Cyber bullying : an overview in Indian Schools

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Abstract

This paper is intended towards the Cyber bullying in Indian Schools. As we all see in today's Internet world people send email, create their own website, send text messages, image via mobile phone, do instant messaging, chatting, seek for new friends etc. Unfortunately there are increasing reports of aggressive behavior of adolescents. The issues of bullying and Cyber bullying can only be contained in the short term and not eliminated completely due to how deep-seeded they have become in our competitive society. Cyber bullying is the use of cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Face book and Twitter to harass, threatens or intimidates someone. Cyber bullying may seem humorous to some people, but it is a serious matter. Kids who are bullied online often feel hurt and rejected by their peers. This can lead to low self esteem and depression. Like bullying, cyber bullying is a serious problem which can cause the victim to feel inadequate and overly self-conscious, along with the possibility of committing suicide due to being cyber bullied. There is a negative impact of cyber bullying on psycho-social factors. Therefore, Cyber bullying should not be tolerated and should be reported to authorities.

Keywords: psycho-social, cyber bullying, bullying, adolescents, self esteem.

1. Introduction

Cyber bullying has become one of the most discussed social problems recently, due to the soaring popularity of mobile devices and social networks among adolescents. Present day bullies would rather look for their victims not in school corridors but on the Internet, this is what makes this problem so urgent and important to research. Cyber bullying is a new form of bullying that follows students from the hallways of their schools to the privacy of their homes. Many victims of Cyber bullying are bullied from the moment they wake up and check their cell phone or e-mail, to the time they go to bed and shut off their computer or cell phone.

Cyber bullying is an aggressive, intentional act using electronic forms of contact. It includes texting derogatory messages: - sending threatening e-mails, forwarding confidential e-mail or pictures, repeatedly sending upsetting messages, excluding individuals from chat rooms, and setting up slanderous voting websites.

Cyber bullying may have more devastating outcomes than traditional forms of violence, due to its potential to reach a wider audience through distribution and the sense of anonymity that technology can provide.

2. Cyber bullying in India

In India, after it was considered the third highest country in the cyber bullying acts and that was among the twenty – five other countries included in the study, only after China and Singapore, it was also found according to a survey done by Microsoft about the Global Youth Online Behavior, that 53% of children have been bullied online in India. India is also one of the rare countries where the rates of online and offline bullying are the same, in which 77% of the children reported that they were being bullied online and offline.

An eye-opening trend is that half (52%) of India's youth even access their social media accounts while at school, with teens (57%) being more connected during school hours than teens (47%). Even though the minimum age to register to on social networking sites like Face book, Snapchat, Pinterest, Tinder, Tumblr, and Vine is 13, 10-12 year olds report higher daily access to than their teen counterparts.

In India, the survey indicated that 22% of children reported mean or unfriendly treatment, 29% were made fun of or teased and 25% were called mean names. The survey also found that 70% of children said that they know a lot or something about online bullying, while 79% were very or somewhat worried about the phenomenon. 77% reported being bullied online and/or offline. "India is one of the few countries where the rates of online and offline bullying were equal," the survey said.

According to Cyber bullying statistics 2014 :

- 25 percent of teenagers report that they have experienced repeated bullying via their cell phone or on the internet.
- Over half (52 percent) off young people report being cyber bullied.
- Embarrassing or damaging photographs taken without the knowledge or consent of the subject has been reported by 11 percent of adolescents and teens.
- Of the young people who reported cyber bullying incidents against them, one-third (33 percent) of them reported that their bullies issued online threats.
- Often, both bullies and cyber bullies turn to hate speech to victimize their target. One-tenth of all middle school and high school students have been on the receiving end of 'hate terms' hurled against them.

3. Traditional bullying v/s Cyber bullying

Technology's progression is often equated with the advancement of human societies. Pivotal innovations, such as the Internet, have forever changed how people interact. Though these developments have allowed the human race to make great strides in many fields, they have also allowed forms of transgression to become more rampant and widespread. This is evident when considering how traditional bullying has evolved into an issue today known as cyber bullying. While bullying and Cyber bullying are often similar in terms of form and technique they also have many differences. Unlike traditional bullying, Cyber bullying allows the offender to mask his or her identity behind a computer. This anonymity makes it easier for the offender to strike blows against a victim without having to see the victim's physical response. The distancing effect that technological devices have on today's youth often leads them to say and do crueler things compared to what is typical in a traditional face-to-face bullying situation.

