# Cyber Bullying: A Virtual Menace

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On any given day, almost one billion students attend school around the world (UNICEF, 2009). Many of these children value their right to be educated in a vibrant and safe atmosphere. Schooling, on the other hand, does not ensure such opportunities for many others. Bullying, sexual and gender-based violence, physical punishment, and other forms of violence are all commonplace among these young people. Many are also subjected to peer violence such as schoolyard fighting, gang violence, attack with weapons, and sexual and gender-based violence (Pinheiro, 2006). New forms of violence, such as cyberbullying via mobile phones, computers, internet, and social networking sites, are impacting the lives of youngsters.

Cyberbullying has been defined as repetitive, intentional hurtful behaviour by a group or individuals using modern digital technologies to aggress against a victim who is helpless to defend himself or herself (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, &Tippett, 2008).
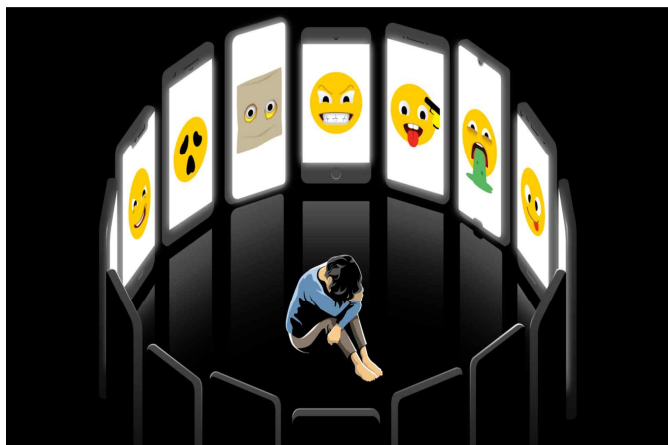

The vast number of the possible audience; continuous access; the durability of online content; the ease of duplicating and broadly disseminating material; and the lack of control of online activity are all elements of the digital world that may raise the danger of cyberbullying. Furthermore, the inability to see the target's emotional reactions prevents attackers from feeling empathy for the victim. Sexting, or sending explicit images or text through digital channels, has created a particularly dangerous opportunity for perpetrators to take images intended for an intimate relationship and broadcast them (without the target's knowledge or consent) in order to humiliate the target and harm his or her social relationships (Campbell & Bauman, 2018).

1. TYPES OF CYBER BULLYING

According to Chisholm (2014), there are ten different varieties of cyberbullying, which are listed below:

1. **Catfishing** is when people are duped into having emotional/romantic interactions for long periods of time using fictitious identities.

2. **Cheating**occurs when gangs of players block access to specific game sites;

3. **Flaming** is a male-dominated online communication style that is hostile and contentious.

4. **Impersonation**iswhen someone is misrepresented or fraudulently portrayed in an online context.

5. **Slamming** is whenindividuals both known and unknown to the victim engage in online abuse.
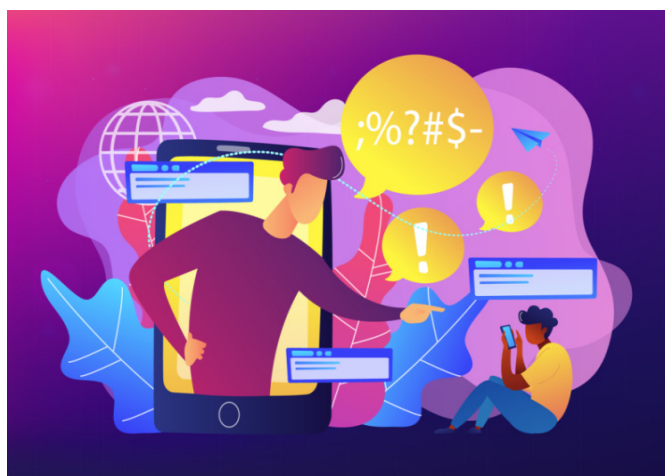

6. **Ratting** is when someone remotely controls the computer or camera of another person without their knowledge or agreement;

7. **Relational Aggression** is when someone makes up rumours or fabricates a phoney profile in order to isolate or remove the target from a group;

8. **Sexting** is when photographs that are unpleasant, humiliating, or sexually graphic are purposefully shared.

