Cyber Stalking: An Overview Mass Media and its Catalytic Role in Combating

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Abstract*: Media often has proved to be the most powerful tool of communication. It has the power to influence the lives of people in all walks of life. Techno savvy people using social media such as Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter to post their photos, videos, profile and status. Posting of such data on social media provides enough information, inter alia, techno savvy criminals stalkers to play havoc impeaching upon the right to privacy of commoners. Cyber stalking in a serious and unique crime as it transpires online without per se a physical act Moreover, the inability to identify cyber stalkers encourager the perpetrators to pursue the victims of any place. This paper therefore endeavors to assess what role media can play in combating cyber stalking.*

Keywords: Herbal shampoo, natural and healthy evaluation of shampoo spends indicia

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Craig Connect, almost 50% of Americans under the age of 35 have been bullied, harassed or threatened online. What is worse, only a few people know that they are bullied or harassed over social network. A study by Pew Internet that examined the behavior of teenagers online establishes that 76 percent of teens are active on social networking sites, proving that Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter are ideal avenues for engagement among today's youth. Not only are more teens using social networks, they are using such networks more frequently for longer periods and they are sharing more content than ever before, which raises the possibility of such teens becoming victims of cyber stalking.

This paper is divided into six parts. The first part is an introductory part while the second one deals with the concept and meaning of the term cyber stalking. The third segment incorporates mediums of stalking. The fourth part includes types of cyber stalkers while the fifth segment is reserved for various measures the media can take to prevent the growing menace of cyber stalking. This is lastly followed by conclusions drawn from the study and suggestions thereof.

II. CONCEPT ANDMEANING OF THE TERM CYBER STALKING

There is no precise definition of the term 'cyber stalking. In ordinary parlance, 'stalking' is defined as harassing another in an aggressive often threatening and illegal manner. Meloy defines stalking as "the willful, malicious and repeated following and harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety".

In the National Violence against Women Survey stalking is defined as: "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written or implied threats, or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person fear"."

The term 'cyber stalking', is considered as the use of the internet, email or any other electronic communication devise to stalk or harass an individual, a group, or an organization. It takes place when a person is followed and pursued online. A person's privacy is invaded and his/her every move watched. It is a form of harassment and can disrupt the life of the victim and leave him/her afraid and threatened.

According to Wayne Petherick, the mental profiling of digital criminals has documented several psychological and social factors that motivate stalkers which, inter alia, include:

- Unemployment or failure with own job or life,
- Envy.
- Pathological obsession (professional or sexual),

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- Curiosity:
- Revenge over perceived or imagined rejection, and
- intimidation for financial advantage or business competition."
- Apart from the above factors, there are also internet characteristics that facilitate harassment by cyber stalkers. These are:
- Anonymity: One of the principal factors that promote cyber stalking is opportunity of anonymity provided by the internet services which not only allows stalkers to say things that they might never say face-to-face but it also helps them to create an online persona or "handle" with little relationship so their real life identity. Anonym ity may be achieved by several means i.e, pseudonymity is achieved by forging an e-mail header so as to create an online digital persona; impersonation of others by making an e-mail appear as if it was sent from a different e-mail account, by using anonymous re-mailers. These are computer services which cloak the identity of users who send messages through them by stripping all identifying information from an e-mail and assigning a random replacement header. The most sophisticated re-mailer technology which uses public key cryptography granting unprecedented anonymity is referred to as "Mixmaster."

Dissemination of information: One more internet characteristics that facilitate harassment by cyber stalkers is the ease of dissemination of information via the internet.

Online communication: Online communication has also one dimensional nature that facilitates harassment through the internet.

Inexpensive: Drastic fall of internet cost has enabled stalkers to harass their target at the comforts of their homes or any desired place.

Cyber stalkers, whether online or offline, are motivated by a desire to exert control over their targets. In offline stalking, majority of cyber stalkers are held to be men targeting female victims even though there are reported cases of women cyber stalking men and of same-sex cyber stalking.

Cyber stalking is unique because it transpires online without per se a physical act. The Cyber stalker does not need to physically confront the victim. However, the more relentless the pursuer, the more likely it will result in some of offline attack including physical violence as well.

