

Exploring Cyber Harassment among Youth Who Use Social Media

Jannat-E-Tajreen Momo

Research Fellow

Mphil student, Department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka

Abstract

This is an anthropological research which studies cyber harassment on social media among the young people of University of Dhaka. Cyber harassment is an umbrella term and consists several harassing behaviors. There is no concrete definition of it. In general, it is defined as intentional and repeated behavior that is directed to someone through the digital platforms in order to disturb, harm or scare them. Social media is a digital communication platform which is used most by almost all age group around the world. In our country, young people are the main user of social media platforms. So, this study is very relevant in the context of our country to understand cyber harassment. Anthropological methods and its core theoretical tenets which encourage in-depth study of any issue have provided a good framework to this research. This study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods including ten in-depth interviews and a questionnaire based online survey with fifty informants. The present study observes young user's perception regarding cyber harassment, the nature of cyber harassment from user's personal experience in social media. Several factors like technical skills, knowledge regarding social media, gender, capital, social network etc. play a great role in shaping their perception. This study also illuminates young people's understanding of cyber harassment, reasons behind their mild or severe dichotomy of harassment and activities that are considered as cyber harassment by them. This study also explores the nature and extent of cyber harassment from young people's personal experience on social media. It also observes user's awareness on personal security through the safety measures they follow to stay safe and the strategies they take after facing cyber harassment on social media. The whole study has been analyzed using Arjun Appadurai's Technoscapes theory, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital and symbolic violence. This study concludes with a summary of the whole research, some additional opinion of the participants about this research and the role of anthropologists to work in this issue.

Keywords-*Cyber Harassment, Social Media, Youth, Young People, Bangladesh, Bullying, Technology, Privacy, Anonymous, Sexual Harassment, Perception, Facebook, Hack, Anthropology*

1. Introduction

Technological advancement is often equated with the advancement of human society. People are now exclusively dependent on technology and we can see its influence on all spheres of our life. Internet has provided a new platform for our communication system and it is also one of the most important sources of knowledge in the present digitalized world.

One important contribution of internet in our communication system is "Social Media". According to Merriam Webster dictionary, social media is forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). Technology turned the globe into a village and social media turned it into a community. With the emergence of social media platforms, they have been used in raising awareness and mobilizing for social causes around the world (Nwabueze & Oduah 2014). Social media is the blessing of modern society which has speeded up our communication and strengthened our bonding by

connecting with Family, Friends, relatives and well-wishers. It has also become a platform for education, learning, seminar, training, symposium, webinar, online shopping, business, entertainment, gaming, protest, awareness and what not.

But these online platforms are in one hand a empowering tool but on the other hand it can also be a platform for abuse, harassment, negativity and cyber-crime. Thus, social media can play dual role at the same time. The increased connectivity of online environment with the emergence of social media has given rise to a long range of communication crimes like cyber harassment (Chowdhury 2019).

Cyber harassment is an umbrella term which means it encompasses a number of harassing online behaviors. According to European Institute for Gender Equality, "Cyber Harassment is harassment by means of email, text (or online) messages on the internet." UNICEF defines Cyberbullying as "bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behavior, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted. Examples include- spreading lies about or posting embarrassing photos of someone on social media, sending hurtful messages or threats via messaging platforms, impersonating someone and sending mean messages to others on their behalf."

Cyber harassment incidents can be committed against individuals, property, organizations or society. This study will mainly focus on harassments that are committed against individual level. In the vision-2021 project, the government of Bangladesh took different steps including the development and increased use of information and communication technology to make Bangladesh digitalized. But the facilities and usefulness of cyber-technology are often spoiled by some negativity like cyber harassment. Cyber-technology is often misused to conduct many fraudulent activities mostly on social media platforms. To increase the positive usages of social media, these negative aspects should be strictly tackled.

Social media usage has become a part and parcel of the modern age youth and their lives in Bangladesh. As no invention is free from its drawbacks, social media is also like this. It can also facilitate numerous online risks such as – cyber harassment, cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, sexting, morphing, Facebook cloning, privacy violation, access to controversial and illegitimate material, harmful effects on mental health etc. Among all the social media platforms, Facebook is the most popular app in Bangladesh. There were 52,958,100 Facebook users in Bangladesh in October 2021, which accounted for 6% of its entire population. People aged between 18 to 24 were the largest user group (23,200,000) which is 42.2% of the total Facebook users in Bangladesh. (NapoleonCat.com 2020) As young people are the largest user group of social media in our country, they are also in some vulnerable position of online risks. This study has explored the issue of cyber harassment among young social media users. There are many studies on cyber harassment issue but most of those studies are largely focused on women's and teenager or adolescent people's experiences. This study has included both male and female participants to get both perspectives and more focused picture. Their experience on social media, generalized perception regarding cyber harassment and their awareness level has been studied in this research.

2. Research Objectives:

- To identify user's perception on cyber harassment.
- To illustrate the nature of cyber harassment from user's personal experience in social media.
- To observe their awareness on personal security on social media.

3. Materials and methodology

3.1. Research approach: This study used a mixed-method approach to accomplish the research objectives. Mixed method approach combines both qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

3.2. Study area: This study has been conducted among the current Undergraduate and Graduate students of Dhaka University who are connected with social media. It has limited the cyber area field to Facebook, Messenger, Instagram and Whatsapp apps and has studied cyber harassment incidents that occurred in these social networking platforms.

