

**GENDERED IMPACTS OF CYBERBULLYING AMONG
COLLEGE STUDENTS**

A project report submitted in

Partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Submitted by

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UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

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COLLEGE WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE**

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This is to certify that the dissertation titled, '**Gendered Impacts of Cyberbullying among College Students**' is a record of the original and independent work carried out by **Rebecca Rose** under my guidance and supervision. This has not previously formed the basis of the award of any degree/ diploma /other similar title of recognition

Place: Ernakulam

Mr. Tijo K George

Date: 25th March 2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled '**Gendered Impacts of Cyberbullying among Students**' is an original work prepared and written by me, under the guidance of **Mr.Tijo K George**, Department of **Communicative English, St Teresa's College** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication**. This thesis or any other part of it has not been submitted to any other University for the award of other degree or diploma.

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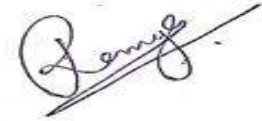
ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the influence of gender on verbal aggression and cyberbullying among college students in the Ernakulam district. The study proposes to make an understanding of the perspectives and experiences of both male and female students and determine whether gender has an influence on verbal aggression and cyberbullying. For the study, students from various colleges in the Ernakulam district would be considered and the sample size would be 100 students. The study proposes the use of quantitative research design and an online survey would be conducted to collect the data. Non-probability quota sampling method would be considered for the study.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Verbal aggression, Gender.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled, '**Gendered Impacts of Cyber Bullying among College Students**' prepared and submitted by **Rebecca Rose** in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication** is a bonafide record of project work done by the student and is hereby accepted.



Place: Ernakulam

Date: 25 March 2022

Ms. Remya John

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The advent of the internet and the increase in the use of information and communication technology has increased the instances of people facing a new type of phenomenon that has become more harmful than face-to-face bullying and aggression. The term electronic bullying or cyberbullying is often defined as “a systematic abuse of power which is exerted repeatedly through digital tools for interaction between an individual or a group against a victim who finds it difficult to defend himself or herself” (Harakchiyska,2020).

Cyberbullying has always been a relevant area for researchers, most of the studies conducted in this area suggest that female students face more cyber aggression and cyberbullying as compared to male students.

In cyberbullying, aggressive content is often used to harm an individual or a group. According to the study conducted by Veiga Simão in ‘Cyberbullying: Shaping the use of verbal aggression through normative moral beliefs and self-efficacy’, some of the aggressive contents that are seen to be used in cyberbullying are making threats, harassing with sexual content, and impersonation. As information and communication technology has become an important part of our daily life, it is very much important to analyze the impacts of their use. Students are a group who heavily rely on the use of the internet and social media for education as well as communication. Most college students have smartphones and continuous access to the internet. As a

result, they are prone to instances of cyberbullying and verbal aggression, so it is very much relevant to analyze cyber bullying and verbal aggression faced by college students.

1.2 Bullying

Bullying is frequently described as an aggressive, purposeful act or behavior committed repeatedly and over time by a group or an individual against a victim who cannot readily protect himself or herself. Bullying is a type of abuse that is based on a power imbalance; it is characterized as a systematic misuse of power. Bullying may be classified into four forms, according to researchers: physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying. Physical bullying is defined by aggressive physical behaviors such as striking, punching, or pushing. Relational bullying, also known as social exclusion bullying, is characterized by the propagation of rumors and the willful exclusion of people from activities or encounters, as well as friendship withholding. Verbal bullying is distinguished by verbal aggressions such as calling names, taunting and teasing.

Cyberbullying is defined as peer aggression performed via the use of technology such as text messages, emails, or social networking sites. Although the concept of bullying brings up pictures of a playground and elementary school-aged youngsters, bullying notions stretch well beyond this narrow vision. Physical bullying such as striking, shoving, and kicking, and verbal bullying which includes name-calling and hurtful taunting are considered direct forms of bullying, but relational bullying refers to an indirect kind of bullying, such as social isolation and spreading rumors. According to studies

on direct and indirect bullying, men are more involved in direct bullying, whereas girls are more involved in indirect bullying.

1.2 Types of Bullying

Bullying falls into four main categories, which includes physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying and cyberbullying. Some of the other categories are sexual bullying, social bullying and prejudicial bullying.

1.2.1 Physical Bullying

Physical bullying involves causing harm to a person's body or possessions. Any assault on a person's body, such as striking, kicking, tripping, or shoving, is considered physical bullying. It is the most visible kind of bullying, and it is perpetrated by an individual or group of persons who are bigger or stronger than the person being targeted. It can also include making offensive hand gestures or stealing or damaging a victim's belongings. According to research, males are more prone to engage in physical bullying activities than girls.

1.2.2 Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is the use of words, either spoken or written, to insult or threaten a victim. It involves insults, mocking, and even threats. Bullying is defined as speaking or writing hurtful words. Teasing, name-calling, improper sexual comments, mocking, and threatening to do damage are all forms of verbal bullying.

1.2.3 Relational Bullying

Relational bullying, also known as relational aggression or social bullying, refers to behaviors that are meant to destroy a victim's reputation or connections. It might involve publicly humiliating the victim, spreading

rumors, purposefully keeping them out of social events, or excluding them from a group. It is particularly subtle and insidious than more overt forms of bullying because it includes social manipulation. Relational bullying can lead to isolation, loneliness, despair, and social anxiety in victims.

1.2.4 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs via the use of electronic devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets. It can occur through text messages, social media, apps, or online forums and includes publishing or transmitting damaging stuff, including words and photographs, as well as disclosing personal information that causes embarrassment and humiliation.

1.2 Rise of Internet

With the introduction of low-cost personal computers in the 1990s, traditional bullying made its way onto the internet. People have been susceptible to cyberbullying in public chat rooms and private messaging services since then. The anonymity of the internet offers the ideal cover for a user to harass or threaten others without fear of consequences. Although we have moved past the history of cyberbullying, it still occurs on several social media sites and apps.

Cyberbullying is certainly a modern phenomenon that has been enhanced by the pervasiveness of technology and mobile phones. Also discussed are our dependency on various types of technology and the rise of social media. Today's technology allows us to stay connected to individuals we know and don't know 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For many young people, accepting the unpleasant parts of social media is preferable than feeling alienated. Even though cyberbullying may be anonymous and gives a

platform for a broad audience, it is potentially more brutal than traditional bullying. This anonymity encourages disinhibition and can increase violence. The offender is unaware of the emotions created by their harassment and, as a result, may believe they are safe from retaliation.

1.3 Cyberbullying

The term and concept of cyberbullying refers to a systematic abuse of power that is repeated using online technology for interaction between an individual and a group against a victim who is unable to defend himself or herself. Cyberbullying, like conventional bullying, has been defined as aggressive behavior with the intent of causing harm to another person and imposing the perpetrator's control over the victim. Despite the fact that cyberbullying is a low-prevalence phenomena in the virtual world, data from recent studies consistently supports the assertion that it is more destructive than conventional bullying. Face-to-face bullying has been around for decades, but researchers began to observe that online abusers were not always physically dominating over their victims. According to Olweus, a bully must have some physical superiority or greater power, resulting in a power imbalance over their victim.

In contrast to conventional bullies, cyberbullies can be of any size or age, and by using anonymous identities, they can eliminate the essential power-feature to be stronger or physically more aggressive. With the rise of social media and digital forums, people's comments, images, postings, and information are frequently viewed by strangers as well as friends. An individuals' internet output, be it personal, cruel, or hurtful, establishes a type of permanent public record of their opinions, actions, and conduct.

Cyberbullying tarnishes not just the online reputation of the victim but also those who participate in the process of cyberbullying.

1.4 Gender and Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a globally occurring phenomenon but when it comes to understanding the impact of gender on cyberbullying, there are mixed findings. According to an exploratory study conducted by Qing Li (2006) to understand how male and female students are perceived in schools and to highlight the gender differences in the bullying experiences faced by students, revealed that boys are more likely to be cyberbullies than girls. Faucher et.al (2014) in his research study to understand the gendered impacts, experiences and perspectives of cyberbullying among university students showed that same-gender targeting is more common than opposite-gender targeting.

Although cyberbullying is rapidly being acknowledged as a societal issue, many concerns about gender disparities in cyberbullying practices remain unanswered. More robust study findings on gender differences, or lack thereof, in cyberbullying would enable academics and practitioners to identify the various types and levels of cyberbullying engagement by male and female students. Better information in this area would assist researchers and practitioners in devising and planning more effective preventative work and intervention, therefore improving students' mental and emotional health and assisting them in becoming better citizens in the long run.

1.5 Need for the study

The purpose of this paper is to find the relationship between gender and its influence on cyberbullying and verbal aggression among college students in Ernakulam. With the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in

internet usage among students for academic as well as social wellbeing. The surge in internet usage has also increased the incidence of cyberbullying and verbal aggression. The study aims to analyze the cyberbullying experience of college students and to understand whether gender influences it.

The current study seeks to investigate and make an understanding on cyberbullying, as well as the motives underlying the power and control exercised by both genders in their online interactions. According to various studies that were conducted earlier, female students are more empathic and hence are less involved in cyberbullying, whilst males will be less empathetic and more active as cyberpetrators. It is also projected that women would be placed in a more vulnerable position than males in the power inequalities highlighted by cyberbullying.

1.6 Objectives

1. To study how students face cyberbullying and verbal aggression through the use of various social media platforms.
2. To gain knowledge on the perspectives and experiences of students on cyberbullying and verbal aggression.
3. To evaluate how gender influences the experience of students on cyberbullying and verbal aggression.

1.7 Research Questions

RQ1: Does Cyberbullying exist in social media platforms?

RQ2: Do students face verbal aggression and cyberbullying while using social media?

RQ3: Does gender have an impact on cyberbullying and verbal aggression?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The advent of the internet and the increase in the use of information and communication technology has increased the instances of people facing a new type of phenomenon that has become more harmful than face-to-face bullying and aggression. The term electronic bullying or cyberbullying is often defined as “a systematic abuse of power which is exerted repeatedly through digital tools for interaction between an individual or a group against a victim who finds it difficult to defend himself or herself” (Harakchiyska,2020).

Cyberbullying has always been a relevant area for researchers, most of the studies conducted in this area suggest that female students face more cyber aggression and cyberbullying as compared to male students.