Regardless of the manner or form of the harassment, each method results in the intended effect on the victim. Due to the various forms and uncertainties surrounding stalking, reporting of stalking cases in India is quite minimal." This is a serious problem which needs immediate response from law enforcement agencies and more importantly, for online users to realize that any online, emotionally packed incident can and is likely to lead to an offline component that can pose a real threat to life.

III. MEDIUMS OF STALKING

The manner in which cyber stalking is conducted generally depends upon the particular use of the internet being exploited. The following are the three principal ways in which cyber stalking can be conducted:

Email stalking: This mode of stalking include unsolicited email, sending the victim viruses or high volumes of electronic junk mail (spamming), and/or threatening mail.

Internet stalking: In this mode, stalkers use the internet to slander and endanger the victims irrespective of the space barrier and

Computer stalking, Here, the stalker exploits the workings of the internet and the windows operating. system in order to assume control over the computer of the targeted victim.

IV. TYPES OF CYBER STALKERS

Cyber stalking has been regarded as one of the most serious crimes in India which has caused tremendous pains to many innocent victims." Dr. Paul Mullen and a group of other Australian experts dealing with cyber stalking categorized cyber stalkers into five groups as indicated here under:

Resentful stalkers: This type of stalkers are not only dangerous but they are also fully aware the victim's movements. They inflict upon the victim fear and distress as they believe that the victim deserves it because they have caused them and/or others unbearable anguish and distress.

Rejected stalkers: Rejected stalkers are also dangerous just like the resentful stalkers. Following failed attempts to reconcile with their victims after divorce, separation or termination of a relationship, these types of stalkers often seek revenge on their targets.

Predatory stalkers: These types of stalkers are considered the most dangerous and determined among the five types of stalkers. Motivated strongly by uncontrolled sexual need, they engage in actively planning an attack on their target and fantasize how they will enjoy having sexual acts with their victims even though they are not in love with their victims.

Intimacy seekers: Intimacy seekers are less harmful than the other types of stalkers. They often do not have any ill will towards their targets. They simply desire to have a love relationship with their targets as they view them   as   life-longs soul mates destined to betogether at any cost. That they are motivated to ensure that they have done whatever it takes to fulfil destined loving relationship.

Incompetent suitors: These types of stalkers are deeply enamored with their targets. Even though their way of functioning is similar to the Intimacy Seeker stalker incompetent suitors are more gradual in their means and methods of contact. They always think that they will one day be married with their targets. It may however he noted that incompetent stackers lack social communication of courting skills.

V. MEASURES THE MEDIA CAN TAKE TO PREVENT CYBER STALKINGTHROUGH ITS ETHICS BASED REPORTING

There are a few steps the media can take to combat the growing menace of cyber stalking. These, inter alia, includes:

Raise awareness: Awareness is powerful. It changes social perceptions. Rather than create panic over technology use or spread misunderstandings, awareness allows a positive atmosphere to emerge. Put cyber stalkers in the spotlight in every nook and corner. The media should teach, especially the students who are the most users of the internet, about the psychological and legal ramifications of cyber stalking. The media should as well show students how they can use technology for the greater good instead of engaging in illegal activities.

Create digital citizens: Cyber stalking is impersonal in nature. The media should promote programs that teach on how to be cyber safe and savvyonline.

Reporting of cyber stalking cases: The media should spread awareness by reporting cyber stalking cases However, there should be a limit while reporting to ensure the fundamental rights of individuals are not trampled upon.

VI. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is evident that cyber stalkers presently referred to as digital criminals are wrecking the lives of many innocent victims in India. The rate at which crimes are committed by cyber stalkers is growing stead fastly over the years in India. Nobody deserves to be abused online. Emerging technologies and the media at large can help monitor cyber stalking but it all comes down to the person engaging in the activity. With the increasing usage of social media among teens and available technologies like Image Vision's, cyber stalking can be put at bay.

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DOI: 10.48175/IJARSCT-15079

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ISSN
2581-9429
IJARSCT