Violence against Women and Girls on Social Media

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Abstract

Crimes against women and girls are spreading like an epidemic in the 21st century. The past few decades have seen many changes in the lives of women and girls. Today, women and girls are actively participating in social, political, economic, aerospace, medical, technological and educational fields. However, news of increasing violent crimes against women continues to emerge daily, and the growing violence against women and girls on social media is raising concerns in the era of technology and technological advancement. While social media plays a vital role in the information revolution, some antisocial elements have into a hotbed of crime, making women and girls easy targets.

Cyberstalking, morphing, online trolling, blackmailing, objectification of women, offensive memes, cyberbullying, fake profiling, deepfakes etc. on social sites have not left women and girls from wealthy and middleclass backgrounds untouched by the negative impact of technological means, and even prominent women leaders and women in administrative positions have been witnessing a steady

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increase in the abuses against women and girls on social media. according to the data of NCRB approximately 4,45,256 cases of crime against women (including social media) were registered, which is approximately 4 percent more than before. A characteristic of gender related violence is that it knows no socioeconomic boundaries but affects women and girls from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, to prevent all these crimes, the government must take concrete steps and implement existing laws on the ground. New laws must be introduced according to changing circumstances and changes. Cyber literacy regarding the safe use of social media and its risks must start from the basic level with adequate knowledge about good operating practices. Regarding cyber privacy and security. It is important to remain extra vigilant. A community-based, multifaceted approach and continuous engagement with multiple stakeholders can also reduce violence against women and girls.This will empower women and girls to speak out against violence against their husbands in a timely manner, and also move towards achieving the objective of **International Women's Day 2025: "For all women and girls: rights, equality, empowerment".**

Keywords

Social Media, Cyber Bullying, Cyber Stalking, Morphing, Online Trolling, Cyber Fakes.

Introduction

When we want to reflect on women's society, many questions arise. Women of which era should we consider? What status of women should we consider? Women of which society do we consider? What was the condition, status and role of women in that system? Or did we women ever have independence, even if it was through social media? Many questions demand answers.

In every country in the world, women have been to a greater or lesser extent, slaves to men. They have been the personal property of men, who can use them in any way they wish. For centuries, the rigid consciousness of women forced them to be like slaves. They had no will of their own, and even if they had, they could not express it because they were subservient to their master. our entire social

system has been shaping women into a helpless, pitiful form. From childhood, we have instilled in girls the mantra, or words, that a girl is someone else's property. She is destined to go to someone else's home. Here, the words of French writer Simone de Beauvoir are so significant: "A woman is not born, but is made". This is the extreme form of violence against women. Manu Smriti, the ancient religious scriptures of Hinduism, also gave women a secondary status and incorporated ideas that reinforced the sense of inequality, stating, "A girl should always remain under the protection of her father after marriage she should be protected by her husband. After the death of her husband, she should be at the mercy of her children. But under no circumstances can a woman be free". In the third chapter of Manu Smriti, it is said that when brahmins eat they should not look at any pig, chicken, dog, eunuch or menstruating woman.

Nowadays, Crimes against women are also prevalent on social media, which is the focus of this research paper. Crimes committed on social media are also known as cybercrime. Cybercrime is defined as illegal activities conducted through the internet and digital devices that are intended to intrude on the personal space of others and harass them with objectionable content and abuse. With the expansion of the internet and more Indians coming online, includes cybercrime against women and girls is on the rise. Cyberspace poses many challenges, stemming from its vastness and inclusive nature. In his book, "The Lonely Crowd" Riesman writes that in today's world, industrialization, urbanization, innovation and advanced technology have led to new patterns of behavior.

