CYBERCRIME AGAINST WOMEN-PERCEPTION AND OPINION OF CYBER CELL OFFICIALS AND COUNSELORS - WITH REFERENCE TO PUNE CITY

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Abstract

Information Technology and Internet have widened its scope over the last few years. With the use of computer mobile phone etc. the crimes using Internet has also widened, especially in the case of women related crimes. Through the present study an attempt has been made to focus on the major cybercrimes against women and its responsible factors in the view of cyber cell officials and counselors. This study also focused on the social implications of cybercrimes on the life of the women victims and reasons for not reporting of cybercrimes by women committed against them. The present study also highlights the major deficiencies in the IT Act 2000 and 2008 and barriers in detecting/investigating of cybercrimes.

Key words – cybercrime, women victim, cyber cell

I) Introduction – Information Technology and Internet have provided various facilities, but not come out without drawbacks or bad effects on the lite of women today. With the advancement and utilization of Internet, the crimes through Internet have also increased, especially in the case of women. Today, cybercrime is a world phenomenon and women are the soft target of cybercrime. Cybercrimes against women are increased rapidly since the last 10 to 15 years. There are many serious crimes against women like- rape, murder, dowry death abatement of suicide etc. but today cybercrimes against women are also increasing and it is on at alarming stage and it may pose as a major threat to the security of women as a whole. In the Indian context cybercrime against women includes sexual crimes and sexual abuses through Internet. Many times cybercrimes goes unreported as women are unaware of such offences. This facts give the chance to the offenders to escape after the committed of cybercrime against women. Many websites and blogs gives tips of security for the safety of women, while utilizing Internet, but still the cybercrime against women is increasing in India. Through the present study an attempt has been made to understand the nature of cybercrimes against women and its responsible factors, and the opinions and perceptions of cyber cell officials and counselors on the cybercrime against women.

II) Literature Review – 1) P. K. Vanita, (2012), has focused on the various issues related to prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of cybercrimes by Indian Law enforcing authorities in the first level and in the second level about creating awareness and technical knowledge pertaining to cybercrimes for detection, prevention and investigation of cybercrimes against women.

2) Virendra Kumar, (2018), has discussed on the different types of cybercrimes committed against women. Author has pointed out that, increase in the users of Internet, there is an increase in cybercrime rate. Author has opined that victimized women should come forward and report against the crime in special Anti-cybercrime cell. In the opinion of author, awareness among women about cybercrimes, and usage of Internet, social media will definitely help to curb the cybercrime, and there will be reduction in the cybercrimes.

3) V. A. Panse, (2016), has attempted to present the current scenario of cybercrimes against women in India. According to the author there are inherent challenges to the field of Information Technology, security and service through individuals and critical infrastructure. Author has suggested that, security and awareness training model towards public security should be developed in preliminary phase

4) N. Agarwal, (2014), has discussed on the cybercrimes and outlined security vulnerability against women in India. Through the study author has also understand the opinions/ perceptions of police officials, counselor's cyber cell officials etc. about the cybercrimes against women. Author has also discussed on the Information Technology Act 2000.

III) Need of the study – The increase in cybercrimes against women in India, as all over the world, is on the rise. Any women who use the Internet is at risk for becoming a victim of cybercrime. On this background it is necessary to understand the nature of cybercrimes frequently committed against women in India and the responsible factors of cybercrimes against women. It is also necessary to know the opinions and perceptions of the cyber cell officials on the background of increasing rate of cybercrimes against women in India.

IV) Objectives of the study

1) To understand the major nature of cybercrimes against women.
2) To focus on the factors responsible for increasing cybercrimes against women.
3) To understand the opinion of cyber cell officials about social implications of cybercrimes and sexual crimes.
4) To know about the deficiency in the Indian IT Act 2000 and 2008.
5) To focus on the causes of unreported cybercrimes by women victims.

6) To understand the major barriers in detecting and investigating of cybercrimes.

