
Social Media and the Cyber Crimes against Women-A Study

Rashid Manzoor Bhat^{1*}, Peer Amir Ahmad²

^{1*}Department of History, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, TamilNadu, India

²Department of Political Science & Public Administration, Annamalai University,
TamilNadu, India

Email: ²rahieamir786@gmail.com

Corresponding Email: ^{1*}rsdbhat@gmail.com

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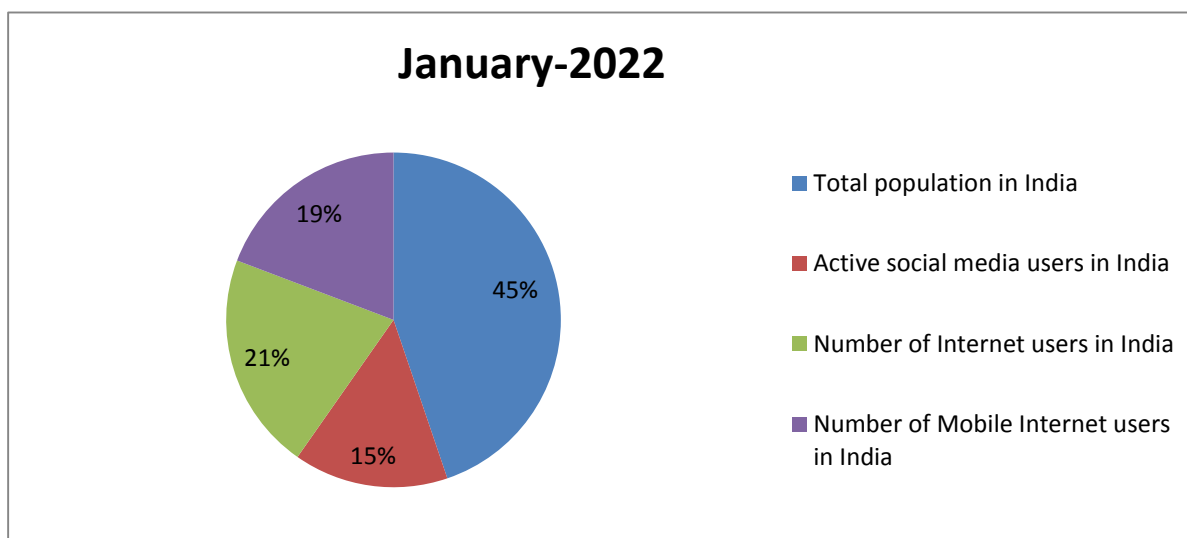
Abstract: Cyber security is also referred to as information security or computer security. Additionally, this book provides an overview of the history of cyber security. As part of our research, we sought to discover what the repercussions of cyber-violence, harassment, and discrimination against women would be in a patriarchal culture. This paper examines the realities on the ground - how well Indian laws protect women (and girls) and create an environment where they can safely use the internet. The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has acknowledged the seriousness of cyber-crime and the need for coordinated efforts to combat it.

Keywords: Cyber, Crime, Bullying, Pornography, Stalking.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is the goal of the study's research to identify the most common forms of social media cyber-crime against women (e.g. stalking and cyber pornography, distributing images and videos of women engaged in intimate acts), as well as online trolling, bullying, blackmailing, and threats or intimidation, as well as impersonation. Specifically, it focuses on how it affects the daily lives of women in our society.

Indian social network users have grown significantly over the past few years. Social media has become a natural extension of the Indian way of life for the country's citizens. Approximately 2.36 hours a day is spent on social media by Indians, on average. The number of social media users in India grew steadily to 467 million in 2022 due to the widespread availability of internet connectivity in the country. Social media is now an essential part of Indians' daily internet lives. Facebook (meta), Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and SnapChat are some of the more popular social networking sites in India.



