

A Jural Study on Cyber Crime Against Women in India

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Abstract: Cyber crime against women in India has been a growing concern. The rate of online harassment against women is increasing day by day. There are several laws, plans and policies in India to curb cyber crime. But due to lack of sufficient infrastructure, lack of implementation and inadequacy of cyber law enforcement, the rate is increasing. In India, it is seen that due to family pressure and fear of social isolation the victim women cannot report about the cyber crime suffered by her. For this reason this issue needs research and analysis. Present paper highlights meaning and definition of cyber crime, recent data on cyber crime against women in present India. This paper also focuses on various types of cyber crime against women in India, international provisions relating to cyber crime against women, legislative framework, plans and policies to control cyber crime and some landmark judgments relating to online harassment. This paper also examines various causes of cyber crime against women in India, conclusion and some suggestions to prevent and control cyber crime against women in India.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Online harassment, Implementation, Inadequacy.

1. Introduction

In this modern technological era, Computers and internet serves as important tools or sources for giving information. Internet has played a vital role in providing quick communication and facilitates various services for education, online businesses, advocacy, jobs, websites and entertainment. It also helps us in accomplishing our daily tasks like shopping, online banking etc. One of the communities of Internet i.e., social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter help people for sharing information and maintaining social connection.

But you know, internet has a negative side also. It plays a massive role in violence, abuse and cyber crime against women. Men and women both are victimised by this digitalization, but women have been seen more victimised than men. Recent

Research Report by the World Health Organization shows that one in 3 women will have felt cyber crime in her life and the report also shows that one in ten women have already experienced a type of cyber crime since the age of 15.¹

In present days, cyber crime against women becomes a major issue. Generally women become victim and they are targeted. Their personal photos and information are leaked through social media platforms. So this information is misused by criminals. The victim women suffer from psychological trauma, depression and anxiety etc. In extreme cases it also causes suicide. Due to fear of public shame, loss of respect or further victimisation, they hesitate to report these crimes. Let's discuss various aspects of cyber crime against women in India.

2. Recent Data on Cyber Crime Against Women in India

The rate of cyber crime against women is increasing day by day. In 2025, over 76,650 cases were reported on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP).² Similarly in 2024, 48,335 cases were reported.³ The figure was highest at 37,743 in the category sexually obscene material in 2025.⁴ Again the committee on the Empowerment of women (Chair person: Dr. D. Purandeswari) submitted its report on 'Cyber crimes and Cyber safety of Women' on March 23, 2026. It submitted that according to National Crime Record Bureau data, there has been a 239 percent increase in cyber crime against women in India between period 2017 and 2022.⁵ So it is an emerging issue now which needs to be controlled (Standing Committee Report Summary)

3. Meaning and Definition of Cyber Crime

In general cyber crime may be defined as 'any unlawful act where computer or any online communication device or computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of crime.'

¹ European Institute for Gender Equality, "Cyber violence against women" available at https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/cyber-violence-against-women?language_content_entity=en accessed on 02.07.2026

² The Telegraph Online, "Cyber crime against women jumps to 76,657 in 2025, obscene content tops complaints: Govt tells Rajya Sabha" available at <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/cybercrime-against-women-jumps-to-76657-in-2025-obscene-content-tops-complaints-says-government/cid/2152003> accessed on 02.07.2026

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ PRS Legislative Research, "Standing Committee Report Summary" available at <https://prsindia.org/policy/report-summaries/cyber-crimes-and-cyber-security-of-women> accessed on 02.07.2026

Cyber crime against women is defined as any illegal activity where digital technologies, computer or internet are used to target women. This type of activity exploits and harms the reputation of women. It also causes emotional distress to women.

4. Types of Cyber Crime

There are various types of cyber crime against women in India.

A. Harassment Through Email

Threatening through email, sending love letter in unknown names to embarrass her, blackmailing through email are included under harassment through email.

B. Cyber Stalking

It includes constant monitoring a person's movements through internet which creates fear and anxiety in the minds of women.

C. Cyber Bullying

It includes threatening and spreading wrong messages and images through electronic devices such as mobile phones and computer etc.

D. Defamation

It includes knowingly harming a person's reputation and good name through social media and websites. It occurs by giving false information.

E. Fake Profiles

It includes making of fake profiles in the name of women in social media etc. The intention is to harass her or to spread false information about her through online.

F. Doxing

It includes sending private information about a woman in social media, digital platforms etc. without her consent.

G. Cyber Pornography

It includes publishing offensive materials containing sexual image through online.

H. Cyber Grooming

It includes building of relationship with a young person and forces him or her to do sexual act.

5. International Perspective

There are various international provisions relating to cyber crime against women in India. Some of the major provisions are

A. Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

This international treaty was adopted by UN General Assembly in 1979. 189 countries have ratified this treaty. This treaty is otherwise known as 'international bill of rights for women'. The objective of this treaty is to end gender based discrimination and promote equality between men and women. CEDAW committee gives direction to member states to update

national cyber crime laws to include cyber crime against women as a punishable one. According to this committee proper training regarding investigations must be given to law enforcement agencies and judiciary.

