Nature and Aftermath of Cyberbullying with Female University Students in Bangladesh

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Abstract:

Bacground: The growing severity level of cyberbullying in educational institutions and other social sphere in Bangladesh call for serious consideration to our educators, researchers, administrator and authorities. Principal objectives of this study are to explore the pros and cons of the nature of cyberbullying victimization as well as to focus on the aftermath of cyberbullying with female university students in Bangladesh.

Materials and Method: Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling technique was used to explore the samples. All of the respondents were female and students aged 18-22years. Most of the respondents were undergrad students. Primary data were used in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interview from the cyberbullied respondents from Khulna division in Bangladesh. In this article Cyberbullying means a social behavior that is done deliberately and repeatedly through internet in open or hidden forum to harm people psychologically, socially, economically etc. with a presence of power differential. Interviews were designed focusing five fundamental aspects; (a) Demographic information of the respondents, (b) Respondents' online involvement and activities, (c) Nature of Cyberbullying in respondents' experience, (d) Negativities of cyberbullying from respondents' perspective, (e) Actions taken by respondents.

Results: This study shows that bullying is on the riseand the girls especially girls aged under twenty years are more likely to be respondents of cyberbullying. There are two types of bullies found, known and unknown bullies. Most of the identified or known bullies are male, aged from 15-28years. Bullies are comparatively more skilled than respondents about internet browsing as mentioned. The negativities of cyberbullying are beyond thinking, it may cause to attempt suicide. A much concerning issue is that respondents are apathetic to taking legal actions as well as they think it is shameful to raise voice against it.

Conclusion: It is hoped that this study will meaningfully assist to know better about the nature and aftermath of cyberbullying with female university-students in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, victimization, social dominance, nature, aftermath

I.   INTRODUCTION

Internet browsing is a must to keep pace with the very fast modern world. Easy access to new technology as well as internet has paved the way for students' social interaction through online. It has also created a big opportunity to collaborative learning process. Besides the pandemic of Covid-19 has pushed students as well as teachers to spend more time to learn, teach and accomplish research through online. Now a days teachers conduct their classes even some practical courses, offer lectures, take interviews-presentations, assign assignments, conduct class tests and share materials through online. So students have to spend much time on online for learning and social interaction. A study has demonstrated the exceptional growth of social media in Bangladesh as more than nine million users joined the platform between 2020 and 2021. The total number of social media users in the country is 45 million, according to the Digital Report, a report published in February by We Are Social. The number of social media users is equivalent to 27.2% of the total population of Bangladesh, the report reveals. There were 47.61million internet users in Bangladesh in January 2021, increased by 7.7 million (+19%) between 2020 and 2021, reveals the report. Internet penetration in the country stood at 28.8% in January 2021. According to the report, there were 165.8 million mobile connections in Bangladesh in January 2021, which increased by 1.7 million (+1.1%) between January 2020 and January 2021. The number of mobile connections in Bangladesh in January 2021 was equivalent to 100.2% of the total population, it said. (Dhaka tribune 2021). This gradually growing number of internet users in Bangladesh including students is a very clear indication that Bangladesh is keeping in touch with modern world.

No doubt technology has brought a lot of benefits. But simultaneously it causes to happen series of negative phenomena related to technology. Technology itself causes some problems as well as human beings cause some wrong deeds using technology. Cyberbullying is one of the forefront of them. Generally

