



From Cyberbullying to Human Rights: A Legal and Ethical Analysis of LGBTQIA+ Online Harassment in India and Bangladesh

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Abstract:

There are several instances of cyberbullying against LGBTQIA+ individuals in South Asia, and especially in countries like Bangladesh and India, since the society and its laws fail to provide adequate support to these communities. The study offers an examination of the human rights violations of cyberbullying against LGBTQIA+ persons in these nations. By drawing from a human rights lens, the book presents an analysis of the violation of human dignity, equality, and justice as established in international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). In Bangladesh and India, cyberbullying appears in the form of blackmail, threats, and the sharing of sensitive information, leaving LGBTQIA+ people in a critical mental state and harmful conditions. These problems are compounded by weak legal protections and social acceptance; they result in rampant discrimination and marginalisation. Using a doctrinal and descriptive research method, the study critically analyses the adequacy and effectiveness of existing legal frameworks in addressing online harassment, while also engaging with the ethical dimensions of digital harm. This study highlights the critical importance of national anti-bullying policies, intervention programs, and schools' networks in protecting the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons. Tackling these human rights abuses, South Asian cultures can become a more inclusive, respectful place for everyone, regardless of their sexual or gender orientation.

Keywords: *Cyber-Bullying, LGBTQIA+, Human Rights, South Asian, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity*

Introduction:

Social media was supposed to be optimised for effortless communication and connection regardless of distance. In short, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter: these forums aimed to build a virtual setting for sharing ideas, opinions, and other important facts – they were a mechanism for social interactions in the digital universe. Furthermore, customers could now interact with businesses via social media, and businesses could promote their goods and services and receive important feedback, all of which have enhanced the online interaction space. (Sudzina & Pavlíček, 2017)

The potential that social media has to change the world for good also has an ugly side — and not only for the LGBTQIA+ community at large but also for LGBTQIA+ people. (And for LGBTQIA+ composers, note the non-normative or non-binary gender identity.) Social Media provides them a visibility and a sense of community, but it also leaves them open to discrimination, harassment, and violence. The harsh reality of hate speech, cyberbullying, and misgendering is commonplace on these platforms, leading to real mental health issues and physical violence, creating a dangerous cycle for many of our members who need community in a world full of exclusion. Algorithms only worsen these dynamics, pushing exploitative, offensive, or injurious content to the forefront, generating echo chambers of hate that isolate already targeted minorities. Furthermore, there are big worries here about invasion of privacy – and, often, the mis- and non-consensual sharing of personal info, again, flashpoint issues for trans and LGBTQIA people online. (Bragazzi et al., 2023).

For example, a 2023 study from GLAAD found shocking results – all of the major social media networks were slamming LGBTQ+ users with low or failing grades on an LGBTQ+ social media safety index. Some of the worst findings to come out of the report included that Twitter is the worst social media network there is for LGBTQ+ people. Even more so, studies illustrate the frequency of cyberbullying, with 44.9% of LGBTQ students being cyberbullied. Another study showed that 39% of LGBTQ respondents receive hateful and/or sexually explicit messages online each week. (GLAAD, 2023)

Cyberbullying and Its Catastrophic Effects on LGBTQIA+ Persons in India:

Cyberbullying against LGBTQIA is a massive problem that compounds the discrimination and stigma that these groups commonly experience. Victims are commonly subjected to repeated harassment, threats, and disclosure of private information on social media platforms, causing severe emotional and psychological impacts. The internet allows criminals to troll for LGBTQIA victims under the cloak of anonymity, free of concern for the real-time repercussions they might face. These actions can lead victims to face mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. Moreover, the multiplicative (intersectional) nature of identities affects the impact of cyberbullying, resulting in increased susceptibility of persons who face multiple forms of discrimination. The essential role of everything from education and policies to online safety is crucial to overcoming this epidemic and to allowing LGBTQIA people to be able to be themselves without harassment.

But in actuality, cyberbullying in the Queer or LGBTQIA+ community is horrifyingly high, especially in India and Bangladesh. As per some recent/past incidents, though, it is mentioned, and we will be filing some cases in this regard to fight out this menace. (Jose, 2025)

Case Studies Highlighting the Issue:

Pranshu's Story:

Pranshu, a 16-year-old student and self-taught makeup artist from Ujjain, had nearly 30,000 followers on Instagram. His Diwali video, in which he was featured in a sari, received a flood of 50,000 comments, many containing homophobic slurs and threats. On Nov. 21, he ended his own life. And after he died, his Instagram account, now with more than 35,000 followers, became a target of homophobic trolls, until his family turned it private. Trolling of LGBTQIA+ Community Using such language against queers and trans people is a relatively new phenomenon, and it underlines the intensity of the phenomenon, according to LGBTQIA+ poet Adarsh E, who also points out that trolls are now subjecting them to seemingly scientific descriptions apart from cursing and mudslinging. This part also proves how trolls take transphobia from the West to the next level. (Jetubhai, 2024)

Arvey Malhotra:

A certain Arvey, 16, a Faridabad student, was also a victim of cyberbullying. A student of Delhi Public School, he had jumped from the 15th floor of his building. He described the sexual assault and harassment he faced because of his sexuality in a letter. (He was gay and dyslexic and was tormented by homophobic bullies at school, and eventually lost his battle with depression when he died by suicide. It's a tragic illustration of the extra vulnerability LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse people have, and the lack of support often found in societal structures. (Llewellyn, 2024)

Purav Nagi:

Purav, an 18-year-old makeup artist, often gets hateful comments within minutes of posting new content on Instagram. Even after getting rape threats, death threats, and whatnot, Purav has learned to remain unaffected and laugh about it rather than take it seriously. His story illustrates the continued struggle that LGBTQIA+ people face when trying to safely exist in online spaces. This has been the story for many LGBTQIA+ individuals in the South Asian country. They are getting discriminated, bullied, and hated just for doing some professions, which your society says are so-called non-normative. (I Am Sorry, I Am Unable to Extract the Title of the Work from This Text, 2021)