In cyberbullying, aggressive content is often used to harm an individual or a group. As information and communication technology has become an important part of our daily life, it is very much important to analyze the impacts of their use. Students are a group who heavily rely on the use of the internet and social media for education as well as communication. Most college students have smartphones and continuous access to the internet. As a result, they are prone to instances of cyberbullying and verbal aggression, so it is very much relevant to analyze cyber bullying and verbal aggression faced by college students. In this chapter previous research works related to bullying, cyberbullying and harassment has been reviewed. The main source

for accessing the pervious literature was mainly through web, online journals and articles on cyberbullying and its gendered impacts.

2.2 Cyberbullying vs Traditional Bullying

Marilyn A. Campbell in her research article ‘Cyberbullying: An old problem in a new guise’ describes that bullying is often considered as a normal part of childhood and is usually not given much attention. Bullying arises from the schoolyard and is regarded as an age-old societal problem. Bullying can be defined as abusive treatment or aggressive behavior toward a person by coercion. The act of bullying involves the use of abusive language, hitting, and spitting. With the advancement in technology and the use of the internet for communication has entirely changed this term, and has brought in a new form of bullying that relies on the use of technology. The term cyberbullying was coined by Canadian Bill Belsey and it can be defined as “an intentional harmful behavior carried out by a group or individuals, repeated over time, using modern digital technology to aggress against a victim who is unable to defend him/herself” (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Konig, Gollwitzer, & Steffgen, 2010; Smith et al., 2008).

In simple terms cyberbullying refers to bullying through the use of technology. Cyberbullying involves sending derogatory messages, passing personal or confidential information to a group of people, creating websites to degrade individuals, sending spam emails and negative comments. A study conducted by National Children’s Home in Britain has revealed that one out of the four students has faced cyberbullying. Campbell claims that young people make use of emails, mobile phones, texting, and web camera to bully their

peers. Through the research article Campbell aims to bring focus on what bullying is and what are its consequential effects on young adults, she also discusses the importance of taking preventive measures to control cyberbullying.

Slonje and K. Smith (2008) in their exploratory study 'Cyberbullying: Another main type of bullying?' aimed to look at the nature of cyberbullying in adolescents in Sweden. The study looked into four main categories of cyberbullying, which included text messaging, phone calls, picture/video clips, and email. The gender difference in cyberbullying was also considered as part of the study. The final aim of the study was to examine and understand whether victims seek help by telling anyone of experiences of cyberbullying. 360 students from eight schools in Gothenburg, Sweden. The students were given a questionnaire adopted from the Olweus Bully/Victim questionnaire (Olweus, 1996), they were asked to fill the survey in the presence of the researcher. The Chi-square test was used to analyze the categorical data that was collected through the sampling method. The results of the study suggested that about 10.6% of the students faced cyberbullying frequently inside and outside school and the rate for being bullied was higher in lower secondary than for sixth-form students. The study also showed that gender does not have an influence on a student being cyberbullied. The finds of the study helped to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of cyberbullying and distinguish between the different types of cyberbullying, the variations in gender differences, and perceived impact factors. The study helped to prove that experience with bullying has a negative effect on adolescent development.

Fernandez et.al (2015) in their study, 'Explicative factors of face-to-face harassment and cyberbullying in a sample of primary students' discusses the influence of factors like self-esteem and academic performance on cyberbullying and bullying in Spain. The primary objective of the study is to analyze the various factors like disruptiveness, normative adjustment, contextual factors, and individual factors that exert an influence on how an individual is involved in bullying and cyberbullying as a bully, victim, or aggressor. Two working hypothesis was formed for the study, (H1) There are common risk factors between bullying and cyberbullying, (H2) Contextual factors have a higher influence than personal factors in bullying and cyberbullying. The sample for the study was selected using the probability stratified random sampling method. As part of the study, data was collected from 1278 students in an urban and rural region in southern Spain, out of which 47.9% were females. A detailed questionnaire was administered to the students, which comprised of four sections. The questionnaire included the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which consisted of 10 Likert types scale questions. The collected data was divided into two subsections, the first sample was subjected to exploratory factor analysis and the second section underwent confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis of the data showed that lack of social adjustment among peers was a risk factor in traditional bullying, not in cyberbullying. Logistic regression analysis indicated that social adjustment, normative adjustment, disruptiveness, gender, and self-esteem are a substantial part of involvement in bullying and cyberbullying as victims or aggressors.

2.3 Cyberbullying and its impacts

Rebecca Dredge et.al in their research paper ‘The Development and Validation of the Social Networking Experiences Questionnaire: A Measure of Adolescent Cyberbullying and Its Impact’, highlights that several inconsistencies exist in the current method that is used to measure cyberbullying, which leads to difficulty in analyzing its consequences and impacts. The primary aim of the exploratory research is to come up with a tool to measure the effects and impacts of cyberbullying and also analyze the psychometric properties of the measurement tool. As part of the pilot study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 18 students from Australian Catholic University (ACU) using a snowballing technique. Out of the 18 participants, 66% were males and 44% were females, who were chosen according to the time they spent on various Social Networking Sites (SNS). For the main research, data was collected from 318 students in age between 15 and 24 from Australian Catholic University (ACU), Melbourne Campus. An online questionnaire was employed to collect the data, which included demographic questions and social networking experience questionnaire. The respondents had to rate their bullying experience based on a scale. The helped to create a six-factor model to analyze the impact of cyberbullying victimization. The results of the study provided an introductory evidence on the validity and reliability of the SNEQ for analyzing the experience and impact of victimization in various social networking sites. The SNEQ provides an opportunity to measure the experience of 14 different behaviors experienced in SNS as well as 5 different impact areas.

K. Smith et.al in their research study ‘Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils’ aimed to differentiate the relationship between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. In the studies that were conducted earlier. As part of the study, two surveys were conducted on students between the age of 11- 16. The first study was conducted among secondary schools in London, among which 20 schools participated. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to collect data, which included a questionnaire and focus group discussion. A total of 94 students answered the questionnaire and 47 students participated in the focus group discussion. ANOVA and MANOVA test was used to analyze the data to understand the difference in the year or age in cyberbullying, and it was found that age is not a factor in cyberbullying or victimization.

In the second study, a questionnaire was employed which included questions on their internet usage. The questionnaire also included 7 forms of media, which was listed separately and students had to rate them according to which they considered as more harmful as compared to traditional bullying. The results of the second study showed the relation between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Both the studies provided qualitative and quantitative data on cyberbullying and showed unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying is experienced outside the school in adolescents.

According to the study conducted by Heidi Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009), cyberbullying is not a marginal problem among youngsters in Belgium. As part of the study, 636 schools participated, out of which 1416 students were selected as the sample using a stratified random sampling

method. The students were given questionnaires that were filled in the presence of the researcher. The questionnaire included questions on the ICT use of students, how often they face bullying, and how long they have been bullied by the perpetrator. Three different scales like ‘victim of traditional bullying’, ‘perpetrator of traditional bullying’, and ‘bystander of traditional bullying’ were used for data collection. A Likert scale was also used to look into the parental supervision on children’s internet usage and how much the respondent depends upon the internet. The results of the study showed that 61.9 percent of respondents had experienced cyberbullying, 52.5 percent had been perpetrators and 76.3 percent had been bystanders of cyberbullying. The results of the study revealed that youngsters who face cyberbullying are more dependent upon the internet, feel less popular, take more internet-related risks, are more often a bystander and perpetrators of internet and mobile phone bullying, and are less often a perpetrator and more often a victim of traditional bullying.

Patchin and Hinduja (2010) in their research study ‘*Cyberbullying and Self Esteem*’ discuss the relationship between cyberbullying and the self-esteem of a victim. As part of the study, data was collected from 1963 students from 30 schools in the United States using the random sampling method. The middle school student was asked to complete a self-report survey on their internet usage and cyberbullying experiences. The questionnaire included the validated measure of self-esteem by Rosenberg which encompassed several questions designed to estimate an individual’s level of self-esteem. The cyberbullying measures that were utilized for the study were carefully developed and refined over 2 years to ensure that they were clearly worded,

well defined, and capable of capturing the most relevant behavior. The study concluded that a moderate and statistically significant relationship exists between low self-esteem and experiences with cyberbullying faced by a victim. Experience with cyberbullying, both as a victim and as an offender, was associated with significantly lower levels of self-esteem, even after controlling for demographic differences. The study helped to highlight, how important it is for an educator to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying be it the traditional bullying that takes place within the campus or through threatening messages in cyberspace, as it directly and indirectly the well-being of the youth.

Veiga Simão et.al (2018) in their study '*Cyberbullying: Shaping the use of verbal aggression through normative moral beliefs and self-efficacy*' investigates the mediating effect of normative moral beliefs about cyberbullying behavior and self-efficacy beliefs to solve incidents of cyberbullying. As part of the study, a survey was conducted among 1607 students from 10 different schools in Lisbon, Portugal. The questionnaire for the survey included various questions from the Inventory of Observed Incidents of Cyberbullying. The participants of the research were selected using the non-probability convenience sampling method. A pilot study was conducted with three adolescents to test the validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire also included an open-ended question to understand the various expression of verbal aggression that is used in cyberbullying. Content analysis was performed on the responses collected from the open-ended question, the qualitative data were converted into quantitative data with the help of NVivo 11 software. The analysis was done in two phases, the first phase included 529

students and the second phase included 1078 students. The second phase of the content analysis identified 9 different categories of verbal aggression in cyberbullying. The 9 categories included making threats, making fun of someone, harassing someone using sexual content, pretending to be someone else, revealing information about someone's private life, demonstrating one has information about someone's life that may affect that individual's psychological well-being, using someone's image without authorization, devaluating someone's life and insulting someone. The results obtained through the research provided a base to formulate policies that would help to prevent cyberbullying and verbal aggression.

Eden and Roberto in their study '*The Role of Verbal Aggression in Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization by Middle School Students*' examine the role played by verbal aggression in victimization and perpetuation of cyberbullying. The hypothesis statement formed for the research were (H1) Trait verbal aggression will be positively related to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization in adolescent middle school students; (H2) Cyberbullying victimization and cyberbullying perpetration will be positively related to one another; (H3). There is a positive relationship between age and both cyberbullying perpetration and cyberbullying victimization. As part of the research, the study was conducted among 440 middle school students out of which 46.8% were males and 52.2% were females. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire on the various traits of verbal aggression and their history of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. The results of the study indicated that traits of verbal aggression were visible in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization and that cyberbullying perpetration increased

with age, but victimization did not show much increase. After analyzing the linear regression, it revealed that trait verbal aggression was a statistically significant predictor of both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization, that cyberbullying perpetration and cyberbullying victimization are related, and that cyberbullying perpetration appears to increase with age while cyberbullying victimization does not increase with age.

