



Case Study

Women Victims of Cyber Sexual Harassment-A Study with reference to Kerala, India

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Abstract

Cybercrimes have become increasingly prevalent, posing a significant risk to individuals, particularly women. These crimes encompass a range of activities such as online harassment, revenge porn, stalking, and non-consensual distribution of intimate images. The victims often face severe emotional distress and reputational damage as a result. One major challenge in dealing with cybercrimes is the constantly changing structure of the digital landscape. Perpetrators exploit new technologies and platforms to carry out their malicious activities, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to keep up with evolving tactics. The anonymous nature of online communication can make it challenging to identify perpetrators and gather sufficient evidence for prosecution. By examining the experiences of women who have been victims of cybercrimes, this study aims to shed light on their unique struggles within legal proceedings. This research will contribute towards developing strategies and measures that can better support victims and ensure justice in cases related to cyber victimisation. The study also tries to understand the cybercrime space with the help of Routine Activity Theory by looking at the three factors the theory proposes i.e.; the suitable target, motivated offender and absence of capable guardianship.

Keywords: Cyber sexual harassments, Routine Activity Theory, Women Victims, Cyber victims, Cyber Crimes.

Introduction

As the technology advances and more people using the cyber platforms, individuals become more prone to various forms of cyber victimisation. In an era at the verge of technological breakthrough through Artificial Intelligence generated tools the cyber space is equally inhabitant like any other physical space on the planet. Thus, the crimes in cyberspace are also inevitable as they are in the physical space. United Nations defines cybercrimes in two ways i.e. Cybercrime in a narrow sense (computer crime): Any illegal behaviour directed by means of electronic operations that targets the security of computer systems and the data processed by them. Cybercrime in a broader sense (computer-related crime): Any illegal behaviour committed by means of, or in relation to, a computer system or network, including such crimes as illegal possession [and] offering or distributing information by means of computer system or network¹.

These can include identity theft, financial crimes, scams, online hacking etc. The technical sophistication plays a crucial role in the context of cyber victimisation. There are many theories in criminology that deal with the offenders' role in crimes. One prevalent theory in this field of study is Routine Activity Theory. The Routine Activity Theory (RAT) provides a framework for understanding the factors that contribute to the

occurrence of a crime. One key aspect of RAT is that it considers both the victims and offenders in understanding the dynamics of crime. It acknowledges that certain attributes and behaviours of potential victims can make them more vulnerable to becoming targets. Similarly, it recognizes that certain characteristics and motivations of offenders increase their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities. By examining these factors, RAT helps us gain a deeper understanding of how crimes occur and how they can be prevented. It highlights the importance of implementing effective strategies to enhance guardianship and reduce opportunities for criminal behaviour.

Cybercrime victimization is a pressing issue that affects individuals of all genders and age groups. However, women and children are often considered more vulnerable and easy targets for cybercriminals. This can be attributed to various factors such as their lack of technical expertise and awareness of the cyber space. Women, in particular, may face challenges in navigating the digital world due to a perceived lack of technical know-how. This can make them more susceptible to falling prey to cybercriminals who exploit their vulnerabilities. Additionally, the lack of awareness about potential risks and preventative measures further increases their chances of becoming victims. These crimes involve the exploitation of individuals through sexual means in online spaces.

Unfortunately, these types of crimes have become increasingly prevalent in recent years, posing a significant threat to the safety and well-being of women and children. It is crucial for society as a whole to address these issues by raising awareness about cybercrime risks, providing education on cyber security practices, and promoting digital literacy among women and children. By empowering them with knowledge and skills, we can help reduce their vulnerability to cybercrime victimization.

Unlike physical crime victims, the cybercrime victims face great difficulties when it comes to litigation of the crimes. In India specifically, there are several challenges faced by victims of cybercrime. One major challenge is the lack of adequate laws and systems in place to effectively prevent and respond to these incidents. This creates a gap between the growing number of cybercrimes and the ability to prosecute offenders. Furthermore, there is often a struggle for victims to seek justice due to inadequate litigation processes related to cyber laws in India. This can leave victims feeling helpless and discouraged from reporting incidents or seeking legal remedy. The factors such as jurisdictional issues or difficulties in gathering evidence also contribute to the low litigation rates of cybercrimes.