3.3. Methods of data collection: Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data that the researcher collect from the field are considered as primary sources of data. In this research,

primary data has been collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Observation, Semi-structured interview, Case study, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Netnography methods were used in qualitative methods with open-ended questions. For quantitative data, questionnaire based online survey has been used where close-ended questions have been asked. Qualitative methods have been used to gain in-depth insight about user's perception, experience and awareness level. Quantitative methods have been used for statistical representation and some general view. Some secondary sources of data regarding cyber harassment in social media, how it impacts the young population of Bangladesh and what's their general perception about this issue have been explored. Secondary data has been collected from Books, Articles, Newspapers, Relevant Government documents, policy and law, International organization's report and research, Relevant national study report and documents of different NGO's, Website & Social media.

3.4. Sampling: Sampling is necessary when a researcher is studying variables in a population of diverse elements. Sampling is time efficient and budget friendly as it is easier to study a sample instead of an entire population. Since this is an in-depth study and in-depth research needs knowledgeable informants, not just responsive respondents — that is, individuals who are chosen purposefully, not spontaneously, so this study has used the techniques of "Purposive or judgment sampling". Purposive sampling has been used in this study where researcher relies on his/her own judgement while choosing the number of informants to participate in the study.

3.5. Sample size: The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines "youth", as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. But for detail understanding and time limitation this study has selected young people between the ages of 20-25 years as research informant. The study has collected both qualitative and quantitative data for this research. Qualitative data were collected from 10 in-depth interviews where 6 respondents were female and 4 respondents were male. All of them were graduate and undergraduate students in University of Dhaka. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire-based Google form where both open-ended and close ended questions were included. The sample size was 50.

3.6. Data analysis: Qualitative data has been analyzed using "Thematic analysis" technique. Quantitative data has been analyzed using frequency analysis through Google form.

4. Theoretical Framework

The whole study has been analyzed using Arjun Appadurai's Technoscapes theory, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital and symbolic violence.

Technoscapes

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has introduced "5 Scales" of globalization to discuss the global cultural flow and acceleration of globalization. Those 5 scales or flows are- Ethnoscapes, Technoscapes, Ideoscapes, Financescapes, and Mediascapes. Technoscapes refer to the flow of technology. It denotes to the way technologies help in speeding up cross-border movements. By technoscape, he meant that now-a-days technologies move at high speeds across various kinds of previously unaffected boundaries. Appadurai introduced two types of technology. They are- Mechanical technology and information technology. Mechanical technology is technology which is rooted in physical form such as machinery, gadgets, handheld devices, cars and so on. This is the type of technoscape that has existed throughout much of human history. The other form of technology is informational technology, which means virtual technologies involving telecommunications and software. A significant implication of the spread of information and communication technology is social media. Technoscape has eased communication beyond territory. As a result, it has created features like free speech, free access and free flow of information on those communication platforms. Social media is a major example of it. But, the very nature of social media is that it has turned a vast amount of private information about a person into public information. This often led to misuse of information. Free access of social media is sometimes used by some perpetrators to misuse people's information and harass them.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital has been used in this study. In capital theory three types of capitals have been discussed by Bourdieu – economic capital, social capital and the cultural capital. Economic capital refers to which that is convertible to money such as money, land and cash. Cultural capital may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications. The social capital refers to the social obligations and the networks which people use as a beneficial way in time of hardship (Bourdieu 1986). Drawing on theory of capital of Bourdieu, this study has tried to explore the use and usefulness of social capital, economic capital and cultural capital. In this research this theory has assisted to focus on how different capitals have influenced in perceiving cyber harassment, building technological skills, awareness, knowledge and taking steps against cyber harassment. All these three capitals are interrelated and one capital enables a person to achieve the other capital.

In this study, money has been defined as economic capital, kin and friends as social capital and technological skills, knowledge and efficiency as cultural capital. These three types of capital will work as means by which users' social media usage, importance, skill, knowledge, experiences and ability to tackle cyber harassment cases are determined in the cyber space. Bourdieu's capital theory has been used to explain that how economic, social and cultural capital play a key role in user's perception development, user's experience of being a victim of cyber harassment, in taking steps against cyber harassment and maintaining personal security on social media. This study finds that users having these three capitals are more likely to have better knowledge about social media and cyber harassment than people who don't have these capitals. That's why they have a developed perception about cyber harassment and are very aware about their personal security on social media. Moreover, they are less likely to face the negativities of social media like cyber harassment.

Symbolic violence

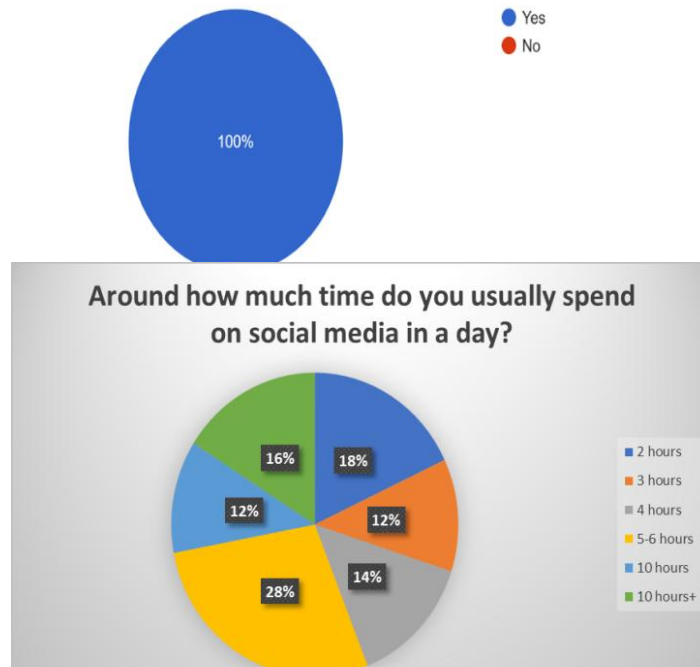
Symbolic violence is a term coined by Pierre Bourdieu, a prominent 20th-century French sociologist, and appears in his works as early as the 1970s (Bourdieu et al. 2013). Symbolic violence describes a type of non-physical violence manifested in the power differential between social groups (Bourdieu 1992). It is often unconsciously agreed upon by both parties and is manifested in an imposition of the norms of the group possessing greater social power on those of the subordinate group. Symbolic violence theory has been used to explain that some forms of cyber harassment like trolling, bullying, sexual harassment and mean comments are often conducted towards the subordinate groups of society in terms of gender, physical appearance, color, religion, sexual orientation, political view etc. This is an indirect form of aggression which symbolically portray the subordination of a specific group of people through cyber harassment.