Yadav's Experience:

Yadav is an aspiring teenage influencer with about 17,000 Instagram followers who experienced vicious homophobic cyberbullying. His followers doubled after he died, but the cause of his suicide is yet to be ascertained. His mother has spoken of her fears for the online abuse he received. This case is a reflection of the increasing trend of cyberbullying and cyberstalking, now up by 25% over the last year, according to

government figures from 2022. Reports of online suicide abetment also doubled, highlighting the need for more online protections. (Kaur & Saini, 2022)

Revealed battles in Bangladesh for LGBTQIA+ and Transgender Folks:

H. C. M. Islam:

H C M Islam, a transgender woman activist, explains the dangers in the digital landscape in Bangladesh as it evolves. Intimidated by transphobic hate campaigns and online harassment, Islam's case underscores the necessity for increased safety provisions on social media. Despite this, the refusal of these platforms to take real action continues to leave transgender people in a state of fear and exclusion. (Lowik, 2022)

Y. A. S.

Y.A.S.'s achievement as a second runner-up in "Miss Evergreen Bangladesh 2023" is a landmark in the history of transgender presence in Bangladeshi society. But her triumph has also come with a dark side, exemplified by cyberbullying and hate speech against transgender people. Although she is doing history, S. is also suffering continuous abuse on the internet, which demonstrates the sort of challenges that trans individuals are having to face in Bangladesh. Cyberbullying causes deep emotional and psychological damage and has a strong negative impact on social integration and inclusion. What S has gone through epitomises just how necessary those efforts to tackle cyberbullying and remind people to respect transgender rights are. By building awareness, encouraging understanding, and enacting reforms to address online harassment, society at large can work to create a more inclusive and affirmative climate in which people like Sokal, in all their beautiful variety, can flourish and help weave an ever more colourful tapestry of Bangladeshi culture. (Nahar, 2021)

Overcoming T. A. S. Barriers:

T. A. S. is the First transgender person in Bangladesh to be a newsreader on a TV channel named Boishakhi. Yet her record-breaking achievement has come with a tsunami of bullying and abuse on social media. However, Shishir is clearly not cowed down, and her spirit to fight back, despite all odds, is evident as she boldly faces the perils of cyber hate. Her journey reminds us of the continued challenges for acceptance and non-discrimination of transgender people in our world, even as she also reminds us of the imperative to fight discrimination wherever it lives. (Kinney et al., 2022)

Tragic Loss:

The harrowing suicide of transgender woman R. T. U. in Bangladesh has caused waves in the community and has sparked yet another round of conversation about the prevalence of online bullying and intolerance. The premature death of R. T. U. shows what harassment to end for the weaker could lead to lonely and desperate people. (Nova et al., 2019; Valashany & Janghorbani, 2018)

According to accounts, R.T.U. was subjected to continuous derogatory messages and cyberbullying on various social media platforms and in other aspects of life, calling on all concerned to increase efforts to fight cyberbullying and intolerance and to promote tolerance and acceptance. Despite some progress in spreading the message of transgender rights and equality, stories like R. T. U.'s are a stark reminder of the continued

stigma and peril that transgender people in Bangladesh - and around the world - face. As the queer community grieves R.T.U.'s loss, supporters and allies are reinvigorated in their work to build a safer, more inclusive world in which all can live freely and without fear of persecution because of their gender identity. R. T. U.'s death is a tragic reminder to us all to step up empathy for, understanding of, and assistance to transgender people on and offline. (Soloaga, 2021).

[Acronym has been used for the victims from Bangladesh for privacy reasons.]

The terrible effect of Cyberbullying on LGBTQIA+ people:

These examples tragically demonstrate the real-life dangers of cyberbullying for LGBTQIA+ people. Cyberbullying only compounds the challenging place LGBTQ people occupy in a society that frequently marginalises and discriminates against them. The veil of the internet allows offenders to spread hate without any repercussions, singling out people with threats, negative feedback, and harassment. The sustained online abuse can result in serious psychological distress for individuals who are non-binary and the LGBTQIA+ community, leaving victims to feel further isolated, terrified, and worthless. This can lead to mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, and unfortunately, to thoughts of suicide. (Tomic et al., 2025)

In addition, as the social climate in India is such that LGBTQ minors are targeted with institutionalised discrimination, police abuse, and blackmail in spite of legal changes, the impact of cyberbullying is also exacerbated. The absence of proper support systems and protections on social media, as pointed out in GLAAD's 2023 LGBTQ social media safety index, renders LGBTQIA+ people vulnerable to being targeted repeatedly.

These heartbreaking cases should remind us all to act now to stop cyberbullying and protect LGBTQIA+ people for good. This encompasses stringent laws around social media platforms, better support networks, and greater societal acceptance and understanding of LGBTQ people. It is only through our collective efforts that we can minimise the damage done by cyberbullying and create a more welcoming and inclusive world for everyone. (Esnault, 2020)

The Long-term Effects of Bullying on Rights:

The hurt inflicted by bullying and harassment cannot be measured by physical and emotional injuries alone: the range of human rights abuses is much broader. Through this detailed examination of bullying, the authors spread out the way in which bullying violates human rights, providing the impetus for a multi-dimensional response to bullying and its effects. (Gaffney et al., 2021).

The Highest Level of Health by Human Physique and Psychic Development:

Bullying threatens the optimal health of children and youth. The negative consequences appear in countless forms: physical trauma from violent encounters, illnesses related to long-term stress, and so on. BULLYING The CURE-It is estimated that 160,000 (64% of our K-12 student population), put up with physical and emotional abuse from another student or a group of students on a daily basis, and some if bullied enough, end their life or develop serious emotional problems and mental illness as a result of the relentless torment and

fear inflicted upon them by others. "The chronic nature of this stress means that bullied children may be at risk of developing these health problems later in life." ([Sansone & Sansone, 2008](#))

Mental health effects can be just as devastating, leading victims to develop low self-worth, feelings of powerlessness, or even thoughts about taking one's own life. Those conditions demonstrate the importance of appropriate mental health programs in the education or work environment as a way of helping people deal with and overcome the trauma of being a bullying victim.

