

Ubiquitous Adolescents and Cyber Crimes: Stakeholder Roles and Rein-ins

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ABSTRACT

“The invisible criminal is dangerous than the visible one.

He uses technology as his weapon: we use the same to nab him”

Runs the home page of Cyber Crime Investigation Cell, Crime Branch, CID, Mumbai (<http://cybercellmumbai.gov.in/>)

The adolescents' fiascoes nowadays send ripples through not only a conservative society but also amidst tolerant ones. We should not give our adolescents a platform or a context which empowers our boys and at the same time dis-empowers our girls. Cases in point are the social media invasions and the use of networking or cyber crimes widely prevalent. Technology is such a potent tool which has and have harnessed rich dividends if used wisely to one's advantage. But then 'technology' is again a double-edged sword which produces images of 'allurement', 'inducement, and 'fraud'. Technology can allure the adolescents like bees to honey. Consider what happens when a hapless victim, needless to mention, any member of the 'fair' sex falls a prey unaware. A society which is uncomfortable dealing with marital discords, especially dealing with sexual problems, one can imagine the trauma the adolescent undergoes, when caught in the web for all the wrong reasons. Earlier too we have had cases of voyeurism and of blackmailing of the same through other conventional ways. But that was a world which was not so networked, not so well connected and not so fast paced. Come to the contemporary times in our global world, with just a mouse click away, our 'ill-gotten', 'illegal' snaps gets clicked, morphed, transferred and viewed across by tens of thousands of viewers simultaneously within seconds. This is definitely the wrong movement of technology. But technology does not work on its own. We humans are its masters. We can use it to benefit ourselves, our society or mis-use it to harm ourselves or society. Like Churchill's proverbial thought 'When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you'. We the adult generation adopt technology into our lives and into the lives of our young generation but we do not teach them about the good and bad effects of technology. Adolescent is such an impressionable age. The adult generation can influence the youth tremendously. Now in this melee when our Prime Minister Modi ji has initiated A 'Digital India' drive it is more the responsibility of the stakeholders of education sector to row our youth in the positive channel. Our teachers, parents, community etc. must give a direction of growth and development based on our cultural heritage and secular constitutional values. 'Sabke Saath, Sabke vikas' chanted by our PM ji needs to be reiterated by our stakeholders too. The aim of this paper is to highlight the role and rein-ins of the stakeholders of the knowledge society to the adolescents, the ubiquitous younger generation

by building bridges and making inroads of social cohesion into the lives of our youth by transmitting values by acting as exemplars and the role conventional wisdom can play.

Key Words : Adolescents, Technology, Cyber crime, Cyber laws, Values

In our cycle of events, the human race has reversed the roles of its materialistic and non-materialistic aspects. In this post-modernist age, we are in a chaos because we love things, “material things” and we have no qualms about using people to achieve / get our love for materialism satiated. In reality when the world was simple, perhaps less complex, we the humans could distinguish and visualize that we should love people and use things to achieve our ends. But now the opposite exists. We love things and use people. This is the crux of many evils of our post-modernist age. But of course, due credit should also be given to the many benefits we enjoy as a consequence of modernism and post-modernism.

Computer crime, or Cybercrime, refers to any crime that involves a computer and a network. The computer may have been used in the commission of a crime, or it may be the target. Netcrime is criminal exploitation of the Internet (http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/C/cyber_crime.html).

Cyberstalking - Phishing - Information warfare - Cyberbullying are associated terms used synonymously. Our stakeholders need to be aware of these forms of cyber crime. For example; hate crimes, telemarketing and Internet fraud, identity theft, and credit card account thefts are considered to be cyber crimes when the illegal activities are committed through the use of a computer and the Internet (http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/C/cyber_crime.html).

The digital revolution has changed the value dynamics tremendously and with mobile phone cameras, tens of thousands of images are captured every day, day-in and day-out. Many a times the object being shot at is unaware. The Cyber laws are enacted regarding authentication of digital signatures, legal recognition of electronic records, attribution of electronic records etc. But dissemination of the same amidst the public has yet to take off. This is a major issue that needs to be taken care of.

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Like Churchill's proverbial thought 'When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you'. We the adult generation adopt technology into our lives and into the lives of our young generation but we do not teach them about the good and bad effects of technology. Adolescence is such an impressionable age. The adult generation can influence the youth tremendously.