The exploratory study by M. Abaido (2019), 'Cyberbullying on social media platforms among university students in the United Arab Emirates' looks into the pervasiveness of cyberbullying and the attitude of people towards cyberbullying in the Arab community. As part of the study, data were collected from 200 students who were chosen using a random sampling method from two prominent universities in UAE. Data was collected using a questionnaire and a pilot study was conducted to understand its reliability. The questionnaire was divided into four sections and it included multiple-choice questions, scaled responses, and open-ended questions.

The social participation of the respondents was also taken into consideration for the study. The data that was collected using the questionnaire was statistically analyzed using the SPSS software. The first part of the survey explored the social activity of the students, the second part explored students' involvement with social media platforms and the online behaviors and general views regarding cyberbullying. The third part of the survey examined their personal experience with cyberbullying on social media platforms and the possibility of reporting such incidents. The fourth part of the survey included students' usage of social media platforms as well as their personal opinions

and experiences related to both traditional and cyberbullying. The survey concluded with three open-ended questions on the personal cyberbullying experience of the respondents. The results of the study suggested that 91% of the respondents have faced online harassment through various social media platforms and it also suggested that Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are the top three platforms through which students face harassment. The study also showed that 37% of the respondents would prefer to report these issues, while 21% of the respondent prefer to remain silent.

2.4 Gender and cyberbullying

Harakchiyska (2020) in his study, aimed explored the cyberbullying experiences of high school students in Bulgaria. The primary aim of the study was to examine and analyze the association between affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and gender involvement in cyberbullying along with the intentions behind the power and control exerted by both genders in their online exchanges. Data were collected from 215 Bulgarian undergraduate students out of which 98 were males and 117 were females. The sample for the study was chosen voluntarily with a random sampling method. The participants were given a questionnaire on cyberbullying and the basic empathy scale to gather data.

The cyberbullying questionnaire was divided into four sections, the first section collected the background information of the participants, and the second section investigated the cyberbullying experiences of the participants. The third section of the questionnaire was focused on the types of cyberbullying formats in which the respondents have been involved in the

given time frame of 12 months. The fourth section involved 8 statements and gathered data regarding the reasons for students' involvement in cyberbullying. The Basic Empathy Scale (BES) included 20 statements, 9 of the statements measured cognitive empathy, and 11 measured affective empathy through a Likert scale. The collected data were statistically processed using the SPSS software. After analyzing the data it was observed that females were more often victims of cyberbullying than males and at the same time, they frequently acted as cyberbullies compared to males. The study proved that both genders differ in their cyberbullying experience and the patterns of online interaction in which they engage. The results of the study indicated that both affective and cognitive empathy affects gender differences in cyberbullying.

Faucher et.al (2014) in their research study '*Cyberbullying among University Students: Gendered Experiences, Impacts, and Perspectives*' aimed to look into the cyberbullying among university students in Canada. The study was conducted on a broader aspect and it included faculty and student survey, policy scan, focus group discussion, and interviews with policymakers. A total of 1924 participants including Faculty members and students from four Canadian universities participated in the study. The questionnaire contained 100 items which included multiple-choice questions, yes or no, and open-ended questions; was disseminated to students and faculty members through mailing groups. The questionnaire was divided into five sections, the first section was regarding the background information of the respondents, the second section was about any cyberbullying experienced by the respondents in the last 12 months, the third section included any cyberbullying activity

engaged during the time of the survey. The fourth section asked respondents to rate various solutions to cyberbullying and the fifth section asked the respondents to provide their opinions regarding a list of statements relating to cyberbullying. The results of the study showed that university students heavily relied on ITC and about 20% of the students faced cyberbullying. The study also suggested that same-gender targeting is more common than opposite-gender targeting. The research study served as a foundational stone for policymakers to address cyberbullying.

Qing Li (2006) in his exploratory study '*Cyberbullying in Schools: A Research of Gender Differences*' aims to highlight the gender differences in the bullying experiences faced by students and to understand how male and female students are perceived in schools. Three middle schools in Canada were randomly selected as the sample for the study. A questionnaire was administered to collect the data and 364 students participated in the survey, out of which 130 were males and 134 were females. The questionnaire included two major areas, the demographic area of the students and their experience of being cyberbullied. The questionnaire included 26 questions and the data that was obtained was analyzed using SPSS software. A Chi-square test was conducted to analyze the influence the gender in cyberbullying. The results showed that 30% of the respondents faced traditional bullying and 17% has faced cyberbullying. It was also observed that there existed no gender difference concerning victimization and males are more likely to cyberbullies than females. The study suggested that cyberbullying and bullying follow a similar pattern in terms of male and female involvement.

Burgess Proctor et.al (2009) in their study, '*Cyberbullying and online harassment: Reconceptualizing the Victimization of Adolescent girls*' discussed how cyberbullying and online harassment effect the self-esteem and has a negative effect on an individual. Studies conducted earlier in this field suggests that adolescent girls have different experiences with cyberbullying than boys. The study aimed to answer the major questions like what cyberbullying behaviors do adolescent girls experience; who cyberbullies adolescent girls; how do adolescent girls respond to being cyberbullied and how does being cyberbullied affect adolescent girls.

As part of the study, data was collected from 3141 adolescent girls using an online survey and all the respondents were identified to be under the age of 18. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in order to gain a wider understanding about the experience of adolescent girls in cyberbullying and harassment. After analyzing the data it was found that most of the girls fall under the age of 14 and out of the 3141 girls, 1203 girls have faced cyberbullying or harassment. It was observed that the victims were most often bullied by a friend or someone who is known to them and most of the girls responded by retaliation or 'bullying back'. The study helped to gain a broad understanding on cyberbullying and harassment among adolescent girls in US.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology is a method that helps to systematically solve the research problem and all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his/her research problem are termed as research methods (Kothari, 2004). It discusses many approaches to determining the most significant research problems. It comprises concepts, ideals, and foundations that may be utilized to drive the approaches and activities that can be employed to perform a research. It encompasses a theoretical investigation of a branch of knowledge's corpus of methods and principles, with approaches varying based on their historical growth and evolution. As a result, a variety of techniques that span various viewpoints on how information and reality should be viewed emerge. This contextualizes tactics within the framework of larger concepts and approaches. It consists of precise processes, tactics, and methods used to efficiently perform the study. The chapter is divided into several sections, including research, design, sample design, instruments utilized and procedures for data gathering, and so on.

The primary object of this study is to make an understanding on cyberbullying and how gender plays an important role in perpetuating cyberbullying. The participants of the study include college going students from Ernakulam district. The aim of the analysis is to apprehend the impact of

gender on cyberbullying. To accomplish this goal, the objectives of the study are specified with the assistance of research methods.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the framework of research methods and techniques that are chosen by a researcher. It is a framework for conducting the study and collecting data. It is defined as the specific methods and procedures you use to acquire the information you need (Smith 2012). Research design has to be thoroughly specific as to what methods of data collection are followed. The design enables researchers to focus on research methodologies that are appropriate for the subject area and set up their study for success. A researcher can use one of two approaches for the study. It could be a qualitative or quantitative approach. For this study, the researcher employed a quantitative approach of research, in which data is acquired using closed-ended questions with predetermined levels. Using a quantitative method of research would assist the researcher to gain a deeper understanding into the concept of cyberbullying and how gender plays a great role on how a person is cyberbullied.

3.2 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research approaches prioritize objective measurements and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data obtained via polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by modifying pre-existing statistical data with computing tools. Quantitative research is concerned with collecting numerical data and generalizing it across groups of individuals or explaining a specific phenomenon. The final written report follows a predetermined framework that

includes an introduction, literature and theory, methodology, results, and commentary (Babbie & Earl R, 2010). A structured Questionnaire was utilized as a technique to collect quantitative data from diverse respondents for this study. Respondents were directed to an online survey with 20 questions and it took approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A copy of the online survey has been attached in the appendix.

3.3 Sample of the Study

According to Webster, a sample is a limited subset of a statistical population whose attributes are investigated in order to learn more about the entire population. It is a sample drawn from the general population for study. In this research paper the focus is primarily given to college going students in Ernakulam District, with a sample size of 120 respondents ranging in age from 18 to 25 years. The population consists of colleges in Ernakulam district, out of which 5 colleges would be considered for the study.

3.4 Sampling Method

The researcher has used a non-probability sampling strategy in this study. Non-probability sampling is a valuable and practical technique of obtaining a sample. In certain cases it is the only method available for collecting data for the research study. A survey method was considered over all the other forms of data collection to collect comprehensive data directly from the primary sources. The researcher chose a purposive sample strategy in non-probability convenience sampling for this investigation. In this method of sampling, the respondents were chosen by the researcher based on the convenience of getting the data from the respondents. The data that was

obtained was collected from students from Ernakulam districts with their age between 18 to 30.

3.5 Sample Size

In research, sample size refers to the number of participants included in a sample. (Kothari, 2004) The sample size for this study includes 120 respondents from different colleges in Ernakulam district, with ages ranging from 18 to 30 years.

3.6 Tools for Data Collection

A researcher would need a large amount of information to gather tools or techniques. There are two kinds of data: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is information gathered by the researcher firsthand, whereas secondary data is material that already exists or has been compiled by another researcher. The essential data for the completion of this study was gathered from students of Ernakulam district aged between 18–30 years. For the same purpose, a questionnaire was prepared and an online survey was conducted to collect the data from the respondents.

The purpose of the study was explained to the students through a detailed description and participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. The cyberbullying questionnaire was anonymous and the only identification that was collected was the gender of the respondent. The data collection instruments were given to the students and the questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to be completed. The questionnaire containing 20 items was distributed to 120 respondents in Ernakulam District between the

ages of 18 and 30 for this study. For the predetermined response, the researcher employed a Likert scale.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

The main objective of the study was to gain a deep understanding on how gender has an impact on cyberbullying. All the information that is gathered for the study to answer the research questions and to meet the objectives of the study, are thoroughly analyzed and interpreted. This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from students through the use of questionnaires and online surveys. Responses from the survey are emphasized using various forms of graphical representations and simple percentage analysis is done to analyses and further describe the data. First, data collected from surveys will be analyzed followed by interpretation of data collected through telephonic interviews. This chapter is also divided into sub-headings to throw more light on questions asked to the respondents.

4.1 Gender

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender in the questionnaire. Out of 120 respondents, all of them answered the question. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 illustrates the results.

Table 4.1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	41.7
Female	70	58.3
Total	120	100

The collected data has been represented as table based on the gender of the respondents. The bellow given chart shows an overall percentage of gender distribution of the students.