cyberbullying refers to bullying via electronic communication tools. Bangladesh has a high rate of cyberbullying and 80% of the respondents are girls and women (14-22). Majority of the cybercriminals and hackers fall between the age-rage of 16-17. (Daily star 10 dec 2020). The growing severity level of cyberbullying in educational institutions and other sphere call for our educators, researchers, administrator and authorities to take proper steps. Principal objectives of this study are to explore the pros and cons of the nature of cyberbullying victimization as well as to focus on the aftermath of cyberbullying with female university students in Bangladesh.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Cyberbullying is an umbrella term related to similar constructs such as online bullying, electronic bullying and internet harassment. Researchers, educationists, sociologists, psychologists, administrators have suggested different definitions from different viewpoints. Three necessary conditions must be met for a situation to be considered Cyberbullying; 1. Must be carried out with internet 2. The behaviors must be repeated 3. Must involve in psychological torment. (Dehue, Bolman and Vollink, 2008). Harassing using technology such as e-mail, computer, cell phone, video cameras, etc. Bullying occurs when people say mean and hurtful things or make fun of another person or calls him /her mean and hurtful names, completely ignore or exclude him/ her from their group of friends or leaves him/her out of things on purpose, tells lies or spreads false rumors about him/her, sends mean notes and tries to make other students dislike him/her and other hurtful things like. (Li, 2008) When a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way by another student, or several other students: (a) say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her and call him or her mean and hurtful names, (b) completely ignore or exclude him/her from their group of friends or leave him/her out of things on purpose, (c) hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room, (d) tell lies or spread false rumors about him/her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him/her, and (e) other hurtful things like that. And it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself/herself. It is called bullying. But Cyberbullying: Includes bullying: (a) through text messaging, (b) through pictures/photos or video clips, (c) through phone calls, (d) through e-mail, (e) in chat rooms, (f) through instant messaging, and (g) through websites. Bullying can happen through text messages/pictures/clips/e-mail/messages/etc. sent to a student, but also when text messages/pictures/clips/e-mail/ messages/etc. are sent to others about that particular student. (Smith et al, 2008). Under most definitions, bullying is much worse than simply being mistreated, pushed, or generally made fun of. Reviewing much literature about cyberbullying this study suggests that, "Cyberbullying is a social behavior that is done deliberately and repeatedly through internet in open or hidden forum to harm people psychologically, socially, economically etc. with a presence of power differential".

Many studies on cyber aggression have tried to explain the the root causes, materials and methods of cyberbullying, perception, behaviors and responses of cyberbullied after attacks, motivation of perpetrators etc. from various perspective. Here some notable works reviewed for this purpose, 'The things you didn't do': Gender, slut-shaming, and the need to address sexual harassment in narrative resources responding to sexting and cyberbullying. In: Narratives in Research and Interventions on Cyberbullying among Young People'. (Dobson, 2019), Cyberbullying among emerging adults: Exploring prevalence, impact, and coping methods. (Oblad, 2019), 'Cyberbullies, cyberrespondents and cyberbully-respondents: Discriminant factors in Portuguese adolescents'. (Carvalho et al.,2017), 'Cyberbullying in adolescent respondents: Perception and coping. Cyberpsychology'. (Sleglova &Cerna, 2011), 'Cyberbullying Identification, Prevention, and Response'. (Hinduja&Patchin (2014), 'An exploratory study of the cyberbullying and cyberstalking experiences and factors related to victimization of students at a public liberal arts college'.(Kraft & Wang, 2010), 'Prevalence, psychological impact, and coping of cyberbully respondents among college students'. (Schenk &Fremouw, 2012), 'Cyberbullying: Youngsters' experiences and parental perception. (Dehue et al., 2008), 'Traditional bullying and cyberbullying: Differences in emotional problems, and personality. Are cyberbullies more Machiavellians? (Resett &Gámez-Guadix, 2017), 'Defining cyberbullying: A qualitative research into the perceptions of youngsters'. Vandebosch & Van, 2008), 'Anonymously hurting others online: The effect of anonymity on cyberbullying frequency'. (Barlett, 2015). Much notable works have done on cyberbullying around the world focusing various angles from various academic and disciplinary background and purposes.

Socio-economic, cultural, educational and biological background make differences in every sphere of human life. That's why attitude, culture and behavior vary man to man, society to society, nation to nation and country to country. So it is not wise to measure cyberbullying statuesque of one country with the examples of other countries. Bangladesh is much different from other countries on this perspective. Bangladesh has a high rate of cyberbullying. According to The Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID)'s survey titled "Cyberbullying against girls and women over social media" on behalf of the ICT Division. This survey shows that the cyberbullying victim's rate is 80% as well as the percentage of respondents in which 64% of the girls in the cities and 33% in the rural area receive sexually explicit videos, messages and photos. (Sraboni, 2021). So in this context dedicated research should be done to portray the actual image of Cyberbullying. Little research

published on cyberbullying with female university students in Bangladesh. To the best of researcher's knowledge, no research work has been published yet on Cyber-bullying of university students in Bangladesh. So the nature and aftermaths of cyberbullying victimization among female university students in Bangladesh have not been fully explored. This study aims to help fill this void.

III. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Dominance Theory (SDT) is a multidisciplinary theory that tries to explain discrimination, oppression in the society with psycho, socio-economic perspective. SDT helps researcher better understand functions of several individuals and characterizing societal status. It can be used to reveal the disparities among people in a social context with power and hierarchical differential. This theory may be applicable in helping researcher to better understand cyberbullying-victimization because this framework suggests that a cyberbullies goal is to inflict feelings of hurtfulness, fear or helplessness, in other words to harass someone and force them into submission. Because cyberbullies cannot see their targets immediate reaction, they will be even more aggressive and callous to ensure harm to the victim, ultimately, ensuring dominance over the respondents (JD & AD, 2002). This research study is aided by this theoretical perspective.

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

*Study design:*This was an exploratory study. The nature of this study was qualitative as well.
*Study location:*For this study subjects were explored from Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jashore, Narail, Magura and Jhenaidha districts of   Khulna division in Bangladesh.
Study duration:Data were collected from November 2020 to June 2021.
Sample size: 20 female students were discovered and selected as the sample for this study.

Sample size calculation:
Girls who were respondents of Cyberbullying were the population for this study. But in Bangladesh this matter is usually hidden by respondents. So the population had to be discovered. For conducting In-depth interviews 25 females were asked. 20 female students (80%) agreed to participate.

Subjects and selection methods:
Reviewing cyberbully related articles and observing Bangladesh context, female students were taken to consideration as sample for this study. Identifying the best sample for this study was challenging. A clue was found from a relative that made the researcher interested to explore this stated problem. Snowball sampling technique was used for this study. Various types of snowball sampling are used in research. To get the best sample for this study Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling technique was used. Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling is a sampling technique where the first subject recruited to the sample group provides multiple referrals. Each new referral is explored until primary data from sufficient amount are collected.

Procedure and methodology:
The objectives of this study were to explore the nature of cyberbullying with various angles and to explore the experience, perception, feelings and actions of the respondents. Following research questions guided this exploration: (a) How did cyberbullies occur to the respondents? (b). What were the respondents' perception about cyberbullying?(c). What did they do after being cyberbullied? A total of 25 female students were asked and 20 students (80%) agreed to share their information. To gain deeper insight into the perspectives regarding to cyberbullying In-depth Interviews were conducted to collect data from sample. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique. Usually it involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea or situation. For this study, interviews were conducted focusing on five fundamentals; (a). Demographic information of the respondents, (b). Respondents' online involvement and activities, (c). Nature of Cyberbullying in respondents' experience (d). Negativities of cyberbullying from respondents' perspective (e). Actions taken by respondents. The conversations were literally transcribed. The texts were then inductively coded. The manual analyses focused on the detection of general trends. A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing or evocative attribution for a portion of verbal and non-verbal data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, literature, artifacts, photographs, video, websites, e-mail correspondence, and so on. In data analysis process for this study researchers used inductive coding to read and interpret raw textual data to develop concepts, themes through interpretations based on data collected for exploration.

V.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents

        Subjects for this study were explored from Khulna division in Bangladesh. Data were collected from November 2020 to June 2021. A total of 25 female students were asked and 20 students (80%) agreed to share their information. The age of respondents was within 18 to 22 years. The average age is 19.2 years. The age of most of the respondents' age was in 18 years. The below figure 1 describes the age of the respondents.
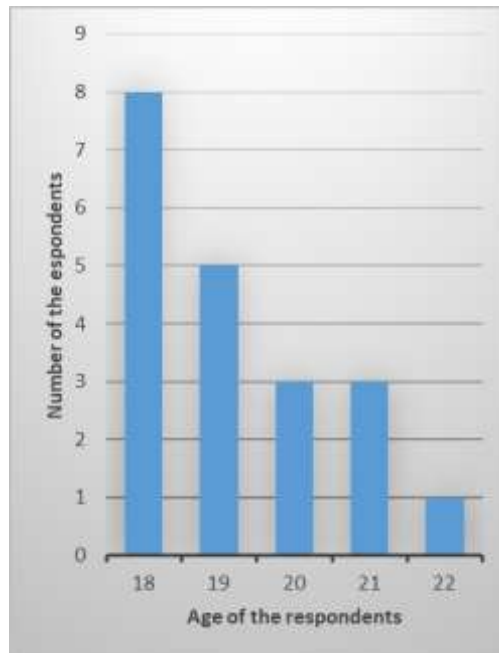