5. Discussion

5.1. Cyber Harassment & Users' Perception:

Increase in technological ways of communicating with one another has opened up a new platform for bullying, which is called Cyber harassment (Case 2007). There is no established and concrete definition of the term cyber harassment. Researchers, International organizations, Government, NGO's have defined it in many ways. There are multiple aspects of defining cyber harassment. From the field data and observation, this study has also found that people's understanding and perception about cyber harassment differ from each other in many respects. So, it is not possible to generalize their understanding of cyber harassment in one single definition. It has been found that their knowledge vastly depends on their social media usage, importance of social media to them, technical skills regarding social media, purposes for using social media and so on. The present study observes young user's perception regarding cyber harassment. Several factors like technical skills, knowledge regarding social media, gender, capital, social network etc. play a great role in shaping their perception. Users' basic information has been collected to observe their perception and to grasp their viewpoint more accurately. Informants' engagement with social media is very important to have their perception. That's why they were asked whether they use social media or not. The result is given below-

Are you a Social media User? (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Instagram etc)
50 responses



For what purposes do you use social media? You can select from the list.
50 responses

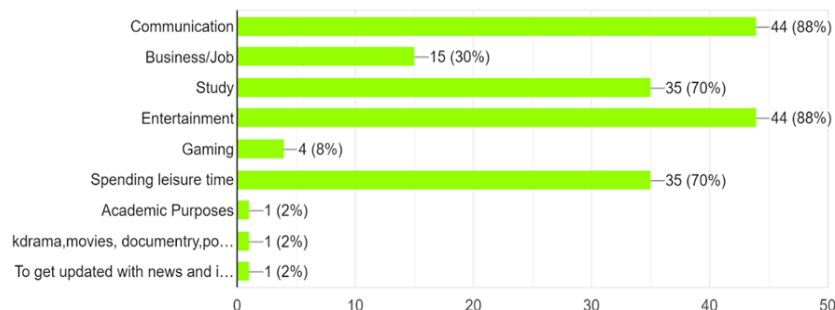


Figure 1: User's Basics (Source-fieldwork 2021)

The study found that more engagement with social media and using social media for various purposes have an impact on the user's perception. This study tried to understand how they define it and the boundary line for considering any activity as cyber harassment. After providing basic information, informants were asked about what they understand by cyber harassment. Here are some definitions provided by them-

"Doing something on social media that disturb, scare, insult, harm or put the person in an uncomfortable situation. Doing something that violate the offline norms boundaries values which can affect the user's privacy." (Mumu, 24 years old undergraduate student)

"Cyber harassments are also known as online bullying. It has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers, as the digital sphere has expanded and technology has advanced." (Mamun, 24 years old graduate student)

“Disturbing someone through social medias such as posting photos without permission, bullying, insulting someone in social media, body shaming, racism and many more things...” (Rahaat, 23 years old undergraduate student)

These are few statements. From all the definitions, the most common issues were bullying, sexual harassment and disturbing someone online. Informants have also mentioned the activities which they consider as cyber harassment on social media. The types that they mentioned as cyber harassment are not all same. Some activities were considered as situational cyber harassment and some were mentioned as cyber harassment by almost all of them. This study has observed that law regarding cyber-crime, available information, individual's mentality, situation, gender, education, technical skills, knowledge about social media etc. act as influencing factors in considering any activity on social media as cyber harassment. The type of activities that the informants defined as cyber harassment are given below-

1. Hacking social media account
2. Mean comments or posts toward someone
3. Sexual harassment
4. Bullying
5. Using someone's identity and information online without their consent
6. Sending pornographic content without consent
7. Forcing/giving threats/scaring to get into a relationship
8. Personally, attacking someone online for their physical appearance, religion, race, ethnic identity, political views etc.
9. Spreading rumors, lies, gossips or misinformation about a person
10. Sending messages or calling someone without permission
11. Trolling
12. Leaking someone's personal photos or information
13. Blackmailing
14. Defaming others online
15. Revenge porn (Revenge porn is the distribution of private and sexual materials of the lover with whom he/she was in an intimate relationship)
16. Editing anyone's photos intentionally to harass them
17. Pretending to be the actual victim

A questionnaire-based survey was also conducted where informants were asked that which activities on the social media they consider as cyber harassment. They were asked to select from the above list and add other activities also which are not included in the list. The figure is given below-

