Cyberbullying- A Threat To Children And Their Psycho-Social Ambience

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ABSTRACT

Bullying is always present across the world forever. It is present almost in every social and personal space of the human being. In the 21st century, almost the total population is connected with one or another through the internet. People across the world share a social gathering in terms of internet-connected games, social media, and forums. Bullying is in front of us with a new avatar called cyberbullying which has no boundary or limitation. The younger generation is far more affected compared to elder ones due to cyberbullying due to their curiosity about the internet. The amount of time they spend over the social platform and their vulnerability to bullying due to premature mental agility are some of the main reasons that they are easily trapped in the web of cyber. Cyberbullying can be from a simple step like posting a light rumor about someone till critical like taking someone's identity to blackmail others. It is one of the most popular crimes today which mostly affects the population at its most. Several criminal cases like suicide, rape, kidnapping, attempt to murder, and even murder are found to be the ripples for which the epicenter is cyberbullying. Doxing is one of the recent terms mostly used for researching someone's identity on public platforms and posting in formations about victim without his/her consent. Doxing is the newest type of cyberbullying for which there are several fines and even imprisonment is imposed by governments across the world. As per section-66A of IT Act, if someone misuses the computer to violate someone's privacy, it is an offense and for doing that there is a provision of 2-3 years of imprisonment or 5 lakh rupee fine or both in India. Cyberbullying is a heinous crime and it is the prime responsibility of the parents of minors to periodically monitor the children's wellbeing in terms of cybersecurity. Our paper is an initiative to draw the attention of the public and parents to help their wards against such threats. There has an endeavour in this paper to thoroughly analyze the reason, impact, and steps to avoid cyberbullying

Introduction

Cyberbullying is the type of bullying in which digital equipment and connections are the influencers. It causes immense distress on sub-emotions and psychological levels. It incorporates the state of mistrust, fear, anxiety, and depression. The victims of cyberbullying feel extremely helpless and humiliated. The situation becomes much extreme if children are involved. Their mental standing is not that mature to handle t estuation with proper order. Mostly the support from parents plays vital roles against cyberbullying but if the parents are not that supportive then the self-esteem of children gets shattered to its maximum extent. The feeling of being worthless and humiliated causes the suicidal tendency in most of the cases. Most of the time cyberbully attacks the most vulnerable in the family which is youngsters. Cyberbullying escalates the tendencies of being useless when family members don't pay proper attention to their issues.

The motive of cyberbullying is to reduce the self-belief of the victim for example if a victim is called fat, he/she thinks if weight is reduced a little bit, this bullying would stop. Next time the bullies identify something like study grade, complexion, height, etc to bully the victim. Many times the counter attack comes in the form of vengeful retaliation in form of severe fight or to get even. It is very easy to find someone under cyberbullying because they start to perceive the whole world and relationships in a different manner. Lack of Interest in studies, decreasing grades, introvert nature, and depression are some of early signs of bullying for children. In most of the cases, it escalates to rage, tension, and yelling. Being isolated is also one of the major systems of being cyberbullies. Parents need to identify such signs and talk to their kids about the issue. They should resolve the problem of cyberbullying taking children in to confidence [1].
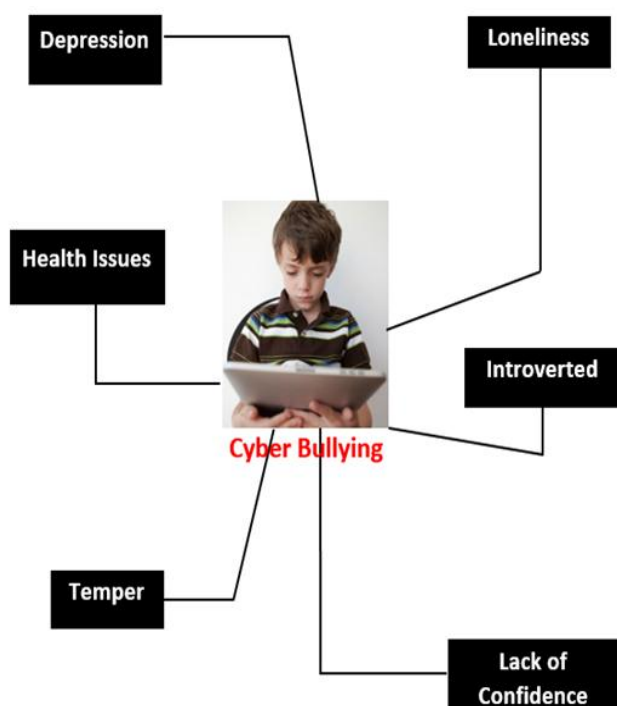
Figure 1 The effects of Cyber Bullying [1]

As per the recent survey of panda security, it is observed that 76% of parents state that their children have never gone through any form of cyberbullying. 41% of the parents never interacted with their children about cyberbullies. Around half of the victim's parents meet the guardians of the bullies to complain about their kids but any a quarter of them only meets the bullies [2]. With the permission of bullies' parents, they should meet the bullies directly to find the overall reason. If the situation is critical they can take the help of canceling for both, bullies and victims. For extreme situations, there is a provision to take police help also.