Work and Fair Working Conditions:

Targeted workplace bullying can cause the right to work on equal terms and under fair conditions to be severely compromised. Absenteeism is likely for those who are subjected to bullying at the workplace. This avoidance is not only bad for their earnings and career advancement but also contributes to a toxic workplace culture that has the potential to spread to others. It isn't surprising then that stress and even fear about losing one's job accompany the paycheck of a bullied worker, in addition to the lost work time related to distress and lost productivity, not to mention the increase in medical bills as a result of the bully's insidious stress attacks. ([Al-Ghabeesh & Qattom, 2019](#))

In the worst circumstances, continued bullying can lead people to quit their jobs, which can be financially devastating and lead to long-term career derailment. It is your employer's legal and moral duty to provide you with a safe environment where you can work free from bullying and harassment. It is necessary to have proper interventions and policies that protect workers and keep the workplace a place that is functional and supportive of health. ([Schulte et al., 2015](#))

Freedom of Opinion and Expression:

Bullying interferes with an individual's freedom of thought and the capacity to possess and communicate ideas without fear of influence. Victims can feel uncomfortable expressing their actual sentiments or opinions for fear of retribution or continued harassment. Such censorship contributes to an intense experience of isolation and powerlessness and squelches creativity and invention. ([Kappeler et al., 2023](#))

Students being bullied in education settings are less inclined to contribute to class discussions or speak out, resulting in decreased academic performance and a lower level of education. Likewise, individuals who are bullied in the workplace may be reluctant to share ideas or offer constructive input, thus stifling an organization's learning and growth. The protection of freedom of expression requires a safe and enabling environment that is conducive to diversity and retains respect for all expressions of ideas. ([Sánchez-Gordón et al., 2023](#))

Right to Leisure:

School playgrounds, sports fields, and social media playgrounds, such as Instagram, are places where children's play and socialisation are seeded with the toxic breeze of bullying. These are supposed to be playgrounds of discovery, fun, and growth. But where bullying is present, these can become zones of fear and exclusion. The right to rest and leisure is a right that is codified in the universal instrument of the UN

Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is vulnerable, as childhood play and recreation are essential components to development. Bullying in such situations can significantly curtail children's opportunities for play, with deleterious effects on social skills, physical health, and overall sense of well-being. 7 The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child also emphasised to the government the need to safeguard against children's exposure to violence, racism, pornography, and other harmful content via mobile phones and the internet. Safe, play-friendly environments are essential to supporting the healthy, well-rounded development of children and youth everywhere. (Kalal et al., 2017)

Right to Education:

Education, as the edifice of a society, develops a country into a set-up of tolerance, recognition, and co-existence. But when it comes to LGBTQIA+ people, a sickness in educational institutions, regardless of School, College, or University, showcases the issue of cyber-bullying. The right to education is, in essence, invalidated when bullies take over schools, making the learning environment uncertain and hostile, which does indeed impede academic and personal development. Bullying can have a crushingly negative effect on a student who is bullied – they may worry and feel afraid, so anxious that they cannot focus on an education or even make themselves go to school in the first place. (Rizzotto & França, 2020)

These disruptions to their schooling can result in poor school performance, bad grades, and suboptimal educational attainment. In extreme circumstances, relentless bullying can lead children to abandon school entirely, robbing them of the upside of an education and future success. Schools owe it to all students to ensure they can learn in safe and supportive environments. Establishing anti-bullying initiatives, counselling services, and an ethos of respect and acceptance are critical components of defending the right to education. (View of The Influence of Bullying on The Mental Health of Class XI Students at SMAN 15 Padang of the 2024/2025 Academic Year, 2023).

A Human Right to Freedom from Violence:

Having the freedom from being harmed, be it verbally, emotionally, or physically, is a basic human right that bullying severely infringes upon. Bullying victims suffer violence that can wound, sometimes to the psyche, and other times to the body. Psychological and emotional bullying involves teasing, name-calling, and cutting players out of social events, contributing to the loss of security and self-esteem for a player. Physical violence is one of the most direct risk behaviours for an individual, as hitting, pushing, and using other physical aggression are immediate risks to the individual's safety and physical security. Bullying is all-encompassing, and victims may feel like there is nowhere safe, not at school, not on the job, not even online. To protect people from all types of violence, there must be strong laws in place, enforceable anti-bullying policies, and education on the damaging effects of bullying. (Makhulo, 2018)

Human Rights Perspective in the Light of Laws:

Cyberbullying of LGBTQIA+ people is a serious abuse of a number of basic human rights. This discrimination and violence, often enabled online, serves only to erode the dignity and safety of individuals and create the root causes of systemic injustice. To appreciate the significance, it is necessary to dive into the philosophical foundations and concrete legal constructions, which are neither equal around the world.

International Law:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) The UDHR is a bedrock of international human rights law and promises equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination for all people. For LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQIA+, cyberbullying infringes numerous articles of the UDHR:

Article 12: Right to Privacy:

This article safeguards people from unwarranted intrusion into their privacy, family, home, or correspondence. Observable symptom Cyberbullying typically includes unauthorised exposure of personal information, harassment, and privacy invasion, which stands against this inalienable right. This can be particularly damaging for LGBTQIA+ individuals, in some cases resulting in outing and a great deal of emotional turmoil. And the philosophy into their individual privacy is as such: A lack of privacy is a threat to dignity and independence. Privacy is an essential check on the power imbalance between the individual and those who gather and use our data, and the degree of control we have over our own identities and personal lives is particularly important for individuals whose identities are marginalised. (Whitman, 2004)