Fig 1: Age of the respondents by years   (n=20)

        All the respondents were from Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jashore, Narail, Magura and Jhenaidha district. All the districts belong to Khulna division The respondents were students from various public university in Bangladesh namely Dhaka university, Khulna university, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi university, Comilla university and Barishal university. Among the mentioned universities, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Khulna Agricultural University and Khulna University located in Khulna division. Rest of the universities located in other division of Bangladesh. There was one student of postgrad and the rest were undergrad students. The below figure 2 describes the educational status of the respondents.
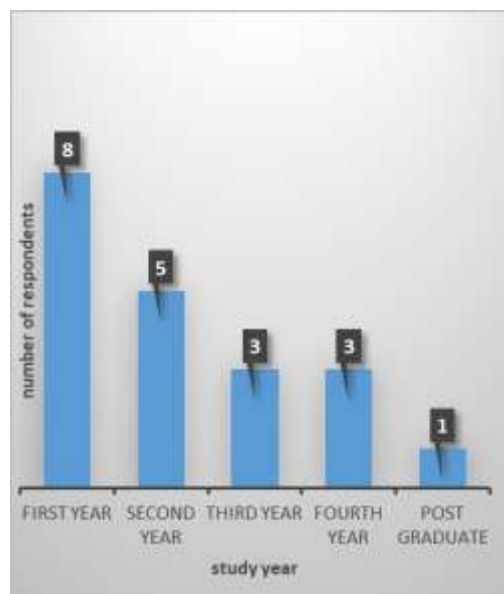

Figure 2: Study year of the respondents (n=20)

Researchers tried to portray the socio-economic status focusing several social and economic background of the respondents. The below figure 3 exhibits about that at a glance.

Family income per month (BDT)	Number of respondents	Marital status	Number of respondents	Religion	Number of respondents
15000-25000	13	spinster	15	Islam	16
25000-35000	04	Married	04	Hindusim	-
35000-45000	02	Divorced	01	Buddhism	-
45000-55000	01	Single mother	-	Christianity	-
55000-65000	01			None	

Figure 3: Religious, marital and economic status of the respondents

The table above demonstrated that of all the respondents only one respondent was divorced woman, four were married and rest of the respondents were spinsters. Majority, 16 respondents (80%) believed in Islam and 4 respondents (20%) in Hinduism. The family income of the majority respondents was not so high in Bangladesh context.

Respondents' online involvement and activities
Most used devices
　　　All the respondents (100%) have at least one cellphone which has digital camera and can avail internet opportunity. Some (20%) have cellphones and laptop opportunity. All of them have the access to internet. 70% of them use mobile data pack to browse on internet. And rest of them have the access to Wi-Fi connection. They spent 90% of their time using cellphone on internet. They use personal computer on other time.

Most used platforms and most executed activities
　　　There was a clear indication in their narrations that they used Facebook most as a social media platform. Messenger, YouTube, What's App, Instagram, IMO, Email, Pinterest, Twitter are found respectively as the most used platforms after Facebook. Uploading photos, videos, sharing personal opinions- liking and disliking, personal chatting, group messaging, belonging to groups, sharing issues, sharing live, maintaining personal and business pages are the most done activities on Facebook. Messenger and What's app are used for sharing text, photos, videos, audio-video calling on, YouTube for watching videos, uploading updates, videos on personal YouTube channels. Respondents used Email for receiving and sending official-personal messages. Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest are used very slightly for personal uses.

Time spent
　　　The respondents spent an average of three and a half hours in a day for browsing on internet. Sometimes in busy days such as while exam was going on they spent one and a half hour highest. In holidays they spent approximately four to five hours. They rarely miss a day using social media for personal or educational purposes. The figure 4 below describes the hierarchical status based on respondents' activities and time spent using the social platforms.
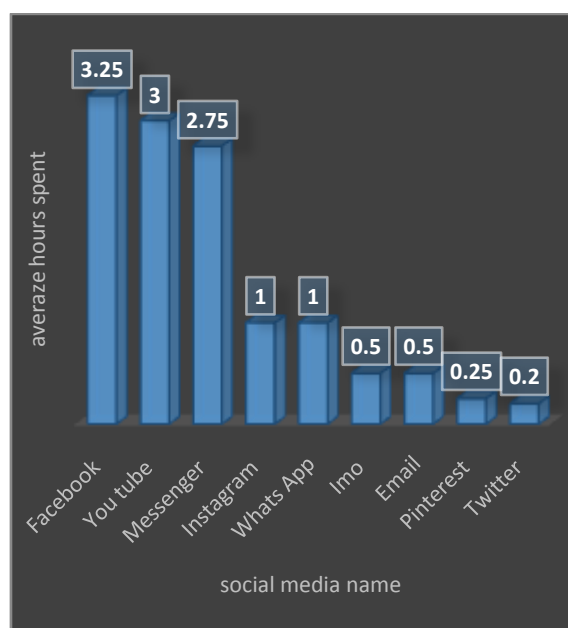
Figure 4: respondents' time spent in social media browsing

