

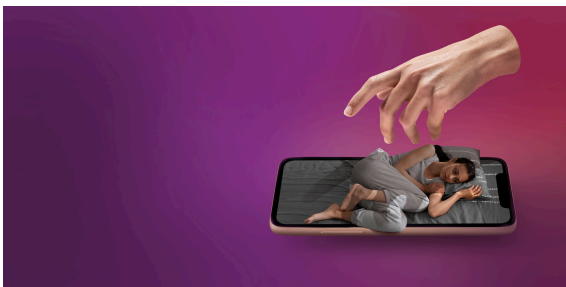
THE RISE OF ONLINE HARASSMENT: HOW THE INTERNET IS BECOMING A HOSTILE PLACE



"Online harassment is a growing issue, violating people's rights and harming their well-being."
— UN Women

***The Scope of Online Harassment (A snapshot):**

In 2021, the Pew Research Center released a comprehensive report revealing that 41% of Americans have personally experienced some form of online harassment. Among these individuals, 25% reported being subjected to more severe forms, such as physical threats, stalking, or sustained harassment. While these numbers paint a disturbing picture of the digital environment, they also only scratch the surface of what many experience. Online harassment is not limited to overt threats and attacks. The data also shows that many users endure quieter, prolonged harassment that can be equally devastating. For instance, 14% of internet users reported long-term harassment, often in the form of persistent negative comments, microaggressions, or targeted social exclusion.



***The Psychological Impact : Harassment's lasting Effects:**

The emotional toll of online harassment is staggering. According to the same Pew Research Center study, 53% of harassment victims report feeling stressed or anxious as a direct result of their experiences. Another 37% report feelings of sadness or depression. These numbers are even higher for individuals who endure long-term or severe forms of abuse, such as stalking or doxxing.

***Vulnerable people, emotional injury, and actions against online harassment:**

People with many mass media appearances were targets of all types of online harassment, excluding sexual harassment. By contrast, online media appearances did not reveal considerable effects, excluding harassment in public spaces. Younger people may be targeted for harassment in private spaces and with dating requests. There were insignificant gender differences in online harassment. Although offline harassment followed online harassment trends, women were more vulnerable to offline stalking than men. And concerning the actions against online harassment change depending on the type of victimization. Victims used anti-harassment functions provided by platforms (blocking/reporting accounts and closing comment forms) in public and private spaces, and there's some actions of the victims: "I discussed with my legal consultants " "I spoke to the police " "I went to mental health counselors " "I contacted an inquiry counter of the platforms " "I reported my victimization to my talent agency " "I talked family/friends/business friends " "I avoided and consigned weblog/social media posts to my staff " "I blocked/muted harasser accounts on platforms " "I restricted comments and replies on my weblog/social media " "I reported harassers to platforms " "I stopped updating my weblog/social media "

****Bitter silence allows sexual harassment to continue in workplace: A qualitative study in Iranian nurses****

- Sexual harassment in the workplace is continuing. However, the rate of sexual harassment disclosure is low, which causes many problems.

Family barriers Nurses in this study reported that they were silent on sexual harassment due to family barriers that occurred for the following reasons: fear of being more confined to independent mobility by their family; fear of being blamed by their family for example: Some of them in the study did not disclose sexual harassment in their workplace because they were afraid of being blamed by their families. In these cases, families did not support them and solve the problem, and they even blamed them, so nurses preferred to remain silent in similar cases.

"I informed my sister of what had happened in the hospital. I expected her to understand me, but she immediately began blaming me. I would prefer to remain silent and avoid explaining these incidents to anyone."

Loss of trust in others

Some nurses in the study remained silent on sexual harassment because they did not trust others. They were afraid that talking about this incident, even with close friends, would make the situation worse. *"I no longer trusted anyone because I was afraid that my close friend would tell everyone about what had happened."*