Also provides the right to privacy to children under Article 16, which prevents the unlawful acquisition of their personal data. Cyberbullying is largely about the invasion of that privacy, with often severe psychological effects on the young people involved. The philosophical significance of respecting this right is related to the progress of a child's self and autonomy. Their privacy must be respected if we want them to grow and flourish securely. (Ploug & Holm, 2017)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) The ICCPR protects the civil and political rights of all individuals, including the right to privacy and freedom from discrimination:

Article 2: Prohibition of Discrimination:

Article 2 guarantees the right to non-discrimination based on, among other grounds, sexual orientation and gender identity. Cyberbullying is directed at individuals for these reasons specifically, which violates their right to equal protection and equal treatment under the law. Beneath this double standard lies a deeper current of bias and exclusion. It is not just unfounded; however, philosophically speaking, it is disrespectful to treat people in a manner that is inconsistent with their entitlement to respect by virtue of being human. Society offends human rights by making LGBTQIA+ people less than or otherwise. (Wong et al., 2025)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) The CRC focuses on the protection and well-being of those aged less than 18 years with regard to rights of protection from violence and respect of their privacy:

Article 17: Right to Privacy:

Article 17 reemphasises the right to protection against arbitrary or unlawful interference in one's privacy, family, home, or correspondence. For them specifically LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQIA+ folks, cyber-bullying often equates to their interference also their outside numbers for their humanity. Philosophy The right to privacy is a key element of the freedom debates in modern philosophy. It lets them be able to determine for themselves and their own well-being without added outside influence, which is especially important with people whose identities are often exposed to public display and judgment. (Shih & Liu, 2023)

Article 19: Protection from Violence:

In compliance with the present article, children must be guarded from all sorts of physical or mental violence, mishap, or ill-treatment, including against cyberbullying. Governments are called upon to adopt policies to ensure that such harm does not occur, which emphasises the state's role in protecting children online. The respect for children's intrinsic vulnerability and their entitlement to a safe and nurturing environment are the philosophical bases that underpin this article. If children are not shielded from cyberbullying, society fails in its duty of care, contravening the principle of beneficence, which dictates that we owe our most vulnerable members such protection. (Formosa et al., 2021)

Article 26: Equal Protection:

Article 26 also prohibits discrimination in the law. Cyberbullying against LGBTQIA+ persons falls in sharp violation of this provision, citing that it discriminates against them by targeting and excluding them due to their orientation/identity. The philosophical value at stake is justice (or fairness, to use a common, but less precise, term) that claims that every person ought to be treated in a manner that gives equal consideration and respect to all relevant human beings, whatever their particular attributes or identities. (Negro, 2021)

Indian Legal Provisions:***The protection of Children from sexual offences act (POCSO), 2012:***

The POCSO Act deals with various forms of sexual abuse against minors and any form of forcing minors to electronically transmit sexually explicit content. It is an important legislative base for the protection of juveniles from online sexual harassment and cyberbullying, and for establishing an online sexual harassment and cyberbullying reporting and processing system. In ideological terms, this is an act of protection of the weak and affirmation of the dignity and rights of children. With this invocation, the Indictment emphasises that this crime is one that citizens should protect the welfare of their weakest members.

Information Technology Act, 2000 (as amended):

Legal Provisions of the IT Act also have provisions to deal with cyberbullying and harassment, which include:

Section 66A (subsequently struck down): While this section did not specifically criminalise offensive messages, it evokes the spirit of legislative reform on online harassment geared towards sexual orientation and gender identity content.

Section 67 This section makes punishable the publication or transmission in electronic form of any material that is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest, as well as any sexually explicit acts, etc., in electronic form; this includes derogatory material directed at LGBTQIA+ and trans persons. The interests served by these provisions are those of protecting public discourse from speech that does not treat people with dignity and respect, and that deeply undermines people's sense of their own worth and their standing in the community.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:

This act will afford rights to transgender people, such as the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. While the Act does not specifically prohibit cyberbullying, it supports the rights of transgender individuals to live free of harassment and discrimination with human dignity and equality. But its values could nevertheless translate to the push for stronger protections online. To the extent it can, this law upholds the intrinsic value and dignity of transgender people to be full members of the human family and helps ensure their presence in society is fully respected. (O'Connor et al., 2022)[40]

Some Digital Offences Regulating Provisions in Bangladesh:

In Bangladesh, cyberbullying is covered under a larger legal scope that works to shelter people from every type of online harassment and bullying. This right is envisaged on the grounds of maintaining a respect for human dignity, privacy, and personal security in the technological age. The LGBTQIA+ community in Bangladesh doesn't have a specific legal protection, but so far, Section 377 of the Penal Code has marked homosexuality or any kind of sexual activity as illegal. (Makbul & Goni, 2022)

However, the basic cyberbullying rules are applicable to all, irrespective of gender, sex, and caste. The idea underpinning these laws is that digital platforms can be both spaces for communication and expression and spaces for the infliction of harm, to the detriment of individual well-being and national harmony. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to legislate against online behaviour in order to better prevent and respond to cyberbullying.

Relevant Legislation Related to Cyberbullying in Bangladesh:

The Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (ICT Act) is:

Section 57 This provision made punishable the publication or sending by electronic mail (e-mail) of any material described as "threatening, obscene, fake, or information for the purpose of extorting or coercing money". The aim was to prevent the spread of dangerous and offensive material on the internet, so that internet platforms would not become platforms for defamation, profanity, or other such evils. But it was criticised as being too vague and broad to the point that it could be abused, and it was eventually cancelled. (Oliva, 2020)

Digital Security Act, 2018 (DSA):

Section 25 of this Act punish*[s] the sending, publishing, or propagation of offensive, false, threatening, or alarming telegrams, and the sending, publishing, or propagation of false reports or statements for the purpose of causing a panic. This section relates to combating misinformation and cyberbullying, the objective being

the protection of individuals against misinformation and hateful content on the internet, to make the digital world a safer place in which to interact.

