

Cyberbullying: Domino Effect of Digitalization upon Wellbeing of Young India

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Abstract

India is the centrifugal hub of IoT in the present times and along with the rising era of Digital India, what has become a bane for the nation in the form of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is an online form of aggression that has garnered significant attention due to its increased number in social media. The research paper aims to provide a comprehensive study on the effects of cyberbullying on the mental health of the online users residing in southern India. The paper has drawn the theoretical implications from the recent literature on cyberbullying including harassment, cyberstalking, and online rumor-spreading, and its leading consequences. The paper studies the influence of technology in accentuating cyberbullying behaviors and discusses the social factors regulating the increase of cyberbullying. It evaluates and discusses existing interventions, prevention strategies, awareness programs including education-based programs, non-governmental agency programs, awareness campaigns in community centers and technical resolutions, thereby emphasizing their effectiveness and limitations. The research

findings exhibit that cyberbullying dynamics have adverse effects among online users and it affects their wellbeing. The study interventions contribute to minimizing the cyberbullying effects and how the young population can be less impacted by cyberbullying on the grounds of being stakeholders in learning and spreading awareness about cyberbullying.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Digitalization, Wellbeing, Young India, Domino Effect

Introduction

A study conducted by WHO/Europe, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) project, focuses on bullying and peer aggression patterns among teenagers across 44 countries and regions, has released its second volume. Cyberbullying has grown, amplified by the growing digitization of young people's relationships, with potentially significant effects on young lives, even if general trends in school bullying have stayed consistent since 2018. Among the important bullying of other students in the classroom. Six percent of teenagers harass other students on average at school. Boys (8%) are more likely than females (5%), to exhibit this behavior.

McAfee provided a similar study on the risks that Indian children face when using the internet in May 2022, along with advice for parents on how to protect their children from cyberbullying. In India, 83% of children aged 10 to 14 use cell phones, a percentage that is 7% higher than the global average of 76%. Due in large part to the security chasm that exists between parents and children, this places them at grave risk from online threats.

According to the poll, 42% of children in India experience racial cyberbullying, a striking 14% higher as compared to the rest of the world. Children and teenagers in India also witness and endure the greatest levels of cyberbullying practically across every social media platform and messaging apps.

Being harassed in school, there is no measurable difference in the percentage of teenagers who have experienced bullying at school between boys and girls—roughly 11%. Cyberbullying of other people. One in eight teens, or around 12%, report cyberbullying others. Compared to females (9%), boys (14%) are more likely to report cyberbullying. Notably, this shows a rise

from 2018, with females down from 7% and boys up from 11%. experiencing cyberbullying. About one in six teenagers, or 15% of them, report having been the victim of cyberbullying; percentages for males and girls are about equal (15%) and (16%), respectively.

For males, there is an increase from 12% to 15%, and for girls, from 13% to 16%, from 2018. combat involving physical force. Ten percent of teenagers have engaged in physical altercations, with a clear gender disparity: fourteen percent of guys and six percent of girls. These statistics show how important it is for schools, parents, community leaders, and legislators to work together to develop digital literacy and safety among teenagers, who are spending a growing amount of time online.

There have been several reports of cyberbullying nationwide. The cases of cyberbullying over a Facebook post revealed that, Ooshmal Ullas, aged 23 years, pursuing an MBBS degree at KMCT Medical College in Mukkam, Kerala, wounded her head, legs, and spine and committed suicide by leaping, according to news sources. Another incidence, which occurred on January 9, 2018, was a 20-year-old Hindu lady who committed herself after receiving threats on a messaging app about her acquaintance with a Muslim boy residing in Karnataka. On May 4, 2020, Delhi police reported the arrest of a 15-year-old teenager who was associated with the "Boy's locker room," an Instagram community where members make vulgar comments and share images of young women. On June 26, 2014, a 17-year-old girl committed herself as a result of her friends Deepak and Satish altering her images and sharing them on Facebook along with her mobile number. The escalating number of suicides linked to cyberbullying is a cause for apprehension and concern, with the recorded instances increasing each year.

In India, the most common forms of cyberbullying were found to involve the spread of false rumors (39%), exclusion from groups and chats (35%), and name-calling (34%). Perhaps as a result of the general lack of conversation, it is noteworthy that 45% of Indian kids reported keeping their experiences with cyberbullying from their parents.