9. **Trolling** is when insulting remarks or postings are posted inside an online community or forum in order to enrage, frustrate, humiliate, or generate a response from a target;

10. The act of **stalking** is when a person pursues or acts violently toward a target in a virtual environment.

2. PREVALENCE OF CYBER BULLYING IN INDIA

Surveys performed by commercial firms and researchers indicate that cyberbullying is prevalent in India (Blaya, Kaur&Sandhu, 2018). 81 percent of 8- to 16-year-olds are engaged on social media networks, according to an Intel Security research entitled "Teens, Tweens & Technology Study" (Intel, 2015). One in four of those polled (22%) said they had been bullied online (Australia, the United States, and Singapore being the other three).
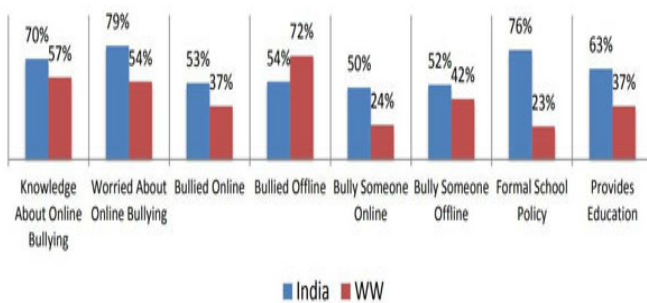
Source: Microsoft study of online bullying (2012)

It was acknowledged in the 2014 report of the Parliamentary Committee on Information Technology (Standing Committee on Information Technology, 2013–2014) that online bullying of minors by their peers was prevalent. When it comes to cyberbullying, Kaur, Kaur and Sandhu (2014) discovered that both genders are subjected to hacking online accounts, getting vulgar text messages, and uploading obscene photos of someone on the internet and making them publicly available. Common cyber victimisation methods include receiving insulting text messages and Facebook posts that make fun of the victim's body type, size, and appearance.Cyberbullies attack both females and boys equally. As a result of cyberbullying, victims experience feelings of sadness and helplessness as well as anxiety, poor academic performance,

high levels of stress, low self-esteem, loneliness, and suicidal ideation.

In comparison to other Asian nations, such as China and Japan, Indian teenagers are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying, both as perpetrators and as victims (Wright, Aoyama, Kamble, Li, Soudi, Lei, &Shu, 2015). It was found by Blaya and colleagues (2016) that pupils from Punjab (northern India) and the Cote d'Azur region (south of France) showed a similar difference.

According to the Telenor India WebWise study, conducted by Telenor, over 35% of youngsters have had their accounts hacked and 15.74 percent had received improper communications online. 15 percent of those who were bullied online reported, while 10.41 percent were humiliated by their peers online, according to the study. In addition, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram emerged as the most popular social media platform for school-age youngsters. It was found that 98% of urban schoolchildren use the internet to search out information for school projects, play games, read online books and listen to music and movies, as well as access social networking sites and email, among other things (Indo-Asian News Service,2016). In fact, according to Sandhu, Indian school kids are subjected to greater online bullying than their counterparts in other nations, including the United States. 219 students in Amsterdam, 537 in Munich, 815 in Annamalai, and 480 in Patiala participated in the study. 53 percent of respondents in Patiala have encountered online bullying, according to the results (Mohan, 2017). It appears that a substantial percentage of Indian kids are victims of cyberbullying, according to these results.

Lifetime Cyberbullying Victimization Rates
Eleven Different Studies 2007-2019

Justin W. Patchin and Sameer Hinduja
Cyberbullying Research Center
www.cyberbullying.org

6. Online Gaming: Online gaming has grown rapidly over the last few years. This boom has also seen a rise in online players reporting toxicity and abuse when gaming online. On-line gamers have the option of using a microphone to speak with other players—a feature that encourages collaboration, builds friendships and enhances the overall gaming experience. Some players take advantage of this technology and utilise it to verbally or text/message abuse other players in order to get an edge.