Another aspect that makes cyber space an attractive spot for criminals is its lack of physical boundaries. The nature of the crimes is such that the criminals can operate from anywhere in the world with a computer and internet connectivity. Thus, tracking them becomes a herculean task for the officials. Overall, addressing cybercrime requires a multi-faceted approach involving technological advancements, legal frameworks, international cooperation, and public awareness. The field of cyber criminology plays an essential role in understanding these complex dynamics and developing strategies to combat this ever-evolving threat landscape.

The study is based on the framework of Routine Activity Theory, which helps to examine factors such as suitable target selection, motivation of offenders, and absence of capable guardianship in cybercrime scenarios. The first factor, a suitable target, refers to an individual or property that is attractive to potential offenders. For example, an unlocked car or an unattended house may be seen as easy targets for theft or burglary. The second factor, a motivated offender, refers to someone who has the intention, willingness and desire to commit a crime. The third factor, absence of capable guardianship, refers to the lack of effective measures in place to prevent or deter criminal activity. This could include inadequate security systems, lack of surveillance cameras, or insufficient police presence in certain areas or a factor which is capable to prevent an offense. By analysing all these factors together, RAT provides insights into how different attributes and behaviours of both victims and offenders contribute to the occurrence of crimes. Understanding these dynamics can help inform strategies for preventing and reducing criminal activity in various contexts.

By utilizing the case study method, it is possible to delve into real-life experiences and gather qualitative data that offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics surrounding cybercrimes against women. This approach allows us to explore various aspects such as the motivations behind cyber offences, identifying factors that make individuals vulnerable as suitable targets, and examining the role of capable guardianship in preventing or mitigating cybercrime.

For the chosen case studies, examined the cybercrimes that occurred in the state of Kerala. These cases serve as an important example to understand the complexities of cybercrime litigation and transformation of an innocent victim to a powerful survivor.

In case no.1 (CC1), the victim found herself at the centre of a scandalous situation. Accused of sharing an obscene video of herself, she faced severe consequences that drastically impacted her personal life. With three children to care for, the victim's life took an unexpected turn as her husband filed for divorce and she was subsequently thrown out of their home. An obscene video of a woman who is a lookalike of the victim was shared in the professional circle of victim and her husband. The husband seemed to believe the video is of his wife i.e. the victim and filed for divorce. The victim went on to fight a long legal battle to prove that the video is not hers and emerged victorious. Yet the divorce did go on and the victim got separated from her husband and children. The video in question was uploaded to a porn site from an international IP Address and that was the major hurdle to identify the offenders. The victim had to go on a nine-year long litigation process to gain her credibility back. Although the damage to her reputation was brought back as she proved the video is not of hers, the damage to her personal life was irreparable and had to separate from her children for all these years.

In the second case (CC2), the victim's ex-lover intentionally leaked an explicit video of her on a lesser-known porn site. The offender's motivation stemmed from the break-up of their relationship, leading him to seek revenge by violating his ex-partner's privacy and dignity. This type of crime is called as revenge porn in cybercrime terminology. Revenge porn involves the non-consensual sharing of intimate or explicit content with the intention to humiliate, shame, or seek revenge against the victim. It is a serious violation of privacy and can have severe emotional and psychological consequences for the victims involved.

In the third case (CC3), an innocent victim working in a private firm fell prey to a sexually exploiting cybercrime. The victim received a call on her office landline from someone claiming to be from the 'cyber vigilance department'. The caller made a shocking allegation that there was a nude picture of her circulating on the internet. To supposedly prove that the picture was not hers, the caller requested the victim to share her original

picture. This incident highlights the manipulative tactics used by cyber criminals to exploit their victims.

It is crucial for individuals to be aware of such scams and exercise caution when dealing with unknown callers or sharing personal information online. Cybercrimes targeting innocent victims are unfortunately prevalent, and it is important for everyone to stay informed and take necessary precautions to protect themselves in the digital world.

Review: Sexual crimes have been a part of human society throughout history and it can be traced back to time immemorial. The definition of sexual crimes varies from ages and generations. The definition of sexual crimes also varies depends on the society it occurs as the moral code of the respective society also plays a crucial role in identifying one act as a crime especially when it comes to sexual crimes. For example, polygamy or polyandry is considered a crime in the modern society whereas they were socially accepted life choices in the previous generations in many parts of the world. Marital rape is considered a crime as heinous as rape in many countries while Indian legal system refuses to identify it so. As cyber space becomes an equal virtual reality for the present and coming generations the definitions of sexual crimes need to be inclusive of all the possibilities and potential crime scenarios that can bring about by the cyber space. One such definition of sexual violence can be spotted in Ontario Sexual Violence and Harassment action plan which says ‘...sexual violence, means any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person’s consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation’².