V) Scope of the study – The scope of the study is confined to understand the opinions of the cyber cell officials and counselors about the nature of major cybercrimes against women, its implications and to understand various causes for not reporting of cybercrimes and major barriers in detecting and investigating of cybercrimes. There are several studies available pertaining to the nature of cybercrimes against women but there are very few studies pertaining to other factors mentioned above. Therefore, this kind of study has been conducted in Pune city.

VI) Sampling Technique – Convenient sampling method has been followed to select the sample of cyber cell officials and counselors.

VII) Size of Sample – The sample consisted of 25 cyber cell of officials and counselors in total.

VIII) Geographical Scope of the Study – The geographical limit set for the survey population is Pune city only.
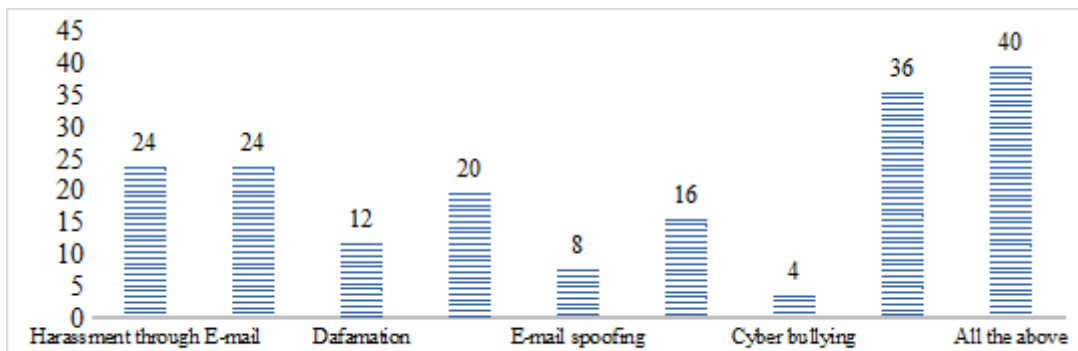
IX) Research Methodology – For the study purpose descriptive research method has been followed. For the purpose of collecting primary information for the cyber cell officials/counselors (Respondents) interview schedule is used. The primary information is analyzed by applying simple percentile method. The required secondary data is collected through various study papers, published in the various domestic and international journals, government reports, books etc.

X) Results and Discussion –

Table No. 1

Major Cybercrimes against women (opinion of the respondents) (Multiple responses)

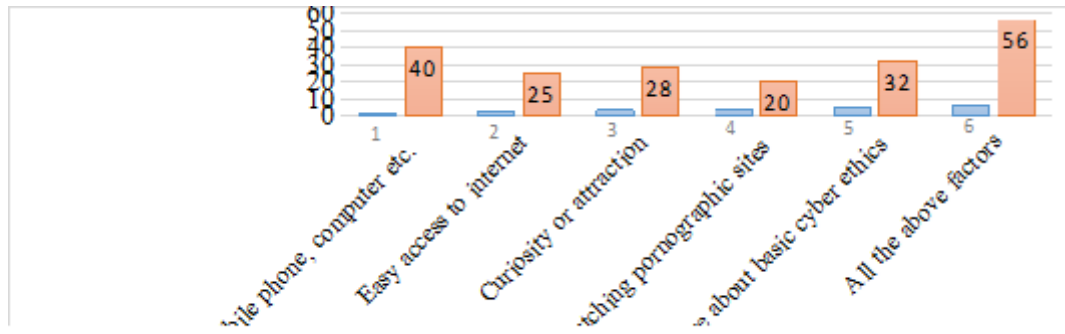| Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
01	Harassment through E-mail	06	24%
02	Cyber stalking	06	24%
03	Defamation	03	12%
04	Morphing	05	20%
05	E-mail spoofing	02	08%
06	Cyber flirting	04	16%
07	Cyber bullying	01	04%
08	Cyber sexual defamation	09	36%
09	All the above	10	40%

In the opinion of 24% respondents harassment through E-mail and cyber stalking are the major cybercrimes against women. In the opinion of 12% respondent's defamation is the major crime against women. While 20% and 8% respondents have respectively stated that morphing and E-mail spoofing are the major cybercrimes against women. According to the 16% and 4% respondents cyber flirting and cyber bullying are major cybercrimes committed against women in India. 36% of the respondents have stated that cyber sexual defamation is the major cybercrime against women. 40% respondents have reported that all the above mentioned cybercrimes are equally committed against women in India. Due to various types of cybercrime against to women, the challenges have emerging for the national and economic security also.

