



Trolling on social media: A study of its impact on under graduate female students in Kangra (H.P.)

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Abstract

There is a rampant spike in the usage of third screen i.e., smart phones. It made the access to social media platforms (SMP) very easy and gained immense popularity among the youth. All of the respondents (n=146) of the current study actively use these platforms and Instagram tops the tally. Present study found that SMP becomes integral part life of the sample population as they spend considerable time on these platforms. This aspect usher's boon and bane too. Users can give vent to their feelings without any inhibition on it. On the flip side, it opens a Pandora's box for many vices such as cyber trolling and bullying which leads to stress, depression, tension, aggression and retaliatory behavior among the respondents. Trolls used derogatory and offensive language against the victims clearly suggest lack of online communication etiquettes. Study also brings into fore that sampled girls were aware to deal with the ordeal of trolling. They know the mechanism of registering complaint and blocking of trolls. The finding of the study supports the elements of disinhibition and deindividuation in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Key Words

Trolling, social media, addiction, offensive language, vulgar comments, depression

INTRODUCTION

Rise of the social media platforms has changed the way of communication, interaction and consumption of information. It has revolutionized and transformed patterns of communication particularly in teens (Plaisime et al., 2020). These platforms supply a lot of benefits (Kircaburun et al., 2019), but they come with certain challenges particularly in the form of antisocial online behaviours (Alavi et al., 2023). The increasing problem of trolling and social media dependency, particularly among youths, is one of such issues.

The expression social media addiction (Elena et al., 2022), relates to the excessive and passionate consumption of social media sites, which has an unfavorable impact on a variety of areas of life (Lavis and Winter, 2020). Besides these traits of these platforms as well as cell phones' continual availability and the enticement of virtual interactions, promotes behaviours that are addicting (Montag et al., 2019).

In addition, the growth of social media has created the disturbing phenomenon known as trolling. According to Evita et al., (2019) trolling is the deliberate provocation, harassment, or intimidation of others online, frequently with the goal of generating intense emotions or creating conflict. Similarly, Marrington et al., (2023) decipher that cyber trolling involves online behaviour aimed at inciting conflict and propagate friction. It left its victim feeling humiliated and feeble.

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Reynard (2020) argues that trolls camouflage themselves with anonymity which is provided by internet to them. It brims them with confidence to act brutally and cruelly as not being opposed with immediate repercussions. Researchers added that due to the halo of anonymity of social media provides perfect ambience for trolling. A study conducted on the Brazilian internet users by Santos et al. (2022) tried to decipher the relationship between online trolling and exposure to antisocial online content. Researcher found a positive correlation between time spent and exposure to antisocial content. Likewise, studies conducted earlier reveals that excessive time spent on social media leads to increase the cases of cyber bullying and cyber trolling. Researcher further argues that harmful behaviour can be developed due to excessive time spent on these platforms. (Craker & March 2016; Pew Research Center, 2014; Phillips, 2011).

Adolescents use social media platforms in perpetual manner and prone to many negative and positive attitudes. Researchers conducted a study on adolescents and young people in Russia found that active online users develop destructive online behaviour such as cyber-aggression. It is linked to depression and other perilous health effects (Chigarkova et al. 2022).

Vogels (2021) found that social media helps in appending social connections for many. On the contrary it can be a suitable place for anti-social behavior. This study argued that people were targeted for political thoughts, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.

Teenagers may find themselves continuously comparing their life to well managed and idealised portrayals on social media as a result of constant exposure to virtual interactions, which can cause feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and sadness (Betul et al., 2020). Additionally, the ubiquity of trolling can lead to cyber bullying (L. et al., 2020) which increases the effects on youngsters' social lives and mental health.

Addiction to social media appears to be a possible issue among youngsters. China, India, and the United States lead the world in the raking of internet users. Trolls engage in trolling behaviors to “annoy, humiliate, disturb, tease, provoke, or provoke people to react emotionally to those they target” for fun (Rafferty et al., 2014).

March et al., (2019) found that trolls are deaf and dumb and they don't accept any kind of constructive or disruptive criticism. They are very brute in nature and blatantly ignore rules of empathy and social responsibility. Negotiation can be an uphill task with them and they can't be felt ashamed and mercy and no one can argue so that they can apology for the damage done.