The act of harassing an individual or group over the internet is known as cyberbullying, and it includes, among other things, trolling, racism, sexual harassment, and personal insults.

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Cyberbullying involves the act of intimidating, threatening, or causing harm to another individual by exploiting digital communication platforms such as social media, messaging apps, or online forums.

It has emerged as a counter-productive worldwide occurrence, affecting individuals across all age groups, with teenagers and young adults particularly susceptible due to the increasing access to internet and social media.

Cybersecurity practices such as sharing passwords frequently, disclosing personal information to strangers on social media, accepting invitations from strangers to meet in person, posting private digital materials, and the number of safety precautions implemented on various online platforms have all been examined.

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Cyberbullying involves the deliberate use of electronic and other internet-enabled devices by individuals or groups to inflict verbal, mental, physical, or psychological harm on others. This form of bullying can lead to various crimes such as defamation, harassment, and criminal stalking. Despite this, India lacks specific legal provisions addressing cyberbullying.

Looking into the graph below we can understand the need for special provisions of cyberbullying in India.

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2. Literature Review

Myers, C., & Cowie, H. (2017) have highlighted the rising recognition for the students who happen to be frequent social media users. Although academic study into the magnitude of cyberbullying is yet to match the internal level of investigation in the educational institutes wherein the young minds are enrolled. The established belief that cyberbullying does not occur at universities is yet a challenge to overcome in the Indian periphery.

According to this viewpoint, it can be asserted that these institutions also owe a responsibility of being vigilant to the behavior of students in their learning environment and at what length social media in a day distracts from their main goal which is building a career. Zalaquett, C. P., & Chatters, S. J. (2014) have studied that the larger reach of the internet and its influence has been a significant reason for the emotional damage and cyberbullying has been one of the main causes behind the damage. The impact of ethnicity is conflicting if compared between the different regions of the nation for the victims' as well as bullies' cyberbullying. A large proportion of survey participants equivalent to 40% or more have reported the cases of Cyberbullying from various sources namely both within and outside of college, encompassing friends, romantic partners, and/or colleagues.

Watts, L. K., Wagner, J. B., Velasquez, B. J., and Behrens, P. I. (2017) highlighted that Cyberbullying may also generate a toxic atmosphere, resulting in diminished engagement and reduced involvement in academic as well as extracurricular pursuits. Scaringly, cyberbullying has escalated its detrimental effects as victims can be targeted irrespective of their location. Regrettably, the utilization of the Internet as a medium for cyberbullying may underscore the technology's adverse implications even further.

Kota, R., Schoohs, S., Benson, M., and Moreno, M. A. (2014a) extensively documented that cyberbullying often involves "hacking" into social media profiles like Facebook to post inappropriate content. Participants frequently discussed the notion of "intention" to characterize how bullies target their victims. While intentionality is a defining aspect of traditional bullying, its relevance to cyberbullying has been subject to scrutiny. Additionally, the challenge of arriving at a consensus regarding an appropriate definition of a cultural concept is also emphasized, mirroring the struggles that professional groups may encounter in crafting a precise definition of cyberbullying.

Gary W. Giumetti and Robin M. Kowalski (2022) examined several social media indicators that could potentially predict cyberbullying, including careless posting, social media usage duration, and personality traits. They also highlighted potential adverse effects on well-being, such as psychological distress, decreased life satisfaction, and suicidal ideation, which may be linked to cyberbullying through social media. Additionally, studies have recommended means for

prevention and intervention, such as implementing cyberbullying detection software to prompt users to reconsider before posting a cyberbullying message.

Zhu, C., Huang, S., Evans, R., and Zhang, W. (2021) investigate the impact of cyberbullying on mental health and the subsequent cascading effects of these repercussions, discussing how initial victimization can lead to enduring psychological issues and impair victims' coping mechanisms.

Savita Srivastava (2021) conducted the research that compared to traditional cyber impacts of cyberviolence are more severe and persistent. Research will identify potential impacts, such as victims experiencing social, emotional, and academic maladjustment. unlawful activity can be carried out with impunity in a number of ways, and intelligent people have been abusing this feature of the Internet to further criminal activity in cyberspace. For this reason, India needs cyber laws.