Some **other major reasons** are exhibited below:

Main Reasons People Get Cyberbullied

Furthermore, Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin, two cyberbullying researchers, found that the average lifetime cyberbullying victimisation rate among kids is 27.8%.
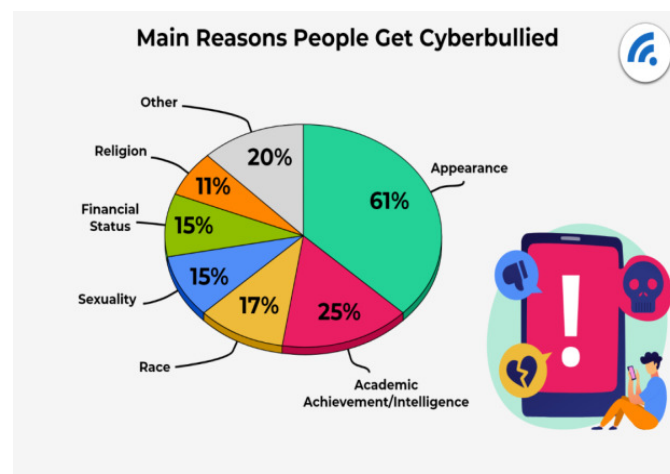
3. CAUSES/MOTIVES OF CYBERBULLYING

Anyone can cyberbully another individual for a variety of reasons. Reasons for this include:

1. It's possible that someone chooses to cyberbully someone else because they've been cyberbullied themselves. This might be because they believe it's right to treat others in this way, or because they believe it's the only way to express their own sorrow and suffering.

2. Someone who witnesses another person being cyberbullied by a group of people may feel that by engaging in the cyberbullying, they would 'fit in' or establish a new group of friends.

3. The offender may have a rough home life and he or she may misplace his or her anger or frustration on someone else. Also, if the cyberbully has no one to confide in, this will happen most often.

4. People cyberbully in order to feel strong and dominate a situation.

5. Jealousy is another major cause of cyberbullying, especially among teens and young adults. Young people are learning who they are, and they may be uncomfortable about their looks, so growing up as a teen may be challenging. Due to insecurity, youngsters may compare themselves to others, resulting in cyberbullying and harassment based on jealousy.

4. LEGAL AND POLICY RESPONSES AGAINST CYBER BULLYING IN ASIA

Legal reactions to cyberbullying in the Asian continent differ. In summary, China watches users, censors Internet material, regulates news transmission, and bans Facebook and Google's search results (although permitted in Hong Kong). A self-regulatory approach is used in Taiwan because there are no explicit cyberbullying legislation. In 2008, the Korea Communication Standards Commission (KCSC) was established in South Korea to combat cyberbullying. A law was passed in 2013 to prohibit cyberbullying in Japan.Cyberbullying is illegal in Malaysia since there is no particular law that regulates it. In 2013, the Philippines passed a law requiring schools to take legal accountability.**India** has a legal vacuum regarding cyberbullying specifically (Grierson, 2016). Children's internet safety is ensured by several laws and policies: Although it has limits, India's regulatory and legal framework for cybersecurity provides a solid foundation for developing a comprehensive plan for kids' internet protection (UNICEF, 2016). In order to combat cybercrime, the following legislation have been passed:

• Cyberspace is covered under **the Information Technology Act of 2000** and **the Information Technology (Amendment) Act of 2008.** These laws
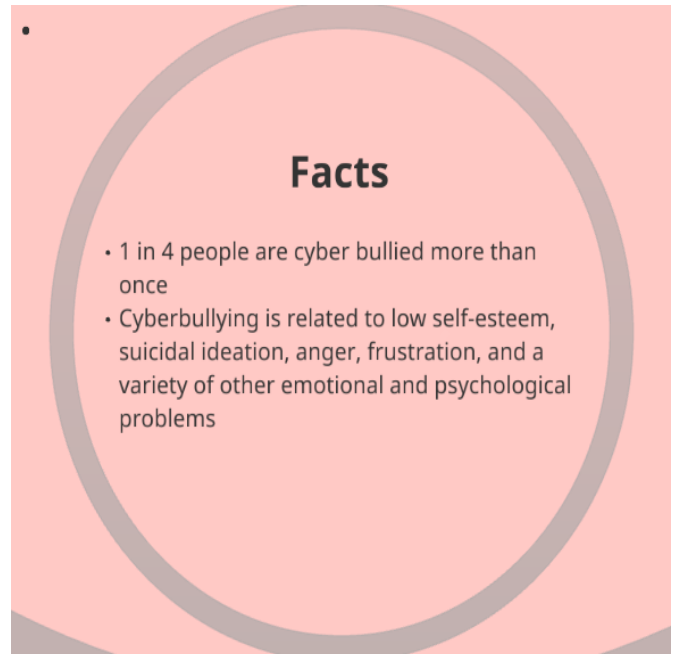
encompass any equipment used to send text, audio or visual data via the Internet. According to the National Cyber Security Policy, 2013, a dynamic legal framework can be created (UNICEF, 2016).