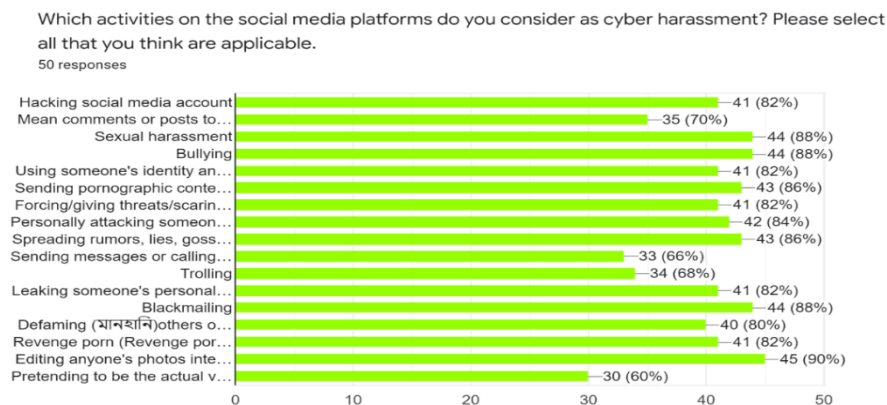


Figure 2: Cyber harassment activities (Source-fieldwork 2021)

We know that in the offline harassment cases, there are some level of severity. Not all forms of harassment are considered as very severe and the steps taken against harassments vastly depend on the level of severity of the harassment. This study has also tried to understand if the case is similar on online platforms too or not. Attention were given to understand the boundary line and underlying reasons for considering any cyber harassment case as mild, severe or ignorable. From the in-depth interviews, it has been found that some forms of cyber harassments are considered as mild and some as severe form of cyber harassment. This study tried to understand the mediating factors and the boundary line for considering an activity as mild/severe form of harassment. In the study questionnaire, informants were asked to select the mild form of harassments and add other types that are not included there. The figure is given below-

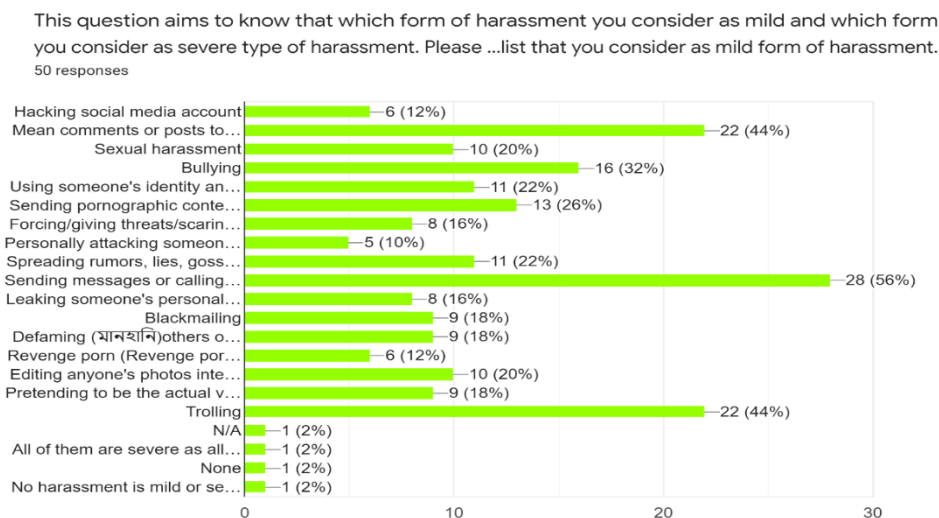


Figure 3: Mild form of cyber harassment (Source-fieldwork 2021)

From the above list we can see that 27(56.3%) people consider sending messages or calling someone without permission as mild form of harassment. Mean comments or posts toward someone is considered mild harassment by 21(43.8%) people and trolling is considered mild by 21(43.8%) people. Besides, four informants opined that no cyber harassment is mild and denied to make mild/severe differences. According to them, all type of cyber harassments should be considered as severe because all these reasons make someone suffer in the social media platform. During the in-depth interview, it has been tried to understand the underlying reasons for considering any harassment as mild/severe. The following reasons were mentioned by the informants while considering any cyber harassment as mild- Indirect criticism, Easily stoppable, Access control, Trend, Mild consequence and Situational.

This study also tried to situate cyber harassment by asking informants that what kind of problem cyber harassment on social media is. Majority informants (80%) of this study opined that cyber harassment on social media is a major problem. 20% people think that it is situational major or minor problem. The percentage of considering it as minor and ignorable issue is null. The study tried to articulate the general perception of informants about the nature of cyber harassment. The interviews have been analyzed later to extract the themes of their perception which are discussed below-

Perpetrator- Megan Lindsay and Judy Krysik (2012) in their article “Online Harassment Among College Students” showed that people are mostly harassed by their known ones on social media and harassment from strangers are relatively lower. The present study has also found similar information. Cyber harassment can be committed by both known people and strangers. From the interviews, it has been found that people think that cyber harassments can be mostly done by known people. They think that strangers don’t have that much access in someone’s social media account like known people. Moreover, strangers don’t even know that much about

the specific person to harass them. Though sometimes strangers send disturbing messages or put bad comments, it can be easily managed by setting the privacy of the user's social media account. Strangers can harass only in public posts or public comment section. They think that celebrities and popular online persons can be harassed by strangers. But mass people mostly face it from known people and the severity of the type of harassment from known people can be drastic in some cases. Most informants think that cyber harassment from strangers become severe in very few cases. Known people mostly hide their identity while harassing someone or commit indirect harassment. In very few cases, their identity is open. Orsha(pseudonym) said *"Strangers also harass on social media but I don't think they are the main perpetrator. People mostly face it from known people. Some people use their acquaintance and access as a weapon to throw hurtful, sexually explicit and disturbing hate speech to people. Sometimes friends and cousins constantly mock and insult the people in the name of fun on social media. Some people share their Facebook password with their lover and in some cases when the couple break up their relation, their ex-lover use the personal information to harass their ex. A stranger can never go that much."* She meant that cyber harassment from strangers can't take that much severity as people can handle it by blocking or ignoring. But, due to increased access, cyber harassment from known people often take severe and drastic consequences.