Section 29 relates to making/transmitting defamatory material in electronic form, etc. Like classic defamation laws with digital era modifications, this section contributes to the protection of citizens' reputations against false statements spread online. (Lacy & Mookherjee, 2020)

Section 31 regulates the propaganda that spreads information that is likely to generate hostility, hatred, or fear among the population and prohibits it. This provision is intended to prevent the dissemination of information that may lead to violence or hatred, maintaining social stability and public order.

Article 32 redresses illegal acquisition and use of personal information. Ensures personal privacy by outlawing the collection or utilisation of personal information without permission, which will protect from identity theft and abuse of personal information.

Section 33 Identity theft and fraud. This section is focused on combating the fraud related to the use of personal data and protecting individuals' identity and untainted transactions in cyberspace. (Mohapatra, 2024)

Penal Code, 1860:

Section 499 defines Defamation as making, publishing, or circulating any defamatory statements. This provision shields an individual from slander or defamation, and is a reminder that defamation in whatever form, including online and digital, is actionable and punishable.

500 Defamation, Punishment for defamation. The following section details the penalties for defamation, giving the wrongfully accused a course of legal action. (Benkler et al., 2018)

Telecommunications Act, 2001:

Section 69(1) Offences: Miscellaneous Restrictions relating to offensive send-through or writing and the telephone lines, telegrams, etc, message. SECTION V: MISUSE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TO ABUSE. The purpose of this section is to block the use of telecommunications services for harassment or intimidation, and to ensure that these services are used responsibly and humanely. (Peebles, 2014)

Cyberbullying in Bangladesh, despite the existence of comprehensive legislation like the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006, the Digital Security Act, 2018, the Penal Code, 1860, and the Telecommunications Act, 2001, is prevalent in Bangladesh. These laws were created to prevent all types of internet harassment, such as the publishing of false and defamatory comments, the unauthorised use of personal information, and identity theft, to name a few. (n.d.)

But the impact of this legislation is usually diluted by a number of issues. For one, the general public is unaware of such legal protections and how to turn to them when they are being cyberbullied. Fear, stigma, and a lack of faith in the justice system lead many victims to keep quiet. Secondly, challenges in enforcement remain – law enforcement institutions often do not have sufficient resources, training, or technical capabilities

to successfully combat cyber legislation. The result can be delays, insufficient investigations, and a lack of punishment for offenders. (B, 2022; Vendius, 2015).

Third, the broad and sometimes unspecific language of laws like the now-repealed Section 57 of the ICT Act has been criticised as leading to abuses and mission creep, which can undermine confidence in legal safeguards against cyber-bullying. The Digital Security Act, which is more polished but has also come under criticism as a tool to suppress free speech.

In fact, there is law in the books to fight cyberbullying, but there are great struggles in the enforcement of these, and in public awareness. A coordinated response is needed, focusing on public education, capacity building of law enforcement, and the appropriate and equitable application of the law as a tool to protect all citizens from the impact of cyberbullying. (Li & Peng, 2022)

Human Rights Implications:

Cyberbullying against LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQIA+ persons is a common problem and undermines the principles of dignity, equality, and justice - the cornerstones of human rights. From a philosophical point of view, cyberbullying is a negation of those philosophical principles and an indication of the general society's failure to respect and protect the rights of everyone. Human dignity is something inestimable that every human being has simply by virtue of being, and regardless of whatever that being is like or even whether that human being is alive this side of the grave (or the other side). The dignity of a dead body is also a matter to be considered in human rights. People usually hold an unfavourable opinion of people who have passed away.

Yet, insults to the honour of a living person were not the exclusive event of our society, but also a part of it; these were the trends, such as cyber-bullying. Cyberbullying, which assaults this principle by attacking those in the LGBTQIA+ community, is a form of harassment, discrimination, and dehumanisation due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. When people are attacked with threats, hate speech, or derogatory remarks online, it takes away from them a sense of value and robs them of dignity. This can result in feelings of shame, embarrassment, and low self-esteem that can impact psychological and emotional health. In addition, the public nature of cyberbullying may reinforce these emotions as the victims feel exposed and susceptible to the judgment and criticism of others. As such, fighting cyberbullying means challenging and defending the very dignity of LGBT people, providing that each of them is as deserving of respect, empathy, and compassion online and off. (Zhang et al., 2023)

Fairness for All Men are created equal and deserve equal treatment, impartially, and without prejudice. But cyberbullying reproduces inequality in the form of targeting LGBTQIA+ youth because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The discrimination fuels societal prejudices and stereotypes, putting up barriers to equality and full participation. LGBTQIA+ people can experience systemic discrimination and marginalisation in school, work, health, and housing. Cyberbullying only serves to deepen these disparities by isolating and marginalising them in cyberspace. Additionally, at the intersection of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic identities, discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals can be more complex, resulting in many layers of oppression and discrimination. Thus, to reduce cyberbullying, we need to focus our attention on addressing the underlying drivers of inequality and discrimination, advancing diversity, equity, and

inclusion, and fighting for the rights and the dignity of LGBTQIA+ folks in all aspects of society. (Abul & Nilotpal, 2024).

Issa'a is the concept that everyone is entitled to fair treatment, protection against harm, and recourse when their rights have been violated. Cyberbullying is crying out iniquity against LGBTQIA people as it robs them of the freedom to live without fear, to live without harassment, and to live without persecution. Victims of cyber-bullying who have no option or support are not receiving justice, and the chance of recompense for the wrongs done to them. Additionally, cyberbullies continue to face no consequence and are able to victimise other LGBTQIA+ members. Justice in this area, then, entails a combination of projects which work to prevent cyberbullying, hold perpetrators responsible, and provide victims with support and resources. Upon adding protections and enforcement measures, one of the above includes digital literacy and enhancing empathy. And the other is having a respectful solidarity subculture in society. (Bovill, 2022)[54]

We address cyberbullying of LGBTQIA+ individuals by implementing the values of dignity, equality, and justice. It means acknowledging that all people have intrinsic value and have the right to live happy and healthy lives, free from harm and discrimination, no matter who they love or how they identify. It also includes fighting against societal biases and misconceptions, promoting diversity and inclusion, and supporting the rights and humanity of LGBTQIA+ people in all walks of life. By adopting and applying these principles and by working together against cyberbullying, we can build a fair, kind, and inclusive society for all.