Figure 4.1

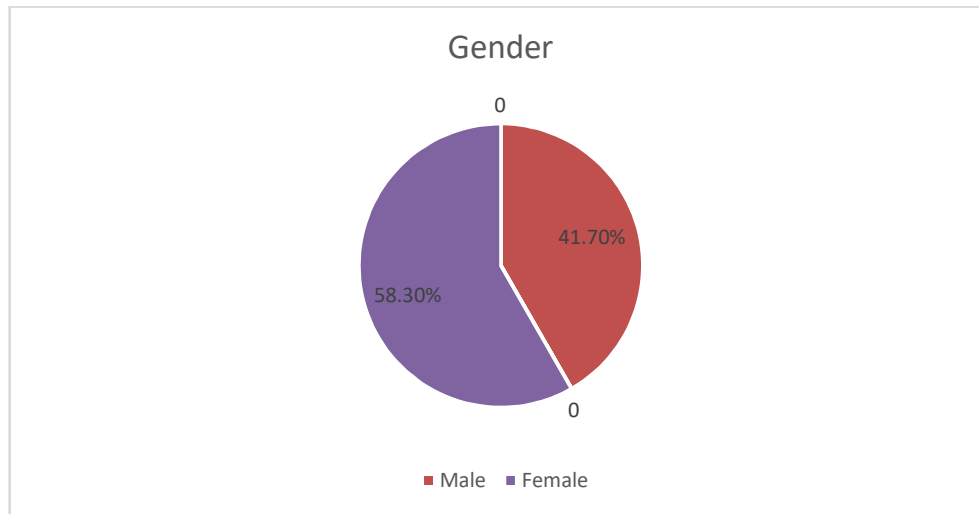


Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 shows that 70 respondents representing 58.30% of the total number of participants were females while 50 of them represents the 41.70% of male from the total population.

4.2 Age

The respondents were asked to mark their age from the four age groups given in the questionnaire. A total of 120 responses were collected. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 illustrates the results.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 18	2	1.7

19 - 21	16	13.3
22 - 25	80	66.7
Above 25	22	18.3
Total	120	100

The collected data has been represented as a table based on the gender of the respondents. The below given chart shows an overall percentage of gender distribution among the student respondents.

Figure 4.2

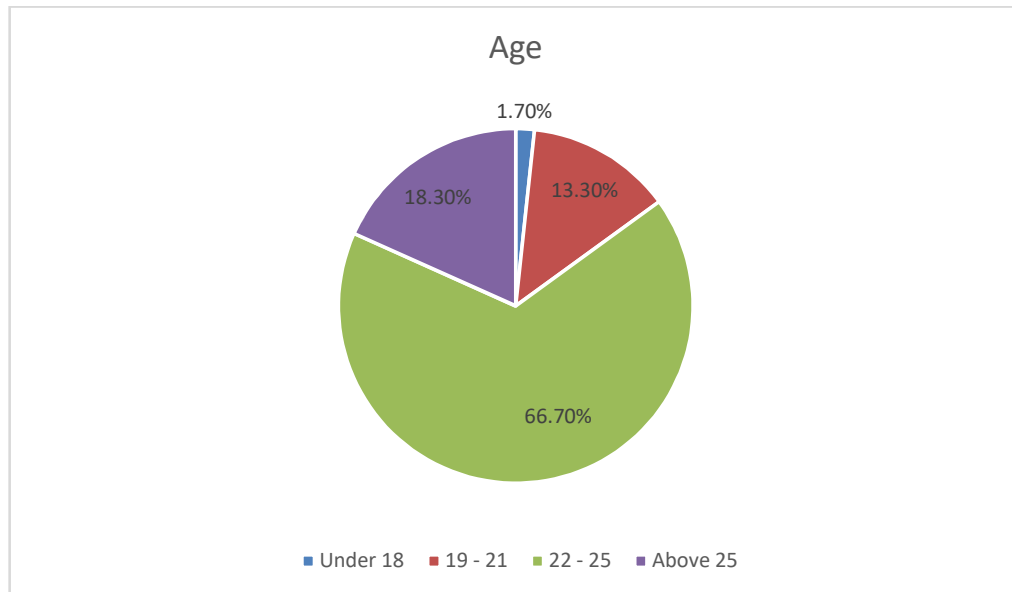


Table 4.2 and figure 4.2 shows that 120 students who have responded to the questionnaire. Here, 1.7% of the respondents are those who have an average

age below 18. It can be seen that 13.3% of them belongs to the age group of 19-21 years, 66.7% of them are between 22-25 years and only 18.3% of the students were above 25 years.

4.3 Social Media Usage

The respondents were asked to mark if they use social media. Out of the 120 responses, 119 (99.2%) respondents marked that they are active in social media and 1 (0.8) marked that they do not use social media.

4.4 Time Spend on Social Media

The respondents were asked to mark the average time they spend on social media every day. A total of 120 responses were collected. Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 illustrates the results.

Table 4.4 Time spend on social media

Time Spend	Frequency	Percentage
1 Hour	8	6.7
2 – 3 Hours	35	29.2
4 – 5 Hours	51	42.5
More than 5 hours	26	21.7
Total	120	100

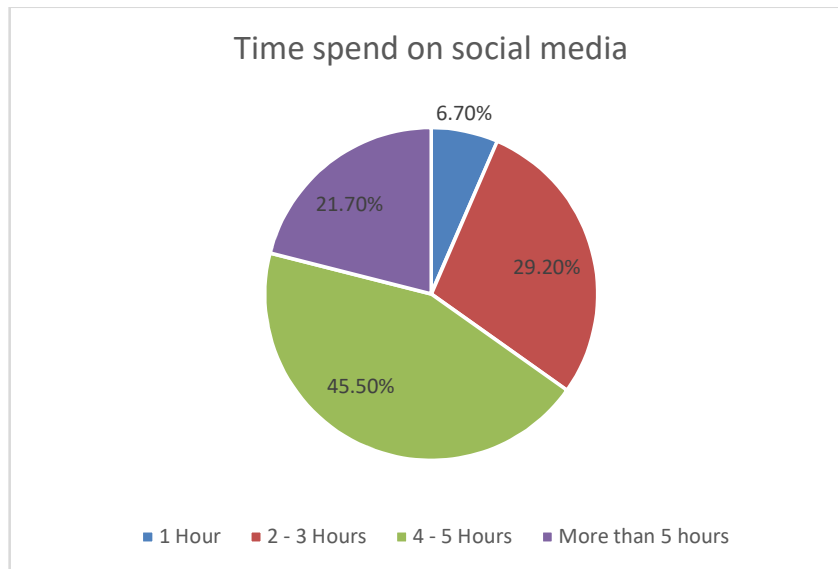
Figure 4.4 Time Spent on Social Media

Table 4.4 and figure 4.4 show the average time spend by the students daily on social media. The results showed that about 6.7% of the respondents spent only 1 hour, 29.2% respondents and average of 2 – 3 hours, 42.5% of the respondents spent an average of 4 – 5 hours daily and 21.7% of the respondents spend more than 5 hours on social media.

4.5 Social media platforms

The respondents were asked to mark on how many social media platform they are active on. Out of the 120 respondents, 5 respondents who make up 4.2% claimed that they use only 1 social media platform. 18 respondents who make up 15.1% of the population said that they use 2 different social media platforms. 55 respondents from the population marked that they use 3 different social media platforms daily. And about 41 respondents from the population which makes up about 34.5% uses more than 4 different social media

platforms. It was observed that a major part of the population uses an average of 3 social media platforms.

4.6 Social media activity

The respondents were asked give details regarding which social media platform they are most active on, from a list of options. Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 illustrates the results.

Table 4.6 Social media activity

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	7	5.8
Instagram	97	80.8
Snapchat	9	7.5
Twitter	2	1.7
Others	5	4.2
Total	120	100

The collected data has been represented as a table based on the social media activity of the respondents. The below given chart shows an overall percentage of the distribution among the student respondents.

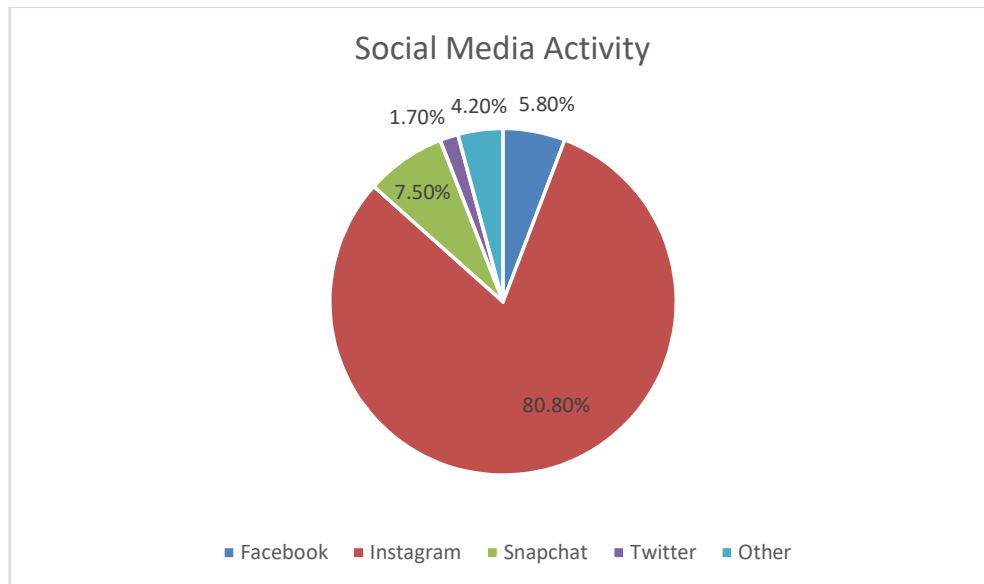
Figure 4.6 Social media activity

Table 4.6 and figure 4.6 show which of the social media platforms the respondents are most active on. It was observed that 7(5.8%) respondents used Facebook, 97(80.8%) respondents used Instagram, 2(1.7%) of the respondents used Twitter, 9(7.5%) of the respondents were most active on Snapchat and about 5(4.2%) of the respondents preferred to use other social media sites like LinkedIn, AmiI, YouTube and WhatsApp.

4.7 Why social media

The respondents were asked to answer why they use social media for from list of reasons given in the questionnaire. Table 4.7 depicts the results obtained from the respondents.

Table 4.7 Why social media

Use	Frequency	Percentage
Networking	89	74.2

Business	3	2.5
Learning	10	8.3
Other	18	15
Total	120	100

Table 4.7 shows the reason why the respondents use social media. Out of the total 120 respondents, about 89(74.2%) use social media for networking purposes, 10(8.3) respondents use it for educational and learning purposes. It was observed that about 2.5 % of the respondents make use of social media for business and its related activities. Out of the total respondents about 15% use social media for various other purposes like entertainment, communication, relaxation, leisure and chatting.