4. Forms of Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can take many forms. The following are just a few examples:

  - ➢ Making fun of another user in an Internet chat room.
  - ➢ Harassing a user over an instant messaging session.
  - ➢ Posting derogatory messages on a user's Face book or MySpace page.
  - ➢ Circulating false rumors about someone on social networking websites.
  - ➢ Publishing lewd comments about another person on a personal blog.
  - ➢ Posting unflattering pictures of another user on the Web.
  - ➢ Spamming another user with unwanted e-mail messages.
  - ➢ Sending threatening or provocative e-mails.
  - ➢ Repeatedly calling another person's cell phone.
  - ➢ Sending unsolicited text messages to another user.

5.   Reasons of Cyber bullying

There are a number of reasons why people might cyber-bully someone else, including:
  - they don't like the person
  - they don't consider it to be a big deal
  - they don't believe there are any consequences
  - they think they are anonymous
  - they think that it is amusing
  - they want to show others how powerful they are
  - they believe embarrassing others entertaining

6. Effects of Cyber bullying

There are many detrimental outcomes associated with Cyber bullying that reach into the real world. Kids who are bullied online often feel hurt and rejected by their peers. Like bullying, Cyber bullying is a serious problem which can cause the victim to feel inadequate and overly self-conscious, along with the possibility of committing suicide due to being cyber bullied. There is a negative impact of cyber bullying on psycho-social factors.

Victims of Cyber bullying most commonly report feelings of:

- anger
- embarrassment
- fear
- sadness
- worried
- threatened
- distressed
- loneliness
- anxiety
- poor performance at school
- loss of confidence and self esteem
- revenge Cyber-bullying
- self-harm, even suicide
- family problems
- academic difficulties
- School violence and various delinquent behaviors.

7. Prevention

- ➢ Schools should intervene to prevent Cyber bullying off-campus and should define cyber bullying in school regulations.
- ➢ teachers and parents be educated about Cyber bullying and that educators limit the use of cellular phones students in school settings.
- ➢ Stop, block and tell method. Once you realize that you are becoming a victim of cyber bullying, stop it before it worsens. Block the Cyber bully and tell to your teachers or parents about it or, if it a threat to your life, inform the authorities.
- ➢ Safeguard your password and other private information from prying eyes. Never leave passwords or other identifying information where others can see it. Also, never give out this information to anyone, even your best friend. If others know it, take the time to change it now!
- ➢ Restrict access of your online profile to trusted friends only. Most social networking sites like Face book and Google offer you the ability to share certain information with friends only, but these settings must be configured in ordered to ensure maximum protection.

- Regularly search your name in every major search engine (e.g., Google, Bing, and Yahoo). If any personal information or photo comes up which may be used by cyber bullies to target you, take action to have it removed before it becomes a problem.
- Establish rules about appropriate use of computers, mobile phones, and other technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they're online. Show them how to be safe online.
- If you believe that you are a victim of Cyber bullying the one thing you must do is not erase the offending material from the system. Print a copy of the material and immediately report the incident to a school official (principal, assistant principal, school counselor, teacher, or director of technology). All reports of harassment in cyberspace will be investigated fully. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension, separation, or expulsion from school.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Cyber bullying is dangerous. It promotes a negative outcome with both the bully and the victim. Unfortunately, the impact of bullying has also made contemporary headlines with the recent rash of school shootings and other forms of school-based violence. The current body of students brings an additional threat to bullying. Due to their sophisticated use of technology, today's students are using contemporary delivery systems to taunt, tease, and threaten their classmates. Cyber bullying is the newest form of bullying, and it brings additional challenges for school personnel. Because of the unique aspects of Cyber bullying, school psychologists need strategies to guide school communities faced. Cyber bullying could potentially lead to low self esteem or suicide. The internet is a public place where employers and children could receive the wrong impression. Overall, Cyber bullying is a serious worldwide issue that needs to be resolved. Like bullying, Cyber bullying is a serious problem which can cause the victim to feel inadequate and overly self-conscious, along with the possibility of committing suicide due to being cyber bullied. There is a negative impact of Cyber bullying on psycho-social factors. Moreover, Cyber bullying has serious impact on society in the form of psychological disorder and social disorganization. Therefore, Cyber bullying should not be tolerated and should be reported to authorities and resolved. Due to the negative impact of cyber bullying on students, schools must take action to reduce incidents both inside and outside of school.

In order to prevent Cyber bullying schools need to take the following steps in formulating their Cyber bullying prevention program: a) Define cyber bullying b) Have strong policies in place (Everyone will know what they are enforcing and it is very important because of law suits.) c) Train staff, students and parents on policy and be able to identify cyber bullying when they see it and d) Employ internet filtering technology to insure enforcement.

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