A Critical Analysis on the use of Social Media among School Students in Chennai with the help of Traditional Media

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Abstract—*Technological advancement and its usage have led to various positives as well as negative aspects. Social media websites help in connecting people from various parts of the world. Adolescents are more prone towards the negative hazards of social media in the form of cyber-bullying, which differs from normal bullying. It is when a person, or a group of people, uses the Internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to threaten, tease or abuse someone.*
The research explores on different types of cyber-bullying and aims to analyze the knowledge among school students aged 13 to 16 years on cyber- bullying, signs and consequences and its effects before and after educating them with the use of traditional medium (drama). A qualitative study is done which focuses on the importance of monitoring cyber life of the children. By analyzing various parameters, the results are discussed and a conclusion is drawn.

Keywords*: Social Media, Cyber media, Cyber crime, Psychological effects, Adolescent, Bully.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has resulted in worldwide integration on various aspects of life and its development helps people to connect, share knowledge and opportunities. Globalization has taken us all to the next level of communication using the multimedia mode of communication. To prove this, a drastic change can be seen from the usage of print and television media compared to electronic media. In today's Digital world, Social media has become pivotal, making its way to the center of our mundane life. Facebook, Orkut, Twitter, YouTube, etc are some of the social media websites that are virally used among children and adults. Even though it has been a powerful means of communication across the globe, it also has a steady increase in dangers of improper use of social media accounts.

Lack of proper monitoring and control, kids are left all alone in the faceless world of online interactivity due to which they stumble upon cyber-bullying as they try to fit in. With the increase in social media users, bullying has upgraded itself to the online platform causing the same impacts of traditional or face-to-face bullying. An immediate attention is needed for creating awareness about cyber-bullying seriousness and dangers.

2. RELATED LITERATURE

Cyber-bullying, a term coined by Bill Belsey of Canadian origin, "is a form of bullying that takes place using electronic technology". According to recent report on Outlook 2015, co-director of the Cyber-bullying Research Centre and a professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University states cyber-bullying as "A unique form of digital abuse that involves a range of tormenting, humiliating, threatening, embarrassing and harassing behaviours has gained a lot of attention in recent years." [9].

It involves Internet, cell-phones, or other technology to send or post images or text messages intended to hurt or embarrass another person [8]. Cyber-bullying is "covert psychological bullying conveyed through the electronic mediums" [10]. Cyber-bullies are usually anonymous and hence in that aspect differ from normal bullying.

2.1. Types of Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is one of the many crimes that fall under Cyber Crime that has more impact on the younger generation. There are seven different types of cyber-bullying namely Flaming, Denigration, Exclusion, Trickery, Impersonation, Outing, Harassment and Cyber-Stalking [11].

"Flaming" is a type of cyber-bullying which involves the exchange of rude and angry comments online. Having fun by posting cruel online messages and photographs in order to hurt someone refers to "Denigration." Intentionally leaving someone out of online groups or a social media group created for general purpose refers to "Exclusion". "Outing" is one form of cyber-bullying that involves revealing and sharing secrets or personal information about someone online. Similarly, when a person is forced to reveal personal

information and further discussing it online with several other people is termed as "Trickery."

In cyber-bullying, the bully is mostly anonymous where they create a fake ID in social networking sites and post false information about someone online. This is known as "Impersonation." Nancy Willard (2007) states "Harassment" as sending inappropriate and rude messages to someone online intended to sexually and emotionally hurt another person. It also includes abusive photographs and videos online."Cyber-stalking" is continuous harassment of another person that is highly intimidating and includes threats of their safety [11].

2.2. Traditional Bullying Vs. Cyber-bullying

Traditional Bullying is face-to-face bullying where there is direct contact between the victim and bully; exchanging rude comments and harassing another for a purpose. Here, the bully abuses a targeted individual for fun or to intentionally hurt them or to take revenge on them. The information is communicated essentially through body language and tone of voice [11]. Traditional bullying happens in an environment such as schools, classrooms, public places, streets, theaters, etc. This type of bullying takes place in an open space where the crime is seen by others and hence, the victim tends to get sympathy and support to escape or to stop the bullying.

Cyber-bullying also known as Online-bullying is a form of bullying through technological interactions. A cyber-bully can be anonymous and thus, the victim is deceived with fake information in various aspects such as age, place, profession, etc. Usage of emoticons in social media chats can help to understand the tone of information. Yet, the receiver of the message does not have any additional cues about the nature of message [3]. The perception of anonymity is what emboldens the bully [3]. On other hand, a cyber-bully can also be a person known by the victim who might abuse them to take revenge online. Cyber-bullies have a notion that they will not be caught or punished [4]. Hence, the element of fear is absent in the mindset of a bully and the crime continues on.

As a result, the intention in both forms of bullying is the same, and that is to hurt another physically, emotionally and psychologically [3]. The main element of traditional bullying is physical power. However, when using technology, their power is driven by their proficiency with technology [5].