It is important to recognize that the trauma and pain experienced from cyber assault can be just as significant, if not more so, than that of physical crimes. One key factor contributing to this is the rapid and widespread dissemination of information online. Once personal or intimate content is shared or leaked on the internet, it can quickly reach a vast audience, causing immense emotional distress and long-lasting consequences for the victim.

Chapter IX, Rape Threats and Revenge Porn: Defining digital sexual violence in digital age, Jordan Fairbairn discuss about the importance to understand the gravity of online sexual assaults just as the physical sex crimes. She further argues that the society has the tendency to discount the sexual assault on cyber space referring them as ‘not real’ even though the discount does not really happen when it comes to shaming the victim of cybersex assaults. Victim blaming and victim shaming is much more common in cyber harassment cases as the presumption that the victim has shared the photos, videos or merely being exposed in the cyber space is often pointed out as reasons for the victimisation. She urges that the new definitions and new form of data gatherings should come in place in order to include

all sorts of sexual assault manifestations against women in this technology driven era³.

Jacqueline D Lipton in her article *Combating Cyber Victimisation*, extensively talk about the victim’s reputation in the reputation management techniques. She starts by quoting Fertik & Thomson i.e. “Your online reputation is your reputation” and go on to discuss the reputation management technique to empower the cyber victims to combat online abuses. She argues that education and awareness about the online platforms and risks of sharing personal information online can help prevent the victimisation to an extent. She also emphasises the importance of cyber security measures to be taken by individuals to protect their gadgets from hackers or other perpetrators. The internet has undoubtedly revolutionized global communication, providing unparalleled connectivity and access to information. However, along with its benefits, online interaction can also have negative consequences, leading to emotional suffering and even physical harm. When individuals experience harm online, seeking legal remedies is often the next step. In conclusion, while legal remedies are available for those who experience harm through online interactions, they are not without limitations. Time constraints, cost considerations, and jurisdictional challenges pose significant barriers in addressing issues within a borderless digital environment, she says⁴.

Cassie Cox in her article named *Protecting Victims of cyber stalking, cyber harassment, and online impersonation through prosecution and effective laws* discuss in detail the cyber stalking and harassments faced by the victims and hindrances to seek justice in cybercrimes. She argues that when it comes to prosecuting cases of cyber stalking and cyber harassment, the key hurdles face by the victims can be establishing intent, proving credible threat, surveillance of the victim and last but not the least the difficulty to decide proper jurisdiction. Unlike physical stalking or harassment where the perpetrator's actions can be more easily observed and proven, intent in online cases can be harder to establish. This is because digital communication allows for anonymity and often lacks clear indications of intention. Another challenge lies in proving credible threats made by the perpetrator. For a threat to be considered credible in a legal sense, there must be evidence that suggests a genuine intention to harm or cause fear. However, gathering such evidence can be challenging when it comes to online communications as they can often be ambiguous or open to interpretation. In the surveillance part, she talks about the unlawful surveillance of victims by the defender where there is no adequate law criminalising placing a victim under surveillance. She further names the smart phone apps that are called ‘Find Friends Nearby, Girls around me, and Skout’ where these are typical stalking apps and also known as creepy apps. These social networking apps pave ways to serious crimes such as sexual abuse and rape of minors and often move from cyber space to physical space. Furthermore, she discusses, determining the proper jurisdiction for bringing charges can also create conflicts in prosecuting these cases effectively.

Cybercrime knows no geographical boundaries and perpetrators can operate from anywhere around the world using anonymising tools or techniques. When it comes to jurisdiction, the complexities can occur in defining the jurisdiction of act occurred and the jurisdiction of the effect occurred and in analysing if an element of crime occurred in a particular jurisdiction. This makes it challenging for law enforcement agencies as they may need cooperation from multiple jurisdictions which could result in delays or complications⁵.

J.Devika in her article '*Gender- Based Cyber Violence Against Women in Kerala : Insights from recent research*' says that forty three percent of the respondents in her survey had faced cyber harassment, or unwanted behaviour online which made them scared, depressed and anxious or angry. While most of them had past experiences minority of them had it ongoing. She also discusses the police responses to GBCV as a patriarchal-protectionist approach i.e., they are more sympathetic towards the innocent or women fit into to 'good victim' profile. They tend to prioritise family crises over attacks on women in public debates. They rather have a negative approach towards the opinionated or strong women and view them with suspicion holding them at least partially responsible if not fully for their victimisation. She further confirms this by stating the interviews with lawyers as well where they also second the findings regarding police attitudes towards victims⁶.