- Online risks are not specifically mentioned in **the National Policy for Children (NPC) 2013.** NPC's principles should be included into all policies including children's learning opportunities, ICT, or cybersecurity, while also safeguarding them from harm (UNICEF, 2016).

- It is more explicit in **the 2012 National Policy of ICT in Schools** that ICT must be regulated in order to safeguard children from potential dangers As a result, it contains measures for controlling Internet access and surveillance. The National Education Policy promotes the use of ICT technologies in schools and adult education (UNICEF, 2016).

- As part of **the National Cyber Security Policy of 2013,** cybercrimes, particularly those against minors, are prevented, investigated, and prosecuted. It emphasizes that law enforcement authorities should be given more resources to investigate cybercrimes and acquire data for prosecution (UNICEF, 2016).

- **The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986** criminalises obscene actions or songs, but it do not penalise the audience or those who force someone to do such activities (UNICEF, 2016).

- As a result of **the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act of 2012,** which deals with online crimes against children, such as child pornography and grooming, the provisions of the Information Technology Act have been reinforced. There are no explicit criminal intimidation, hate speech, or defamation prohibitions under the Information Technology Act, thus the Indian Penal Code applies in instances of online offences (UNICEF, 2016).

- **"Cyber Swachhta Kendra"** was established to improve the cyber security of Digital India (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre). Detecting botnet infections and notifying, cleaning and protecting end users' computers is part of the Digital India project of the Indian government, which is run by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). According to the "National Cyber Security Policy", the "Cyber Swachhta Kendra" (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) was established to create a safe cyber eco system in the country.This centre works closely with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and product/antivirus manufacturers. The "Cyber Swachhta Kendra" provides users with knowledge and tools for securing their systems/devices through the usage of the internet. In accordance with Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000, it is administered

by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) (CERT-In, 2018).

In conclusion, cyberbullies in Asia are subject to a wide range of legal punishments.

5. CYBER BULLYING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH

Facts

- 1 in 4 people are cyber bullied more than once
- Cyberbullying is related to low self-esteem, suicidal ideation, anger, frustration, and a variety of other emotional and psychological problems

Children and teenagers' mental, emotional, and social well-being are adversely affected by cyberbullying, according to studies. They describe cyber bullies as having maladaptive psychosocial characteristics, such as being disconnected from school, lacking self-esteem, and engaging in problematic behaviour, such as intentionally damaging property, making contact with the police, physically assaulting a non-family member, and smoking or drinking (p. 1355). According to recent studies, those who engage in cyberbullying have an increased risk of substance addiction, delinquency, relationship issues, and suicide (Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu, &MacFadden, 2011). In addition to hyperactivity and conduct issues, cyberbullying is also related with peer group behaviour that is less pro-social (von Mare'es&Petermann, 2012). Bullying perpetration and victimisation are linked to social and behavioural issues (Kljakovic& Hunt, 2016). Cyber bullies are also more likely to be victimised offline, according to Patchin and Hinduja (2012). They are also more likely to be unmotivated in class, engage in risky behaviour such as binge drinking or using cigarettes, as well as to be more aggressive and rule-breaking. A 2013 study conducted by Chang et al. found that cyberbullying, school bullying, and mental health were linked among Taiwanese teenagers, with cyber/school victims, bullies, and bullyvictims being at a higher risk for depression.