LGBTQIA+ Hate or Trend?:

Cyberbullying dynamics usually home in on non-conforming individuals, groups, or communities, reinforcing the caricatured roles that society assigns. When any of these expectations is not met, it is considered a challenge to the current societal order that needs to be brought down or tamed, whether it's in the form of online, public shaming or personal extortion. This cyberbullying acts as a means of intimidation for the "normal" majority against these remnants of marginal social identities. This is the absurd pseudo-logic that can account for the tsunami of online bullying many trans people experience across social media. Transgender individuals, as part of sexual and gender minorities, are increasingly subject to discriminatory and threatening sexual content in the digital environment. (Mitrić, 2022)

The tools of online bullying make use of both the anonymity and the extended reach of the internet in order to intimidate and torment. This anonymity lends a false sense of security; individuals feel more shielded from the consequences of their actions and are more likely to act homophobically. It turns the internet into a hivemind and acts as an emboldening warrant to troll accounts. These trolls are looking for reactions to their attacks, and they get a kick out of causing people grief. The faceless reality of the online world only fuels these types of people, as they possibly wouldn't dare to act like this in real life. (Cheng et al., 2017)

Cyber Bullying as LGBTQIA+ Hate:

Much of the cyberbullying towards LGBTQIA+ people, and the LGBTQIA+ community in general, can be directly tied to LGBTQIA+ hate. This type of harassment is a consequence of homophobia and transphobia, and the society's bias against sexual and gender minorities. Transgender people, for example, experience

especially high rates of discrimination, both online and off. The internet ensures that our worst impulses don't just go virtual—they receive a megaphone, an unfiltered platform from which to spew their hate without worrying about the human impact. (Grant et al., 2011)

Studies have also shown that trans individuals are significantly more likely to experience cyberbullying than their cisgender counterparts. It also often expresses itself as harassment in the form of derogatory language and violent threats, and is designed to demean and negate their existence. The internet provides a barrier of anonymity for cyber bullies to constantly assault any transgender person and has been linked to such extremes in psychological distress that range from overwhelming anxiety to severe depression and suicidal thoughts. (Valashany & Janghorbani, 2018)

Cyber Bullying as a Trend:

On the contrary, some people think that cyberbullying, at least when it is of an extreme type, can be considered as a fad influenced by the contagion effect typical of social networks. This view is based on the belief that acts of harassment seem to take on a life of their own as a growing number of individuals become involved in bullying, even though they are often unaware of what they are doing. The gamification of social media interactions, where likes, shares, and comments are used as a pseudo social currency, may encourage bullying behaviour. People may bully online because they want to be accepted by their community members and not necessarily because they actually hate another individual. (Chatzakou et al., 2019)

Social media only compounds the issue by being inherently designed to promote user engagement, rather than user well-being. Algorithms frequently amplify sensational and provocative material, increasing its visibility and the likelihood that people will engage with it. This can establish a feedback loop in which hateful content is consistently pushed along, motivating more and more people to join the harassment. The result is a poisonous online environment that normalises and even glorifies bullying. (Windisch et al., 2021)

Hate Meets Trend:

It's helpful to separate LGBTQIA+ hate from trend-based bullying, but the two can and frequently do reflect one another. Support our reporting -- Become a JFP VIP The homophobia and transphobia that lie beneath LGBTQIA+ hate are only further amplified by the viral reach of social media trends. Prejudice can be an initial motivator for bullies, but the direction and severity of that behaviour are arguably determined by the broader context that online harassment has established. On the other hand, hoarders or those engaging in bullying as a fad might take on the deviant attitudes they voice as attitudes they actually hold, contributing to the entrenchment of LGBTQIA+ hate in digital environments. (“Impact of Social Media on Youth,” 2019)

Cyberbullying of transgender persons may have a ladder-like impact on the well-being and even the lives of these persons. In South Asia, the cyberbullying of transgender persons can become extremely aggressive, which can have deleterious effects on their well-being in real life. The societal background, which is steeped in traditional gender roles, only heightens the effects of online harassment. Transgender people in this area not only suffer from the psychological pain of being cyberbullied, but they are also subjected to violence and

threats in person. The convergence of cyberbullying and offline discrimination leads to a hostile environment that negatively impacts the lives of the trans community. (Poteat & Simmons, 2022)

Combating Cyberbullying Against Transgender Individuals:

Online hate towards transgender people is a modern challenge, as far-reaching social media and anonymity enhance the impact of discrimination and bullying. Anyone seeking to effectively address this problem needs to deal with both the hate of cyberbullying and the trend of it. This will take an all-of-society response – from education and awareness raising, to policy and legislation, to early support systems, to platform responsibility. All of these pieces are critical for making the internet a safer and more welcoming place for trans people. (Renner et al., 2021)

Education and Awareness:

One of the most basic actions to combat cyberbullying is to raise awareness of its effects of, as well as educate people about the acceptance of transgender identities. Education is an effective contingency to confront stereotypes and alleviate the bias against persons who are Homosexual. School curricula and community mobilisation activities should include educational activities. Such initiatives should constitute not just general bullying-prevention efforts but also address the unique struggles of transgender people. If students, teachers, and members of the community were educated about the lives and rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals, there would be a more empathetic and inclusive society. (Klemmer, 2019)

Workshops and lectures in which LGBTQIA+ people share their individual stories may be effective ways of putting a human face on their experience and disrupting a stereotype. Moreover, initiatives that focus on the successful contributions of transgender individuals can contribute to changing the narrative from victimhood to resilience. Efforts to educate the public should also utilise online platforms to educate more people. Social media campaigns, web tools, and interactive resources can provide young people with the opportunity to engage in more profound dialogue about diversity and inclusion. These are the types of programs that can debunk the myths that drive cyberbullying and create a new culture of respect and inclusion. (Nee et al., 2023)