Aiman El Asam, Muthanna Samara (2016) endeavors to examine extant legislation and the obstacles that come with enacting cyberbullying regulations within the framework of the United Kingdom. One could argue that certain statutes could be helpful in regards to cyberbullying. In the context of the UK, this article aims to examine existing laws and the difficulties in enacting legislation on cyberbullying. Several statutes, such as the “Education and Inspections Act of 2006, the Protection from Harassment Act of 1997, the Communications Act of 2003, the Malicious Communications Act of 1988, the Telecommunications Act of 1984, the Public Order Act of 1986, the Obscene Publications Act of 1959, the Computer Misuse Act of 1990, the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998, and the Defamation Act of 2013”, could prove beneficial concerning matters related to cyberbullying (Aiman El Asam, Muthanna Samara (2016)).

Stavros P. Kiriakidis, Androniki Kavoura (2010) present a thorough analysis of the frequency, origins, and effects of cyberbullying. It highlights the cascading effects of psychological and societal suffering that can result from cyberbullying. It draws attention to how destructive and ubiquitous it is. Creating successful preventative and intervention methods requires an understanding of the prevalence, causes, and effects. Comprehensive strategies that incorporate awareness-raising, education, and support networks for both offenders and victims are needed to address the domino effect.

To conclude on the different studies, it can be identified that the manifestation and impact of cyberbullying differs from one demography to the other. Also, the studies show a smaller number in the context of young India and adverse effects on their wellbeing specifically. Henceforth, this paper attempts to address further research upon the context of cyberbullying in the dimensions of:

- What short-term and long-term psychological effects does cyberbullying have on its victims?
- What factors contribute to the perpetration and experience of cyberbullying?
- What legal framework and policies are in place to address cyberbullying, and how effective are they in different countries?
- What strategies and interventions prove effective in preventing and dealing with cyberbullying?

Research Methodology

A thorough literature review of research was used to categorize peer-reviewed publications that concentrate on the assessment of cyberbullying and its domino effect on young India. In order to identify the gap and build on the purpose of research motivation, a thorough review of the literature linked to assessment was imperative to form the objective of the research.

The research objectivizes to opt for investigative-based research. This is aimed to gather an in-depth understanding of the adverse effect of cyberbullying can be analyzed in the quantitative approach. The authors identified varied factors from the various studies which are similar to the objective of the study.

A simple random sampling technique is adopted to examine the impact of cyberbullying on the well-being of young India. The authors have structured a questionnaire based on the secondary data available in the previous studies and aligning them with the identified research gap.

A structured questionnaire was floated to a targeted sample size of 160-180 respondents out of which 143 samples have completely furnished the information. The researchers aimed to collect the demographic samples as well as the data on the variables highlighted as the impacting factors

of the study. The questions are based on the constructs that probabilistically impact the study and have been verified in the pilot study with a proven Cronbach alpha value of .837.

Data Analysis & Interpretation:

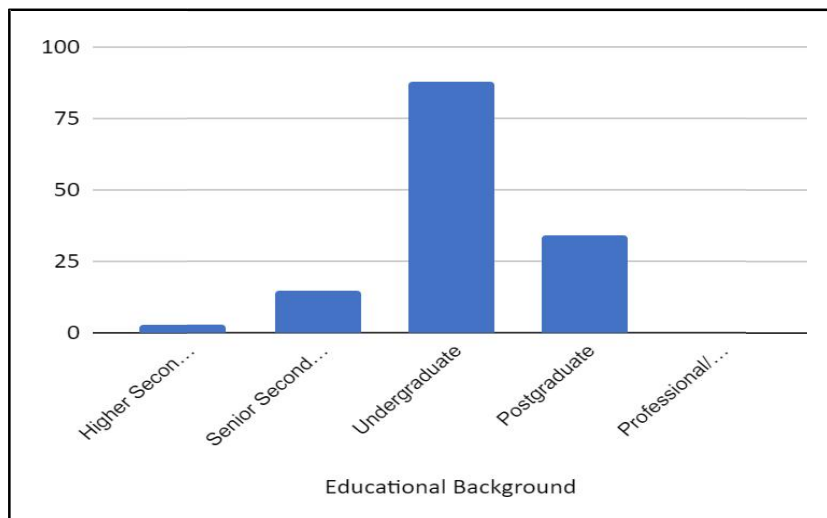
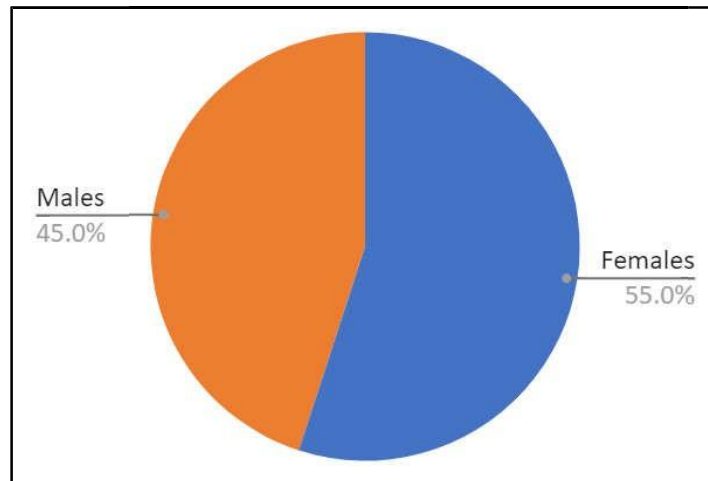
Cyberbullying is a pressing issue, and data analysis reveals concerning trends. The study analyzed sample data ranging from the age group of 18-28 years. The majority of demography is based on young Indians who are enrolled as students. However, some of the data was also in their employment role.