Issues Kids Feel Result From Cyberbullying
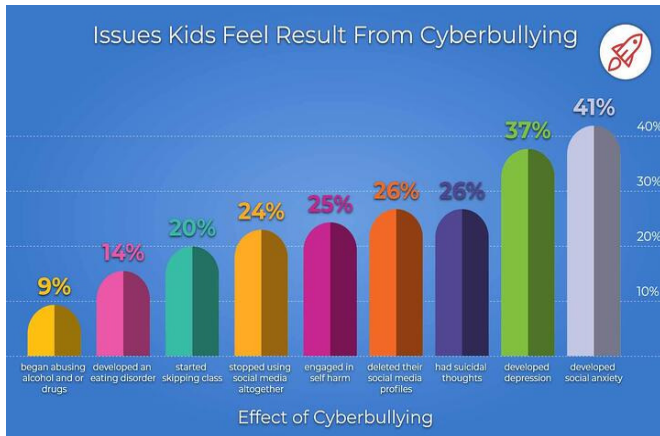
Cyberbullying, according to a study by Perren, Dooley, Shaw and Cross (2010), has been linked to psychological and physical issues. When they looked at this phenomena on a wide scale, they discovered that both victims and perpetrators had higher levels of stress than their peers, including higher levels of depressive symptoms, which eventually drove them to engage in harmful behaviours like drinking more and smoking more. Be it conventional or cyberbullying (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve and Coulter, 2012), bullying has psychological repercussions that affect not just the victims but everyone involved (Smith, 2014). As Beckman, Hagquist and Hellström (2012) note, being a bully is a risk factor for depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and drug misuse.Sourander et al. (2010) also found that cyber bullies had a high level of perceived problems, hyperactivity, and low prosocial behaviour, felt insecure at school and uncared about by their instructors, and had a high level of headaches in their research of 2215 Finnish teenagers. However, cybervictims were more likely to report emotional and peer issues whereas cyberbullies were more likely to report conduct difficulties, smoking, and drinking. Traditional and cyber bullying has been related to increased alcohol and drug use (Gower &Borowsky, 2013; Moore et al., 2014), which is a risk factor for suicidal thoughts and actions (Serafini, Pompili, Innamorati, Rihmer, Sher, &Girardi, 2012).

Effects of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has also been linked to psychosomatic problems. For example, in a study by Kowalski and Limber (2013), it was discovered that children who were both cyberbullied and bullied themselves had more severe psychological (such as anxiety and despair) and physical health difficulties (for example, problems sleeping, headache, poor appetite, and skin problems). Students who were both perpetrators of cyberbullying and victims reported the highest levels of anxiety, despair, and physical symptoms. These negative impacts were also mediated by the age of the teenagers, with high school students who were both offenders and victims of cyberbullying experiencing the greatest anxiety, sadness and physical health issues of any group of adolescents. According to Beckman, Hagquist, and Hellström (2012), engagement in cyberbullying is associated with psychosomatic symptoms such as insomnia, headaches and nausea, with teenagers who are both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying suffering the most severe psychosomatic symptoms. Children's mental, emotional and physical well-being is jeopardised by cyberbullying according to Mesch (2009).
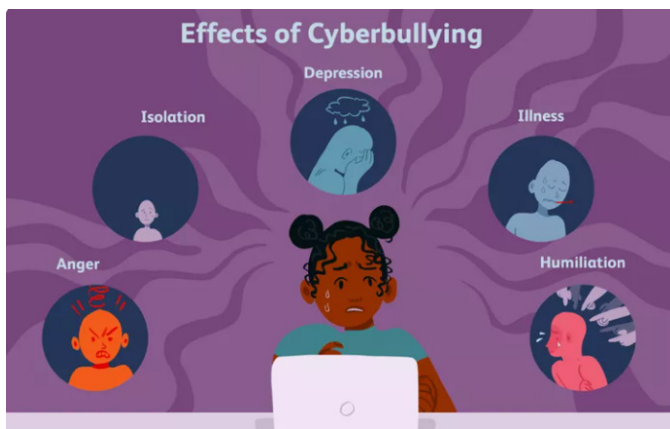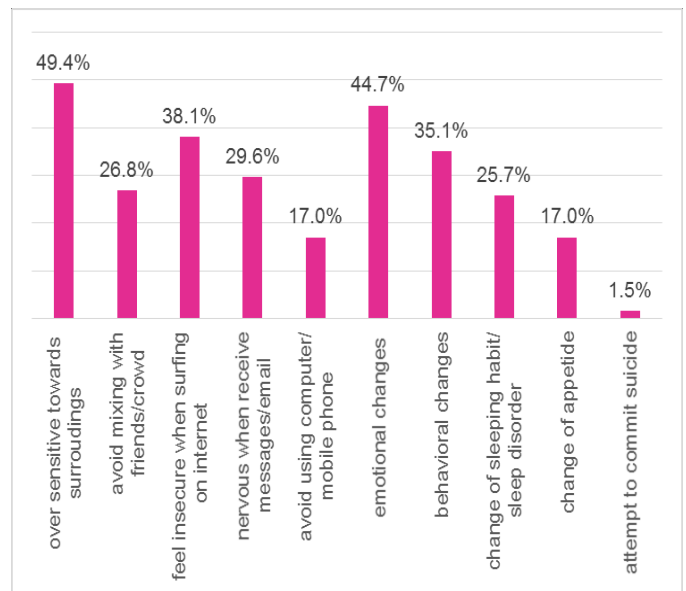
Studies examining the relationship between cyberbullying perpetration and adolescent health has shown that adolescent cyberbully perpetrators are more likely to engage in problem behaviours, such as more proactive and reactive aggression, property damage, illegal acts (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b), substance use and delinquency (Schultze-Krumbholz, 2013), and other negative behaviours (Bonanno&Hymel, 2013).Cyberbullying has been linked to hyperactivity, relational aggressiveness (SchultzeKrumbholz&Scheithauer, 2009), behaviour issues (Schenk et al., 2013), smoking and intoxication. One study found that cyberbullying caused higher social difficulties, tension, sadness and anxiety among Australian teenagers compared to peers who did not engage in

