

## Chapter 24

# Increasing Virtual Offences Through Cyberbullying in Developing Countries: Catalytic Factors Leading to Virtual Offences

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Cyberbullying malice is more a socio-psychological issue in developing countries like India. The kinds of virtual offences indirectly through cyberbullying and the toll on the various segments of society are concentrated to bring attention to the increasing maladaptive consequences of the virtual offences. The chapter concentrates on the direct and indirect methods of consistent evolution in the methods of virtually offensive practices against children, adolescents, school students, college students, and women in general. The chapter highlights the methods of cyberbullying happening across developing countries like India. It also describes the catalytic factors leading to virtual offences committed online and their nature, evolution, impact, and intensity on the victims' psyche across developing countries like India.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Increased usages of online social media platforms by younger generations are creating Socio-Psychological issues that endanger teen mental health. (Porhola M. 2016). The virtual offences through these social media platforms have now become the crucial escalating factor for depleting the socio-psychological health of the younger generation. The young and vibrant generation is considered as social wealth for any country. The young generation is negatively impacted by virtual offences like cyberbullying, which has phenomenally increased in developing countries like India. The damages are more to the growing

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younger population (Kuttler A, La Greca A, Prinstein M1999). Ubiquitousness in the variety of social media to interact and express, cheaper digital gadgets, seamless connectivity makes interaction in social media very attractive for the younger generation. Availability of a plethora of public forums and online social media platforms in developing countries like India are now the primary platforms to self-express or participate or opionate about their individuality, and are the most sought after platform for the younger population (Pepler D, Rubin K1991). The modalities are aplenty, and hence indulgence in cyberspace is very high like the developing countries like India (Rootman I,2001). Increased indulgence naturally have brought in the issues of online bullying or cyberbullying either for fun, to troll or by other subtle means. Since virtual space is huge and ubiquitous, virtual offences too have gained prominence among the young population. Especially the social issues due to cyberbullying abuse is very high in proportion in the teenage group. Various research studies in India points out that, 8 out of 10 teens in India had been the victims of one of another kind of online harassment (Due P, Holstein BE, Lynch J, Diderichsen F, Gabhain SN, Scheidt P, *et al.*2005). The younger generations across the world set the online trend of expression of public opinions, create platforms for debates for self-expression, thereby exposing themselves to the world. This increases their presence in social networking and video tours and amplifies larger spaces to make multiple online connections to a variety of social media platforms. Since the online platforms are with unique features, of late they are the full-time entertainers in the world where the younger generations are spending time virtually even with their kith and kin (Kshirsagar VY, Agarwal R, Bavdekar SB.2007). The social media platforms are now the primary source to express or virtually contact for any matters be it official personal. Most of the e-learning platforms have amplified positive views on being on social media platforms. Hence although the advantages are huge, the malice like virtual bullying or virtual offences that impacts the psyche of the innocent young generation victims have added the problems even to class, caste, gender and even the looks are picked on (Coie J, Dodge K. 1998).

## **BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENTS IN VIRTUAL OFFENCES IN INDIA**

The evolution of virtual offences are not new, and only the forms are differing like the evolution of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is in many forms, and it starts like texting, where the young population exchange information or communicate by sending, posting or sharing insensitive and at times even malicious content. The virtual offences start from here like someone privately or in public is trying to damage the psyche of the public gets too high (Juvonen J, Graham S.2001). The malicious act of one person virtually might create a very negative impact on the psyche of the people. It can bring down the morale of the society too is uncontrollable levels at times since fake and exaggerated information that is malicious is very powerful, that people will not be able to distinguish what is good or bad since the invasion in the psyche of the people is very high. It can go to the extent of damaging the judgements with the premeditated exchanges of information. It shall even trigger cyberbullying due to the exchange of voluminous messages that are not required(Bishop J, Inderbitzen H.1995). Various research studies across Asia have found that the highest amount of virtual offences in the forms of cyberbullying in developing countries like India (Purdy N., & York L. A.2016). It also found that the cyberbullying culture too is enormous in countries like India. The psychological, as well as physical health risks, are on the rise especially due to the rise of psychosomatic disorders. The younger generation is found to have worsening depressive symptoms. Further studies revealed that exacerbated symptoms of depression, as

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