Trolls use their online behavior for various objectives. Keeping in view their objectives they can be classified in various ways. Veszelszki (2017) divided trolls in two categories depending on their usage and interactions with whom they communicated. Trolls are aggressive and provocative. Aggressive trolls used to target specific person to insult them. It willingly misinterprets words and targets the victim by sending personal messages. On the other hand, provocative trolls focus on gaining people's attention. It tries to impede the flow of conversation by posting comment to infuriate them.

Voggeser et al., (2018) said that in online communication, use of offensive and insulting statements is known as flaming. These texts are defamatory and contain hostile language, vulgar words, sarcastic tone, negative comments, caveats, sexually inept statements. Social media platforms are democratic in terms of sharing and publishing information. But these become hub of vices such as trolling and bullying. It gives the reflection of patriarchy and misogyny. It incites violence against women and girls. It can be considered as an extension of offline violence against women.

Soares et al., (2023) found that young adults engage in online anti-social behaviour for fun and social approval. Researcher found that perpetrators are unaware that how their targets feel. Meanwhile, Kircaburun et al. (2018) found that cyberbullying and cyberstalking are correlated positively.

With the continuous increase in the number of internet users many vices also appeared. Over use of social media can contribute to challenges like anxiety, depression and higher chances of relapsing. Olckers and Hattingh (2022) states that, it is vital to delve deep into investigating the causes of rising social media addiction and trolling cases

among youngsters. Study emphasizes on the need of the understanding the causes and creating of the strategy to curb this tendency and create sage online milieu for young people.

Key Definitions

Social Media: In its most basic form, social media (Aichner et al., 2021) refers to apps and websites that are that aim to swiftly, effectively, and in real time spread substance. Social media are interactive digital tools that make it easier to create and share material through online communities and networks, such as information, concepts, interests in certain occupations, and other forms of expression.

Troll: A "troll" is someone who deliberately creates contentious discussions, use crude language and send vulgar messages. A person participating in these activities on social networks, forums, and other online platforms basically troll's others. Trolls typically create false identities on social media to help them feel less judgmental (Cathlin et al., 2019). In comparison to cyber bullying, they do not directly know their victims, and they are able to act at any time. Trolling can be of different types such as; meticulous, incoherent, clown, aggressive (offensive content such as racist, sexist and misogynist), hackers Black Hat or Crackers (use social media to harm the reputation of company by threaten to hack websites, conduct black hat search engine optimization (SEO) campaigns and create accounts with fake followers to dent the image.), invincible (never stop attacking) and the big fan (other dislike the brand or person but they are ardent supporters and fight till last).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Different studies have revealed that adolescents are prolific user of social media platforms. Adolescents and young adults are leading this tally. Girls aged between 16-24 years heavily relying on social media and spend over three hours daily on it. On the other side boys of the same age group spend one hour less than girls on the social media. Therefore, girls become most active users in that age group for any demographic evidence (Nesi et al., 2015). Buckels et al. (2014), delineated the definition of trolling as willfully posting offensive, provocative or hateful comments on internet. Its purpose is to incite clashes, harm other or gain amusement.

This phenomenon of aggressive and antisocial behaviour is not limited to few countries. Scott et al., (2020) conducted a study in Australia on online aggression among adolescents. This study found that online aggression and victimization are common among adolescents. About 44% of the sample population experienced negative online incidents and over 80% surveyed adolescents took action against such incidents. They blocked users, reported content and changed privacy settings to get rid of it. In other study researchers found that online trolling is widely found in students studying in colleges. (Case et al., 2017).

Bishop (2012) categorized trolls into four main types i.e., haters, lolcows, bzzzters and eyeballs. Haters instigate people to behave in revengefully and commit make mistakes. Lolcows are actively involved in data sharing and potentially falls in high-risk category by sharing inciting content and causing harm to audiences. Bzzzters rakes up meaningless topics regularly and divert attention from the main topic. Eyeballs give hype to the instant mistakes of other. Eyeballs keep vigil on the reactions to themselves and enjoy the situations they encounter.

Hong et al., (2018) found that online trolling is common among the students who post text information on Facebook. The most common types of trolling were evocative, malicious, obstruction, and pathological. Students are becoming trolling victimization such as identity victimization, dissemination victimization, malicious victimization, and obstruction victimization. It is developing personality traits like sense of inferiority, social extraversion and depression among the sampled students.

In another study focusing on Turkish university students Akbulut and Eristi (2011) found that person who witnessed bullying and becomes victim of it has a possibility of turning into an online troll. In this study they found 23% of probability of turning into an online troll.