Policy and Legislation:

Strong anti-bullying and anti-discrimination statutes are also vital to shield LGBTQIA+ people from cyberbullying. Good laws should name online harassment and set out clear definitions and penalties for such behaviour. Governments must enforce their laws against cyberbullying and ensure they reach their goal. This includes laws that enable people to be identified and prosecuted for their online harassment. Not only may they deter future bullies, but they can also set legal precedent that gives justice and protection to the victims. (Selkie et al., 2018)

Social media also has an obligation to comply with these standards of law. They need to be held responsible for what they are putting out and how that impacts the community. Platforms must adopt terms of service that explicitly target and counter hate speech and harassment. This involves creating clear standards for acceptable conduct, putting in place strong reporting, and taking immediate action against offenders. Legislation must also protect the privacy and rights of transgender people. Laws that protect privacy and prohibit doxxing (the

nonconsensual sharing of personal information) can help prevent bullies from using tactics like these to intimidate and harass their victims. (Grant et al., 2011)

Support Systems:

It is important to offer not only effective but also longer-term psychological support service systems to cyberbullying victims and to encourage them to fight back against cyberbullying, not only mitigating the psychological impact of cyberbullying, but also enabling victims to take control as proactive agents in dealing with the perpetrators. These support systems need to be mental health services, legal help, and safe spaces online and offline.

Psychological services serve an essential function to ease the distress that victims of cyberbullying experience. Counselling and therapy can help survivors to work through their experience, increase resilience, and build coping skills. Professional health care providers should be educated to be aware of the special needs and concerns of transgender people and offer culturally sensitive care. (Sha et al., 2021)

Victims who want justice also need legal help. It may be helpful for victims to seek assistance from an attorney to file reports for cyberbullying, as well as to file restraining orders and a lawsuit against the cyberbully. Public-interest law firms can aim to make these resources available to those who cannot secure them through their own efforts. Building safe spaces for trans people and other LGBTQIA+ people to come together and be there for each other is also important. Online community support groups, helplines, and community centres can provide some sense of community and bonding. Such spaces provide a venue to tell the stories, compare notes, and create a support network. The community-serving curriculum should be extended to include criteria for schools and employers to develop policies and resources for LGBTQIA+ workers and students. Anti-bully programmes, sensitisation training, and a sufficient number of support staff can foster a safe and inclusive atmosphere. (Johns et al., 2020)

Platform Responsibility:

Social media firms need to better protect the public from cyberbullying by operating stronger moderation, detecting and removing toxic content using algorithms, in order to protect marginalised communities online. There are some Social Media content strategies to tackle these issues that are in place as of now. The effectiveness is not in bringing out the desired results in various situations that differ from time to time. Enhancement of moderation practices requires training moderators to understand and deal effectively with cyberbullying. This includes the intricacies of hate speech and harassment targeted at LGBTQIA+ people. Moderators will need to be able to process reports quickly and with a degree of empathy to make victims feel heard and believed. (Cobbe, 2020)

It is algorithms that are key in identifying and removing harmful content prior to it travelling further. Social media companies need to commit to robust machine learning capabilities to track abusive patterns of behaviour and alert content for review. And, as new types of cyberbullying continue to emerge, we need to refine these algorithms so that they work for any type of harmful content. Platforms should also have user-friendly and expedient anonymous reporting of bullying. If Online Harassment Policies Were Clearer, Would We Have

Less Cyberbullying? Clear definitions of cyberbullying and a process for handling reports can create apathy among users and make them less likely to report negative behaviour. (Slaughter & Newman, 2022)

We must all help to cultivate safe online spaces. Social media platforms can encourage better behaviour by promoting content that celebrates diversity and inclusiveness. By featuring stories and voices of transgender people on the platform, campaigns can act as a counter-narrative to these and offer positive and diverse role models for people to look up to.

Platforms should also work with advocates and experts to craft policies and programs to better serve the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ users. Participation in the conversation with members of the community will be beneficial for the analysis to help ensure the actions taken to fight cyberbullying are effective and representative. Social network sites (SNS) are important moderators of cyberbullying. Platforms need to amend their terms of service to contain clear, enforceable definitions of cyberbullying and harassment. They should make sure policies are applied in a fair and transparent manner. More AI and machine learning. The application of advanced AI and machine learning can enable the proactive detection and filtering of abuse. Consistent audits and accountability reports can help hold platforms accountable for compliance with these policies, supporting transparency and earning users' trust. (Eddine, 2024)

The moderation practices and decision-making of social media platforms should be transparent. The support system can read transparency reports in which the count of reported cases, what we have done to respond, and how that response has helped can be published and bring about confidence and a commitment to safety. Platforms should additionally create external oversight bodies to review and audit their policies and practices in order to hold themselves accountable for ongoing improvement. (Gibson et al., 2017)

Probable Recommendations for Controlling Cyberbullying or Way Forward for Future Research:

To put it in a nutshell, in the battle against cyberbullying, laws and regulations are simply written. It's a lot to implement to fight against it happening, versus the reality that cyberbullying is an epidemic like a plague. Cyberbullying that specifically targets LGBTQIA+ individuals amounts to a serious violation of the inherent human dignity of these individuals, to whom the dignity of all members of the human family is due, and derogates their rights to be treated in a manner that is degrading, as it solely humiliates or debases them based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Not only does this kind of harassment damage a person's self-worth, it also continues the cycle of stereotypes and preconceptions in the larger world. Cyberbullying also serves to perpetuate disparities by preventing LGBTQIA+ people from being treated equally - and protected equally under the law - and failing to address their marginalised status. On a philosophical level, this failure of government to do something about cyberbullying is really just another example of a wider social failure to uphold the principles of justice and fairness for everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from. In the end, the way to fight cyberbullying is by taking action to deal with these problems and uphold the rights of LGBTQIA+ people to exist with respect and dignity online, and everywhere else. (Amadori et al., 2023)

Promote Digital Literacy:

The focus on digital literacy is essential for the creation of a safer online environment and for enabling people to navigate the digital world in a responsible way. Educational programmes should be multifaceted and include both school curricula and community-based programmes. These initiatives should provide students, parents, and educators with the tools to identify cyberbullying and to understand its psychological and social impact, as well as with the strategies to address it. Workshops, seminars, and online resources should be delivered on a range of themes, such as recognising fake news, using privacy settings, and promoting respectful online interactions. Perhaps greater digital literacy would increasingly nurture a population that knows how to make critical sense of digital platforms, in order to avoid cyberbullying? (Fonseca & Tiago, 2024)

Encourage Positive Online Behaviour:

Positive, respectful online culture is essential in the fight to reduce cyberbullying. Social media can come in handy by encouraging good behaviour using reward systems and good example models. Sending users who are relational and supportive of new players works in the opposite direction from the shattered window principle: it actually reinforces this good behaviour. Algorithms can be used by platforms to boost good content and reduce the spread of hateful or damaging content.' Programs like kindness campaigns and digital ambassadors can also serve as a way to amplify positive norms, building the expectation that users will elevate values like respect and empathy when they use connected space. (Blum, 2024)

Collaborate with Law Enforcement:

The cooperation between social media sites and police is crucial in combating cyberbullying. Developing strong partner-ships allows for quick detection, response, and prosecution of cyberbullying. We must train our police in such a way that they learn to be sensitive to cyberbullying and the wide variety of cases that will deposit themselves at our doorstep. Efficient reporting systems and clear guidelines on how cyberbullying should be dealt with provide quick action and support for victims. Moreover, platforms can support efforts of law enforcement by granting access to data and intelligence that strengthens the effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions.

Restorative justice is an excellent remedy for the personal harms of cyberbullying; it is an alternative model that addresses the harm and creates accountability. Dialogue between victims and perpetrators promotes understanding and empathy and helps to pave the way for reconciliation and change in behaviour. Restorative justice initiatives seek to address the root causes of bullying with a focus on education, empathy, and community participation. Restorative justice approaches involve all parties in addressing the issue to help heal the pain, mend the relationship, and prevent the recurrence of cyberbullying.(Kataoka et al., 2018)

Research and Data Collection:

It is fundamental to have a solid research base in order to understand the prevalence, dynamics, and effects of cyberbullying. Both longitudinal and survey research are necessary to study the experiences of victims and perpetrators and establish whether the advancements in prevention and intervention programs are effective. 2.3. Together with academic institutions and research organisations, cooperation helps to transfer knowledge

and best practices. Regular monitoring of data allows policymakers and other stakeholders to monitor trends, to assess interventions, and to wisely allocate resources, and as such to introduce evidence-based responses to cyberbullying. (Volk et al., 2017)

Additionally, there is an absolute need to involve communities in promoting a community response to cyberbullying. Local groups, religious leaders, and community activists can all be invaluable allies in educating and supporting victims. Community-led efforts, support groups, workshops, and awareness campaigns help to promote discussions and awareness and to reduce stigma. Through grass-roots efforts, communities can teach tolerance, empathy, and solidarity to create a culture that discourages cyberbullying and promotes good digital citizenship. (Marzano, 2018)

Developing Resilience in Victims:

Empowerment of cyberbully victims is vital for reducing the psychological and emotional impacts of victimisation. Building-resilience activities provide an integrated recovery approach, including the opportunity to participate in therapeutic activities and skill-training workshops and to connect with peers. They help victims regain control, rebuild their self-esteem, and learn different tools to cope with life online. Psychological care and counselling are key factors to support and assist them to cope with their trauma and to foster resilience. Supporting victims, we can help support victims – and empower people to rise above the trauma of cyberbullying and flourish online – by investing in victim support services. (Bussu et al., 2025)

International Collaboration:

Cyberbullying does not respect geographical borders... [and] international collaboration is required. Countries need to work together to standardise laws, exchange good practices, and tackle cross-border cyberbullying cases. Such intergovernmental organisations serve as fora for the exchange of ideas and knowledge and provide collaborative mechanisms to help combat cyberbullying. International programmes, such as cyber safety conferences, collaborative research networks, and advocacy programmes, would multiply the efforts of like-minded persons and pool resources together to address the scourge of cyberbullying with the force necessary. Through stronger international cooperation, we will be able to utilise the full force of countries in shielding citizens from the wickedness of cyberbullying and continue to champion their rights in the online world. (Nee et al., 2023)

Conclusion:

Bullying and harassment are not simply private problems – they are deep-seated human rights violations that require an urgent response. By acknowledging bullying as a social illness whose consequences for health in a broad sense (physical and psychological), work environments, freedom of expression, leisure, learning processes, and freedom from violence are far-reaching, it is possible to understand how crucial it is to implement a comprehensive approach that encompasses these practices. We can only hope to defend human rights against bullying if governments, schools, employers, online platforms, and the community more broadly all work together. We can only ensure that every human can live, learn, and flourish in an environment without fear and repression if we act together.

Fighting Back Against LGBTQIA+ Cyberbullying Fighting cyberbullying directed at LGBTQIA+ youth requires a two-pronged approach — fighting the hate-motivated and trendy elements of online harassment. This way, by educating and raising awareness, having strong policies and laws, offering support, and having platforms' responsibility, we can create a better and more secure digital environment. All of these things are needed to ensure the rights of, and the safety and protection for LGBTQIA+ individuals, and to encourage a culture where people are respected and accepted in our ever-more-connected world.

Cyber-trolling directed against the LGBTQIA+ community is a multi-layered issue, which exposes a toxic mix of both long-standing LGBTQ hate and the fickle nature of social media. This problem needs closer attention and very practical solutions, including addressing the underlying causes of discrimination, the message of hate, and the means to access and amplify bullying, particularly in South Asia. Collaborating to build a culture of acceptance and accountability in the LGBTQIA+ community will make the digital world a safer and more inclusive space for LGBTQIA+ people and the wider community.

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