The technological advancements while of immense benefit for the society, have also brought various opportunities for the various cybercrime activities against women. The following table focused on the opinions of the respondents about whether there is existence of government mechanism to control over these crimes or not.

Table No. 2

Factors responsible for increasing cybercrime against women (multiple responses)

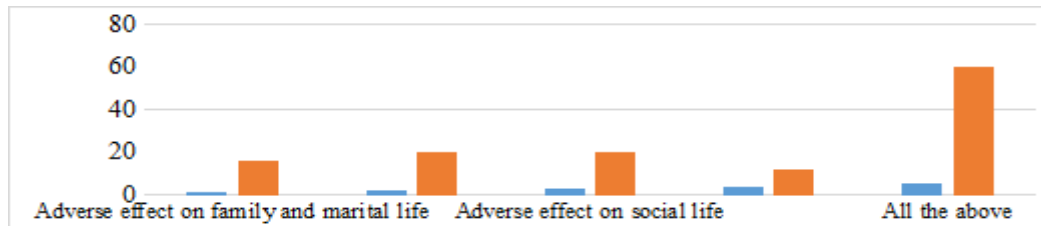| Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
01	Optimum utilization of mobile phone, computer etc.	10	40%
02	Easy access to internet	07	25%
03	Curiosity or attraction	07	28%
04	Addiction of watching pornographic sites	05	20%
05	Unaware about basic cyber ethics	08	32%
06	All the above factors	14	56%

In the opinion of 40% respondent's optimum utilization of mobile phone, computers unnecessary surfing on Internet are the major factors that caused to increase the cybercrime rate against women. In the opinion of 28% respondent's easy accessibility of Internet and curiosity and attraction of surfing on Internet are also major factors caused to increase cybercrime against women. According to 20% respondent's addiction of watching pornographic sites by young people may also cause to increase the cybercrimes against women. It is also observed that yet majority of the women are not having adequate skills for browsing on Internet freely and also not having awareness about basic cyber ethics and therefore they faced the problem of cybercrimes against them; stated by 32% respondents. Majority of the respondents 56% have stated that all the above mentioned factors are caused to increase cybercrime against women.

On the basis of majority of the studies and crime report it is observed that many cybercrime cases against women are not fully detected due to various reasons. The following table indicate the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

Table No. 3

Social implications of cybercrime and sexual crimes (multiple responses)

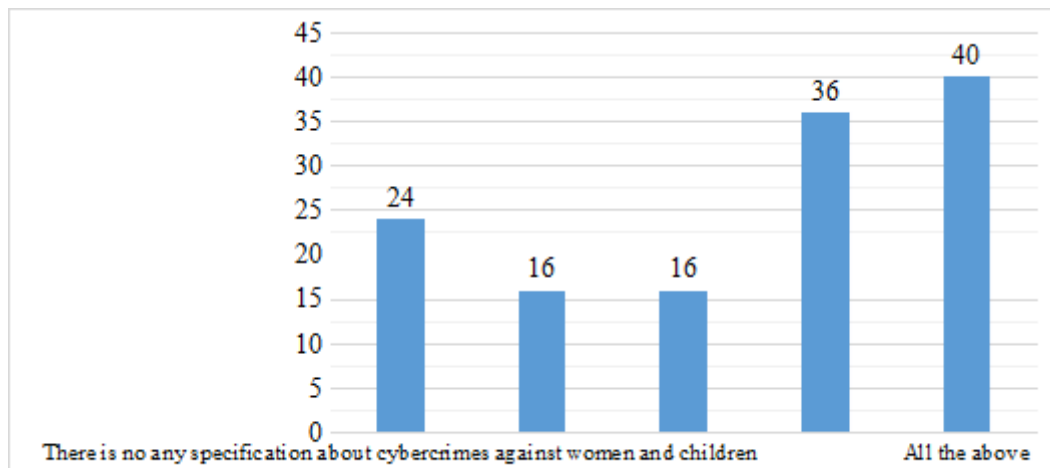| Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
01	Adverse effect on family and marital life	04	16%
02	Obstacles in the arrangement of marriage	05	20%
03	Adverse effect on social life	05	20%
04	Mentally disturbance	03	12%
05	All the above	15	60%