4.8 Social media posts

The respondents were asked a question on how often they post pictures, videos or other information on social media. The question aimed to make an understanding on the social media activeness of the respondents. Table 4.8 and figure 4.8 illustrates the results.

Table 4.8 Social media posts

No of Times	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	7	5.8
Every week	13	10.8
Every month	39	32.5
Rarely	55	45.8

No posts	6	5
Total	120	100

The collected data has been represented as a table based on how often the respondents post on social media. The below given chart shows an overall percentage of the distribution among the student respondents.

Figure 4.8 Social media posts

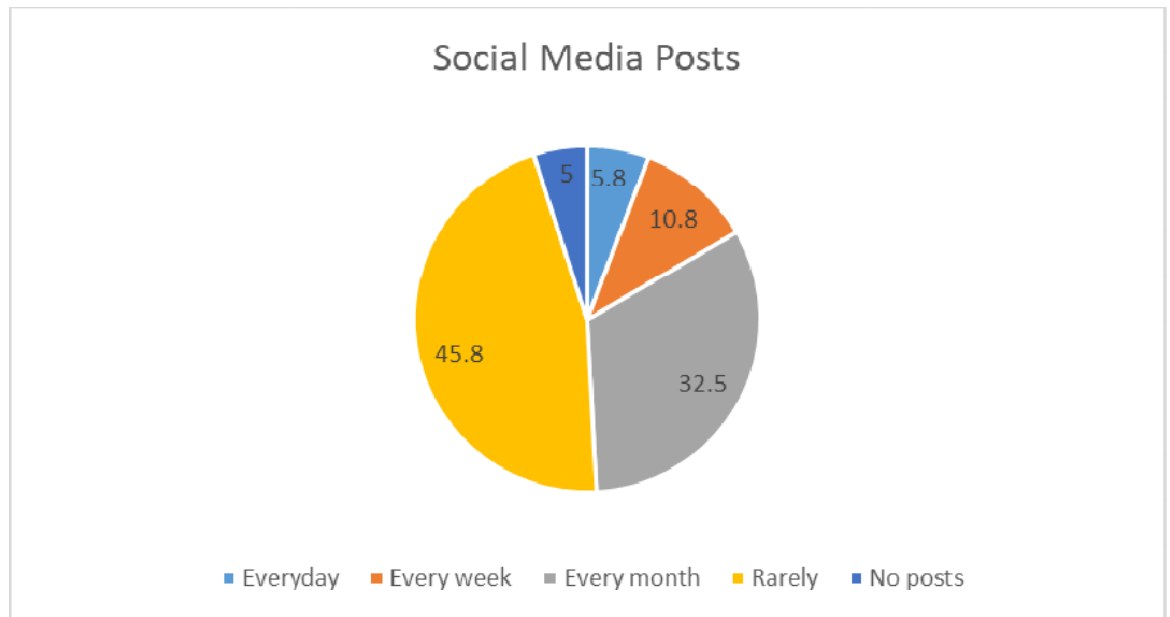


Table 4.8 and figure 4.8 shows the frequency at which the respondents post photos, videos or any information on social media. It was observed that about 5.8% of the total respondents posted on social media on a daily basis, while about 5% of the respondents did not post in social media. It was also observed that a major part of the population rarely posted any pictures or videos in social media.

4.9 Existence of cyberbullying

The respondents were asked if they are aware of the concept of cyberbullying and if cyberbullying exists on social media platforms. All of the 120 respondents gave in their response. The figure 4.9 indicates the results obtained.

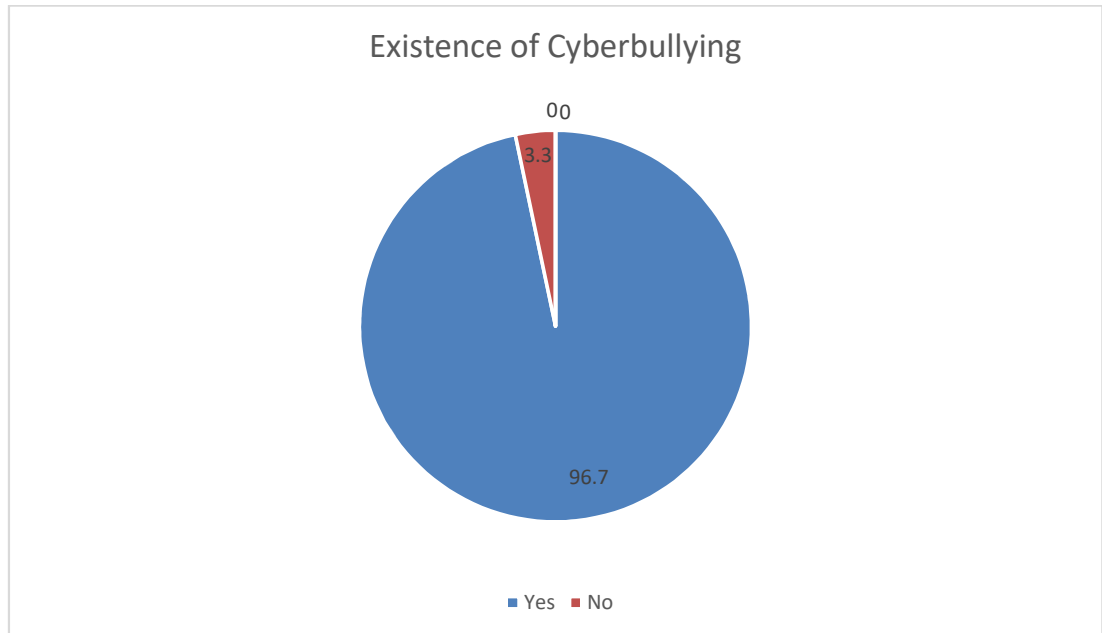


Figure 4.9 Existence of cyberbullying

The figure 4.9 show that out of the 120 respondents who participated in the study 116 respondents agreed that cyberbullying exists in social media platforms, while 4 respondents claimed that cyberbullying does not exist in social media platforms. It was observed that majority of the population agreed that cyberbullying existed in different social media platforms.

4.10 Opinion on cyberbullying

The respondents were asked to mark their opinion on which of the social media platforms do cyberbullying exist. The results of the question is indicated in table 4.10 and figure 4.10.

Table 4.10 Opinion on cyberbullying

Social media platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	59	49.7
Instagram	52	43.3
Snapchat	2	1.7
Twitter	4	3.3
LinkedIn	0	0
Other	3	2.4
Total	120	100

The collected data has been represented as a table shows the opinion of the respondents on the existence of cyberbullying across different social media platforms. The below given chart shows an overall percentage of the distribution among the student respondents

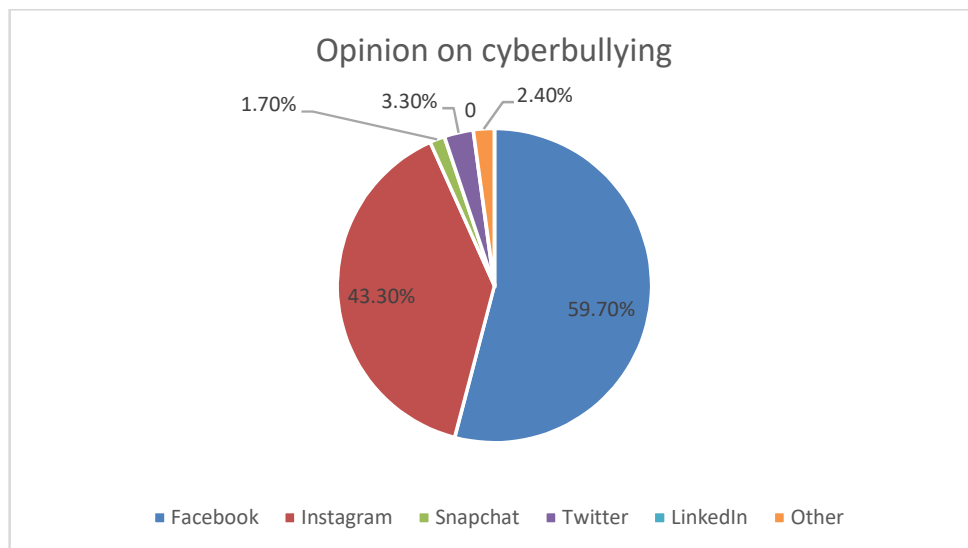
Figure 1.10 Opinion on cyberbullying

Table 4.10 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding the existence of cyberbullying in various social media platforms. Out of the total 120 respondents, about 59(49.2%) respondents said that cyberbullying occurs in Facebook, 52 (43.3%) respondents said that it occurs in Instagram, 2(1.7%) is of the opinion that it occurs in Snapchat and 4(3.3%) of the respondents said that cyberbullying occurs in Twitter. About 3(2.4%) respondents expressed their opinion that cyberbullying exists in other social media platforms like Clubhouse and WhatsApp. It was also observed that according to the population, cyberbullying does not exist in LinkedIn.

4.11 Cyberbullying Experience

The respondent were asked if they have been bullied online. All of the 120 respondents marked their answers and the results of the same is been depicted in figure 4.11.

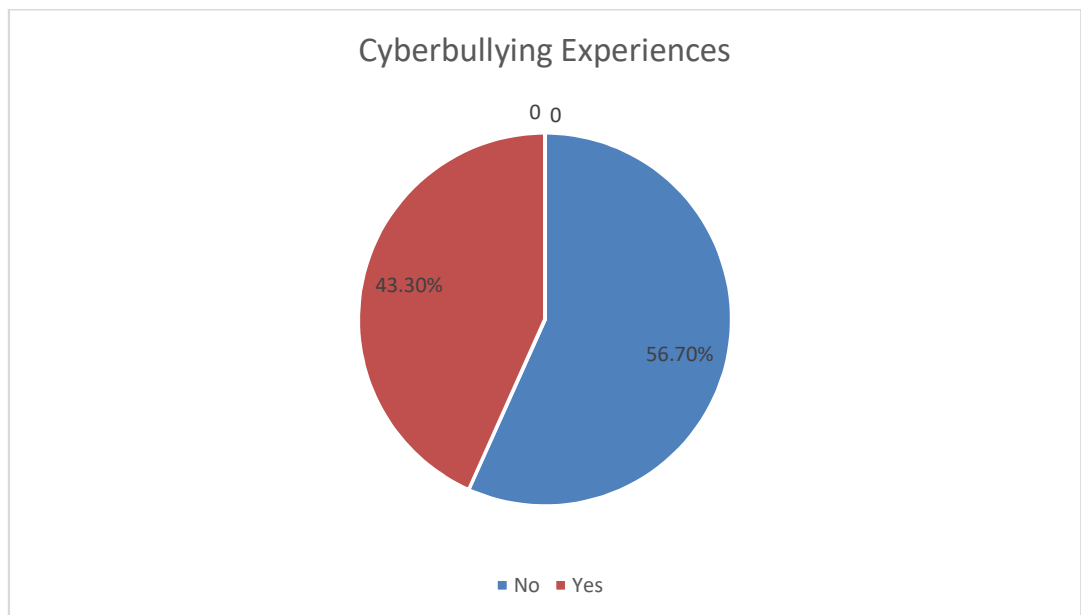


Figure 4.11 Cyberbullying experiences

The respondents were asked if they have any cyberbullying experiences through different social media platforms and 52(43.3%) of the respondents agreed that they have face cyberbullying and 68(56.7%) of the respondents claimed that they have not been bullied online. Out of the 52 respondents who faced online bullying 40 respondents were females and 12 respondents were males.