Vulnerable group- Anyone can become victim of cyber harassment on social media. But some groups are more vulnerable to it. From interviews, it was found that they consider young people, women, children, third gender, LGBT and some minority groups as vulnerable group who are mostly the victim of cyber harassment. But, based on age group, they consider young people as the most vulnerable group. People aged between 15-24 are considered as young people according to UNICEF. The number of young social media users is increasing (Solove 2010). Solove called this generation as "Generation Google" because the fragments of their personal information, whether it's an experience of cyber harassment or normal experience, will remain on the social media forever (Solove 2010). That's why young people are in the grave danger for cyber harassment on social media (Solove 2010).

Shovon, 22 years old male undergraduate student, said *"...People remain emotional at a young age. Young people often do something on social media from their emotion without thinking that much and knowing the consequence. They easily make friends on online due to curiosity and excitement, easily share their personal information and are often driven by emotion. Young people have less experience regarding life and online environment which often led them in a difficult situation to tackle cyber harassment."*

Another informant named Orsha (pseudonym), 23 years old female undergraduate student opined *"15-25 is the age when people remain in educational level. At this age, young people have increased fascination towards social media. They add their real-life friends, online friends and some random people in their social media account. Being younger, they often don't understand the risks of giving access to so many people and sharing personal information. People get really busy with marriage, career, job after the young age. So, they don't get that much time to use the phone or social media. Fascination towards social media is also lower among them. I think that's why they are not in that much danger like young people. Moreover, social media has opened access to vulgar contents, pornography and other nudity for everyone. It creates moral degradation among young people. They are exposed to these obscene at an early age which is creating a really bad situation and often they send these contents to others without even knowing that it's harassment. Children are also exposed to these risks. People have a decent way to know about intercourse but from social media children and young people are exposed to vulgar contents before their maturity. I think immature people mostly harass others. Matured people never do this. That's why cyber harassment incidents are so widespread among young people."*

Vast Audiences - There are several differences between offline and online harassments. If we want to understand the cyber harassment incidents properly, we need to understand some specialty of social media environment. Social media provides its users increased access to their social networks. Unlike face-to-face conversations, individuals can engage with a large number of individuals on social media (Citron 2014). This issue of engaging with large number of audiences sometimes makes cyber harassment cases drastic and even more painful. One informant named Shovon said that *"Sometimes cyber harassment effects can be really drastic*

because these harassment issues often resurface online and haunt forever. But in real life there is nothing like this." This is really true that the leaked photos, mean comments and posts, fake profiles, leaked screenshots etc. remain on online forever. With legal help and social media's security settings, some issues like fake profiles, revenge porn, leaked photos and videos can be tackled. But, due to increased audiences, these leaked things are often shared by people in inbox messaging which can never be controlled. Some mean comments, posts remain forever on social media which haunt the victim year after year. No one can compensate the victim whose social media account was hacked and personal information were leaked and used to harass them. Steps can be taken to recover the account but when everyone can see how you were harassed, your personal information, photos, videos, mean comments and posts towards you then it becomes really difficult to overcome. One female informant of this study was harassed on Facebook by her ex-boyfriend back in 2014. Her ex-boyfriend created a fake profile with her name and later started to leak her intimate photos on that profile. She just went viral among her friends and people started to share her leaked photos in inbox messaging. Later the fake profile was banned by multiple reports. But the photos that were shared via inbox are still there in people's messenger share item now in 2021 too. Still, when people start gossips about her harassment, they share those things in inbox again and which is impossible to stop forever actually. So, we can understand how drastic the effects of cyber harassment can be in some cases.

Online Disinhibition Effect- Social interactions through technology lack the immediate, tangible and emotional feedback that are inherent in face-to-face interactions. Suler (2004) described a phenomenon called the "Online Disinhibition Effect", which refers to greatly diminished internal censorship when communicating in cyberspace. He said, "people say and do things in cyberspace they would not ordinarily do in the face-to-face world. They loosen up, feel less restrained and express themselves more openly (Suler 2004:321)." Similar opinion has been found from the informants.

