

## Review Paper: Cyber Bullying Through Smart Phones & Other Electronic Devices- A Theoretical Perspective

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### Abstract:

Smart phone usage has become very common among adolescents. The usage of Smart phone along with a lot of advantages including exposure to the worldwide knowledge, connectivity, safety, virtual classrooms, there comes cyberbullying which is a major concern in the life's of adolescents. Cyberbullying includes bullying by use of technology such as email, Instagram messages, text messages and social media messages. Adolescents who is either a bully or a victim is experiencing some internalising and externalising problems affecting their mental health. A systematic review of literature is done to explore the effects of cyberbullying on adolescent population.

**Keywords:** 1.Smart Phone, 2.Cyberbullying, 3.Bullying, 4.Internalising & Externalising problems

### 1. Introduction

Bullying is an act of repeated violence between the bully and the victim. Bullying is very common in schools, colleges, workplaces, public places and at home. In traditional bullying, the bully physically hit/kick, verbally assault and threat the victim. And even spreading rumors is a part of bullying. With the introduction to the new technology such as mobile phones and internet a new type of bullying came into existence called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is done by sending annoying messages to attack the victim through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, messenger, email, Instagram, and twitter.

The individuals are divided into four groups in most of the studies conducted on cyberbullying. Bully, the person who sends the annoying messages to attack the targeted person. Victim, the person who is targeted by the bully. Both bully and victim, the person who targets other persons and at the same time is targeted by other bully. And fourth comes individuals who are neither a bully nor a victim. Adolescents and young adults come under high-risk groups in cyberbullying. Owning the mobile phones at a very young age as a prestigious issue or due to the peer pressure, easy access to the internet, lack of awareness about the risk factors involved in usage of social networking sites, problematic internet use due to lack of proper supervision by parents and teachers or may be due to some psychological difficulties faced such as loneliness, lack of self-esteem, depression, delinquency can be the triggers to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullies can hide their identity giving them chance to attack/bully others without fear of being caught, from any place and at any time. Most of the time victims cannot identify who is bullying them even though if they know them very well. This leads to emotional distress in the victims, which may lead self-harm or even suicide. Looking at the increasing number of users of mobile phones at a very young age, it is very important to make children aware of cyberbullying and to seek for help when needed.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 *Internalising and Externalising Problems*

In a study done by Sourander A. et.al 2010, associations between a psychosomatic and psychiatric problems and cyberbullying among adolescents have been examined. The results have shown adolescents who are cybervictims perceived difficulties such as headache, sleeping difficulties, emotional and peer problems, recurrent abdominal pain and not feeling safe at school. Adolescents who are cyberbully perceived difficulties such as low prosocial behavior, hyperactivity, frequent drunkenness, and smoking, conduct problems, not feeling safe at school and headaches. And adolescents who are both cyberbully-victim are associated with all the above problems.

The purpose of the study done by Olenik-Shemesh. D et. al (2012), is to examine the connection/link between Cybervictimisation and Socio-emotional variables – depressive mood and loneliness. 242 adolescents aged 13 to 16 years from Israel have taken as samples for this study. The results have shown that there is an association between cyberbullying victimisation and depressive mood and loneliness (emotional, general, and social).

The research done by Bonanno R.A. et al. (2013), examined the association between either cybervictim or cyberbully and both suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms. 399 students from 8 to 10 grades, Canadian adolescents have been taken as samples of the study. The results have shown that involvement of either cybervictim or cyberbully have contributed to the symptoms of suicidal ideation and depression.

### 2.2 *Social Influence and Problematic Internet Use*

Research done by Hinduja. S (2013) examined the influences of family, peers and educators at school on cyberbullying behaviors. A random sample of 4400 students from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students from 33 schools in Southern United States have been selected for the study. The results have shown that students who are involved in cyberbullying have similar type of friends who are also involved in cyberbullying. And students who felt that their parents and educators would punish them if they were involved in cyberbullying, were not involved in cyberbullying activities.

In the research done by SoraPark. et.al 2014, the relationship between cyberbullying, netiquette and online activities have been studied. In this study 1200 adolescents aged between 12 to 15 years have been taken from South Korea as samples. The results have shown that the adolescents who spent more on online activities are the victims of cyberbullying and at the same time cyberbullying behavior is negatively correlated with netiquette, studying online and spending time with parents.

According to the research done by Hamer. A. D. et.al (2014), there is a relation between antisocial media usage and cyberbullying behaviours. 892 adolescents participated in the study. Participants who are exposed to antisocial media, displayed cyberbullying behaviours. Tsimtsiou. Z., et al (2018), done the research to investigate the relation between cyberbullying and internet addiction. In the study, 8053 students aged 12 to 18 years, were picked up from middle and high schools. It has been examined that student who are on mobile phones and internet for longer hours, who visited internet cafes are involved in cyberbullying.