Kim Barker and Olga Jurasz in their article named *Online Misogyny: A challenge for digital feminism*, discuss how the cyber bullying and social media harassment against women are prominent tools against women to shut down the women how speak out. The high-profile victims such as politicians and celebrities are also targeted for their social media interactions and been bullied badly. The public nature of their lives makes them vulnerable to amplified levels of abuse and harassment. This not only affects the individuals themselves but also sends a chilling message to other women who may be deterred from expressing themselves openly due to fear of similar treatment. Cyber bullying and social media harassment have emerged as powerful tools used against women to silence them. This paper particularly draw attention to online violence against women in politics and discuss online misogyny and argue that these violences pose significant obstacles to women's equal participation in the political and public life⁷.

Nicola Henry and Anastasia Power in their article, *Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence: A Literature Review of Empirical Research* they suggest that the future research needs to focus on identifying the nature of TFSV behaviours. The study should also include the impact of victimisation and gender dynamics in these behaviours. They go on to recommend a nuanced approach in examining the TFSV along with a mixed method approach. They recommend studying the impact of behavioural aspect of relationships and environments such as work place in these crimes.

They suggest the studies should conduct to understand the relationship between violence and attitude to violence, gender, race, age, sexuality, and other factors⁸.

Gillian Angrove in her Article "*She is such a slut*": *The sexualised cyber bullying of teen girls and the education law response* emphasise on the role of education and school system to teach children basic good citizenship and social values such as equality and justice. She believes an equality driven education system that enables the teachers, students and administration can identify, question and stand up against different forms of oppression and exploitations and a way forward to build a just society. Teenage girls are more prone to victimisation due to their high participation in the digital world through social media presence and other apps. In case of teenage girls, the pressure of peer's approval in a hyper sexualised digital world where the line between 'sexy' and 'slut' is very thin, they are forced to enter complex negotiations between their 'self' and 'online self' she says⁹.

Eveline Landstedt and Susanne Persson in their article *Bullying, Cyberbullying, and mental health in young people* says "... by conducting sex-separate analyses, this study shows that all forms of bullying were associated with psychosomatic problems in girls but not in boys. A possible explanation might be that, according to previous studies, girls are exposed to bullying of sexual nature to a higher extent than boys, a type of harassment more strongly related to mental health in girls than boys..." Their study concludes that all sorts of bullying results in mental health concerns eventually and also affects in creating a low self-image of one self. The victims of cyber bullying are more prone to have a low self-esteem and tend to withdraw from their social relationships. The lack of self-confidence can lead to much greater impact in their personal and professional growth¹⁰.

Anita Gurumurthy and Niveditha Menon in their article *Violence against Women via Cyberspace*, discusses one of the major but mostly overlooked hindrances in identifying and prosecuting the cyber criminals. They note that newer technologies are entering sex industry which create more violent and obscene content and at the same time help in sidestep the legal systems as companies chose to locate their server in countries where the act is not a crime or will not be prosecuted. This emphasizes the need for a global governance framework in relation to Information and Communication Technologies. The absence of territorial jurisdiction in cybercrimes becomes a huge hindrance in the litigation process especially in the developing countries. The lack of cooperation from international bodies or foreign based websites freezes the investigation at one point¹¹.

Cyber Victimization of Adult Women by Shakila Akhter deals with the subject elaborately. The types of victimization she uses the UNESCO report on female cyber victimization which says 73% of the women experience online victimization. Another disturbing detail is that moreover 74% of the counties the participated in the study failed to provide adequate legal support

or take necessary action against these victimisations. Under the risk factors the gender, age, sexuality are all identified as risk factors in cyber victimisation. The study is concluded as "... besides that Lifestyle exposure theory and daily routine activities theory along with control imbalance have been reported as important risk factors and explanation of cyber victimisation of adult women in the review of studies..."¹².

By analysing the present available study, one can conclude that there are still many uncovered factors with respect to cybercrimes involving sexual harassment of women in India.

Methodology

The study was done using a case study method selecting the sample purposively to understand the status of women in cybercrime with an objective of analysing the women victimization in cyber cases involving sexual defamation and harassment. The specific objectives of the study are: to evaluate the cybercrimes involving sexual harassment and sexual defamation of women victims, to understand the hindrances, the cyber victims face in the litigation process, to study the applicability of RAT in cybercrimes involving sexual harassment and sexual defamation related victimisation of women, to suggest better strategies to deal with women victims of cybercrime.