The extent of violence against women and girls can be gauged through reports published by the National Crime Records Bureau. Overall cybercrime increased by 18.4 percent from 2019 to 2021, while cybercrime against women increased by 28 percent. Data shows that of the 52,974 incidents reported in 2021; 10,730 incidents, or 20.2 percent, were crimes against women, and 4,555 cases were reported as sexual assault. As of 2021, Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of cybercrime cases. However, these records do not fully reflect the extent of violence against women and girls, as society often teaches women to ignore online harassment they experience on

social media. Therefore, male dominance is evident even in online spaces. The secondary status of women and girls on social media can also be understood from the statements of some prominent women, such as Sheetal Arora, assistant professor, jodhpur, Jodhpur, who said, "Women are abused on social media, but most women don't even report it. To report it, they will first ask their families; patriarchy prevails here too."

Monali Guha, cyber expert, Raipur says, "There are two types of cybercrimes: professionals and close associates. If a woman refuses someone's proposal or refuses something, people who know her often commit cybercrime to take revenge".

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Types of cybercrime against women include gender based and sexual comments and computer networking on activities carried out on social media platforms through mobile phones, which affect the dignity of women and cause emotional distress.

Cybercrime related to women and girls is as follows:

1. **CYBERHACKING:** women become victims of cyberhacking when their phones are asked to click on unauthorized URLs or download apps that leak all their personal information. Criminals use these details for unauthorized monetary transactions and other illegal activities.

2. **CYBERBULLYING:** it is the act of regularly harassing and threatening the victim by posting offensive and misleading content, pictures or videos and sending rape and death threats through digital communication tools.

3. **PORNOGRAPHY:** This criminal activity involves posting distorted photographs of victims and using them for pornographic purposes, sometimes demanding money to remove them from social networking sites.

4. **CYBERBULLYING:** In this case a man establishes a relationship with a woman through an online platform and pressures her to perform sexual acts for undue advantage.

5. **CYBERSTALKING:** This is one of the most prevalent cyber crimes against women, it involves secretly stalking and invading someone's privacy with the intent to terrorize, harass, torment or intimidate the victim. The perpetrator contacts and attempts to establish a relationship without the victim's knowledge or permission.

6. **MORPHING:** This involves unauthorized users creating fake profiles to alter the original photo or downloading a photo of the victim from the internet, editing in a way that compromises the victim's identity and posting it on social networking sites. This practice is now so prevalent that anyone can use it for entertainment or revenge, which can put a woman's dignity at risk.

7. **ONLINE TROLLING/BLACKMAILING:** This is a common crime against women online. It aims to harm a woman's reputation or humiliate her due to her perceived power or dominance.

8. **DEEPFAKES:** This is synthetic media that has been digitally manipulated to replace the likeness of one person with the likeness of another. It can also refer to computer-generated images of human subjects that do not exist in a real life.

It is true that women are selected for higher positions and hold high positions, yet they are not given the respect that men receive, nor are they evaluated in the same way as men. This is all the result of gender bias.

Conclusion

Cybercrime is committed online. When a cybercrime is committed online, it has a negative impact not only on the victim but also on the people around the victim. The concept of blocking is ineffective when the criminals have multiple accounts on social networking sites. The existing legal system also does not accurately reflect the ground reality. A comprehensive and effective strategy is necessary. Women's empowerment is not possible. The daydream that the country is seeing, the dream of a developed nation, the dream of the 5 trillion Economy in the coming years, will remain a dream only. A quote emphasizing gender equality: "What is the meaning of women's

empowerment? If we cannot respect women, then everything is meaningless". International Women's Day is celebrated annually on March 8 since 1975 for gender equality. Sustainable Development Goal 5 (target to be achieved by 2030), and the increasing crime statistics every year pose a challenge to private and government efforts. Therefore, this issue remains a cause of concern even in the 21st century.

Various measures are being taken to prevent cybercrime in India. Yet the number of cases has increased from 15 lakh to 22 lakh in 2024 compared to 2023. This is visible due to the lack of laws implementation on the ground. So, at present there is a need to adapt to the current situation, to run awareness campaigns based on laws and rights, to spread awareness about the dangers of cybercrime and to use them. before using or downloading any app, software (that can be able to secure our system or mobile) it should be downloaded from a secure point of view and the laws should be simplified to make them suitable for the common people.

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