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According to the information collected 16% respondents have stated that there may be adverse effect on the family and marital life of women victim. According to the 20% respondents there may be obstacles in the arrangement of marriage and there may be adverse effect on the social life of the women victim. 12% respondents have stated that, the women victim may face the problem of mentally disturbance due to cybercrime committed against her. Majority of the respondents stated that all the above mentioned social implications existed due to cybercrimes against women.

As mentioned above there are many measures have been undertaken by the government through establishing proper mechanism. It is important to know about the awareness of these measures among the respondents. The following table focused perceptions of the respondents about the various measures undertaken by the government to control over the cybercrimes against women.

Table No. 4

Deficiency in the Indian IT Act 2000 and 2008 (multiple responses)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
01	There is no any specification about cybercrimes against women and children	06	24%
02	There is a problem of jurisdiction less of evidence	04	16%
03	There is no mentioning of stalking, morphing, spoofing etc.	04	16%
04	There is no specialized procedure for prosecution of cybercrimes	09	36%
05	All the above	10	40%

In the opinion of 24% respondents, lack of specification about cybercrimes against women and children is the major loophole in the Indian IT Act 2000 and 2008. According to the 16% respondents, problem of jurisdiction and loss of evidence is the major issue in proper implementation of this Act, and there is no mentioning of cybercrimes like stalking, morphing, spoofing etc. In the opinion of 36% respondents in the present IT Act there is no specialized procedure for prosecution of cybercrimes against women and children. Majority of the respondents 40% have opined that there are all the above mentioned loopholes in the present IT Act. in the opinion of these respondents, this Act is covered only commercial and economic crimes, but there is no specific provision to protect security of women and children in the cyber space under IT Act.

Due to many loopholes in the Information Technology Act there is a poor rate of cybercrime conviction in handling cybercrime against women. The following table indicates the opinion of the respondents in this regard.

Table No. 5

Causes of not reporting of cybercrimes by the women victims (multiple responses)

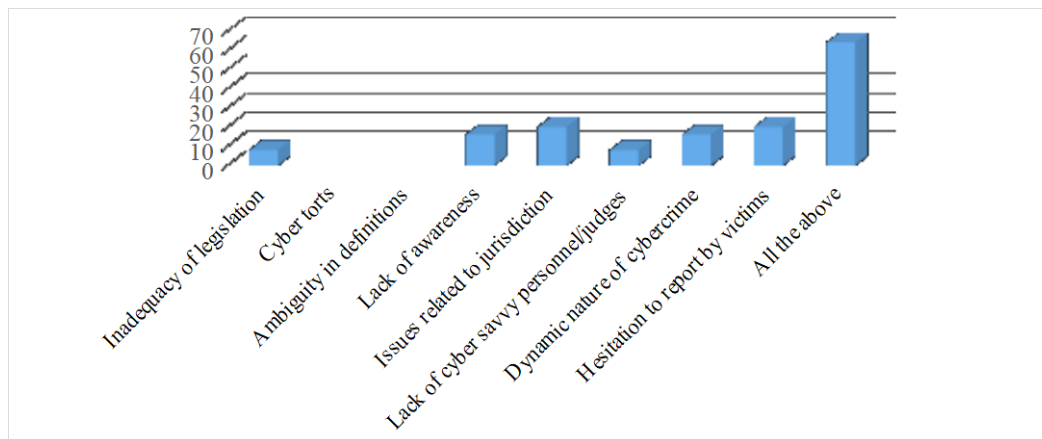| Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
01	Hesitation	03	12%
02	Shyness	03	12%
03	Fear of defamation	09	36%
04	Sometimes victim is responsible	05	20%
05	All the above	17	68%