In order to investigate and understand complex phenomena, qualitative research method was employed for gathering in-depth information and insights from participants. The case study method was adopted and a detailed case study has been done on three cybercrimes which took place in Kerala. The researcher has used the semi structured interview method to collect the information and insights from the participants which allows the detailed exploration of the topic. The sampling method was purposive and the interview guide consists of open-ended questions in order to derive detailed responses from the interviewees and provide the comfort of a conversation. Apart from the interview, the available literature review both physical and digital data regarding the case has been done diligently to arrive at a conclusion.

Results and Discussion

Challenges in cybercrime litigation in India: Cybercrime litigation presents unique challenges compared to physical crime litigation. One of the key issues is the lack of qualified resources within cyber cells or police systems to effectively handle cyber cases. Unlike physical crimes, cybercrimes require a deep understanding of technology and digital forensics, which many law enforcement personnel may not possess.

"...The cybercrime offenders are highly tech savvies and take great precautions to not get caught; sometimes it is difficult to catch up with them..." (Respondent 5, personal communication, April 2023).

This lack of technological expertise among cyber cell personnel creates a significant gap between them and the criminals they are trying to catch. Cyber criminals are often highly skilled and constantly evolving their tactics, making it difficult for law enforcement to keep up.

Another challenge in cybercrime litigation is the red tape and bureaucratic procedures that can cause delays in investigations and prosecutions. The complex nature of cybercrimes often requires cooperation between multiple agencies, both domestic and international, which can further slowdown or freeze the investigation process.

Victims faced similar challenges throughout the litigation process. The origin of the video traced back to an IP address from Czechoslovakia and since its international the cyber team had limitations in tracking and finding the culprit.

"...Only cases that count as national emergency or cyber terrorism, we conduct collaborative investigation with international bodies..." (Respondent 5, personal communication, April 2023).

The offenders use international IP addresses and once that is being established the investigation comes to a standstill as it is lot of procedures or formalities to go further to enquire on international involvement and generally in the cases of normal people it is not encouraged unless there is a matter of national security involved.

The respondents expressed concern over the allocation of resources to the cyber cell wing. They highlighted that the resources allocated to this department are not proportional to the increasing number of cases in cybercrimes. This has resulted in a lack of technical experts available to handle and investigate these cases effectively. The respondents emphasized that there is a need for a fully-fledged department with a team of skilled experts who can tackle cybercrimes efficiently. Without such a dedicated and well-equipped team, it becomes challenging to keep up with the growing number and complexity of cybercrime cases.

Addressing this issue by investing in training programs, recruitment drives, outsourcing and providing necessary resources can help bridge this gap and ensure that there is an adequate number of technical experts available to tackle cybercrimes effectively.

In cybercrime, particularly when women are the victims, there is a concerning issue where the police discourage them from filing a complaint and pursuing litigation. This discouragement often extends to the victim's family as well, with the belief that going ahead with litigation will be a tormenting experience. This can be particularly true for women victims of cyber sexual harassment, who have already suffered a traumatic experience online.

The process of litigation itself can often be challenging and overwhelming for anyone involved. In cybercrime victims, this can further exacerbate their trauma. It can be complex, lengthy, and emotionally draining, which can add to the trauma already experienced by the victims. This creates a barrier for victims seeking justice and can perpetuate a cycle of silence and inaction.

“...I was already down; No one was supporting me. Even my parents were reluctant to come to the police station...” (Respondent 2, personal Communication, May 2023).

It is important to address this issue and create an environment where victims feel supported and empowered to come forward without fear of further harm or trauma. By providing a victim-friendly approach with adequate support systems and post trauma care, we can encourage more victims to pursue legal action against cybercrimes. In most of the sexual harassment cases the victims' mental health is seriously affected and the long-term impact such incidents create on their social life is significant. Many of these victims are found struggling with the PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) aftermath of such incidents.

We need to work on creating a society that is more empathetic towards the victims of sexual crimes. The society continues to be judgemental with victims of sex crimes whether online or physical in nature. There is always a part of society that finds faults with the victim for being targeted. At the same time society never fails to justify the scenarios or circumstances that provoked the offender to commit the crime.