Afnan, 25 years old undergraduate female student, said that *"real life norms and courtesy are often maintained loosely on social media. People often conduct some activities on online which they will never do in their real life. In case of real-life harassment issues the victim can give on spot reaction and take steps at once. But on social media the victim cannot give any immediate feedback. They can highest block and report the harasser's profile. How many people think of taking legal action? Who wants to go through legal procedures for cyber harassment? Harassments on social medias are not even considered as harassment by most people. That's why the perpetrators are gaining more courage to commit such harassments."*

Normalization- Erum Hafeez in her article "Cyber Harassment and its implications on youth in Pakistan" said that majority cyber harassment victims do not label it as harassment and consequently never report it (Hafeez 2014). She conducted this study among 100 university students. This current study has also found this theme. The most common theme that the study got from the in-depth interviews is that Cyber harassments issues on social media have been normalized in our society. Tori(pseudonym), 22 years old female undergraduate, said that *"Cyber harassments are continuously occurring in social medias are prove that it has been normalized. People don't take it seriously and don't even raise voice against it. You can see that any popular celebrity's issue of cyber harassment will remain hot topic of the social media for two days and later everyone forgets it. So, you can clearly understand what the normal people go through daily if the celebrities and popular persons are not safe online. You say anyone about your cyber harassment experiences and they will not even define it as harassment by saying that come on your issue is nothing...this happens with everyone...that's not serious...people face even more dangerous things. They just pay no heed to it and blow up the issue."* Araf(pseudonym) said that he was repeatedly harassed by a gay on social media. The perpetrator had some mutual friends with him. Earlier the harasser used to comment on his photos and repeatedly used to invite him in his house for meal. After some days the harasser started sending sexually explicit messages to him. Araf blocked him at once but the perpetrator also sent him messages from other accounts. The victim was totally unable to share his stories with someone as he is a boy and cyber harassment incidents have been normalized in most cases of our society. He said that *"I was unable to share this with anyone because people either say that come on this is nothing...happens to everyone or they will laugh with it. They would say that how a boy can be*

harassed online and would not even define it as harassment. Rather I would become a joke to them for defining it as harassment."

Anonymity- Citron in her book "Civil Rights in our Information age" (2010) showed some forms of cyber harassment that have been possible due to anonymity. Internet provides its users with the facility to remain anonymous so that anyone can express anything freely. But cyber harassers often use this as a weapon to hide behind the screens and hide their identity while harassing someone. This feature of harassment is only possible in the online platforms only and differs from offline harassment. Orsha(pseudonym) said that *"The facility of remaining anonymous on social media has increased the chance of cyber harassment. Harassers think that there is no fear of being caught if they remain anonymous. Suppose if a boy harasses a girl in offline then the girl may slap him at once or scold and protest on the spot. Based on the severity she can even file a complaint to the police. But on social media the case is totally different. If the harasser remains anonymous, you will not even get to know by whom you were harassed. Even if you know who he/she is, you will not be able to give any immediate feedback."* I was also told by my other informants that there are also some people from our acquaintance who never harass in offline but take a totally different form on online. Some people often say some things on online which they will never say to the person in real life. Sometimes these are normal conversations and sometimes this takes the form of cyber harassment.

Real world impact- People's cultural practice in everyday life has got a new platform through internet (Solove 2010). Undoubtedly, social media is one such platform of internet. According to Lisa et al. (2012), online behaviors are an extension of or is similar to social behavior in the face-to-face world. Sometimes people have bad relation, conflicts and dilemma in real life relationship with people and use the online platform as a weapon to take revenge of those conflicts (Lisa et al. 2012). People are often harassed online for their opinion, worldview, race, religion, body image, gender, political view, taste or choice, jealousy etc. One of my male informants said without mentioning his name that *"boys who are often bullied in offline for not having beard, not being tall and masculine. You can see that these offline bully victims face even more cyber harassment on social media from their friends. They are constantly facing mockery, insult and bully on the comment section and posts."* So, we can see that facing cyber harassment from known people also have a connection with offline relationship and issues. Zihad(pseudonym), 24 years old undergraduate student of Dhaka university said that *"this has become really disturbing that we often face cyber harassment from the power party's political students for expressing our opinions and views on online. They often give threats and often life threats for removing our Facebook status and give threatening messages for our opinion. This is really nonsense."*

Unregulated free speech- Danielle Citron in her book "Hate crime in cyber space" (2014) conceptualized the conflicts between free speech and privacy. She rejects the view that one must stay thick-skinned online to tolerate cyber harassment in the name of free speech protection (Citron 2014). We should, as Citron argues, reject the superficial romanticization of the Internet as the last edge of true freedom. (Citron 2014). She said that social media can be both a uniquely powerful medium for freedom of speech and also a powerful medium for hate crimes as well (Citron 2014). Social media has provided a place for everyone to freely share their thoughts and literally avail almost all possible sorts of entertainment and freedom of speech. It has become an open space of true freedom which is really good but not free from its negative sides. Not everyone define freedom similarly. Opinions differ, perceptions differ and this difference creates a very difficult situation on social media. Tori(pseudonym) said that *"people consider social media as their personal property where they can say anything to anyone and they consider this to be their freedom. Freedom of the individual doesn't mean saying anything to anyone, freedom means taking about your rights. I think the concept of freedom on social media is defined wrongly. People often post mean comments on the comment section and harassing comments towards someone. But when you ask them about it or protest it then they will say that, this is my social media account...I'm using my account and buying mobile data with my money, so I can say anything and I can use this account for any purpose...what's your problem?...this is not your father's property. You can see how nonsense their definition of freedom is. If you say further to these people, they will start victim blaming and personal attack towards you."* The social media environment has become really toxic for unregulated free speech. People often don't understand that there should be a boundary in free speech. They don't recognize that the norms and

values of speech that are maintained offline should also be maintained online too. This absence of boundary in free speech often violate the privacy of users on social media. Without any strict regulations from the authority, this issue is impossible to stop and cyber harassment issues will continue to rise.