People live 'second life' on social media platforms which provides enormous scope of anonymity. Hassan et al., (2020) surveyed 356 females and found that majority of participants experienced cyber violence. Most common tools used against for them consist of indecent or violent images, images with sexual content, symbols with sexual content, discourteous e-mails, offensive and humiliating posts and comments. The purpose of all was to demean women. Majority of the victims experienced psychological effects such as anger, worry and fear. This study reveals that over 92 per cent of the trolls were from unknown persons. Victims used the tactic of blocking the offenders to avoid these malicious intentions.

Wu. (2022) conducted a test on students of 71 colleges. The result of this experiment shows that the news about cyber violence was correlated with internet users' anxiety in a significant and positive way. Additionally, cyber social support played an important role to moderate the relationship between anxiety index and cyber violence behaviour.

In a research Paulhus et al., (2021) found that Dark Tetrad personality traits are associated with a tendency for involving in harmful online behaviours. Features like Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism were the qualities of Dark Tetrad personality. Buckels et al., (2018), examined the association between personality traits, trolling, and online commenting behaviour. A consistent correlation between trolling and the Dark Tetrad of personality traits—sadism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism—was seen in the data. Among such traits, sadism showed the strongest correlation with trolling in particular, as the link only pertains to trolling and not to other online actions. This implies that cyber-trolling may be an instance of standard sadism in the world of online communication.

The idea of personality dynamics is explored in this study (Suler, 2004), as it pertains to personal values, psychological safeguards, social roles, and the impact of online settings. It highlights how both positive as well as negative features, regardless of what is perceived as the "true" aspects of a person's personality, are shaped by culture and personal views. The review emphasises the value of understanding personality dynamics' disinhibiting and inhibiting processes as well as the function of psychological barriers in therapy. It also highlights how various situational situations, such as personal relationships and online conduct, may expose multiple aspects of a person's personality. In order to explain the disinhibition impact in online environments and highlight the broad character of self-expression, the review's result recommends a systems model.

The study conducted by Synnott et al., (2017) found that language was utilised in a different way by the anti-McCanns. It is used to make a leading group identity and negatively portrait the pro-McCann group. Besides this its purpose was to separate them from pro-McCann group. Findings show that anti-McCann trolls used different tricks to instigate and derogate members of the pro-McCann group. It supports previous findings which associates trolling to western media culture and the characteristics of anti-social personality disorder.

O'Reilly et al., (2018), conducted a study on adolescents aged between 11-18 years in Leicester and London (UK). Researchers found that respondents perceived social media as a threat to mental wellbeing. Social media usage caused mood and anxiety disorder to some adolescents. Some said that it is a platform for cyberbullying and some were of the opinion that it is a kind of 'addiction.'

Case et al., (2019) found a contrary picture of trolls. The study showed that men were receiving more trolls than women, probably as a result of changes in sample pools. More confirmation that undergraduate business students behave better online comes from the fact that social media time had a positive correlation with trolling volume for others but not for the users themselves. In last but not least, university students recorded less trolling than the

general public, which may point to underreporting or greater instruction on good online conduct. These results emphasise the complex connection between trolling and parameters like age, gender, and social media use.

Lumsden and Morgan (2018) consider cyber-trolling as a 'silencing strategy' and a form of gendered 'symbolic violence' enacted against women in online spaces, such as Twitter. The authors further bring into fore that how trolling extends beyond teasing to sustained abuse, including rape and death threats, body shaming, and the promotion of female incompetence. They conclude that internet act as a double-edge sword for women as it promotes freedom of expression and provides space for feminist activism and on the contrary, there is a risk of backlash from potential trolls which curtails women participation in online spaces.

Cases of cyberbullying are not limited to common girls and many times illumined film personalities also becomes victim of it. Karthika et al., (2021) found that the actress Parvathy also became victim of cyberbullying and particularly it was gendered and sexist. The study shows that females supported Parvathy and criticizes cyberbullying against her while males supported the attack. Female respondents appreciated her efforts to start a legal fight against this virtual harassment.

Craker and March (2016) states that trolling is strongly and closely associated with negative social potency. It provides a specific satisfaction in the form of social reward by disturbing others. Trolling can have huge impact as there is less risk associated with it and results are highly rewarding. Meanwhile it further aggravates the situation. A study by Brewer & Kerslake (2015) signals that being a victim of online trolling and aggressive content can lead to the development of same traits and there is a possibility of becoming a perpetrator of same demeanor. Powers et al., (2017) found that aggressive behavior can be found more in men. As there is a belief too, that there is a positive relationship between violence and masculinity. It increases the possibility that men will act similarly, on offline and online too.