12% respondents have opined that, hesitation and shyness of the women victims are the major factors that caused to increase in unreported cybercrimes committed against them. According to the 36% respondent's fear of defamation majority of the women do not reported to police about the cybercrimes committed against them; and according to these respondents this is the major reason for not reporting of cybercrimes against women. In the opinion of 20% respondents, due to lack of knowledge of handling Internet there may be mistakes committed by the women inadvertently and become victim of cybercrime; thus they heisted to report the crimes to the police and these women self-become a responsible for the cybercrimes. Majority of the respondents 68% have reported that all the above mentioned factors are responsible for not reporting of cybercrimes against women in India.

The following table shows the various precaution measures suggested by the respondents to control over the increasing rate of cybercrime against women.

Table No. 6

Major barriers in detecting and investigating of cybercrimes (multiple responses)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
01	Inadequacy of legislation	02	8%
02	Cyber torts	-	-
03	Ambiguity in definitions	-	-
04	Lack of awareness	04	16%
05	Issues related to jurisdiction	05	20%
06	Lack of cyber savvy personnel/judges	02	08%
07	Dynamic nature of cybercrime	04	16%
08	Hesitation to report by victims	05	20%
09	All the above	16	64%

As per the collected information only 8% of the respondents have opined that due to inadequacy of legislation and improper enactment of legislations and lack of cyber savvy personnel/judges majority of the cybercrimes cases against women are not detecting and investigating fully. Lack of awareness pertaining to handling of social media Internet among women is also one of the major hurdles stated by 16% respondents. According to the 20% respondents issues related to jurisdiction is the major hurdle and 16% respondents have opined that dynamic nature of cybercrimes creates obstacles in detecting and investigating in the cybercrime committed against women. 20% respondents have opined that due to hesitation by the women victims to report of the police about the cybercrimes committed against them may also create hurdles in investigation of cybercrime cases. Majority of the respondents 64% all the above mentioned factors are caused for not detecting and investigating the cybercrimes cases fully.

For detecting and investigating the cybercrimes cases against women there should be proper training and education imported to the cyber cell staff. The following table focused on the opinions of the respondents about the necessity of training and education to the staff of cyber cell.

XI) Major findings of the study –

1) As per the opinion of the respondents, harassment through email, cyber stalking are the major cybercrimes against women in India. Due to various types of cybercrimes against women there are many challenges faced by the respondents.

2) It is observed that, due to various responsible factors there is an increase rate of cybercrime against women. Easy accessibility of Internet, attraction of surfing Internet without having proper knowledge are some of the major responsible factors in increasing cybercrimes against women.

3) As per the information provided by the respondents it is found that, majority of the women victims faced the problems like, mentally disturbance, obstacles in marital life and also arrangement of marriage. Also there are adverse effects on the social life of the women due to cybercrime victimization.

4) According to the many respondents, lack of specification pertaining to cybercrimes against women and children is the major deficiency in the Indian IT Act 2000 and 2008. In the opinion of some respondents, this Act is covered commercial and economic crimes and not covered cybercrimes against women.

5) In the opinion of the respondents, hesitation and shyness of the women victims are the major factors which responsible for not reporting of cybercrimes against women. Apart from these factors, defamation, fear, mistakes committed by the women victims are also some of the major responsible factors.

6) Inadequacy of legislation, improper enactment of legislation and lack of cyber savvy personel/judges are some of the reasons of not detecting and investigating of cybercrimes against women.

XII) Conclusion – From the study it is concluded that in India, the future of the Internet is still up for grabs between cyber criminals and women Internet users. Fears of a cyber-apocalypse still abound. The Indian IT Act 2000 is not effectively enacted due to some deficiency and therefore, there is a increase in the rate of cybercrimes against women in India.

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