Misuse of public information- Arjun appadurai's concept to technoscapes describe how internet technology has enabled communication throughout the world where the existing territories of the countries are not a barrier. As a result, information that were used to be private once has turned into public information. This study found that people consider celebrities, public figure, popular persons and social media influencers as a major victim of cyber harassment. User's think that people who can't keep their social media account, their online and offline circle private because of being a popular person often fall victim to cyber harassment because a vast amount of their information remain public. People who are not popular figure can keep their social media account private and share less information over there. But popular persons don't have this opportunity. Public figure, social media influencers, celebrities are followed by a large number of people. That's they need to provide constant update on social media. Thus, a vast amount of information about them remain public on those platforms which can be easily misused by anyone as social media provide free access to everyone. Tori(pseudonym) said that *"Mass people consider the comment section of the popular persons as public property where they can write anything they want. They also open fake accounts using their photos. They think that social media is their own property where they can do anything. As the profiles of celebrities remain public, they target them."*

5.2. Nature and Extent of Cyber Harassment:

This study also explores the nature and extent of cyber harassment from young people's personal experience on social media. According to NapoleonCat, people aged between 18 to 24 are the largest user group (18,300,000) of the most popular social media platform Facebook which is 42.2% of the total Facebook users in Bangladesh. As young people are the largest user group of social media in our country, understanding their experiences are very important for understanding Cyber harassment issues on social media. 66% respondents of this study said that they have faced cyber harassment on social media and 33% said that they have never been harassed on social media platforms. The types of cyber harassments that informants have mentioned are- hacking social media account, mean comments or posts towards them, sexual harassment, bullying, using someone's identity and information online without their consent, sending pornographic content without consent, forcing/giving threats/scaring to get into a relationship, personally, attacking someone online for their physical appearance, religion, race, ethnic identity, political views etc., spreading rumors, lies, gossips or misinformation about a person, sending messages or calling someone without permission, trolling, leaking someone's personal photos or information, blackmailing, defaming others online, revenge porn (Revenge porn is the distribution of private and sexual materials of the lover with whom he/she was in an intimate relationship), editing their photos intentionally to harass them and pretending to be the actual victim.

From the in-depth interview, the researcher gets to know more detail about their cyber harassment experiences. Some of those are given below-

"A fake Instagram account using all my pictures (from both Instagram and FB and that of some Indian girls as well) was opened which had more followers than my actual account. So, when the fake account reported me, I lost my actual account. And plenty more harassment stories really!" (Sabah, 22 years old female undergraduate student)

Samiha said, *"My ex-boyfriend had started harassing me after our breakup by distributing my number to his friends online and for what I had to change my number.... That was annoying because people called all the day it deteriorated me mentally."*

Rifat, 20 years old undergraduate male student said, *"One of my friends publicly posted a proposal from my timeline after hacking my account."*

Suranjit, 21 years old undergraduate male student said, *"People spread rumors about my personal life. Bullied for my political and religious views."*

Kaniz, 23 years old graduate female student said, *“She was my varsity junior. Stole my picture and claimed that I am a bad girl and I’m using other girls’ picture for promotion of my business... In real I Have no business pages.”*

It has been observed that social media platform facilitates free speech, free access and free flow of information which have both positive and negative implications (Solove 2010). Majority informants of this study stated that they were aware of those online traps type on social media before their cyber harassment case. But they were unaware of possible steps they should take during such cases. Several cyber harassment cases have been analyzed to understand the nature and extent of cyber harassment on social media among young people. Some general features about cyber harassment have been illustrated from user’s experiences. Issues like cyber Harassment and Social Domain, risks of Free access, risks due to lack of technical skills, risks due to increased social media usage have been identified. This study finds that cyber harassment has a negative impact on user’s mental health and in some cases responsible for changing personality and representation. This study describes that increased cyber harassment during pandemic is because of the relationship between lockdown and cyber harassment. Increased social media usage during pandemic is the main reason behind it.

5.3. Awareness on Personal Security:

Social media usage is increasing a lot with the fastest growing internet and technology. Around the world, people use at least one social media site. In these sites, people constantly share their personal information, data, audio, video, photos etc. Some of the information can be really confidential and if leaked in any way, this can bring several harms to users’ personal security and privacy (Citron 2014). Due to lack of enough technological knowledge, skills, education and proper arrangement of seminar, conference and symposium on cyber harassment, people often lack enough knowledge about their personal security on social media. It is true that just enough knowledge and skills regarding social media don’t solve the issue of cyber harassment fully but at least it creates a guideline of awareness among social media users. This research observes user’s awareness on personal security through the safety measures they follow to stay safe on social media and the strategies they took after facing cyber harassment on social media.

Steps taken by cyber harassment victims obviously depend on the severity, type and context of the harassment. But there are also other factors that are important here. Proper knowledge about social media security and privacy settings, awareness and technical skills are very important to use any social media account smartly with less problems like cyber harassment. These factors also help any individual to take proper steps against any cyber harassment incident. Online world is not fully akin to offline world (Suler 2004). In online platforms like social media, access and privacy can be controlled through social media settings (Suler 2004). Most of these are in the hand of social media users. Several forms of cyber harassment can be tackled by maintaining these settings. Moreover, one can secure their social media account with proper security systems so that no harm can be done to their account. Still there are some types of cyber harassment like mean comments, posts, trolling, disturbing messages and calls which cannot be stopped by setting proper security only. This study has identified the basic awareness measures that young users practice to keep them safe. Users mentioned that they properly set the security and privacy settings of the account, tactfully control the access, follow less engagement and less information sharing as a safety measure and seek help from skilled social network if necessary, to stay safe on social media from cyber harassment. Legal steps are considered as the highest steps against cyber harassment.