One of the most distressing aspects of cyber sexual harassment is the way it can alter a victim's social image and self-image. The exposure of intimate or explicit content without consent leads to feelings of shame, embarrassment, and guilt. This can cause victims to withdraw from social interactions, isolate themselves from friends and family, and mostly develop symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The revenge porn is mostly a crime of passion. Unlike other crimes that may be premeditated carried out by individuals with a history of similar offenses, revenge porn is committed by individuals who have no prior criminal record. This highlights the fact that it is primarily an act driven by strong emotions and not necessarily indicative of long-term criminal behaviour. However, it is crucial to understand that despite any potential regret or realization of the gravity of their actions afterwards, once revenge porn material has been shared online or distributed without consent, there is no way to fully undo the damage caused. The impact on the victim's personal and professional life can be devastating and long-lasting.

“... I uploaded the content in an unknown site, not a well-known platform. It was done at the heat of the moment where I wanted my revenge. I did not intent it to go viral...” (The Respondent 4, personal Communication, May 2023).

Furthermore, society's response to these crimes can exacerbate the negative effects on the victim's mental health. Victim-blaming and shaming are unfortunately prevalent in cases of revenge porn. The immediate spread of sexual content online adds another layer to this issue. Once intimate images or videos are shared without consent, they can quickly circulate across various platforms, making it nearly impossible for victims to regain control over their own narrative. This constant exposure to their private moments being shared publicly intensifies the emotional distress experienced by victims.

“...I no longer trust anyone to get into a relationship or even friendship. I hardly step out as I am afraid to meet the judgemental eyes of people...” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023).

At the same time there are victims who refused to be shamed for the wrong of other people. “...Why should I cover my face when I have done no wrong...” (Respondent 1, personal Communication, May 2023).

In this case the victim voluntarily revealed her face and identity to the media and stood her stand as she is innocent and refused to take the shame for someone else's pitiful actions.

Applicability of RAT Theory

Suitable Target: Women are often seen as suitable targets for victimisation in cyber space due to a variety of factors. They may be less aware of the various cyber threats that exist, making them more vulnerable in the digital world. Additionally, women may have less technical knowledge compared to men, which can make them easier to manipulate. One significant issue is that women are often afraid of victim shaming and may be reluctant to share their experiences of harassment with others. This fear can prevent them from seeking help or reporting incidents, allowing perpetrators to continue their harmful actions unchecked.

“...At first, I did not want to tell anyone as I know everyone will be blaming me...” (Respondent 3, personal communication, April 2023).

Offenders even expect victims to take the shame and keep themselves shut because that is what mostly happens in the cyber sexual harassment cases. There are not many victims who decides to fight back in order to prove their innocence.

“...They never expected me to fight back and prove my innocence. They thought I will leave this place and family out of shame...” (Respondent 1, personal Communication, May 2023).

In terms of relationships, trust plays a crucial role in creating a safe and intimate environment. Unfortunately, in some cases, this trust can be exploited, leading to devastating consequences such as revenge porn. One of the common scenarios is when women share their private moments with their partners, trusting that these intimate moments will remain confidential.

At the time of the relationship, women may feel comfortable and secure sharing these personal moments with their partners. However, when a relationship turns sour, some partners may use this personal data as a weapon to seek revenge. However, there are contents that is being made without the knowledge of consent of the victim and then use these against them in order to get them into line or take revenge on them. With the technology reaching new heights, there are numerous ways these technologies can be used to create such contents both original and fake without anyone's knowledge or consent. The hidden cameras are used in order to make such contents or one's phone camera or laptop cameras are also being hacked to record them live in their intimate spaces without their knowledge. Being cautious is the only preventive measure we can advocate in these scenarios as no one can abstain from their gadgets and staying in closed is not an option at all.

"...I loved him and we were in a relationship. I never thought he would do anything to harm me, ever..." (Respondent 2, personal Communication, May 2023).

This breach of trust can have severe emotional and psychological impacts on individuals who become victims of revenge porn. It not only violates their privacy but also exposes them to public humiliation resulting in destroying their personal and professional lives. It is important for society to address this issue by raising awareness about consent and privacy rights.

"...I do not trust people anymore. I no more meet new people or make new friends. I do not have any friends. Even my friends sort of abandoned and blamed me when it happened..." (Respondent 2, personal Communication, May 2023).

It is crucial for individuals in relationships to have open discussions about boundaries, consent, and respect for privacy. By fostering an environment built on trust and mutual understanding, we can help prevent instances of revenge porn and protect vulnerable individuals from its damaging effects.