any form of bullying (Campbell, Slee, Spears, Butler, &Kift, 2013). According to Patchin&Hinduja (2010) and Wong, Chan, & Cheng (2014), cyberbullying has been linked to teenagers' lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as prosocial behaviour, perceived feeling of belonging (Wong et al., 2014) and safety at school (Sourander, Klomek, Ikonen, Lindroos, Luntamo, Koskelainen, Ristkari, &Helenius, 2010).

Cyber bullies even explain their damaging actions by downplaying the influence they had on others, according to research. According to Campbell et al. (2013), cyber bullies are more likely to feel that their bullying conduct isn't that severe and doesn't upset their victims as much as they think it does. The researches showed that cyberbullying perpetration was positively associated with unpleasant feelings in teenagers such as anger, sorrow or frustration, fear or humiliation (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2007), Hinduja&Patchin (2007) and Patchin&Hinduja (2011). Young people who engage in cyberbullying are more likely to suffer from a variety of relationship problems, including lower levels of empathy (Wong et al., 2014), higher levels of depression (Bonanno and Hymel, 2013), weaker emotional bonds with caregivers and less parental supervision, as well as more punitive discipline (Ybarra, & Mitchell, 2004a). In addition to anxiety, poor focus and academic performance, hopelessness or powerlessness and depression, cyber bullying has been found to have a number of severe social, emotional and educational effects for the victim (Fredstrom et al., 2011). Preadolescents and persistently traumatised victims of cyberbullying have been reported to be emotionally disturbed (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, &Finkelhor, 2006).

According to Sandhu, Kaur, and Kaur's (2015) research on Indian schoolchildren, bullying has a negative influence on the well-being of those pupils. According to Kaur and Sandhu (2016), as well as Sandhu and Kaur (2017) and Sandhu, Sandhu, and Kaur (2018), the mental and emotional health of cyber victims in India is significantly worse than that of uninvolved teenage peers (2017). It has been observed in certain studies (Ybarra and Mitchlon, 2004a, 2004b, 2006) that there is an association between clinical symptoms of depression and cyber victimisation (Ybarra and Mitchlon 2006). Cybervictimization, for example, has been shown to be associated with depression in teenagers (Wigderson& Lynch, 2013) as well as in college students.

To conclude it can be said that cyberbullying is connected with a number of psychological problems in youth.

Considering that young children are especially susceptible to cyberbullying, it is proposed that cyberbullying be addressed via law. New rules regarding online behaviour should be established. In order to safeguard children online, certain laws and regulations need to be drafted and enforced to protect them.

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