Certain key questions form the focus of the paper:

- What is Cyber crime and what allures them?
- What distracts the youth from the path of development to choose a risky path?
- Which way are our youth diverting?
- How can our stakeholders perform its watchdog function?

Attention needs to be focused on the roles our stakeholders play. The roles expected out of our parents, the teachers, the community in which we thrive and the government at large.

Set against the backdrop of NCF-2005, which calls for being sensitive to the needs and well-being of others (National Curriculum Framework, 2005) and the Fundamental Duties as enshrined in our Indian Constitution, which states "to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women" (Article 51A, Constitution of India). The need of the hour is to unearth the vast possibilities of our youth which lie untapped. We as stakeholders, especially teachers need to create opportunities for our learners, following the philosophy of inclusion. Sabke Saath, Sabke Vikas, all learners must be given equitable learning opportunities without discrimination. We must not create hurdles for one section of the population if we are bestowed with some advantage. Our aim should be to develop holistically, to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

Our adolescents' (13-19) age- group are at that stage of which, within a few years, they are about to enter into the throes of adulthood. In India after 18, they are empowered to decide the nation's fate. They can cast their ballot.

The adolescent period, known for its trial - and -error ways, the stakeholders (parents, teachers, community) should not expect resounding success after offering them advice or giving them direction. It should have a benevolent eye towards them and guide them on a continuous basis, forgiving them often and constantly urging them to better themselves by motivating them.

Schools are considered as the miniatures of society. Adolescents spend a lot of time in this formal environment during their formative years. Teachers as role models can use shaping as a strategy to model behaviours of their students. The socialization process which takes place in a formal school environment under the influence of many interacting factors need expert and professional help. Teachers can fit into this role easily by becoming the quintessential "friend, philosopher and guide". Teachers should be able to strike the right balance between using the "carrot and stick" approach.

Prior to the socialization process of schooling, the family is considered as the primary unit of socialization. The role of parents is paramount here. The family functions as the basic fertile ground of a well-developed fully responsible individual. It is the parents who create, nurture and groom their children into ethical responsible adults.

1. Dhiraj Vyas, President, All India Photographic trade and Industry Association (AIPTIA) the digital imaging and photography industry is growing at the rate of 15 per cent and expected to cross the 12,000 crore by 2016. Nowadays, digital imaging is widely accepted everywhere, (cases in point wherein we upload photos during online submission of forms, competitive exams etc.) and the sale of digital cameras, memory card and recordable media such as CD, and DVD is phenomenal,

but use of the conventional photographic film is now rare and may become extinct in the next few years (TOI, New Delhi, 05 Jan, 2014; <https://www.aiptia.org>).

The younger generation which is highly computer savvy, has given impetus to the growth of digital imaging using digital cameras with inbuilt software and follows the various processes such as image capture, image processing, display and storage. Cyber bullying world -wide has caught attention. In India too its penetration is impacted. Cases of cyber bullying in various forms find occurrences in our reputed private schools.

This is in fact an apt moment for society to be educated and enlightened in the digital revolution, for our PM Modi ji has initiated the digital India launch. The stake holders should come out with innovative and appropriate mechanisms to further this noble cause of contemporary and need-of-the-hour education (Digital India Campaign, July 1, 2015; <https://csc.gov.in/digitalIndia>).

What can the stakeholders do?:

Government initiatives:

The government as the largest primary stakeholder cannot treat a certain segment of its population as second- class citizens. This prime agency, a nodal agency, an apex body needs to reiterate in the minds of the youth, the secular values of welfare for everybody, and humane values of respect and tolerance.

The Delhi High Court on January 7, 2015 stressed on the immediate need to start the proposed one-stop crisis centre (OSCC) for victims of sexual offences. Awareness regarding the same needs to be highlighted and promoted.

The Cyber Crime Investigation Cell of Mumbai Police was inaugurated on 18th December 2000. It deals with the offence related to the computer, computer network, computer resource, computer systems, computer devices and Internet.

Schools:

The principals should appreciate the efforts taken by teachers to represent the interests of the adolescents.

The teachers should map the interests of the students.

