

# The dark side of internet: Cybercrime against women



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As India becomes more digital, the internet is now a big part of our lives, offering many benefits but also becoming a weapon of misuse by cyber criminals. This digital growth also brings challenges, especially when it comes to cybercrime against women.

## MEANING OF CYBER CRIME

India does not define the term 'cyber-crime' under any law. The term 'cyber' relates to computers, the internet, or technology, thus implying that cyber-crimes refer to offenses committed in virtual world with the use of the internet. Cyber-crimes against women are gender-specific offenses that are increasing day by day, becoming rampant in the cyber world.

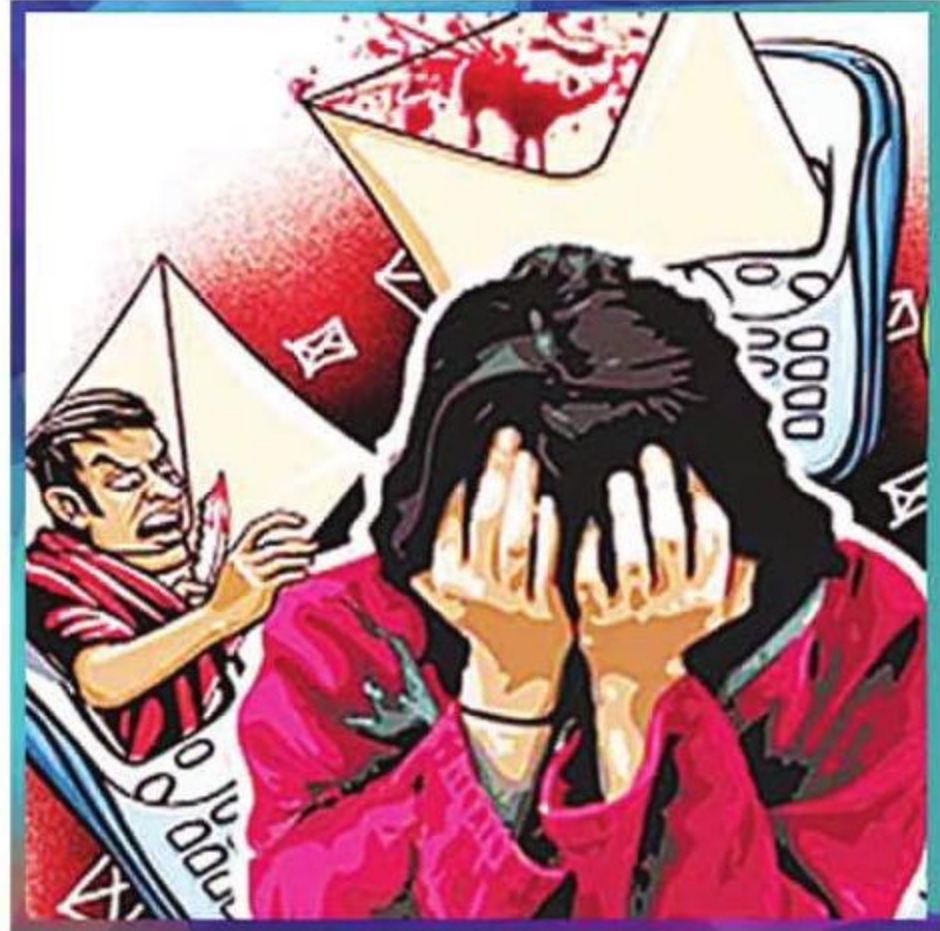
## WOMEN AS THE VICTIM OF CYBERCRIMES

Cybercriminals use technology to access personal information and exploit women. Cyber-crimes against women include sending obscene emails or WhatsApp messages, cyberstalking, developing pornographic content, spoofing emails, morphing images, and more. Cybercriminals utilize fake social media IDs to threaten and blackmail their targeted victims. The cybercriminals blackmail victims with

evil intent for illegal gain, revenge, insulting the woman's modesty, extortion, sexual exploitation, defamation, and other purposes.

## THE LEGAL PROVISIONS

There are many provisions in Indian statutes that govern cyber-crimes, with a significant overlap between them. The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, along with amendments, provides the basis for tackling various forms of cybercrime. Additionally, the new Bhartiya Nyaya Samhita defines crimes like Stalking, defamation and criminal intimidation that can be applied to online offenses. Apart from this, The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 regulates and prohibits the indecent representation of women through advertisements, publications, and other means. Despite these legal tools, enforcement remains a challenge due to limited awareness, under-reporting, and insufficient training for law enforcement agencies.



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## IMPACT ON SOCIETY

The effects of cybercrime on women go beyond immediate harm. Victims often suffer long-term psychological issues like anxiety, depression, and trauma. The fear of online harassment can make women avoid digital spaces, limiting their participation

in social, professional, and educational activities. This not only affects individual lives but also worsens gender inequalities.

## CONCLUSION

As India continues to accept the digital age, ensuring the safety and security of all its citizens, especially women, must be a priority. Combating cybercrime against women requires collective efforts from the government, law enforcement, technology companies, and civil society. By encouraging a safer online environment, we can enable women to fully participate in and benefit from the digital revolution, without fear.

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## HOW TO PREVENT AND PROTECT

Addressing cybercrime against women needs a comprehensive approach:

- 1. Awareness and Education:** Digital literacy programs can teach women about online safety, privacy settings, and recognizing scams.
- 2. Stronger Laws:** Updating and enforcing cyber laws with a focus on crimes against women can offer better protection.
- 3. Support Systems:** Helplines, counselling services, and support groups can help victims recover and seek justice.
- 4. Technological Solutions:** Tools for online safety, like better privacy settings and reporting options, can empower women to control their digital presence.

**Community Engagement:** Encouraging people to intervene and creating supportive online communities can reduce cyber harassment.