4.12 Platform where Cyberbullying Occurs

The respondents of the study were asked to give the inputs on which of the social media platform they have faced cyberbullying. All of the 120 respondents marked their answers and the results of the same is been depicted in Table 4.12 and figure 4.12.

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	9	7.5
Instagram	42	35
Snapchat	1	0.8
Twitter	1	0.8
LinkedIn	0	0
Haven't Faced	65	54.2
Others	2	1.2
Total	120	100

Table 4.12 Platforms where cyberbullying occurs

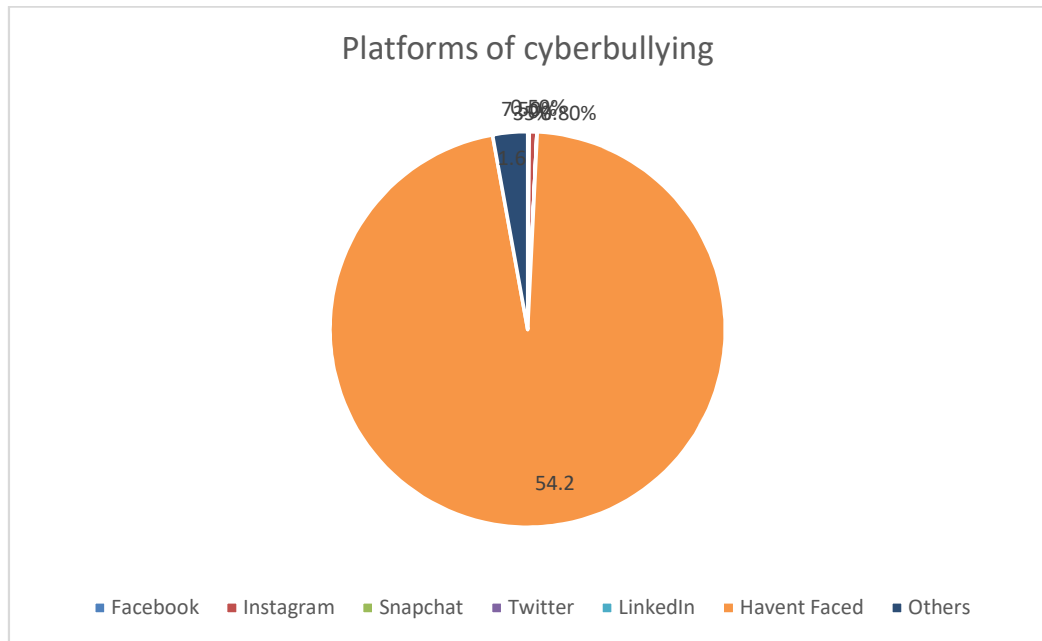


Figure 4.12 Platforms where cyberbullying occurs

The respondents of the study were asked to give details on which social media platform they have faced cyberbullying. All of the 120 respondents give in their responses and it was observed that about 7.5% of the respondent faced cyberbullying through Facebook, 35% of the respondents through Instagram, 0.8% respondent's through Snapchat and 0.8% through Twitter. It was observed that 54.2% of the population did not face any cyberbullying through social media.

4.13 Forms of Cyberbullying

The respondents of the study was asked to give inputs on the different form of cyberbullying they have faced through social media platform. All of the 120 respondents marked their answers and the results of the same is been depicted in figure 4.13.

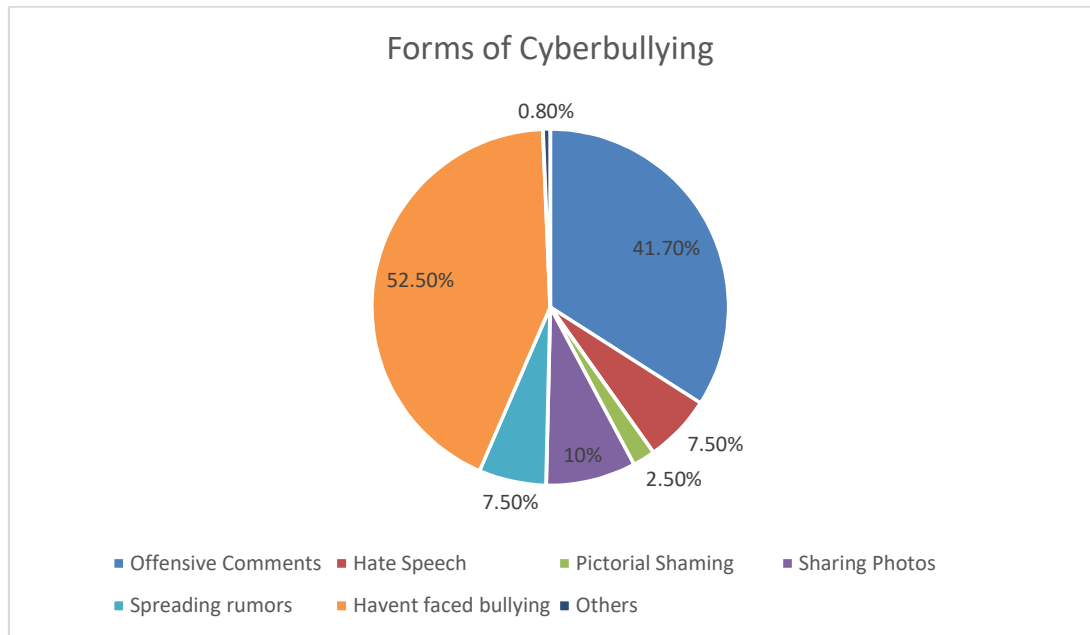


Figure 4.13 Forms of Cyberbullying

The respondents of the study gave in the details regarding the different form of cyberbullying they have faced. The data was collected and it was observed that 41.7% of the respondents faced cyberbullying in the form of offensive comments, 7.5% through hate speech, 2.5% through pictorial shaming, 10% of the respondents faced bullying through sharing embarrassing photos and videos. 52.5% of the respondents claimed that they haven't faced any forms of cyberbullying. It was observed that making offensive comments was one of the post common form of cyberbullying as about 50 respondents had to face offensive comments through different social media platforms.

4.14 Response to cyberbullying

The respondents of the study were asked if they have ever responded when they faced online bullying. 120 responses were received from the respondents and out of these responses 74.2 % of the respondents claimed that they choose

to ignore cyberbullying, while 25.8% of the respondents said that they would respond to online bullying. Figure 4.14 indicates the results of the response of the population towards cyberbullying.

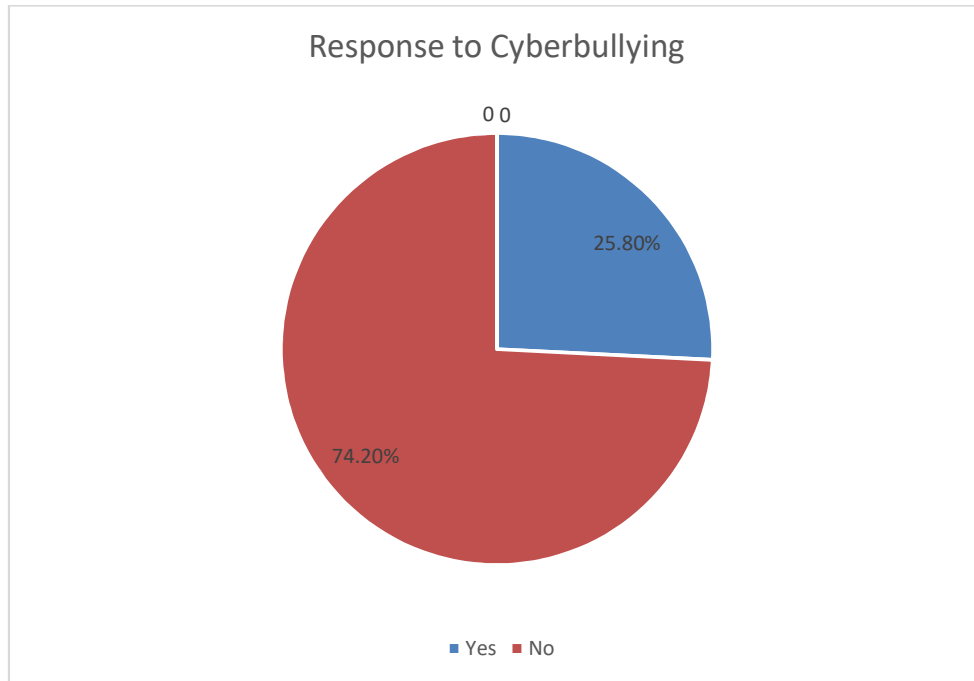


Figure 4.14 Response to cyberbullying

4.15 When did you response to bullying?

The respondents were asked on what circumstances they responded to online bullying. 120 responses were collected. According to the data that was obtained it was observed that 5% of the population responded the first time they faced bullying, 15.8% of the respondents reacted only after consistently facing online bullying, 28.3% of the respondents claimed that they did not respond to cyberbullying and 50.8% of the respondent stated that they haven't faced cyberbullying.

4.16 How did you respond?

The respondents were asked how they respond to online bullying, data was collected from 120 respondents and it was observed that 22.5% of the population openly expressed their opinion actively, 3.3% of the respondents joined in verbally in cyberbullying, 32.5% of the population did not respond to cyberbullying. About 10% of the respondents claimed that they have never witnessed online bullying through social media platforms. A very small percent of respondents stated that they would either deactivate or delete their social media account. It was observed that a major part of the population stated that they would block the bully's account when they face cyberbullying through different social media platforms.