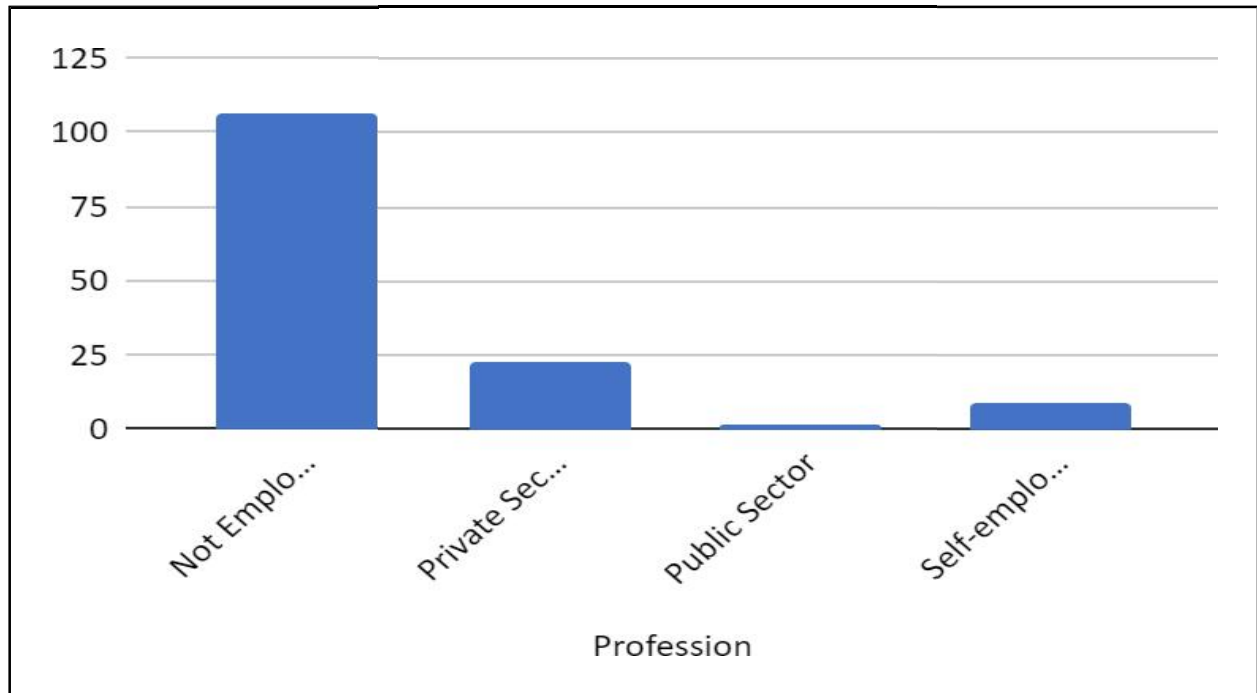
Fascinatingly, studies indicate a gender gap, wherein girls are more prone to encountering cyberbullying in the form of rumors or false information, whereas boys frequently confront direct threats or harassment. Additionally, geographical location influences prevalence rates, with urban areas showing higher incidences compared to rural regions. Even with heightened awareness and preventive measures, the enduring presence of cyberbullying emphasizes the necessity for ongoing research and proactive intervention strategies.

