

A Model to Manifest the Inadequacy of Awareness in Cyber Bullying among Adolescents and to Accent its Dire Need

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Cyber bullying can be identified as the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending message intimidating or threatening nature. As a result of the anonymity that the internet may offer, cyberbullying varies from standard bullying. There are some of forms that the cyber bullies use such as harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion, cyberstalking, and cyber threats. cyber bullying could be threatening to a one's life in different ways. Being a victim of cyber bullying could result on empathy, anger, suicidal thoughts are some of the factors that could harm a person life. The main concern that surfaced when addressing this issue is that in Sri Lanka this subject does not exist as an issue in the eyes of public that needs addressing. The mere existence of this dilemma is in the shadows as it is generally accepted by society. The main objective of the study is to introduce a model that can be used to bring awareness on misuse of social media among adolescents. It attempts to understand the effect of technological illiteracy, psychology of the users and the activeness of the legal framework on the crisis of cyber bullying among the adolescents in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted with qualitative techniques to achieve the objectives of the study. The data were collected through both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included an open-ended questionnaire and an in-depth interview while the secondary sources were based on reading past literature done by previous researchers. Collectively there were 384 participants for the questionnaire representing all the adolescents in the country within the age group of 12-22. Total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with volunteered adolescents and 3 specific interviews with industry experts from CERT, CID, and Child protection authority. The data collected were analyzed using grounded theory and thematic analysis. The results of the study can be summarized with a total count of 384 responses in the questionnaire. The responders have mentioned that they are mostly familiar with Facebook, Instagram and YouTube as the social media platforms and majority are using these platforms daily and hourly. 60% of the responders were unaware about the term cyber bullying but when they were inquired about the experiences they have gone through, they were exposed to cyber bullying. The majority responded that they have witnessed or gone through trolling which is one phase of cyber bullying. Also, when the activeness of legal factor on this crucial factor is concerned, the realization of high need of legal coverage was visible. The study was concluded with a model that is introduced to bring the necessary awareness among the adolescents by giving them proper technological literacy and understanding on the proper ways to use social media and internet and to minimize the debacle occurring continuously among the users.

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