

A Study on Individual Susceptibility to Phishing Attacks via Social Engineering in Bengaluru, India

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Abstract: *Phishing attacks are evolving rapidly, often using psychological tricks—known as social engineering—to take advantage of human behavior. This study looks at how vulnerable individuals in Bengaluru, India, are to such attacks, focusing on their awareness, reactions, and exposure to these deceptive tactics. An online survey was conducted to gather primary data with 55 participants from diverse backgrounds.*

While most respondents had heard of phishing, many struggled to recognize red flags like urgent messages, fear-based prompts, or impersonation. The responses showed a tendency to act quickly when under emotional pressure, making these social engineering techniques highly effective. Despite growing awareness, practical safety habits—such as enabling two-factor authentication or reporting suspicious activity—were found to be underused.

Unearthing this suggests that simply being aware about phishing isn't enough. Real protection requires a better understanding of the psychological triggers at play and more focused behavioral training. This study adds to the growing conversation about the human side of cybersecurity and offers clear, practical steps to help individuals better protect themselves.

Keywords: Phishing Attacks, Social Engineering, Cybersecurity Awareness, Human Vulnerability, Behavioural Response, Individual Susceptibility, Online Deception