The figure above describes that face book was the most used platforms. Messenger, YouTube, Instagram got position respectively. Respondents spent most of their time using Facebook, YouTube and Messenger.

Nature of Cyberbullying in respondents' experience:
Pattern of Cyberbullying

Putting bad comments was found the most common pattern in cyberbullying. Known and unknown bullies put hurtful, mocking, defaming, harassing, threatening, offensive, salacious, sexually in appropriate, pornographic contents, obscenities and bad languages about body shape and structure, educational qualifications, family status, gender orientations, personal habits and outlook to respondent's activities on various platforms in social media. Besides poking, mentioning to memes, trolling, adding to unnecessary pages and groups, tagging to irrelevant posts were much annoying behaviors of bullies mentioned by respondents. All of the respondents faced these happenings several times. Creating fake profiles and spreading rumors about others' personal or professional information were most shocking behaviors of bullies considered by the respondents. Seeking money through fake accounts of respondents was described the bitterest behavior of bullies. And that was very painful and shameful for the respondents. Harassing messages, rumors, unwanted links and spam were shared through Emailing. Respondents said that such emailing demolish their social homage and popularity as they used Email for formal communication. Unwanted audio and video calling, texts and audio messagingthrough Messenger were another common patterns of Cyberbullying. Bullies used amoral images as thumbnail without permission, shared edited or fake video clips, audio clips, unexpected links and information of the respondents in YouTube. Besides reporting to respondents posts and pages to block account, hacking respondents' account were also found in the narratives.

Frequency of happening

Almost three-fourths of the cyber respondents had been harassed more than three times. Sometimes one bully harassed the respondent for three to four weeks. Then somehow stopped but after a few days another bully started harassing. To some extent bullying continued from one to ten weeks. Some bullies changed mode of bullying such as they stopped bulling on Facebook but started bullying on YouTube, stopped bad commenting but started creating fake profiles and spreading rumors about respondents. Sometime respondents were harassed by many accounts and bullies at a time. Few respondents were harassed two times. Some respondents faced bullying once. Nature of bullying was more important than the frequency of happening the respondents mentioned.

Responsible identities and motives

Two types of bullies mentioned, known and unknown. Ex-boyfriend, local boys, neighbor, relatives, competitors, class mates, senior students were mentioned as known bullies. Some bullies were unknown to the respondents. Most of the known bullies were familiar to the respondents. All 95% bullies were male, aged from 15-28years and were more skilled about internet browsing as they mentioned. They were initially in their friend-

list. They knew much information about the respondents. A few female (5%) were identified as bullies. They were competitors in academic area and in social popularity. The respondents thought that the bullies might bully them to embarrass, to reduce popularity, to harm financially, to defeat in competition, to degrade result and to take revenge. Besides pell-mell expansion in the use of technology, easy access, boundless sphere, rises of anonymous networking sites, personal web pages, channels, groups, links and blogs have fueled cyber bullying's growth. The availability of device, twopenny-threepenny price of device, easy access to internet, lack of minimum bar of literacy, lack of socio-cultural boundaries were also mentioned in their narrations.