2.3. Signs and Consequences

The act of Cyber-bullying can be observed in a victim and in a bully by noticing a change in their behavioural activities. Loneliness, humiliation and insecurity are the initial emotional responses seen in a bullying process [5]. These responses can lead to constant instability in the emotional, social or behavioural and academic aspects for a cyber bully and victim. Lack of proper monitoring of children and their cyber life, can lead to serious problems [6].

The predictable consequences for students subjected to online bullying are depression, hopelessness, and withdrawal [2]. Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, and Finkelhor, (2006) stated depression is perhaps the most frequently citied correlate to bullying [12].

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Cyber-bullying is a small but prominent part of the Cyber Crime branch. It is an emerging trend but a very grave crime that hardly has any legal code set of regulations to punish the abuser and to safeguard the victim. A study conducted by McAfee, part of Intel Security as reported by The Indian Express newspaper in 2014 states that almost 52% of India's youth have access over social media websites during their schooling [1]. The age restriction in registering social media networking sites especially Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Snapchat, etc is 13 years, considering that to be the age where the child has the maturity to understand and handle social media.

4. AIM

To critically analyse the use of social media among school students in Chennai with the help of Traditional Media.

5. OBJECTIVES

- To understand the use of social media networking sites among school students in Chennai.

- To analyse the knowledge of cyber-bullying among school students in Chennai.

- To evaluate the impact of traditional media in creating awareness among the school students.

- To understand the role of parents and Educational Institutions in cyber-bullying among adolescents.

6. METHODOLOGY

A mixed methodology was applied involving two methods- Qualitative and Quantitative research methodology.

A Pre-survey was conducted to know the initial level of awareness among the school students. Drama, a form of traditional media was incorporated to teach the school students. The different types of cyber-bullying, its signs and consequences and the preventive steps to stop cyber-bullying were presented to the students of various schools in Chennai (ages 13 to 16 years). A drama was conducted in four schools each - two Tamil medium and two English medium schools. A total of 120 students were surveyed i.e. 30 students from each school represented the sample of the study. It was then followed by a post-survey, which was taken among the same set of students followed by a drama. The results are quantified with the help of various parameters and the interpretation is given in the findings section.

Additionally, to understand the role of parents and educational institutions in preventing the threats of cyber-bullying, an in-depth interview with psychologist was taken.

7. FINDINGS

7.1. Student's Perspective

The majority of the English medium students were second generation users with a solid support at home. But the majority of Tamil medium students were first generation users entering the Cyber world for the first time. The difference in such backgrounds among the students life has led to a difference in their perception and knowledge of cyber-bullying and its effects. In comparison between English and Tamil medium schools, the following results have been analysed.
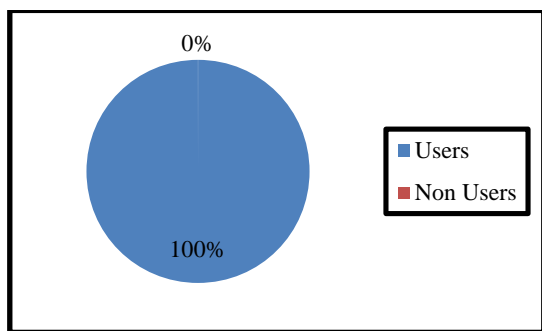
Fig. 1: Social Media users in English Medium schools

In English medium, 100% of the students are active in social media. On the other hand, in Tamil medium only 24% of the students are on social media whereas the majority of 76% are not (See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).
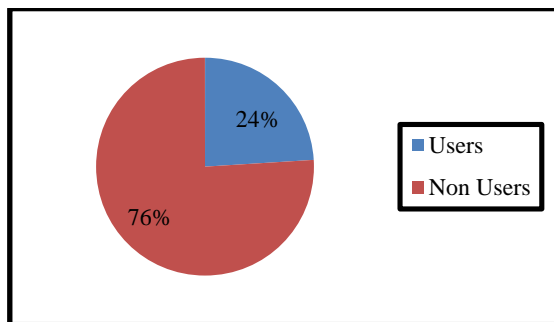

Fig. 2: Social Media users in Tamil Medium schools

The drama proved to be an effective medium as there is an observable change in their knowledge regarding cyber-bullying after the presentation. Three types of cyber-bullying - flaming, denigration, and outing - were tested for understanding and a positive trend was found. Before the drama, none of the English medium students were aware of flaming. Afterwards, 54% grasped the concept. Similarly, the students who understood denigration escalated from 23% to

46% and from 14% to 39% for outing. In the Tamil medium schools, the understanding of flaming went from no students before the drams, to 23% afterwards. Similarly the change was from 27% to 67% for denigration and 13% to 57% for outing.
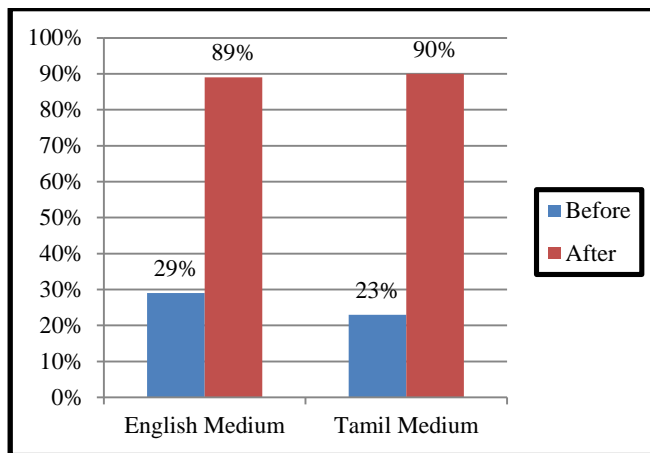