In our next section, we look into some prevision works and their corresponding results.

Literature Survey

[1]. **M. Foody et al.** explained in detail about the psychological therapy and review for cyberbullying. They explained that the bullying scenario in a human being has evolved from traditional bullying to cyberbullying. It is very familiar that how it's being strongly spread towards children and adolescence. As it has seen in the last some decade the cyberbullying has maintained its growing percentage with an increase in internet and digital technology. In the present-day, it became a threat over children and youth. Even elders face cyberbullying, but for children, the case is more complex. It completely alters the social structure and mentality of children. The cyberbullying rate varies with a different percentage in various countries but it does exist. Many teenagers are getting bullied through the internet which reaches them via online gaming, social media, and social apps. Cyberbullying is generally done for a very long time, being harassed or harassing others both issues are the ripples of the main cyberbullying. This affects very severely, the children and younger people and mostly causes issues like psychological, emotional, and mental imbalance. These all negative issues expose victims toward suicidal behavior, depression, loneliness, anxiety, and low thinking capability too. The victims often get several problems while being cyberbullied like head pain, rage, sleeping disorders, and many sentimental issues [3].

[2] **Claire F. Garandeau et al.** explained in detail about the Finnish KiVa program. The program was based on bullying in which they considered the school bullies. The bullies were from std. 3rd to 5th. Around thirty-nine schools implemented the KiVa program. The evaluated bullies were categorized into low popularity, medium popularity, and high popularity of categories based on their previous reports and identifications. The period of 1 year was elapsed to identify the effect of the KiVa program on the bullies. It revealed that the low and medium categories of bullies were mostly neutralized as the decent students. At the same time, there was not much effect on the bullies who were on the most popular chart of bullies from a different school [4].

The research revealed the following conclusions as per our perspectives.

• Low and a medium level of bullies are comparatively much better candidates for anti-bullying programs.

• It is always better to detect bullying in early-stage itself before it reaches to a higher category.

• Bullies who are very popular due to their bully nature are very less susceptible to any anti-bullying program. We need additional steps to research the hardcore bullies.

• The benefits of the KiVa program are highly recommended for schools and with certain modifications, it has the potential to do excellent work in the field.

[3] **Mickie wong-lo et al.** explained in detail about digital metamorphosis. They explained that the mode of communication and interaction is highly modified with recent technological advancements. The research on cyberbullying revels that how important it is to work on such topics to maintain a healthy ambiance. Online platforms provide the stage to showcase the cyberbullying to comparatively weaker sections of children. Mostly the calm, silent, and weaker kids are targeted especially if they have a different physical condition. There is a pivotal role for the people who see everything ongoing also called bystanders. They should take a stand to help children going through such harassment and trauma. They evaluated in detail about the entities involved in cyberbullying. They also provided many steps to be implemented such that cyberbullying should not affect the children [5].

Research Contents and Considerations

The most important and complex stage to overcome cyberbullying is to detect the cyberbullying first, certain behavioral changes can easily point out that the child is harassed. The cyberbullying effects stand different as compared to physical bullying. Physical bullying mostly happens in the form of beating, commenting, provoking, etc. but cyberbullying is mostly affected on a psychological level. There are certain parametric considerations for cyberbullying.
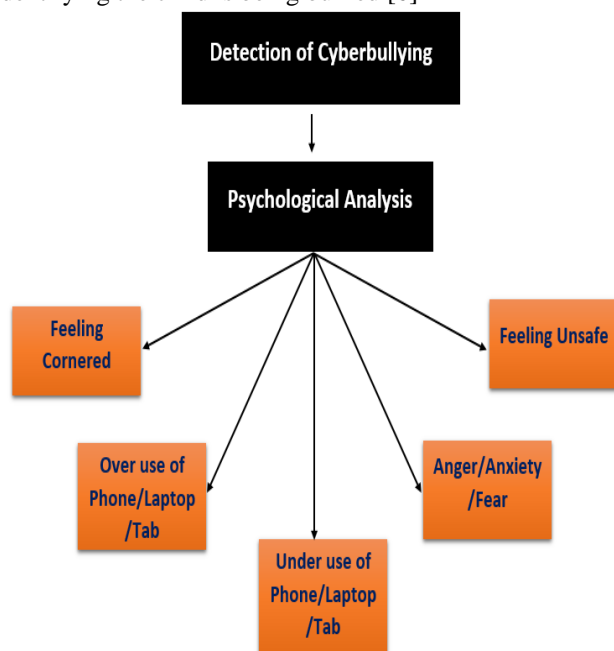
Identifying the child is being bullied [6]

