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The Routledge Handbook of Communication and Bullying

Edited by Richard West and Christina S. Beck

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CYBERBULLIES, BULLYING, AND THE YOUNG IN INDIA

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Introduction

Development of communication and information infrastructure over the years in India has led to a rise in access to and use of these technologies and services. With the government's priority agenda to connect every village in India with internet facilities in coming years, communication network expansion and its uses are likely to rise further. According to a report titled "Internet in India 2017," published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI, a non-profit industry body) and IMRB International (a multi-country market research company), the number of internet users in India is expected to reach to 500 million by June 2018. Internet penetration in urban India was 64.84% in December 2017 as compared to 60.6% in December 2016. Moreover, Rural Internet penetration has grown from 18% in December 2016 to 20.26% in December 2017. Significantly, this report noted that young men and college-going students were the primary users of the internet.

Internet use among youth have also proliferated because of the success of social media platforms that have become an indispensable part of young people's lives. With more and more households getting access to internet and digital information resources, corresponding concerns emanating out of digital consumption also need to be addressed without any delay and with added caution. One of the major concerns arising out of this digital boom in India is an increasing incidence of cyberbullying. Eighty-one percent of Indian children between the age of 8 and 16 years are active on social media networks, and, of these, 21% have reported being bullied online; this was higher than Australia, the U.S., and Singapore (Intel Security India, 2015). *First Post* (17 June 2016) reported that Indian teens faced the biggest risk of cyberbullying among Asian countries, and close to one in two parents believed that their children were safer from bullies on a playground than online. This scenario is giving rise to parental concern about their children as they grow up. It is natural for parents to grow concerned, because childhood and adolescence are the prime development phases of children's lives; lessons learned and experiences gathered in childhood are retained throughout their lives. Parents worry about what their children are experiencing and what are they exposed to during their developmental phases. Therefore, some sort of intervention on the part of parents, teachers, educational institutions, and governments in relation to internet use by the young is the urgent need of the hour (Snakenborg, Acker, & Gable, 2011). This chapter presents and analyzes the incidence of cyberbullying in India and how it can be tackled, especially through parental mediation of digital media use by the younger members in families.