Fig. 3: Impact of drama on understanding the role of adults

In another factor tested, it was found that about 29% of the students of English medium knew to involve an adult immediately to solve the problem. This understanding spread to 89% of the students after the drama. In the Tamil medium schools, 23% of the students were aware of this measure before the drama, and 90% became aware afterwards (See Fig. 3).
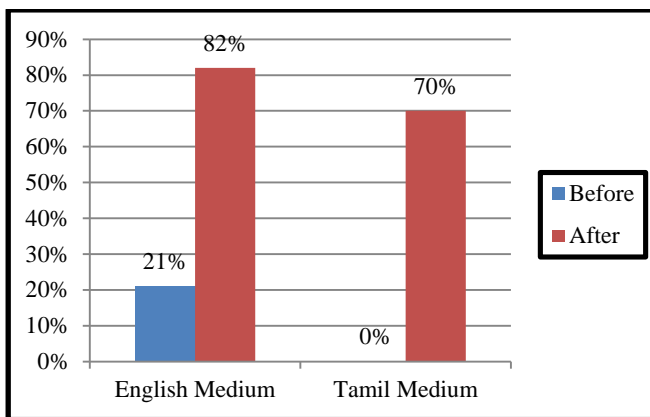

Fig. 4: Impact of drama on understanding screenshot concept

An important step that was assessed and later portrayed in the drama, was the concept of taking a screenshot immediately after being cyber-bullied. Only 21% of the English medium students and none of the Tamil medium students were aware of this before the drama. After its presence in the drama, it was understood by 82% of the English medium students and 70% of the Tamil medium students (See Fig. 4).

7.2. Role of Parents

Based on the survey, about 93% of parents of English medium students are active in social media and all of the parents are aware of their child's online activities. None of the parents of Tamil medium students are on social media and only 33% are aware of their child's online activities. This indicates that parents' personal involvement in social media increases their understanding of the activities that take place on such platforms.

During an interview with Dr. Christina Augustine, a Clinical Psychologist Consultant from Chennai expressed that even though modern values have been transfused in our culture and family, many families still follow the age-old tradition of patriarchal society where children are not very open with their parents and share information about their lives. Living in a life surrounded by gadgets, Dr. Augustine recommends parents to have a scheduled monitoring of all their children's online life. Parents should also register in social media sites where the child is registered, so that they can monitor certain activities of the child such as the child's friends, posts, role model, photographs etc.

7.3. Role of Educational Institutions

According to a few counselors in school, they feel that the impacts of online bullying is highly noticeable in their day-to-day behaviour. They also mentioned that, by noticing their student's academic records and their performance in school one can Fig. out if they are being bullied. A few of the noticeable changes are, losing interest in school activities, gets low grades and often seem to be distracted and gloomy, the child will suddenly seem fearful and will avoid going to school or anywhere outside. A counseling center for the school must be mandatory. Many of the institutes have a counseling center where the child has a person to come and talk to and address the issue. Unless the activities and the behavior of the students are observed it is difficult to trace the issue.

8. SUGGESTIONS

Knowledge on proper use of social media networking sites and its effects has to be educated among the people irrespective of age. Parent-child relationship is an important aspect in a child's life. If a child isn't on good terms with his/her parents or lacks proper parental monitoring system, the child is more likely to become a cyber-bully. Educating parents is a need for the hour with respect to cyber-bullying. Parents are not updated with the current trend and technological usage. Hence, they are not aware of the online life of the children. A counseling center for a school is mandatory. Many of the institutions have a counseling center where the child has someone they can talk to and address the issue. Unless the activities and the behavior of the students are observed it is difficult to trace the issue.

9. CONCLUSION

In this study, the usage and understanding about social networking websites and its threat was analysed using a Quantitative method. Traditional media has played an important role as an effective medium in capturing the students' perspective and knowledge on this subject. There was a visible change in their knowledge after the drama. This was later analysed quantitatively to generate the findings measuring parameters.

With these findings, an in-depth interview with a Psychologist, and feedback from counselors helped in receiving qualitative information about the role of parents and educational institutions in preventing cyber-bullying. The study clearly mentions that parents having knowledge over online activities play an important role to understanding and overcoming the issue if it arises with their child. This difference was observed in our findings among first-generation and second-generation users. Having a strong support system is the basis of prevention of such happenings. Coherence in creating up a system must consist of not only their family members but also the school environment where the child spends most of their time.

10. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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