Source: theglobalstatistics.com

Despite India's explosive growth in internet users, there is a widening gender gap among those who use social networking sites. For example, the number of internet users, the number of Facebook and Twitter users, the level of digital literacy, and political tweets all show this trend. According to a research by Boston Consulting Group and the Retailers Association of India, women account up 29 percent of India's internet users. The remaining 71 percent are men. One of the primary factors that contributes to this phenomenon is the unequal access to the internet that is experienced by men and women. In recent years, the number of cybercrimes against women has increased in direct proportion to this trend. It's not uncommon for women to be accused of "invading" or "trespassing" on territory reserved for men, especially when they express opinions on hot-button issues. This perception is especially prevalent when women users express their opinions on social media platforms. This notion is especially prominent when female users are engaging in conversations about sensitive subjects. According to a report that was produced by the Observer Research Foundation in 2015 and distributed in 2015, there is a substantial lack of women's participation in the political debates that take place on Twitter in India. This reflects the reality that women are excluded from the political processes that take place in India, which this article aims to highlight. The survey also emphasised the fact that many female users, including notable bloggers and activists, have cancelled their accounts owing to the harassment and abuse that women face online.

There were 9622 cases of cybercrime reported in India in 2014, and 5752 people were arrested, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, the Government of India. In 2015, 11,592 cases were filed, an increase of 20% from the previous year, and 8121 people were arrested.¹ The NCRB statistics do not include any information on the victims' characteristics, so there are no reliable data on the scope and nature of cybercrime targeting women in India. As an additional source of information to go along with the official figures, a study was carried out in India in 2016 that combined quantitative and qualitative methods to examine media reports about high-profile women who had been subjected to online harassment as well as a survey of 500 social media users.² The following is a list of the most important things

that this research discovered about people's familiarity with the law and their ability to access it:³

- Thirty percent of those who participated in the survey stated that they were not aware of any legislation that protected them from being harassed online; and
- Only one-third of respondents had filed a harassment complaint with law enforcement; of those who had, 38 percent said the answer was "not at all helpful."

Social Media Stalking

The act of following a person around online through the use of social media or any other online medium to harass, abuse, or otherwise make the victim feel anxious is known as cyberstalking. Cyberstalking can cause the victim to experience feelings of irritation, abuse, and emotional anxiety.⁴ The report on cyberstalking that was conducted by NW3C differentiates it from identity theft in order to place more of an emphasis on the intentional motivations of those who engage in cyberstalking. According to the findings of the study, identity thieves do not care about the effects their criminal behaviour has on their victims, whereas cyberstalkers are aware of the consequences of their actions and carry them out on purpose. According to Alexis A. Moore⁵, In the US, one in twelve women and one in forty-five men will be stalked at some point in their lives. Moore's article talked about how most cyberstalking happens to women between the ages of 18 and 29, but that women in general are not always the target. 56 percent of people who are cyberstalked are men, according to a study done at the University of Pennsylvania. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 1 in 14 18-year-olds are victims of stalking, and 1 in 4 complain about e-mail and IM cyber-stalking. According to, one out of ten Americans has experience of online harassment and 7 % of American adults have faced cyber-stalking.

Social media Stalking doesn't have to be sexual, but it still scares, hurts, bothers, and threatens the person who is being stalked. It is a clear violation of someone's privacy when the stalker tries to get close to the victim without her permission. Stalking could be done in person or through the Internet, which is called "cyberstalking."

The act of secretly following and tracking a woman's movements and activities both online and offline is known as cyber stalking, and it is one of the most frequently reported forms of cybercrime committed against women. In this case, the internet is used to gather information on her likes, dislikes, family members and friends, personal information and contact information, daily routine, and other aspects of her life. Online and off-line crimes might be committed using the information obtained, such as posting the woman's name and personal details on a dating site. These crimes may be committed using either the information obtained online or offline. A common example of cyber stalking would be if a woman went to the movies and shortly afterward received an email from an unknown sender asking how the movie was and if she enjoyed it. Did you enjoy it?"

