention of World Wide Web, mobile phones, tabs etc. changed women's standard of living. Although, these inventions came with huge benefits, they also have some negative effects on women's life, creating great threat known as Cyber Crime. Harassment of women is no longer only restricted to the workplace, streets and public transportation but it has gradually expanded and seeped into cyber space. Cyber violence has exposed women to cyber defamation, sexual harassment and abuse, pornography and email-misrepresentation. This paper presumes the cyber violence against women and how it is impacting their social life. It highlights the reasons and forms of cyber crime and explores some suggestions how to curb cyber crime against women.

KEYWORDS : CyberCrime, Women, Information Technology, CyberVictimization, CyberSpace.

Introduction:

We all celebrate the international women's day on 8thMarch every year for showing our respect, love, affections and appreciations towards women for their economic, political and social achievements in various fields. But on the other hand the condition of violence against women is becoming grimmer day by day with its changing forms because of technology, facilitated by internet and information technology. The internet technology came into existence only in 1986. Once the internet was made available to the general public, it took only four years for 50 million people to go on-line. Women are more prone to victimization than men in cyber space and 75% of victims are believed to be females but these figures are more on assumed basis. The actual figures can really never be known because most crimes of such types go unreported. This is why cyber-crimes against women are on the rise.

Internet and electronic network has exposed women to cyber-stalking, cyber defamation, harassments, email spoofing, pornography, psychological torture and sexual abuse etc. The vulnerability and safety of women is one of the biggest concerns of any criminal and penal law, but unfortunately women are still defenceless in cyber space [Halder, Jaishankar 2008]. Cyber crime against women is on at alarming stage and it may pose as a major threat to the security of a person as a whole as well as society.

Types of Cyber-offences against Women:

1.Cyber-stalking: Cyber Stalking is one of the most widespread net crimes in the modern world. Karen Baker, director of the National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, defined cyber-stalking as "threatening behaviour with that of computer communications." The utilization of technology allows stalkers to harass their target from oceans away. Women, especially of age group of 16-35, are the targets.

Case 1:

A teenage boy has sent a girl various "gifts," including a Domino's pizza. The girl worried and blocked the boy on Face book. The boy then began to threaten her via e-mail and text. One text read, "If you thought ultimate love was bad, wait till you see ultimate hate. I'll ruin your life. I know exactly where you live." Luckily, authorities were able to find the boy from his internet protocol (IP) address which he used when ordering the pizza online. The boy was arrested and faced stalking, fraud and harassment charges, according to a police report. Some targets are not as lucky as the case of this girl.

2.Harassment via Email:

 Email has become one of the most heavily used electronic tools of the last decade. Harassment via Email includes blackmailing, threatening, bullying, constant sending of love letters in anonymous names or regular sending of embarrassing mails to one's mail box. Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and select sections of IT Act deal with the protection from cyber-crime.

3. Cyber Defamation: It is another common online crime against women. The term defamation is used to define the injury that is caused to the reputation of a person in the eyes of a third person .This occurs when someone publishes defamatory matter about someone on a website or sends e-mails containing defamatory information to all of that person's friends (Agarwal 2013). The harm through defamatory statements about any person on a website is widespread and irreparable, as the information is available to the entire world.

Case2: Cyber Defamation Case

 Ashok a teenaged student was arrested by the police following a girl's complaint about tarnishing her image in the social networking. He allegedly created a fake account in the name of the girl with her mobile number posted on the profile.

4. Email Spoofing: E-mail spoofing is a term used to describe fraudulent email activity in which the sender's address and other parts of the email header are altered to appear as though the email originated from a known or authorized source. Email spoof can cause monetary damage also. Information Technology Amendment Act, 2008, section 66-D, section 417, 419 and 465 of Indian Panel Code 1860 are applicable for this. This offence is cognizable, bailable and compoundable with permission of the court before which the prosecution of such offence is pending and triable by any magistrate (Mali 2011).

5. Morphing:

Morphing is editing the original picture by an unauthorized user. Female pictures are downloaded by fake users and again reposted on different websites by creating fake profiles after morphing them. This amounts to violation of I.T. Act, 2000. The violator can also be booked under IPC also for criminal trespass under Section 441, Section 290 for committing public nuisance, Section 292A for printing or publishing grossly indecent or scurrilous matter or matter intended to blackmail and under Section 501 for defamation [Agarwal]. Lack of awareness of these types of crimes encourages criminal to commit this mischief.

