

Cyberbullying cases go up during lockdown months

Reports indicate a 70% rise in cyberbullying cases when restrictions on movement were in place



Sanjana S Megalamane, DHNS, Bengaluru, JUL 09 2021, 22:44 IST | UPDATED: JUL 09 2021, 22:54 IST



Akancha Srivastava

Extensive usage of the Internet to kill time owing to the pandemic has led to a prominent surge in cybercrimes. Experts warn users to stay on the lookout for any unsupervised behaviour that has the potential to cause serious problems.



Here's what Metrolife found out.

Akancha Srivastava, cyber safety expert, director and founder of Akancha Against Harassment, says there is a spike in cyberbullying cases, especially in Bengaluru. "Before the pandemic, we used to get seven to eight triggers a day regarding cyber safety issues, now the number is between 20 and 25," she observes.

Children, teens, and working women are being bullied the most. "Youngsters are using online platforms more aggressively than ever due to the prolonged lockdown, hence, they are more susceptible to either being a bully or fall prey to it," she explains.

Even men are getting bullied online. "Most men do not report the issue because they are afraid of being judged, and those who file a complaint, want to stay anonymous," she states.

The restriction period was a vulnerable phase for many. With many people losing jobs and loved ones, accomplishments of others, no matter how simple, fanned the flames of envy, pushing them to lash out and direct their anger towards strangers online, says Dr Malini Saba, psychologist, human and social rights activist.

"Cyberbullying often leads to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and panic," she adds.

The law

The Indian Penal Code, 1860, does not define cyber bullying, nor does it contain any provision to punish it as an offence.

However, there are several provisions of the IPC as well as the Information Technology Act, 2000, that can be used to combat cyber bullying, says Sharada Naganand, advocate.

Section 354D, 499, 500, 503 and 66 E are some of the provisions of the IPC under which bullies can be booked, she adds.

If you are a victim of cyberbullying, please report. "Courts are certainly taking cognisance of relatively newfound crimes such as cyberbullying. There are several incidences of Courts adjudicating cases of the latter with the current framework of laws," she states.

What is it?

Cyber bullying refers to an intentional aggressive act performed with the purpose of harassing, threatening or bullying another individual by means of technology. It is usually a recurring act and is inflicted through electronic devices to intimidate the recipient.

Report in case of....

Harassment, sexual abuse, fraping (hacking children's account and posting inappropriate comments), masquerade, trolling, morphing, cyber stalking, dissing and flaming.

Helpline

155260, 9480801554, 080-22375522

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