It is important to address these challenges and create a safer environment for women online. By increasing awareness about cyber threats and providing education on how to protect them, we can empower women and reduce their vulnerability in the digital world. Additionally, creating supportive communities where victims feel comfortable sharing their experiences without fear of shame is crucial in combating cyber victimisation targeting women.

Motivated Offender: The role of motivated offenders in cyber sexual harassment cannot be understated. These individuals are confident in their ability to avoid detection and rely on their advanced technical knowledge and computer skills to carry out their malicious activities.

"...I did not upload it in a known website. But instead, I chose a very least viewed website..." (Respondent 4, personal Communication, May 2023).

Motivated offenders in cyber sexual harassment cases are often driven by personal vendettas or a desire for power and control. The sensation of anonymity that the internet provides further encourages them, as they believe they can act without consequence.

One contributing factor to the prevalence of cyber sexual harassment is the low litigation rates. Many victims do not come forward and file complaints due to fear, shame, or a lack of faith in the justice system's ability to address their concerns effectively.

They take advantage of the sensation of anonymity that the internet provides, allowing them to hide behind screens and pseudonyms while carrying out their harmful actions.

Absence of capable guardianship: When it comes to the role of capable guardianship in cybercrimes, cyber security systems play a vital role in protecting the individuals from being exploited. In the ever-evolving digital space we lack robust cyber security systems that can protect the users and their data and effectively combat internet scams and other threats from digital world. One of the main challenges lies in weak cyber laws that fail to address the rapidly evolving nature of cyber threats. As technology advances, criminals find new ways to exploit vulnerabilities, making it crucial for legislation to keep up with these changes.

Another significant issue is the lack of awareness among individuals and businesses about the importance of cyber security. Many people are unaware of the risks they face online or how to protect themselves from potential threats. This lack of awareness leaves them vulnerable and increases the likelihood of falling victim to cybercrimes.

Unlike physical crimes, the cybercrimes are happening in a very private environment chosen by the offender at the comfort of his/her home or personal space. The question of a physical guardianship does not arise much in these scenarios. The offender would take great care to avoid any.

To evaluate the cybercrimes involving sexual harassment and sexual defamation of women victims: Sexual crimes are not always the crimes of passion as they assume it to be. For ages, sexual attacks against women are being used as an effective tool to exert control over them and tarnish their reputation. These oppressive tactics have persisted for ages and with the advent of technologies the cyber space have also become a platform to conduct such crimes against women without much checks on the perpetrators.

In Cyber sexual harassment cases, the victims can fall into two categories: those who are known personally to the offenders and those who are randomly chosen, resulting in innocent victims who play no role in their victimization. This highlights the alarming nature of these crimes and the potential for anyone to become a target.

Offenders often prey on the emotions and vulnerabilities of their victims, using fear, threats, or other coercive tactics to gain control over them. In this heightened state of panic, victims may feel compelled to comply with the offender's demands, no matter how illogical or insane they may seem.

“... I would have done anything at that time to get it over with, I was not in a position to think and act as I was shattered to the core ...” (Respondent 3, personal Communication, April 2023).

One form of cyber sexual harassment that highlights its personal nature is revenge porn. In these instances, the offender seeks to take revenge on a specific individual by sharing private or intimate content of the victim without their consent. This act is deeply personal as it aims to harm and humiliate the victim.

“... I have heard of such things in media, but when I faced it, it was the worst...” (Respondent 2, personal Communication, May 2023).

In other cases where the victim is randomly chosen, their vulnerability depends on their technical knowhow and digital literacy. It is important to recognize that cyber sexual harassment involves a range of actions and motivations. While some victims may be targeted due to personal connections with the offender and motives, others may find themselves accidentally caught up in these crimes through random selection.

In the first case, the emotional toll on this innocent victim cannot be overstated. Being wrongfully accused not only tarnishes one's reputation but also has long-lasting implications for their personal relationships and overall mental, physical, and social well-being. In a remarkable display of resilience and determination, the victim in this case chose to defy the odds and fight against the legal system to prove her innocence. Rather than shying away from the battle, she emerged as a survivor by questioning the flaws within the legal systems and weak cyber security laws.

“...I had to prove my innocence at any cost for my children's sake as they should not be shamed by the society on my behalf in future. That was my sole aim while decided to fight against this allegation...” (Respondent 1, personal Communication, May 2023).