4.17 Reasons for Cyberbullying

The respondents were asked the reasons why people tend to cyberbully others through social media platforms. Table 4.17 and figure 4.17 indicates the results.

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Out of boredom	10	8.3
To become popular	7	5.8
A defense mechanism	39	32.5
They have personal frustrations	33	27.5
Hatred towards a person or community	29	24.2

Others	2	1.6
Total	120	100

Table 4.17 Reasons for cyberbullying

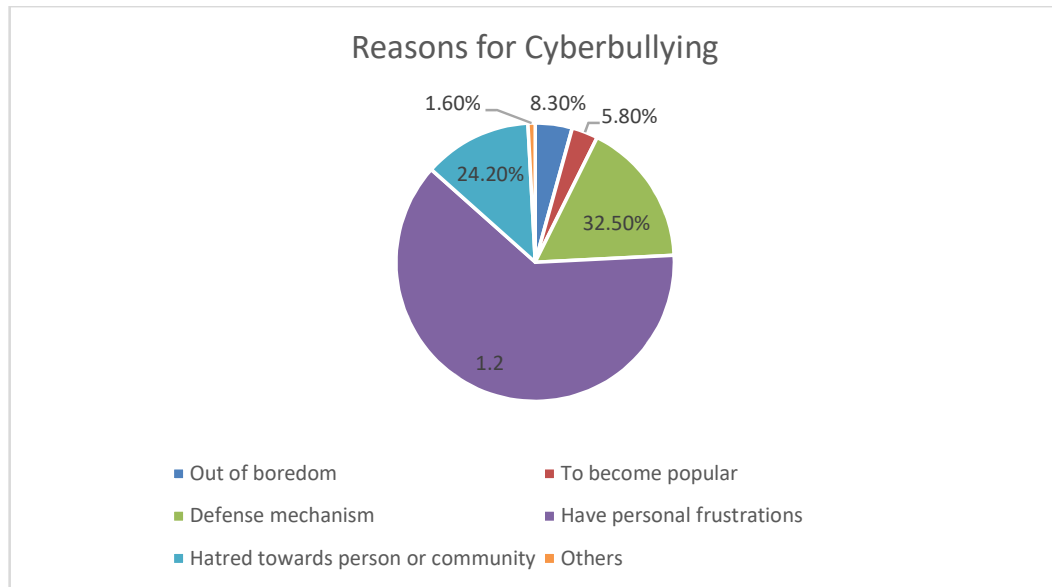


Figure 4.17 Reason for cyberbullying

The respondents were asked to mark the reason why they think people bully others online through social media platforms. 120 responses were received and it was observed that 8.3% of the population cyberbullied others out of boredom, 5.8% of the population to become popular, 32.5% as a defense mechanism against their own insecurities and frustrations and 27.5% of the population because they have some personal frustrations. From the data it was observed that about 24.2% of the population cyberbullied because they have some hatred towards an individual or community and about 1.6% others stated that all of the options can be a reason why people cyberbully others through different social media platforms.

4.18 Personal response to cyberbullying

The respondents were asked to mark how they would react, when they faced cyberbullying through social media. The data was recorded from 120 respondents. Table 4.18 and figure 1.18 indicates the results.

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
I ignore the situation	40	33.3
I change the social media platform	2	1.7
I respond to the bully	21	18.3
I report the bully's account	55	45.8
I confide in a friend	1	0.8
Total	120	100

Table 4.18 Personal response to cyberbullying

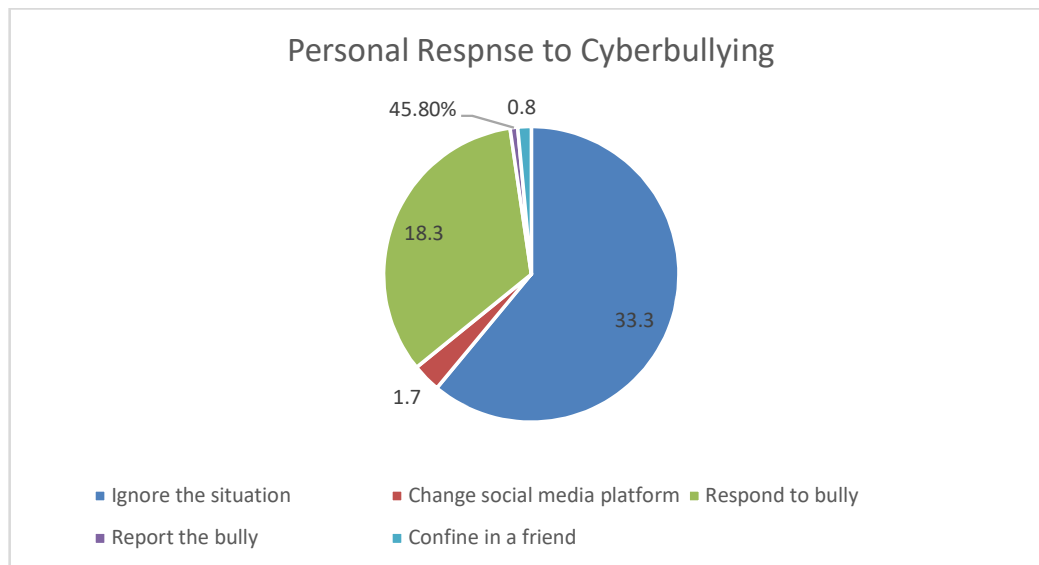


Figure 4.18 Personal response to cyberbullying

The respondents were asked to mark the response on how they would react to the experience of being cyberbullying. From the data that was collected it was observed that 33.3% of the respondents chose to ignore their experience, while 44.8% and 18.3% of the respondents choose the report the account of the bully and respond to the bully. It was observed that a major part of the population chose to report the account of the bully.

4.19 Actions against Cyberbullying

The respondents of the study were asked to share their opinion if they ever considered taking legal action against cyberbullying. The data was collected from 120 respondents and the figure 1.19 represents the results.

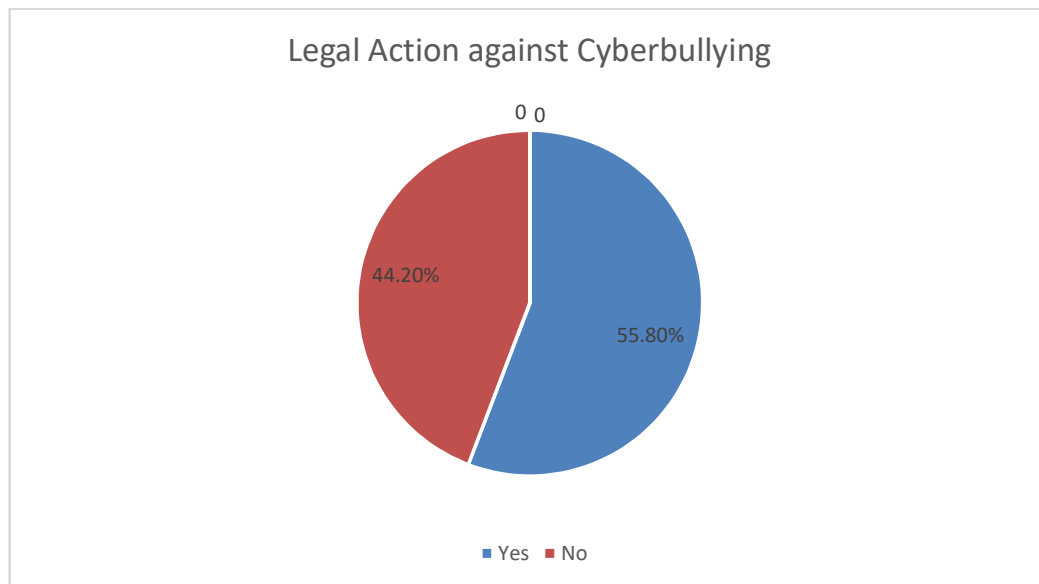


Figure 4.19 Legal Action against cyberbullying

From the data collected from the respondents it was observed that 55.8% of the respondents would consider to consider cyberbullying as a crime and take

legal actions against it, while 44.2% of the populations does not consider taking any legal actions against cyberbullying.

4.19 Statements of agreement

The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement for two statements. The first one was that girls are more prone to facing cyberbullying than boys and the second statement was that boys are more involved as cyberbullies than girls. For these statements about 71 respondents strongly agreed to the statement that girls face more cyberbullying than boys and about 66 respondents stated that they just agree that boys are more involved as cyberbullies than girls. 19 of the respondents disagreed to this statement.

4.20 Personal opinion

The respondents were asked to mark the reason they think why people do not respond to cyberbullying. The data was collected and table 4.20 depicts the results.

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
They are not aware that they are being bullied	19	15.8
They don't want any trouble	39	32.5
Fear that they might get bullied again	41	34.2
Fear of criticism	17	14.2
Others	4	3.3
Total	120	100

Table 4.20 Personal opinion

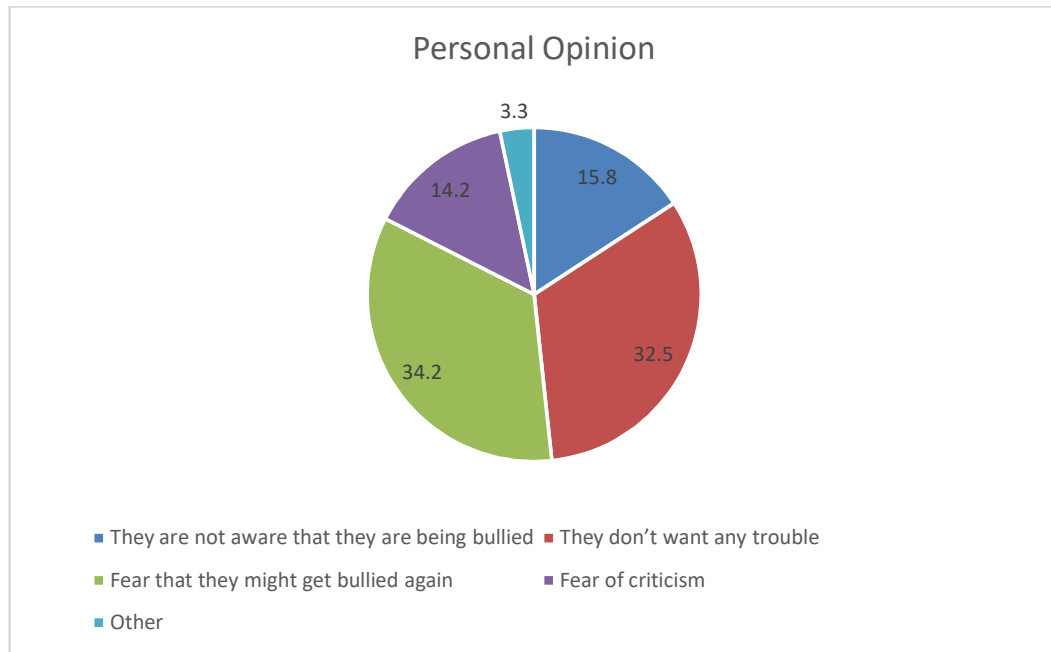


Figure 4.20 Personal opinion

The respondents of the study were asked to mark the reason they think why people do not respond to cyberbullying. From the data that was collected it was observed that 15.5% of the respondents were not aware that they are being bullied, 32.5% of the population said that people don't want to take up any trouble, so they hesitate to respond. 34.2% and 14.2% of the population stated that people fear that they might get bullied or criticized if they respond to cyberbullying.