NEED OF THE STUDY

After conducting a study of existing literature, it was found that cybercrime has emerged as a threat to the social fabric. It has given birth to various serious issues like misinformation, disinformation and vilifying the image of others. Last but not the least it has created a caveat to the society. It can be in the form of cyber stalking, cyber bullying, and cyber trolling. Among all of this poor form of communication is the common factor. In many instances the basic communication etiquettes were missing, which pose a threat to society. It becomes more crucial when girls become victim of unhealthy communication. This leads to cyber crimes like online harassment, which put tremendous mental and psychological pressures on the victim. Present study puts an endeavour to decipher the impact of trolling, a cyber menace, on the minds of college going girl students in the Kangra and Dharamshal towns of Himachal Pradesh in India.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present study wants to decode status of trolling in the town of Kangra and Dharamshala located in Himachal Pradesh. This study tries to decipher the pattern of online harassment and how the college going girl students dealt with it. It will also bring into fore that the respondents are aware of this ordeal and the mechanism to mitigate its severe impact on one's personality. The present study will try to decode the communication pattern followed in online harassment which takes the shape of trolling, cyber stalking and cyber bullying.

THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Albert Bandura postulated psychological theory in 1986 which is known as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), commonly referred to as Social Learning Theory. This theory highlights how cognitive processes, modelling, and

observational learning play a part in shaping human behaviour. According to Social Cognitive Theory, people learn by observation of others and the results of their activities in addition to through direct experience. According to the SCT, behaviour is determined by a dynamic interaction between personal elements (like thoughts, beliefs, and emotions), environmental factors (like social norms and one's physical environment), and behavioural factors (like skills and abilities). According to the hypothesis, people continuously cycle through the processes of observing, imitating, and rewarding behaviour. Social cognitive theory may put some light on the issue of trolling of girls. In order to induce an emotional response from others, trolling is the deliberate use of insulting, provocative, or disruptive behaviour online. How SCT can assist in explaining this behaviour is as follows:

- a) **Observational Learning:** In accordance with SCT, people learn through watching other people. When trolling is involved, people may see others acting in a certain way and find it amusing or acceptable. They might emulate trolling behaviour more readily if they observe others receiving rewards or acclaim for it.
- b) **Reinforcement:** According to SCT, rewards or penalties can have an impact on behaviour. Individuals who engage in trolling may get attention, approval from other people who share their views, or a feeling of power and control as a result of their actions. These benefits may encourage the behaviour and increase the likelihood that it will persist.
- c) **The internet offers a degree of privacy that can lessen the perceived impacts of one's behaviour.** This leads to disinhibition. This can have the effect of disinhibiting people, allowing them to act in ways they might not otherwise in face-to-face interactions. Trolling behaviour may be influenced by the perception of a lack of responsibility and weakening of penalties.
- d) **Deindividuation:** In online situations, people could have a sense of anonymity and have lessened self-awareness, which can result in phenomena known as deindividuation. People may become less likely to think about how their activities can affect other people as a result, which may increase their propensity for unpleasant.

METHODOLOGY

A well-defined methodology based on quantitative analysis is incorporated to reach on a conclusion. Online questionnaire was distributed among the respondents randomly. A bar code was generated and then it was shared in different groups of students. In this survey 146 girl students participated. It helped to keep their privacy as well as security intact. It reduced the researcher interference in filling of questionnaire to nil. Questionnaire with close ended question with multiple choices was used for data collection. Respondents were taken from the Government Degree College Dharamshala and Govt. Degree College Matour (Kangra), Himachal Pradesh (India) for conducting this study. Frequency analysis is used to decode the data in the form of percentages and proportions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Profile

The research conducted among college-going girls focused on gathering insights about their age distribution, academic streams, and social media usage. The majority of participants fell within the age range of 18 and 19, indicating a higher representation of these age groups compared to others. 41 respondents were of 18 and 48 were of 19 years of age, making 28.08 per cent and 32.87 per cent of the sample size respectively. 24 respondents were of 20 years and 22 were of 21 years old, making 16.43 per cent and 15.1 per cent of the total sample size. Among these four respondents were of 17-22 years old. Three were of 23 years old. All respondents of these three age groups consist 7.5 per cent of the sample size.