In the second case, the offender has forsaken the trust of the victim she placed on him during their relationship. She was the victim of revenge porn and it would cause long lasting impact on her social wellbeing as she develops trust issues with people. The trauma of being betrayed by a loved one can be devastating and will take a toll on her future relationship as she will never be able to trust someone fully and hence committed relationship will always be a question mark for her. Also, the victims of revenge porn undergo a certain level of victim shaming from society including the family as there was an element of consent

to the content that was shared. Though the content was not shared publicly with consent, the making of the content or existence of it cannot be denied by the victim. This would add more to the guilt and trauma of revenge porn victims.

“... I do not think I can ever start to trust or love anyone again. It is hurting when everyone around you judges of you as an immoral person...” (Respondent 2, personal Communication, May 2023).

In the third case, it is important to recognize that the victim is not at fault for falling into such a trap. In situations where victims are manipulated in a state of shock and panic, their ability to think rationally and use common sense can be severely compromised. This vulnerability can lead them to make mistakes that have the potential to ruin their lives. The manipulator's tactics are designed to exploit their vulnerabilities and create a sense of helplessness. It is important for a civilised society to provide support systems and resources to empower individuals in these situations and help them regain control over their lives instead of judging and isolating them.

By raising awareness about manipulation techniques and providing education on recognizing warning signs, we can work towards creating a safer environment for everyone. Additionally, providing access to counselling services and legal support can help victims navigate through the aftermath of such traumatic experiences.

In cyber sexual harassment cases, offenders are motivated by multiple factors. One significant factor is the anonymity that the cyber space provides. The ability to hide behind a screen gives offenders a sense of security and freedom to carry out their actions without fear of immediate consequences. Cyber space serves as an ideal platform for individuals seeking to take out their personal vendetta on others. They can target their victims without being physically present, making it easier for them to execute their plans without being caught and from any part of the world. At the same time the impact and scope of these crimes are far reaching. The content created and shared by offenders in cyber sexual harassment and defamation crimes can quickly spread and reach millions of people within seconds. This amplifies the gravity of such crimes and increases the potential harm inflicted on victims. Unlike physical crimes, cyber harassments have a lingering impact that can persist long after the initial incident. One of the key reasons for this is that once shared, it becomes extremely difficult to completely remove such content from the internet. This means that victims of cyber harassment are constantly at risk of having these harmful contents resurface and create threats in their future. The permanence of cyber harassment content adds an additional layer of distress for victims. It creates an ongoing fear and anxiety as they never truly know when or where these materials might resurface. This can have severe psychological effects on individuals, leading to feelings of vulnerability and constant unease.

The offenders on the other hand are hardly caught or brought before law. The number of litigations in the online sexual harassment is alarmingly low even though the number of crimes is increasing at a rapid rate. This perceived protection from the system also acts as a motivation for the offenders to choose the digital platform for their evil version to explore.

It is crucial for society to recognize and address this issue seriously. Efforts should be made not only towards preventing cyber harassment but also towards creating mechanisms that allow for effective removal and protection against such harmful content. This includes implementing stricter regulations, providing support systems for victims, and promoting digital literacy in order to combat this problem effectively.

Suggestions: As most of the respondents faced trouble with the litigation process, the important step is to ensure a fair Justice to the victims of crime. The process should set a standard that it should eliminate the labelling and attract the victims to report the crime. The society as a whole should understand and act in hand with the CJS functionaries to enable a victim safe environment. There should be smart systems and technology sound people to deal with such offences in such a way that it lessens the response time.

Victims getting more victimized are a common aspect of cyber sexual harassments. Even though the support system often stands for the victims in papers, but the reality is almost the opposite and the victims are victimized by words, gestures, complications in the process, media trial and stigmatization. This very re-victimization to be avoided within the society.

Eliminating the risk of suitable target, motivated offenders and impacting a more cyber friendly guardianships can help us to eliminate the victimization. Increased cyber patrolling and thereby increasing the cyber surveillance is one among the many methods of preventing cyber offences.

The dos and don'ts in a relationship is often discussed and being lectured many times, but a more comprehensive understanding on the psychology of such women and making them understood of the issues and exploitation that they can face from their partners and the level of trust that one should be particular in a relationship is something which should be shared.

Conclusion

No one is safe in the world where the individuals are exposed to cyber world. The vulnerable groups are at high risk as they are

often targeted. The suitability of target often creates chaos in the present society that creates a sense of less security among individual. Crimes that target the innocent women group, will give the community a bad impression that no one is safe in this world, and no mothers are either.

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