### 2.3 *Levels of self-esteem*

According to the research done by Hinduja.S. et.al (2010), there is a relationship between the levels of self-esteem and cyberbullying. 1963 number of middle school students were taken from 30 schools

as samples for the study. In this study it has been observed that students who experienced cyberbullying both as victims and offenders had low levels of self-esteem when compared to the students who have no experience with cyberbullying.

According to the research done by Muller. R. D et.al (2016), there is an association between cyberbullying and self-esteem. 107 students from Australian primary school aged 10 to 12 years old are taken as samples. It has been observed that those who has experienced single episode of cyberbullying has high levels of self-esteem when compared to students who have repeatedly cyberbullied. Students who experienced cyberbullying has also employed technological responses which included deleting, changing passwords, and blocking their online accounts.

According to the research done by Pascual-Sanchez.A et.al (2021), there is an association between self-esteem, personality traits and traditional bullying and cyber bullying. 1288 students were taken as samples from secondary schools in London. The results have shown that self-esteem and callous-unemotional traits predicted traditional bullying and cyberbullying among students

According to the research done by Wilantika. R et.al (2022) there ia an influence of self-esteem and empathy on cyberbullying behaviors. 90 students of Vocational High School in Pringsewu were taken as samples in this study. It has been observed that there is a relationship between cyberbullying and empathy and self-esteem. The students with higher levels of empathy and self-esteem showed lower levels of cyberbullying behaviors. And the students with low levels of empathy and self-esteem showed higher levels of cyberbullying behaviors.

### **3. Discussion**

The current literature review provides a brief understanding of the outcomes of cyberbullying. In the literature review it has been observed that both cyberbullying as well as cyber victim have perceived difficulties of psychosomatic and psychiatric difficulties. Difficulties such as low prosocial behavior, hyperactivity, frequent drunkenness, and smoking are observed in cyberbully. Cyber victims perceived difficulties such as headaches, sleeping difficulties, emotional problems, difficulty in getting along with peers, recurrent abdominal pain without any physiological problem and feelings of not safe at school. It has been observed in the above studies that involvement in cyberbullying has contributed to the symptoms of suicidal ideation and depression. Most of the victims of cyberbullying have the socio-emotional loneliness and depressive mood.

Parents and teachers should monitor children continuously. Parents should always be in connect with teachers of their children. Parents should spend more time with their children, should be aware of their peer groups. As soon as they examine any changes in their daily activities such as eating habits, sleeping patterns, behavioral changes, they should immediately seek professional help from

It has also been observed in the studies that adolescents who have been spending more hours in online activities are the victims of cyberbullying. Netiquette, online studying and spending time with parents and siblings at home have been reduced with the involvement in cyberbullying. It has also been observed that adolescents who are exposed to antisocial media displayed cyberbullying behaviors. Adolescents who felt that their parents and educators would punish them if they were involved in cyberbullying, were less likely to participate in cyberbullying. The influence of peers who are involved in cyberbullying, resulted in encouraging the adolescents to be a part of cyberbullying.

Parents at home and teachers in the schools should monitor children's online activities. Limited time should be allotted for internet use. Parents should spend more time with children. Family members should be engaged in activities such as outings, playing games, family gatherings, meeting friends and relatives. Children should be encouraged to play outdoor games such as tennis, football, cricket to increase their physical activity instead of spending time on their mobile phones. Coping strategies such as how to seek

help and when to seek help should be taught to all the children in schools and colleges. In most of the countries there are helplines who provide confidential and free support to the persons in need.

It has been observed in the current literature review that self-esteem has an association with cyberbullying. Self-esteem is how a person perceives and value herself/himself. It is a sense of self-worth. In the above literature review it has been observed that persons who have experienced cyberbullying have low levels of self-esteem than persons who have not experienced cyberbullying. And, persons with low levels of self esteem are more likely to be targeted as victims in cyberbullying than persons with high levels of self-esteem. A person with low levels of self-esteem is always in self doubt and hesitant to take a step to protect himself/herself from bullying and cyberbullying.

Parents should always encourage and appreciate their children. Encourage children in whatever they are interested in and appreciate their children in all their achievements whether small or big. By this, children's confidence levels will get boosted, increase their self-esteem. Children and individuals who are victims of cyberbullying can increase their levels of self-esteem by seeking help from psychologists.

Awareness programs explaining what is cyberbullying, how to deal with such situations if being targeted in cyberbullying. These programs have to be conducted in schools, colleges and workplaces. Helplines should be easily accessible to everyone who is in need and awareness about such helplines should be created. Public should also be aware of the Severe punishments attached to Cyberbullying through smartphones and other electronic devices.

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