The result of the survey brings into fore that Bachelor of Arts was the common stream followed by the respondents in their academics. 52.1 per cent of the respondents were from this stream of knowledge. Besides this the next popular stream in respondents was of Commerce and Non-medical. 19.2% and 17.1 per cent of the respondents

followed this realm of studies respectively. Meanwhile of the total sample size 11.6% the students were from Bachelors of Computer Application, Bachelors of Science (Medical) and Bachelors of Business Administration (BBA).

Social Media Usage Pattern

Further the survey revealed that all the respondents use social media platforms. Survey confirmed that 100% of the girl's student are using these platforms suggest that social media has become integral part of their lives. It enables these college going girls to connect, communicate and engage with heterogeneous people through these platforms. The survey revealed that Instagram is the most popular platform among the respondents. Of the total 75.3% sampled students are using it, while YouTube is used by 19.2% of the respondents. Only 5.5 per cent of the respondents are using Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter.

In terms of the number of followers on social media platforms, 30% of the respondents had 100-500 followers, 20.7% falls into the category of 500-1000 and 50-100 followers respectively. 15 per cent of the respondents had less than 50 followers. Besides this on the higher side of it, 12.1 per cent falls in the category of 1000-5000 followers and 1.5 per cent falls in the category of having more than 10000 followers. It can be considered as significantly high among college going girls.

Based on these survey results, it was deciphered that half-of-the-respondent's i.e., 50 per cent spending two hours per day on social media platforms. 29.5 per cent of the respondents spend an hour daily on social media. But a spike was found in social media consumption pattern of 15.1 per cent of the respondents. They spend five hours a day on social media and 5.4 per cent were spending more than five hours on it. In aggregate 20.5 per cent of the respondents spend five hours or more on social media which can be perceived as sign of social media addiction. Regarding the preferred time of day for visiting social media platforms, 37% of the girls stated that they mostly visited in the evening, while 34.9% said they visited at night. 22.6 per cent visit social media during afternoon and 5.5 per cent visit their accounts in the morning.

Activities Performed on Social Media

In terms of activities performed on social media, 19.2 per cent of the respondents mostly uploaded photographs, 9.6 per cent used to upload videos and 8.2 per cent posts their thoughts on social media platforms. In total 39.7 per cent of the respondents were engaged in these three activities. 13.7 per cent of the sampled girl students used to forward the content shared by others. On the total sample 39.7 per cent revealed their involvement in all of these four activities. 28.1 per cent of the respondents opted none as reply.

Further knowing more in detail about the content published by the respondents, it was found in the survey that 33.6% writes about culture, 25.3% about fashion, 23.3% about poetry, 5% about politics and rest 12.8% writes about satire, films and sports. In response to the survey, 13% of the girls claim they have been trolled for uploading their own pictures, and 11% say they have experienced trolling for posting videos on social media

These two statements relate to each other as they provide information about the reasons for trolling experienced by college-going girls. The girls reported being trolled for various reasons, including posting personal pictures and videos on social media platforms. Trolling, as defined in Statement 1, encompasses behaviors like bullying, awkward comments, and public shaming, which may be directed at girls who share their pictures and videos online.

Why Trolling Happened

45.2% of the girls state they have been trolled for personal content, 26% for sharing forwarded content, 19.9% for their achievements, and 8.9% for political content. The survey unfolded that 13% of the respondents publish political content and do criticism of the state government through comments on social media. Further the survey

points out that trolling was pointed towards personal content. 45.2% of trolling targets their lifestyle choices, appearance and personal experiences. About 19.9% of the girls were trolled for posting their achievements.

The survey puts lights on the numerous aspects of trolling of girls, which includes triggers, methods and language used. 17.1% of the girls revealed in the survey that they were trolled for their appearance particularly for dressing sense, clothing, body shape, body colour and height. 14.5% of the respondents said they were trolled by negative comments, emojis and dislikes. 31.5% of participants in the survey told that language used in comment was inappropriate comments, 26.7% criticized, 24.7% abusive and 13.7% vulgar. It becomes pristine clear for the survey that trolling basically targets on physical appearance and derogatory language was used to defame and insult individuals on these platforms.

The survey vividly defines reasons, methods and language used for trolling. It reveals that appearance related factors are the centre of trolling. The victims of the trolling were targeted by using negative comments, emojis, dislikes and inappropriate, abusive and vulgar language. All these findings suggest urgent need of developing respectful and inclusive online culture. It also suggests a dire need of etiquette in digital spaces.