Negativities of cyberbullying from respondents' perspective

Phobia of Internet browsing, be apathetic to on line education, getting scared about physical harm, lacking of confidence, unable to concentrate to study, getting down of academic results, facing financial loss, falling down popularity and getting psychological affliction are the most common aftermaths of cyberbullying, found from the narratives of the respondents. Fed-up, angry, depressed, scared, exploited, helpless and sad are the most common feelings of the respondents. Indeed, a variety of emotional effects of cyberbullying is found. Lack of safety, fear of social esteem, uncertainty of online-resources are also found as effects. Some shorts of cyberbullying were relatively less harmful but some were long lasting with acute emotional distress, academic problems. A good amount of respondents told that they felt so fed-up that they could not be able to concentrate on study for about a month. One fourth of the respondents stated they felt so depressed that they starved for one-two days. One leaked that she felt so helpless that she thought about committing suicide. Similarities found in the previous research works on cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying victimization is associated with a host of negative problems similar to those of traditional bullying. Respondents of cyberbullying have lower self-esteem, higher levels of depression, and experience significant life challenges (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak&Finkelhor, 2006). Psychosocial problems and negative moods are also demonstrated in those who are cyberbullied. Depression, for instance, is associated with the degree to which individuals experience cyberbullying victimization (Didden et al., 2009). Students who experience bullying or cyberbullying are nearly two times more likely to Attempt suicide (Hinduja&Patchin, 2010).

Actions taken by the respondents

In the narrative of the responses respondents never mentioned that they contacted to law enforcement agency to seek solutions to this problem. They thought that publishing such issue was shameful for them as well as their family. They thought about their self-esteem, family esteem, their status in society and refrained themselves from taking legal actions.

Telling bullies to stop, avoiding, blocking messages, stop using some social media platforms, switching names, deleting accounts, creating new accounts, leaving groups, unlinking pages, reporting issues were found most common actions taken by the respondents while cyberbullying was going on. All the respondents mentioned that they had told bully to stop their offensive behavior twice to thrice as possible. They thought it would work. But they were wrong. Initially respondents blocked annoying messages. They did it so that the bully would stop or would not eager to go another step. The result was not satisfactory as mentioned. Half of the respondents deleted their accounts, pages on Facebook, channels on YouTube, restricted their Blogs. Deleting accounts was thought as a solution. It didn't work thoroughly. Majority of the respondents created new accounts. Despite opening new accounts, new pages on Facebook, new channels on you tube, new blogs, the annoying messages, comments, pokes, reactions, trolls, fake profile creating and unpleasant messages posting started again. After creating new accounts some of the bullies who were used to bull on their previous account left and some new bullies appeared.

Majority of the respondents had changed their activities on internet. They reduced time on internet browsing, curtailed quantity of personal or group picture uploading, shortened opinion sharing, refrained themselves from commenting on various issues. Some started using texture, natural photo for skipping fake accounts of them. Many respondents switched their profile names. They input little information in their social media accounts. They restricted stranger's access to their accounts. Some stopped writing on Blogs, uploading videos on personal YouTube channels, sharing lives on Facebook.

To whom respondents shared their experience

Respondents were found to share their matters to nearest and nearest ones. Friends, parents, siblings, teachers, religious leaders are found the most reliable persons to whom respondents shared their issue. Respondents shared their problems with their peer group or very trustworthy friends. They shared to make themselves get out from distress following that issue. They felt free to share their experiences to their closest ones. They discussed and tried to find ways to get out from the problem informing their matters to their parents. They didn't get sufficient support and affection from their parents they expected. Some respondents thought shameful to share such issue to parents. Stating their matters to their beloved and respected teachers some got

much mental support and care. A few respondents went to their religious leaders and shared their matters. They believed that sharing with religious leaders may reduce their problems. Some respondents were found to confide their experiences while it was going on. Later they shared.

VI.   CONCLUSION

This study has found seven issues that deserve serious consideration. Firstly, bullying is on the rise as most of the respondents knew someone who had been cyberbullied. Secondly the girls especially girls aged under twenty years are more likely to be respondents of cyberbullying. Thirdly two types of bullies found, known and unknown bullies. Most of the identified or known bullies are male, aged from 15-28years. Fourthly bullies are comparatively more skilled than respondents about internet browsing as mentioned. Fifthly nature of bullying was more important than the frequency of happening as stated. Sixthly, negativities of cyberbullying are beyond thinking, it may cause to attempt suicide. Seventhly and much concerning issue that respondents are apathetic to taking legal actions as well as they think it is shameful to raise voice against it. This study suggests that motivation for respondents to avail legal help need to be spread. 'Cyberbullying it is a crime, there is nothing shameful for respondents rather there are punishments for bullies' such awareness creating messages are badly needed to be gone viral on social media. Cyberbullying is becoming an increasingly critical issue of concern and this is the high time Government took major step against this Cyberbullying to ensure cyber safety for all.

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