IPC section 354D defines and punishes cyberstalking. Any man who repeatedly contacts a woman for personal interaction despite her disinterest is stalking. After hacking/cracking her password/stealing her identity, he cyber stalks her by monitoring her internet, email, or other electronic communications. This provision is also helpful in situations in which a stalker sends obscene communications to a woman through electronic

mediums such as bulletin boards, chat rooms, and emails. If you are found guilty of stalking once, you might face up to three years in prison and a fine; if you are found guilty of it again, you could face up to five years in prison.

Preventive Measures

Women who enter traditionally male-dominated fields like politics face public abuse, hatred, and bile. Before, during, and immediately after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Amnesty International reviewed 114,716 tweets about 95 Indian women politicians. 7 out of 7 tweets in India mentioned women politicians, and 1 in 5 were sexist or misogynistic. A similar study was conducted by Amnesty International in the UK with female politicians prior to the 2017 elections. Abuse of female politicians was found to affect women from all political parties, according to the data gathered. However, those who belonged to minority or non-white groups were subjected to more severe forms of abuse. Nearly half (45.15 percent) of the abuse was directed at Jamaican-origin MP Dianne Abbot. Women of Asian and Black descent in the House of Commons received 35% more abusive tweets than white women, excluding Diane Abbott. As a result, 18 female MPs in the UK opted not to run for re-election in 2019, with many citing online and offline abuse as a major factor.⁶

The social media sites themselves should take greater responsibility for occurrences of gender-based harassment on their platforms. Plan International found that 23% of women interviewed had suffered trolling and assault on Instagram, however gendered abuse is not one of the reasons you may report a profile on this site for the reporting procedures on Instagram. As long as we're using the umbrella word "bullying or harassment," we're failing to recognise that women are disproportionately targeted by cyberbullies, who target them because of their gender. Women will feel more secure online if there is a dedicated mechanism in place. Conduct warnings, suspensions, and de-platforming should be issued to those who engage in gender-based harassment.

Second, special regulations for preventing violence and abuse against women on social media platforms should not only be in existence, but they should also be available in the languages spoken in the different regions.

Because of the pandemic's impact on workplaces and opportunities that have shifted online, women are denied the right to work. Denying women an online safe haven is tantamount to denying them their basic right to work. To do this, rules against cybercrime against women should be fully applied. Women are reluctant to come forward with allegations of online harassment due to the low conviction rate for this type of crime. Only one of the 170 cybercrime cases that were filed in 2017 resulted in a conviction, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. It's also important considering that India lacks data on both male and female cybercriminals.

Fourth, encourage openness about the methods used to keep an eye on the quality of the content being produced. It is important for social media platforms to be transparent about how they identify, prevent, and remove content that is harmful to women. Trolls can be screened out of the user base of a platform in a number of ways. For example, the dating app Bumble's VIBee function is only available if you haven't been reported and found guilty of violating the app's regulations.⁷

Fifth, companies that run social media platforms have to compile case studies to demonstrate how they have protected women via the usage of their policies and how these guidelines have been put into action in actual situations. These case studies should be made

available to the general public. It is important for the general public to have access to these case studies.

Companies that specialise in social media should take the initiative to prevent the gender-based abuse that can occur online and become advocates for the construction of secure zones for women. This will help protect women from being harassed or assaulted because of their gender. The pressure that one's peers impose on other women is the single most effective instrument for developing successful platforms that enable women's engagement without fear. This is because it allows women to participate without feeling threatened.

2. CONCLUSION

The research indicates that neither the IPC nor the IT Act effectively represent women's online experiences, and that the first step toward establishing legal remedies for women is to change the two primary legislation to appropriately portray online harassment, threat, intimidation, or violence against women. It recommends increased steps to effectively handle cybercrimes against women. Many women don't know their internet crime rights. The Indian government places a high priority on educating its population about the rights of women as a means of both preventing and punishing violations of these laws. Equally important, other criminal justice system players, including law enforcement, investigative officers, public prosecutors, and judges, must be taught on the laws governing cybercrime against women and acquire a more sophisticated understanding of these crimes. In addition, grievance redressal mechanisms and institutions need to be revitalised and made more popular, with the primary goals of simplifying the process of filing complaints and reducing the amount of time that passes between investigations and prosecutions.

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