How girls deal with trolling

Interestingly, the survey suggests that 18.5% of females and 14.4% of males were responsible for trolling of girls. The survey also highlighted that girls had made their own eco system for dealing with the menace of trolling. 19.2% of the respondents directly responded to the trolls, suggesting eye for eye retaliation technique.

In terms of dealing with trolling, 39% mentioned that they can avoid it altogether, while 21.9% indicated that they registered a complaint. Additionally, some girls sought help from friends and family. However, 45.2% of the girls opted to block the trolls and survey also suggests significant impact on the behavior and personality of the victims. Survey points out that 13.7 per cent of the respondents had deleted their social media accounts to avoid trolling. The survey tries to connect all the dots related to trolling.

This statement links the key points from the survey regarding the sources of trolling (both female and male), girls' responses to trolling (direct replies), their coping mechanisms (avoidance, complaint registration, seeking help, blocking), and the consequences of trolling on their online accounts and personality. It demonstrates the various strategies girls employ to address trolling and underscores the negative impacts it can have on their digital presence and well-being.

Psychological Impact of mindset

In the survey researcher found that 58.3 per cent of the respondents reveal that trolling put impact on their personality. Meanwhile 41.7 per cent said it don't put impact on their lifestyle. The survey's outcome also revealed that 30.8 per cent of the respondents feel angry due to trolling, 29.5 per cent felt tense, 25.3 per cent become nervous and 14.4 per cent develop revengeful mindset.

CONCLUSION

In this study the under graduate students of all streams such as social sciences (arts), sciences, computer application and business administration were involved. It is found that all of them were using the third screen for communication and exploring the world. Girls from the arts stream were dominating more than half of the pie. Meanwhile, the rest of the pie was shared by the students of medical, non medical, commerce, computer application and business administration students. All of the 146 respondents were acquainted with social media platforms and suggest that it has become an integral part of their life. It helps them to communicate and express their feelings and thoughts on social media platforms.

The survey reveals that the Instagram is popularly used platform among girls followed by YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat and X (formerly Twitter). The respondents are aware about the concept of followers on these platforms. In the social media usage pattern, it was found that 50 per cent of the respondents are using social media for two hours a day.

Based on these survey results, it can be inferred that half-of-the-respondents i.e 50 per cent reported spending two hours per day and 20.5 per cent of the sampled girls use it for five hours or more than five hours indicates about the addiction of it. Rest of the sampled population uses it for an hour. A big chunk of the respondents, 34.9 per cent use these platforms in the night while 37 per cent use it during evening. 22.6 per cent visit social media during afternoon and 5.5 per cent visit their accounts in the morning. This pattern reveals that the respondents are deeply engrossed by social media platforms and it has become a vital part of their life.

Sampled students are using these platforms for uploading their pictures, videos, written messages and content shared by others. It leads to their good and bad experience as many times they received unwanted comments on the content published by them. It supports the element of disinhibition as postulated by Bandura in SCT. Respondents have been trolled for uploading content by awkward comments, public shaming and bullying. Trolling was done by both male and female and former were leading in this matter. In maximum of the cases respondents were trolled for personal content. It includes dressing sense, clothing, body shape, body color, and height. Approximately nine per cent of the respondents were trolled for uploading the political content.

The present study also reveals that derogatory language is commonly used to troll the girls. These include abusive and vulgar language and emojis to insult individual online. This type of online behaviour suggests that anonymity provided by these platforms helps people involved in trolling. The sampled girl students reveal that it put impact on their personality when such type of negative messages comes in their comment box which is publically visible. These attacks lead changes in their lifestyle. Lot of fluctuations comes in their mind set. They were engrossed with the feeling of anger, tension and nervousness. This all leads to stress in their life and taking toll of their health as well as peace of mind. Not only this, it is making them revengeful, with a temperament of eye for eye. SCT also says that people learn from observing others and developing the phenomenon of deindividuation.

Meanwhile, to evade ordeals, respondents adopted different mechanism such as responding directly, registering of complaints, blocking of trolls, and help of family members and friends. Some of the respondents had deleted their accounts too. It was found in the study that respondents were alert about legal framework and how it should be used to protect them from trolling.

In all, this study emphasizes the need for fostering a more respectful and inclusive online culture, addressing issues related to body image, personal choices, and language etiquette in digital spaces. Also, there is a need to deal sternly with this menace under the purview of Information Technology Act 2000. So that perpetrators could not harm and vitiate the image of innocent person.

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