6.CyberBullying:

Cyber bullying is the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It occurs by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. Globally, India

isthird behind China and Singapore in cyber bullying. Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims.Cases of suicides linked to cyber bullying have grown over the past decade. Bullying classmates, juniors or even seniors in the school is a common culture among the young school students in India.

Case3:

A 12 year old girl when put up her profile picture on asocial networking site. A person living in the neighbourhood had been bullying herand threatening to misuse her personal information and photos if she told anyone. After certain visits to the cyber-crime police station, they somehowmanaged to get rid of the threat.

Reasons behind Cyber Crimes:

1. Most of the people do not read the policy guidelines, conditions and terms of networking websites before entering into contract with these sites and thereby opening their accounts.
2. Some people share their profile and passwords with their spouses and children.
3. Some people like to participate in virtual socializing and are not aware of spam or phishing emails etc. Many people are unaware of basic cyber ethics.
4. Indian users try to adopt western cyber culture in their own social value system that cause to arise maximum problems in the cyber space. So, cyber defamation, using bullying words, sending threat messages etc. by Indian net users are becoming rampant.Thus, sexual crimes in the internet are growing.
5. Social networking sites like facebook are used to harass women and majority of the people don't understand anddo not know how to protect themselves from hacking.
6. The reason that women are more prone to cyber victimization is that they do not prefer to report the victimization to the police.
7. Cyber crime may be the result of data mining.

Suggestions to tackleCyber Crimes:

 Every citizen, especially women wants to browse web privately and safely.They should take some steps to tackle cyber crimes.

1.Change passwords time to time: If one wants to lower internet crime risk, changing password is a great way to make personal data and social networks safe and difficult to access for cyber criminal (Pennelli 2012). Tricky passwords protect all accounts including cell phones, emails, landlines, banking, credit card etc. and are difficult for anyone to guess.

2. Avoid revealing home address: This is the rule for women in particular and they can use work address or a rent private mailbox. Thus, it can help them out in avoiding cyber stalkers (Moore 2009).

3. Maintain stable social relationships: A personcan have social relationship with a limitednumber of face book friends as our information is distributed to people who really know us well. (Pennell 2012).

4. Awareness campaign against cyber crimes: Awareness campaigns must be set up from the grass root level such as schools, colleges etc about cyber crimes whichcan be fruitful in paralyzing cyber crimes.

5. Seminars and workshops for better understanding of cyber victimization: Police, Lawyers, social workers, and NGOs must be invited to education institutes, clubs, corporate offices for seminars and workshops to discuss about legalities and illegalities of cyber crimes.

6. Rigid and stringent laws: India must bring in more rigid and stringent laws for cyber crimes against women in the cyber space to create agood society.

7. Beware of unsolicited calls and messages: Woman should avoid unwanted or unsolicited phone calls and messages because cell phone may be monitored. If it happens again and again, you should try to record phone calls of harasserment and report to the police.

8. Understand privacy settings of social network: One must try to understand privacy policies of social networks and adopt privacy settings that help in protecting oneself from any potential risk or online harm. (Pennell 2012).

9. Anti-Virus must always be up to date: One must make sure that Anti-Virus is up to date to lessen probability that one's PC cannot be attached with a Trojan virus, email virus or worms.

10. Check account regularly: We should regularly check our email, blog or website accounts etc. By doing so we can lessen the possibilities of hacking, stalking etc by reviewing our account.

11. Protect data on the move: When you are using internet on public computers, web browsers can keep a record of your passwords and every page you have visited. So, you should not forget to erase your tracks or history on web browsers (Doyle 2012)

12. Keep firewall turned on: Firewalls are first line of cyber defence and block connections to unknown or bogus sites. These are recommended for single computers and are pre-packaged on some operating systems or can be purchased for individual computers.

Conclusion:

The growth of cyber-crimes in India and all over the world is on the rise. To overcome the cyber crimes against women as a whole is challenging and the only way is to understand cyber crimes.Cyber space offers a plethora of opportunities for cyber criminals either to cause harm to innocent people.India is considered as one of the very few countries to enact IT Act 2000 to combat cyber-crimes. Women should understand that the time has come to reject the silence and come forward for fighting against cyber crimes. A regular research and attention on cyber crimes must be done. The police personnel must be given training in order to tackle and handle cyber crimes.People has to change their mindsets towards women and should develop the sense of commonality because cleanliness starts from home. Swami Vivekananda had said "The nation which doesn't respect women will never become great now and nor will ever in future" and in order to make India a great nation, let us work towards giving women their much deserved status and place.

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