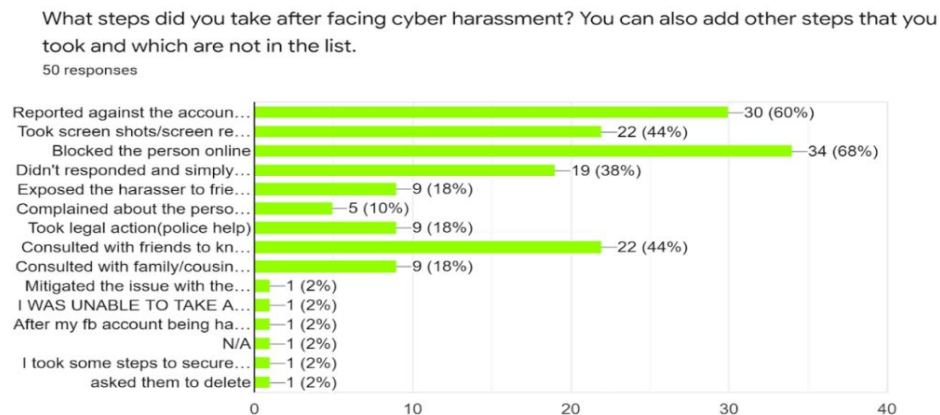


Figure 4: Awareness measures taken by users (Source-fieldwork 2021)

After facing any kind of cyber harassment, 34(68%) people have blocked that person online which is the highest taken step by people in my study. 30(60%) people said that they have reported against the account after facing harassment from that account, the rate of this step is also high. 22(44%) people took screen shots/screen recording of the cyber harassment incident as a prove for further action, 22(44%) people consulted with friends to know what steps they should take. 19(38%) people said that they didn't responded and simply ignored the cyber harassment case. 9(18%) people said that they exposed the harasser to friends/family/online platforms, 9(18%) people said that they consulted with family/cousin/relative to know what steps they should take and 9(18%) people said that they took legal action (police help) against the cyber harassment case. 5(10%) people have complained about the person to the authority in offline. There were also some other responses and each response holds 2% of the total responses. Such as- one person asked the perpetrator to delete the harassing post/comments, one person said that he/she has mitigated the issue with the harasser out of fear/peer pressure/family pressure/fear of prestige, one person said, "After my fb account was hacked, I recovered my account. Then I set two factor authentication and log in approval on to ensure my privacy and security steps." Another person said, "I took some steps to secure my social media accounts by locking Facebook profile and making Instagram account private."

The obstacles that users have faced in taking proper steps against cyber harassment have been studied. The result is given below-

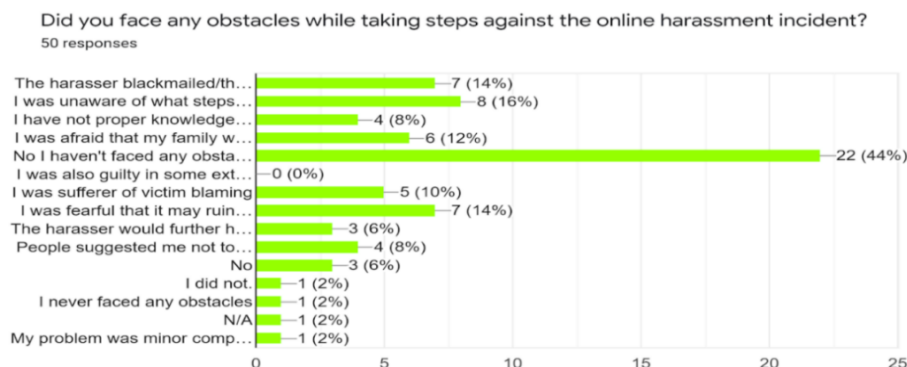


Figure 5: Obstacles faced by users while taking steps against the incident (Source-fieldwork 2021)

From the above graph we can see that 22(44%) people said that they have not faced any obstacles in taking steps against cyber harassment and this is the highest rate of responses. 8(16%) people said that they were unaware of what steps they should take, 7(14%) people said that the harasser would blackmail/give threat/scare them if

steps were taken, 7(14%) people said that they were fearful that it may ruin their reputation and prestige. 6(12%) people claimed they were afraid that their family would become angry/take the phone/blame them for the incident, 5(10%) people faced victim blaming, 4(8%) people had not proper knowledge about social media settings and unaware of those harassing traps, 4(8%) people claimed that people suggested them not to take any steps, 3(6%) people said that the harasser would further harass them more if steps were taken. The rest 7(14%) responses indicated that they didn't face any obstacles.

6. Conclusion: With the rapid development of technology, more and more people are becoming engaged with social media. It is not only a communication platform only but also used in many other purposes. It is almost noticeable that the importance of these platforms and engagement with it will increase more in future. So, it is really necessary to provide its users with a safer online environment and equal participation without obstacle on social media. But not all users have proper knowledge and opportunity to know the proper guideline of usage of these platforms which is often make them susceptible to cyber harassment. As anthropologists study culture, they can use their insights to study cyberculture. They can study what's the gap of knowledge, what factors are leading to cyber harassment, how this can be solved by studying cyberculture with micro level analysis. They can draw the attention of the policymakers to include social media related cyber harassment issues in the future policies more appropriately and strictly. They can address the issues of inequality, exclusion of some groups, privacy violation, information misuse on online platforms due to these negativities. By studying cyberculture, anthropologists can contribute with their insight to reduce cyber harassment for the inclusion of all kinds of users so that the opportunities and benefits of social media platforms are availed by all.

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