Parents :

As parents we have to teach our young generation to be self-reliant towards sensitivity and judge for ourselves between what is acceptable in society and right and what can cause possible harm in society, so should be shelved. Examples of these would be indulging in anti-social behavior in cyber-crimes, where as responsible parents we need to teach our ubiquitous adolescents' to introspect, to be self-reflective, cool-headed and think of the possible consequences of the reaction / action that we take. This is definitely not easy, but certainly not an uphill task.

Parents should spend quality time with their adolescent children at home. A popular quote re-emphasizes this thought “ If you want to grow your children well, spend twice as much time with them and less of money”.

Community:

The role of community is paramount here. Our PM Modi Ji has chalked out an ambitious and a much needed “Digital India” initiative. The internet revolution has not been accessed by every Indian household as yet. There is a skewed distribution between our urban and rural Digital India.

The internet cyber cafes are accessed widely and on a continuous basis by thousands of our youth daily. The cyber café owners should owe a sense of ethical responsibility towards the society. Apart from the mandatory checking and maintenance of record of personal details for accessing cyber space, they should also be alert of the kind of web surfs the users access and update. They can help by providing data regarding the kind of content surfed by users especially “ the viral sites where our ubiquitous adolescents’ go to during their web –time”.

Some possible suggestions:

- Parents, teachers and community need to be aware of the digital imaging potential (strengths) and backlash (hazards). This can be done by organizing community workshops, cyber crime sensitization drives, cyber crime awareness campaigns etc.
- The Information Technology Amendment Act, 2008 needs to be highlighted and its rules need to be disseminated for wider public use. (for e.g. in Schedule I, II, etc.)
- The community members who are adept at technology should organize responsible cyber usage campaigns to educate and enlighten the masses i.e. parents, students- both high school and college goers, community members etc during community harmony week etc. Saturdays and Sundays may also be availed to address cyber issues amongst community, where one may expect a high rate of participation. Resource persons or experts may also be roped in to highlight cyber issues.
- List of mobile phone “do’s and dont’s”, security tips and safe use of internet needs to be promoted and informed to the public. One needs to be aware of computer viruses that comes along a suspect email attachment. Our large share of public who use PC’s are perhaps unaware of the security tip or the need to use strong passwords or latest version of anti-virus software packages for protecting their personal computers from being hacked. Awareness drives regarding simple basic computer protection needs to be arranged for stakeholder information.
- Schools, especially the principals can help against the cyber crimes by building in their schools a culture of ethics, starting from their morning assembly itself. Apart from the routine but unique morning assemblies, the schools’ leadership must promote a moral, transparent and healthy environment wherein every school member owes a sense of ownership of his/ her actions based on a conscience which is alive and ticking. Guidance and counseling programmes can be organized in schools for preventing cyber crimes among anyone especially towards women, Mentoring of students and victims need to initiated as the need of the hour. Our youth need to be told of the lurking dangers that may threaten them if they act as gullible youngsters, functioning thoughtlessly and recklessly, without a sense of responsibility.
- The government on its part should set up appropriate employment generation measures in this fledgling yet emerging industry, to tap the ubiquitous adolescents’ into contributing positively towards society while simultaneously addressing their interests. If the government encourages this industry with standard laws and procedures, more demand will be created and further employment will be generated resulting in contributing towards a positive sustainable development.
- The youth should be encouraged at all levels by the adult generation to engage with outdoor exercises to promote physical health, develop healthy habits of making real friends rather than virtual friends and active participation in games and sports, to develop holistically.

Conclusion:

India is a good testing ground for democracy. We have a long tradition of democratic debates and a free press. These are the true hallmarks of human freedom. But the line of censorship has to fall in place with an individual's right to dignity and privacy. In India in the absence of any legal document for probing into cyber crime, each cyber case will evolve its own working standards.

Thus, till then our stakeholders need to perform its watchdog function instructively. Our core values: sensitivity, empathy, respecting the rights and dignity of the individual, kindness, compassion, richly reminiscent of India's spiritual heritage and cultural capital should be promoted transparently, pre-dominantly and explicitly. Amidst India's multicultural diverse capital the familiar "draupadian" drapes have to be evolved by the respective stakeholders which will also do justice to the largest growing adolescent segment in the world.

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