Figure 2 Detecting Cyberbullying

1.   If the child feels lonely most of the time. It can be due to bullying.
2.   The overuse of mobile phones/laptops indicates cyberbullying.
3.   In some cases, sudden avoidance of mobile phones and laptops can be due to cyberbullying.
4.   Recent changes in behavior like anxiety, stress, and anger issues all at once can be due to cyberbullying.
5.   Certain extreme steps like the fight with friends, family members, and neighbors can also be ripples of cyberbullying.
Considering the above parameters once, cyberbullying can be easily detected.
Steps to be taken once cyberbullying is detected i.e. to stop cyberbullying.
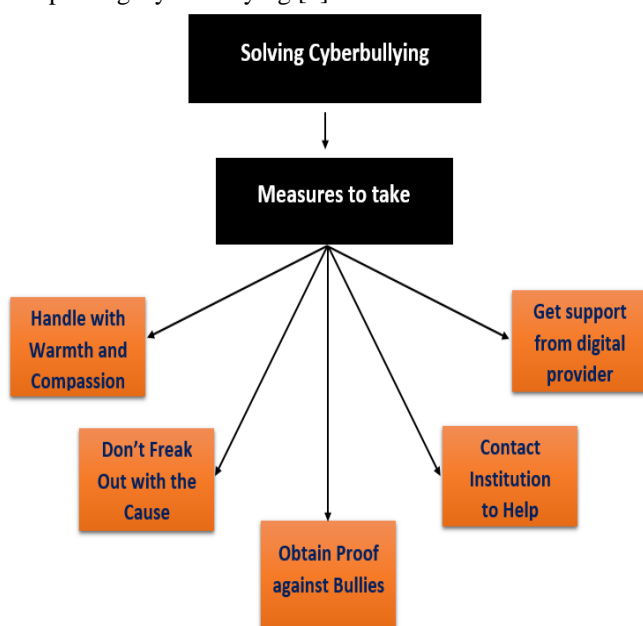Deciphering Cyberbullying [6]

Figure 3 – Managing Cyberbullying

1. The sense of compassion and safety

•   This is one of the most important parameters to avoid cyberbullying.
•   The child should feel very compassionate with parents. The trust of safety and warmth provide them the inner strength to stand straight against cyberbullying.

2. Converse calmly without being freaked out.

•   Most of the time cyberbullying is based on very personal grounds like sexual harassment, obscene photographs, or nudity.
•   The child should feel comfortable talking about such issues with the parents.
•   Sometimes cyberbullying is based on very childish reasons like children making social media profiles faking others' identity and boasting foolish messages like *I am dumb* etc.

3. Contact the institution.

•   If the bully and the victim study in the same institution then along with parents, the institution also must ensure the safety of the victim child.
•   In the case of institutional cyberbullying, school/college should immediately scrutinize the overall situation and solve the issue.

4. Have enough proof.

•   To take social, legal, or institutional support you must have enough proof.
•   The proof can be in the form of a screenshot, recording, video, location history, etc.
•   This will help accelerate the process of eliminating cyberbullying from the life of the child before the maximum damage is done.

5. Get information from the digital provider.

•   All over the world, cyberbullying is a serious offense and there is always a hefty fine as well as imprisonment for the act.
•   Considering the parameter, if report/help asked from the administrative and complaint department of concerned app/social cite, the help is certain.

6. Civil rights and police department support.

•   Apex wings of educational administration consider bullying a very severe offence.
•   If complained of proper evidence, it is already instructed in every constitution for police to take action against bullying of any form.

7. Avoid repetition of cyberbullying.

- Once everything is settled parents should have parental controls or at least proper monitoring of children's social stability.
- If there is suspicion on the repetition of the incidence immediately previous countermeasures should be initiated.

Conclusion

Thus we thoroughly analyzed the reason, impact, and steps to avoid cyberbullying, in as detailed form as possible. We took several literature surveys from different countries to understand international researches and developments in the field of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is rocketing with exceptional speed and so there is a need to take immediate actions from a very grassroots level. The awareness from childhood itself will educate the children about bullying. It is found in many cases that the immature minds of children are not able to identify such incidences as being bullied. This reduces the chance to report it to parents or teachers. One more parameter is awareness about the rules and rights in case of cyberbullying. There are many such rules where parents and even children under the proper guidance of parents can file a complaint against bullies in schools and the most severe cases to the police department directly. Parents should keenly observe the children's total time spent on the internet, at least till they are minors so that they can be safe against cyberbullying. It is the prime duty of institutions also to avoid such unfortunate events. There should be early anti-bullying programs in schools to identify the bullies and help students being harassed. The identified bullies should be kept under inspection undisturbed to identify their improvements and progress. In our future enhancement, we will work with a real-time questionnaire for school students to understand their ongoing state of mind about cyberbullying.

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