B. The Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul convention is established by Council of Europe in 2011. It came into force on 1st Aug. 2014. It is a legally binding human rights treaty. It aims to prevent and control all forms of domestic and violence against women. This treaty also offers a framework to address cyber crime against women. This treaty gives direction to states to criminalize various forms of cyber crime such as Stalking, Psychological violence etc. There are 81 articles in Istanbul Convention. 81 Articles are divided into 12 chapters. The treaty establishes '4Ps' such as Preventive (Articles 12-17), Protection (Articles 18-28), Prosecution (Articles 29-48), Integrated policies (Articles 7-11).

C. The Budapest Convention

This convention is otherwise known as Council of Europe Convention on cyber crime. It is established in the year 2001 and came into force on July 1st, 2004. This treaty is designed to tackle cyber crime. The objective of this treaty includes harmonization of national laws, improvement of investigating techniques and boost cross border cooperation. This treaty mandates the member states to criminalize several computer related offences such as digital fraud, child pornography, illegal access, network security violations etc. This convention also criminalizes various kinds of cyber crime against women such as sexual harassment and psychological violence.

D. EU Directive

European Directive (Directive 2024/1385) is formed to control and prevent cyber crime against women. It is the first comprehensive law in Europe to prevent and control cyber crime, protect the victims of cyber crime and prosecute the culprits of cyber crimes in member states. The directive criminalizes various forms of cyber crime against women such as cyber stalking, deep fakes and psychological harassment etc. This directive mandates the member states to put heavy penalties on the offenders of cyber crime against women. Also support services like help lines, crisis centres and shelter homes must be available in member states for the victims. This directive also contains protective measures to control and prevent cyber crime against women

E. UN General Assembly Resolution

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/79/152 addresses all forms of cyber crime against women. It mandates the member states to criminalize various forms of cyber crimes such as deep fakes, psychological harassment, cyber stalking etc. This law directs the member states to enforce laws regarding cyber crime against women and girls. Member states must provide secure mechanisms to report and receive help regarding cyber crimes.

6. Constitutional Provisions

Article 14 of Indian Constitution provides Right to equality.

According to this article men and women have equal access to digital space and like men; women have also the right to get protection from cyber harassment. Article 19(1) (a) of Indian Constitution provides freedom of speech and expression. According to this article women have right to take part in online debate against cyber crime. According to Article 19(2), state should impose reasonable restrictions on this freedom in the interest of public order, decency and morality. Therefore online hate speech, giving threats through online is punishable under this article. Again Article 21 of Indian Constitution deals with right to life and personal liberty which also includes right to privacy. Women have the right to privacy in online digital world.

7. Legislative Framework with Plans, Policies and Programs

There are various provisions under Information Technology Act, 2000 which are related to cyber crime against women in India. Let's discuss some of the important provisions. If under section 66(c), one uses a woman's electronic signature, passwords or other identification features to create fake social media accounts, then he is punished under this section. If one cheats a woman by pretending to be someone else using a computer or digital device, then he is punished under section 66(D). If one captures, publishes and transfers a woman's private photos without her consent, then he is punished under section 66(E), IT Act, 2000. Similarly under this act, if anyone publishes or transmits any obscene material in electronic form, then he is punished under section 67.

Various provisions under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 also deals with cyber crime against women in India. If a person takes and shares photos and videos of a woman engaging in a private act without her consent, then he is punished under section 77 BNS, 2023. Similarly stalking or monitoring a woman's use of the internet is defined under section 78. Also digital activities words, gestures or sounds done with intent to insult modesty of women is punished under section 79 of BNS, 2023. Also if a person uses online platforms, social media to threaten a woman, then he is punished under section 351 of BNS, 2023.

Several provisions under Digital personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), 2023 also deals with cyber crime against women in India. This legislation is a comprehensive data protection law. Under this law, women have certain rights to protect their data, images and online privacy. According to this law, companies must take steps to prevent data breaches and take safeguards against cyber crime.

IT rules, 2021 also contains provisions relating to cyber crime against women. Under this law, social media intermediaries should take steps to prevent using, transmission and sharing of unlawful content that harasses women. National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal is made to report the offences regarding cyber crime. India Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) is constituted to help law enforcement agencies. The

Cyber Crime Prevention against women and children (CCRWC) scheme also gives assistance to states for the establishment of online forensic laboratories and training of law enforcement officers. Cyber crime Helpline 1930 and National women helpline 181 also assists women who are targeted by cyber offenders. Under ministry of women and child development, Mission Shakti is constituted to prevent and control this crime. Under this scheme, one stop centres facility provides reporting facility, counselling, shelter, legal aid assistance to victim woman of cyber crime.