4.21 Reasons for silence

The respondents were asked to mark the reason why they refrain from taking legal actions against cyberbullying. Figure 4.20 depicts the results.

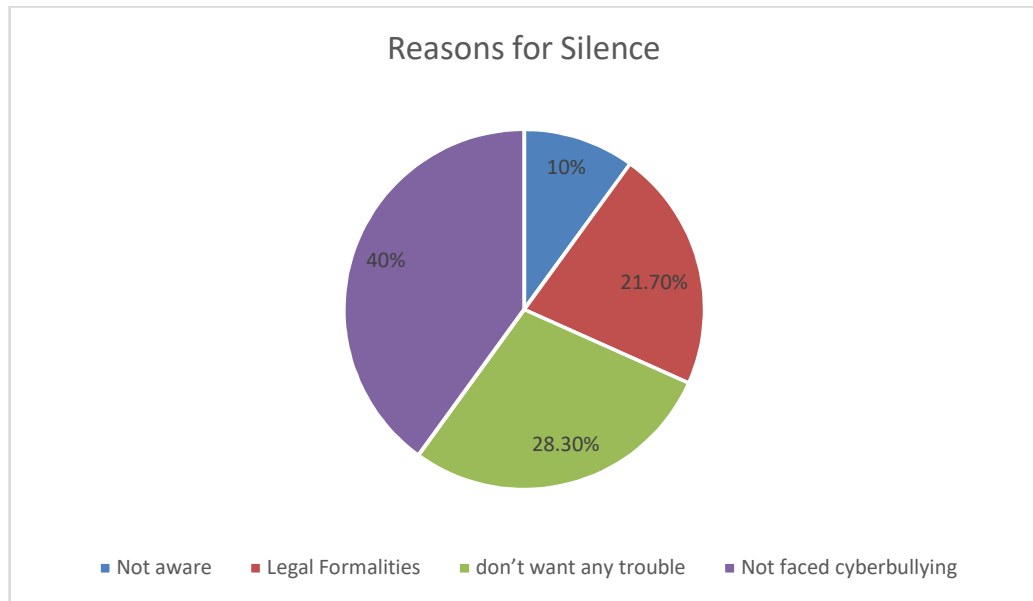


Figure 4.21 Reasons for silence

The respondents were asked to mark the reason why they would refrain from taking legal actions against cyberbullying. 10% of the respondents stated that they are not aware of the fact that cyberbullying is crime and that legal action can be taken against it. 28.3% of the respondents claimed that they did not respond because they don't want to face any trouble and 21.7% of the population claimed that they did not respond due to the various legal formalities associated with it. It was also observed that 40% of the population did not face any cyberbullying.

4.22 Expert interview

“Most of the cases that we get are mainly related to financial frauds and other cybercrimes. Cyberbullying cases are rarely reported”

Mr. Joseph X, Senior Civil Police Officer, Cybercrime police station
Infopark.

To obtain more specific information regarding the various aspects of cyberbullying and its legal aspects, an interview was performed over the phone with a cyber-civil police officer from the Cybercrime police station in Kakkanad Infopark. According to a telephone conversation with Mr. Joseph X, Senior Civil Police Officer, cyberbullying complaints are rarely reported at cyber police stations. Some of the most common forms of cases are email spoofing, phishing emails, and various types of financial fraud, card payment data theft, identity theft, and defamation. Every month, 300 cyber-related cases are reported at the Kakkanad Cyber police station. The number of cyberbullying instances among these 300 is quite minimal.

Chapter 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding on the impacts of gender on cyberbullying. This chapter is organized as follows: the first section will represent the findings of the research by discussing the data and hypothesis statement and the second half conclude the research study with summary, limitations of the study and offers recommendations for further research on cyberbullying.

5.1 Findings

The study delves into a new and critical topic of cyberbullying. The preliminary analysis of survey data received from college students in the Ernakulam area throws light on the ongoing topic of cyberbullying. The survey helped to show the role played by social media in the spread of cyberbullying among students. The study revealed that almost all the respondents used social media on a daily basis for various purposes like networking, learning, entertainment, business and more. It was observed that a major part of the respondents agreed to the fact that cyberbullying does exist in different social media platforms. According to the respondents' answers, Facebook and Instagram are the social media sites with the highest frequency of online bullying. The study helped to provide an answer to the research question related to the existence of cyberbullying in social media platforms.

One of the significant issues is the widespread experience of bullying and cyberbullying among young adults. In this survey, around 43% of the

students reported having experienced online bullying. This lends credence to the idea that cyberbullying is a big problem among young adults. When gender was taken into account, substantial variations in bullying and cyberbullying were discovered. It was observed that males were more likely than females to face cyberbullying than males. This is consistent with prior study showing that girls are less prone to bullying and cyberbullying than males. The number of females who faced cyberbullying was relatively higher than males. From the telephonic interview with Mr. Joseph X, Senior Civil Police, Officer Cyber Crime, it was observed that the number of cyberbullying instances is quite minimal. Cyberbullying complaints are rarely reported at cyber police stations. Some of the most common forms of cases are email spoofing, phishing emails, and various types of financial fraud, card payment data theft, identity theft, and defamation.

5.2 Conclusions

According to the current study, new modes of communication and the ease with which one's identity may be masked enable young people to engage in illocutions that profoundly undermine the reputations, social standing, and relationships of others. The study's findings can be utilized to paint a more complete picture of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is becoming an increasingly important problem for educational institutions and society as a whole, according to the percentage of students who have faced cyberbullying strategies documented in this research study. The study's findings indicate that gender has a significant influence on cyberbullying. The fact that the majority of respondents choose not to respond to cyberbullying emphasizes the significance of raising awareness. It can also be concluded that there is a lack of

awareness about cyberbullying and its forms among both the victims and the cyberbully. Most of the time, both the victim and the bully are not aware that they are a part of cyberbullying. There is a lack of awareness regarding the legal remedies that victims can seek. Awareness programs can be conducted at different levels to provide students with knowledge about cyberbullying and create awareness. The gender disparity revealed in this study highlights the need of utilizing a variety of methods for cyber bullying research and potential intervention programs.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The research method poses several limitations. The use of convenience samples restricts the capacity to generalize the Ernakulam district results obtained using online survey methods. Due to the pandemic and time constraints it was only possible to carry out the research using an online survey and with a small sample size. The study is limited to only 120 respondents and therefore it is not right to a larger population. Larger the sample, the better the results and external validity of the research will be.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the study not only highlight the importance of gender differences and power imbalances in online discourse, but they may also serve as a baseline against which more essential and detailed insights into the essence and impact of cyberbullying of undergraduate students on a national level can be provided. It might be a catalyst for more consistent political reforms and government-supported efforts focused at cyberbullying prevention and intervention at all levels of the country's educational system, lowering the likelihood of female and male victimization.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

The study is intended to gather information for an empirical study conducted for the completion of Masters of Journalism and Mass Communication programme at St Teresa's College, Ernakulam. The questionnaire was designed for respondents of age 18 – 30 years to analyse their response for the same. Kindly complete the questionnaire with your respective responses. This study is strictly confidential and the responses provided will remain the same.

- Gender

Male	Female
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- Age

Below18	19-21	22- 25	Above 25
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1. Do you use Social Media?

- Yes
- No

2. How many hours do you spend on social media every day?

- Under 18
- 19 – 21
- 22 – 25
- Above 25

3. How many social media platforms are you on?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4 and above
4. Which social media platform are you most active on?
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Snapchat
 - Twitter
 - Others
5. What do you use social media for?
 - Networking
 - Business
 - Learning
 - Other
6. How often do you post on social media?
 - Everyday
 - Every week
 - Every month
 - Rarely
 - No post
7. Do you think cyberbullying exists on social media platforms?
 - Yes
 - No

8. In your opinion which of the following social media platform have more cyberbullying?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Others

9. Have you ever been bullied online?

- Yes
- No

10. On which of the social media platforms have you experienced cyberbullying?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- I haven't faced cyberbullying

11. If you have ever faced cyberbullying on social media platforms, what was its form?

- Offensive Comments
- Hate Speech
- Pictorial shaming
- Posting or sharing embarrassing photos/ videos
- Spreading rumours

- I haven't faced cyberbullying
- Others

12. Have you ever responded to cyberbullying?

- Yes
- No

13. When did you first respond to cyberbullying?

- The first time you faced bullying
- After consistently
- I did not respond
- I haven't faced bullying
- Others

14. If you have ever witnessed cyberbullying across social media platforms, how did you respond?

- Express my opinion actively
- Join in verbally
- Do nothing
- Leave the platform(logout)
- I have never witnessed
- Deactivate your account
- Block the bully's account
- Delete your social media account
- Others

15. In your opinion, why do people cyberbully others?

- Out of boredom

- To become popular
- A defence mechanism for their own insecurities
- They have personal issues and frustrations
- Hatred towards a person or particular community
- Others

16. Describe your response to cyberbullying?

- Ignore the situation
- I change the social media platform
- I respond the account of the bully
- I confide in a friend

17. Have you ever thought of taking legal action against cyberbullying as a crime?

- Yes
- No

18. Please state your level of agreement for the following statements.

- Girls are more prone to facing cyberbullying than boys.
- Boys are more involved as cyberbullies than girls.

19. Why do you think people do not respond to cyberbullying?

- They are not aware that they are being bullied
- They don't want any trouble
- They fear that they might get bullied again
- Fear of getting criticised
- Other

20. If you have faced cyberbullying, what refrained you from taking legal action?

- Not aware of the laws
- Legal formalities

- I have not faced cyberbullying
- Others