The data also brings in notice that the majority of the respondents are pursuing their undergraduate degrees followed by postgraduate degrees and higher secondary education. The data thus shows the popularity of social media and internet-based things among users of the age group 20-23 more comparatively to other age groups.

The majority of the respondents also signifies that the users of social media are also not in the working professional group as they belong to the young age group and are enrolled in as students. This data signifies that the majority of social media users are engaged in the social media activities as they do not have any added responsibilities apart from that of their educational responsibilities.

Demographic Interpretation:





Summary Analysis of the Study:

According to the interpretation below, young people use social media extensively.

This reports the high incidence of cyberbullying among the surveyed group, with the significant percentage of participants experiencing cyberbullying at once.

There is substantial short-term and long-term psychological impacts on victims of cyberbullying. Short-term effects include heightened anxiety, stress, and emotional distress, while long-term effects include chronic depression, PTSD, and enduring issues with self-esteem and social relationships.

Despite the fact that social media has distracted the lives of youths as well as their mental well-being. In addition to these all consequences, online platforms are helpful to young people when they are engaged in career enhancement activities.

The following results illustrate both the advantages and disadvantages of using social media. Besides these factors, youngsters are also subjected to cyberbullying, which negatively impacts their mental health. It emphasizes the necessity of all-encompassing, multifaceted strategies to successfully address and lessen the negative impacts of cyberbullying.

	<i>Using Online Platforms</i>	<i>Experiencing Cyberbullying</i>	<i>Procastination Behavior</i>	<i>Prominent Experiences on bullying</i>	<i>Negative Experiences of Online Platforms</i>	<i>Social media negativity</i>	<i>IoT Benefits</i>	<i>Consciousness on Site Selection</i>	<i>High Social Media Engagement</i>	<i>Cyber Security</i>	<i>Privacy Issue in Public Info</i>
Mean	3.388	3.201	3.338	3.468	3.266	3.367	3.540	3.468	3.137	3.194	3.187
Standard Error	0.115	0.102	0.096	0.105	0.112	0.111	0.102	0.101	0.103	0.114	0.121
Median	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	3
Mode	5	4	4	4	2	5	5	4	4	2	4
Standard Deviation	1.359	1.205	1.133	1.241	1.322	1.314	1.199	1.194	1.211	1.340	1.432
Sample Variance	1.848	1.452	1.283	1.541	1.747	1.727	1.439	1.425	1.467	1.795	2.052
Range	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	471	445	464	482	454	468	492	482	436	444	443
Count	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
	<i>Awareness on Cyber Security</i>	<i>Dissatisfactions</i>	<i>Interactions on Online Media</i>	<i>Negative influence of Online Media</i>	<i>Awareness Camps</i>	<i>High Engagement post pandemic</i>	<i>Offline Disengagements</i>	<i>Youth Distraction to Life Goals</i>	<i>Mental Health Issues</i>	<i>Age-appropriate Content Awareness</i>	<i>Benefits of educational contents</i>
Mean	3.403	3.101	3.237	3.050	3.072	3.597	3.245	3.158	3.158	3.489	3.777
Standard Error	0.108	0.099	0.106	0.123	0.107	0.099	0.107	0.107	0.110	0.114	0.103
Median	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Mode	4	2	3	5	3	3	4	4	4	5	5
Standard Deviation	1.278	1.169	1.254	1.451	1.261	1.172	1.256	1.258	1.298	1.343	1.216
Sample Variance	1.634	1.367	1.574	2.106	1.589	1.373	1.577	1.583	1.685	1.802	1.479
Range	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	473	431	450	424	427	500	451	439	439	485	525
Count	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140

Discussions

Research has shown that cyberbullying, an adverse consequence of digitalization, has an enormous adverse impact on the wellness of young people in India. Youth are currently much more exposed to cyberbullying due to the rapid proliferation of social media and internet access, which causes serious psychological and emotional harm. Research has shown that, in comparison to traditional bullying, cyberbullying is more common and more difficult to stop due to the anonymity provided by digital interactions. A variety of negative consequences, such as anxiety, despair, and even suicide thoughts, are frequently experienced by victims. Furthermore, victims of harassment may not always get a break because of the constant nature of digital contact.