8. Role of Judiciary

There are various landmark judgments relating to cyber crime against women in India. Some of them are-

A. *State of Tamil Nadu vs. Suhas katti (2004)*⁶

It is the first conviction case under Information Technology Act, 2000 which is related to cyber crime. In this case, Suhas Kathi sent defamatory and derogatory message to a divorced woman by creating a fake email account. The victim woman complained that it harmed her reputation. The charges were under section 67 of Information Technology Act, 2000, section 469 and 509 of I.P.C. In this case, the accused was found guilty and court sentenced him 2 yrs rigorous imprisonment with fine.

B. *Ritu Kohli vs. Manish Kathuria (2001)*⁷

It was the first case relating to cyber stalking in India. In this case Manish Kathuria was illegally chatting with others in obscene language by using Ms. Ritu Kohli's name. Ritu Kohli reported the matter in Delhi Police Station as she received obscene call from different States. The case was registered under section 509 of I.P.C. But in this section, there was no mention of internet in doing the act of insulting modesty of a woman. In this case, judiciary recognized online harassment in the absence of expressed legislative provision.

C. *Sreya Singhal vs. Union of India (2015)*⁸

In this case section 66A of Information Technology Act, 2000 was struck down by Supreme Court of India as unconstitutional. The court held that the section violated the right to speech and expression. Supreme Court held that the section could be misused to curtail freedom of speech and expression. In this case two women were detained by police for a social media post and as such Court held that as like traditional offline speech through digital communication will also be protected.

D. *Kalandicharan Lenka vs. State of Odisha (2017)*⁹

It is a landmark case relating to cyber stalking and cyber defamation under Orissa High Court. In this case the accused Kalandi Charan Lenka gave marriage proposal to the victim, but the marriage couldn't be finalised. With this, he got angry and sent obscene messages to victim and her father. He mailed obscene letters to her also. He created fake social media account in the name of victim and posted obscene remarks with naked

⁶ C.C.No.4680 of 2004

⁷ C.C.No.14616 of 2014

⁸ A.I.R. 2015 SC 1523

⁹ MANU/OR/0027/2017

images of her. After that, cyber cell arrested the accused and he was charged under Section 354-A, 354-D, 465, 469, 506 and 509 of I.P.C, Section 66-C, 66-D, 67 and 67-A of I.T Act, 2000. The Orissa High Court granted bail to the accused but with strict conditions.

9. Causes of Cyber Crime Against Women in India

There are various causes of cyber crime against women in India. They are,

A. Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is a major cause of cyber crime against women in India. Traditional gender inequality mindset empowers the offenders to use digital weapons in harassing and threatening women. In present day technology is used by the offenders as a weapon to target women.

B. Increased use of Internet

Due to rise of internet access, it is easy for perpetrators to misuse it. Rise in internet access is now a day opening rooms for online harassment.

C. Inadequate Awareness

In today's digital world, one should be vigilant. If she will not be vigilant, she will suffer and become a target of perpetrators.

D. Inadequate Infrastructure

Technical challenges are there in India. Due to lack of adequate infrastructure and technical facilities, investigations are not accomplished effectively and in time.

E. Lack of Knowledge of Legal Remedy

In many cases victims are unaware of legal remedies available to them. They don't know about the law, policies and programs to redress the violence.

F. Insufficient Cooperation

Many times sufficient support and cooperation is not provided by the internet provider and enforcement agencies. On the other side, in many cases society blames the victim. It doesn't blame the criminal. In fear of reputation loss, the victim women don't seek support from police or other enforcement agencies.

10. Conclusion

Cyber crime is an illegal act where computer is used as a medium to harass women. The aim of the crime is financial gain and to cause harm or psychological injury to women. In present day technology gives man new opportunities and opens new gates of communication, but it can be seen that it poses a great threat to women. It becomes difficult on the part of women to protect herself. Rate of cyber crime in India is increasing day by day. It has been a growing concern in India. Many laws, plans and programs are made and various initiatives are taken in India to protect the rights of women. But despite these efforts,

the rate of cyber crime is increasing day by day. Still implementation of plans, programs and law is lacking in India. Lastly, we can say Digital literacy programs and awareness programs must be conducted throughout India to prevent and control cyber crime against women.

11. Suggestions

Some suggestions to prevent and control cyber crime against women in India are,

1. Cyber laws should be amended to include stringent penalties, so that offender will think thousand times to commit the crime.
2. Nationwide awareness programs must be conducted to educate women. Also, cyber law education should be added in the syllabus of schools and colleges. Seminars and conferences must be conducted for creating awareness among women.
3. User friendly cyber law guides must be published and provided to women and girls at free of cost.
4. Fast track cyber courts must be established for the speedy disposal of backlog cases.
5. Specialised training regarding cyber forensics and investigations must be provided to police, judges and public prosecutors. National Cyber Forensic Laboratory must be strengthened or upgraded to complete previous backlog digital evidence cases.
6. There should be interconnection between National Commission for women and cyber crime reporting unit, so that speedy disposal of complaints will be possible.
7. Cyber laws must be reviewed time to time. Government should initiate online safety programs and online literacy through awareness campaigning. Also there should be collaboration among NGOs, Government leaders and Government bodies in controlling and preventing cyber crime against women in India.

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