Affected people are further silenced by the cultural shame associated with mental health concerns in India, which keeps them from getting essential assistance. This snowball effect highlights the critical need for all-encompassing approaches to lessen the detrimental effects of cyberbullying on the wellness of young Indians. These approaches should include educational initiatives, stricter cyberlaws, and readily available mental health treatments.

Studies claim that the intent component that separates traditional bullying from cyberbullying is absent from cyberbullying. Rather, the use of digital communication means for the purpose of harassing, intimidating, or harming people is what defines cyberbullying. Cyberbullying, in contrast to conventional bullying, which usually takes place face-to-face, makes it simpler for offenders to target victims without having to be physically close by allowing them to stay anonymous and separate themselves from the consequences of their actions. Cyberbullying is distinct due in part to its anonymity and quick reach to a large audience via social media platforms. It is also shown that professional associations would have found it challenging to define cyberbullying in a way that accurately captures the complexities of defining a cultural idea.

For young people, social media has several benefits, such as improved communication, information access, and learning and self-expression possibilities. It promotes both social and intellectual growth by enabling children to access educational materials, engage in online communities, and maintain relationships with their peers. These gains do, however, have some significant drawbacks.

Young users may be exposed to addictive habits, privacy problems, and cyberbullying on the same networks. Negative effects on mental health and self-esteem can also result from exposure to unreasonable expectations and continual peer comparison. It's critical to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of social media to make sure it continues to influence youth positively.

Many Studies reveal that cyberbullying can have detrimental and enduring impacts on youth mental health, underscoring the significance of strong safeguarding protocols. Research has indicated that in order to effectively combat cyberbullying, comprehensive strategies that target both prevention and intervention are necessary. These policies cover a wide range of actions, including as campaigns for education and awareness, unambiguous reporting procedures, and punitive consequences against offenders.

A number of studies have demonstrated that certain online content can adversely affect a person's mental health. Studies have shown that exposure to negative or distressing content, such as graphic images, violent videos, or hate speech, may upsurge the symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, the constant bombardment of idealized

lifestyles, unrealistic beauty standards, and curated portrayals of success on social media platforms can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and body image issues, particularly among young people.

In the study by Crosslin, K., & Golman, M. (2014), there can be some potential benefits to addressing and facing cyberbullying in higher education. Encouraging and establishing a safer and more inclusive learning atmosphere: Educational institutions can convey a resolute message against bullying by recognizing and tackling cyberbullying head-on.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Incorporate thorough education initiatives to increase knowledge about cyberbullying, its consequences, and preventative measures in communities and schools. Provide responsible digital citizenship and online safety practices to administrators, instructors, parents, and students. Provide peer groups, helplines, and counseling services as well as other forms of support for those who have been the targets of cyberbullying. When reporting occurrences and requesting assistance, make sure victims feel protected and supported.

In businesses, educational institutions, and online spaces, implement stringent zero-tolerance policies against cyberbullying. Provide staff and moderators with training on how to recognize and handle instances of cyberbullying, as well as a clear description of the repercussions for offenders. Promote parental participation in and oversight of their children's internet activity. Assist parents with setting proper limits, talking to their kids about cyberbullying, and keeping an eye on their online behavior by providing them with tools and advice.

Create and execute technology solutions, such as reporting systems, social media platform and messaging app content filters, and anti-bullying algorithms, to identify and stop cyberbullying.

Urge onlookers to take action and denounce cyberbullying. Teach onlookers how to properly intervene by teaching them how to report the event to the police or to assist the victim.

Create an online environment that values kindness, empathy, and respect. Encourage good online behavior by holding competitions, campaigns, and neighborhood projects that honor responsible online behavior and digital citizenship. Encourage cooperation amongst all relevant parties to

create comprehensive plans for stopping and dealing with cyberbullying, such as parents, educators, legislators, law enforcement, and tech firms. Promote the enactment and enforcement of laws and regulations that expressly deal with cyberbullying, such as those that prohibit cyberbullying and cyberharassment as well as steps to safeguard the safety and privacy of victims online.

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