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UNVEILING THE EVIL; PAKISTANI YOUNG GIRLS AND ONLINE HARASSMENT

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Abstract

Where world is blessed with the countless usefulness of Internet, there are also some cons attached to the usage of internet. Online harassment is a global phenomenon and women in particular are in majority of the victims all around the world. In a country like Pakistan where internet and social networking sites are growing gradually and the cyber control laws are not up to the mark therefore online harassment cases are increasing. Therefore this study that is descriptive in nature was aimed to find out the online harassment cases and the experiences of the Pakistani young social media users. The findings showed that majority of the respondents have clear understanding about this phenomenon however they are unaware to cope with the situation therefore they are reluctant to report the formal complaints because of lack of proper training, unaware of how to report first and have fear of the outcomes if they report it. The results stressed upon the government and other relevant institutions to arrange online trainings, strict laws and an organized mechanism of implementation of the cybercrime laws.

1. Introduction

Now, access to technology is an easy way for most people. The Digital Copyright Foundation (2016) found that Pakistan's use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has grown exponentially, but there is still a long way to go. They found further that Internet penetration in Pakistan was 18% by mid-2016. With the popularity of mobile Internet (3G and 4G), this 18% is expected to rise. Access to these technologies is unequal; factors such as geographical location, economic status, gender and disability determine the level of access.

International Telecommunications Union (2016) found that Pakistan's digital gender gap is among the highest in the world, as "men are twice as likely as women to own a mobile phone in Pakistan" as only 64% of women owned mobile phones, while 81% Pakistani males owned cellular devices in 2015.

Even when women do have access to technologies, they are subjected to online violence that is markedly different from the experience of men. Online violence against women includes an array of behaviour, such as and not limited to, blackmailing, non-consensual access and distribution of personal information, impersonation, defamation, threats and gender-based bullying. While there are several motivations behind online violence, gender is the primary one and women are often the main target of it.

1.1 Online harassment

Winkelman (2015) found that online/cyber bullying often defined as "wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text". She referred cyber bullying as "an aggressive act" or behavior that is carried out using electronic means by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself". However, cyber harassment has found to be linked closely with cyber stalking. It is more partner or relationship focused that encompasses a range of activities such as sending abusive, threatening or obscene emails, text messages, posts on to social networking and blog sites, and phone calls.

1.2 Mediums of online harassment

Mantilla (2013) found that cyber stalking and cyber harassment research has identified the following computer or telecommunication-based harassment mediums including: Monitoring e-mail communication, sending e-mail that threatens, insults or harasses, disrupting e-mail communications by flooding a victim's e-mail box with unwanted mail or by sending a virus program, using the victim's e-mail identity to send false messages to others or to purchase goods and services, using the Internet to seek and compile a victim's personal information for use in harassment, remailers (Email sent through a third party where the headings are removed, making it virtually impossible to trace its origins), spamming, incessant Instant Messaging (IM) or texting, posting in appropriate messages or stalking behaviours in chatrooms, posting inappropriate messages or stalking behaviors on bulletin boards, blog sites, and/or on social networking site personal pages, website tributes and personal data manipulation.

Digital Rights Foundation (2016) expalins that with the many technological devices (computers, laptops, smart phones, electronic notebooks, etc.) and online communication mediums (Internet, email, blogging sites, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) one may become more susceptible and accessible to online harassment or stalking. Many internet users are sharing personal information on the internet making this information readily accessible. Search engines and social networking sites are able to identify people's addresses, telephone numbers, ages, and public mention on the internet (such as articles, blogs, Twitter postings, Facebook profiles, student status at a university, employment status at an organization, etc.).

Forms of online harassment

Mantilla (2013) found that some different forms (although not mutually exclusive or an extension to offline abuse and existing gender based violence) of online gender based harassment are:

i)   Hate Speech
Online hate speech is any electronic communication that attacks a person on the

basis of their identity, opinions, religious views, backgrounds, etc.

ii)   Doxing

Doxing is the practice of leaking and publishing an individual's personally identifiable information. This information is meant to target, locate and contact an individual, usually through social media, discussion boards, chat rooms and the like; and more often than not, it is accompanied by cyber bullying and cyber stalking.

iii)   Accessing and Disseminating Private Data without Consent

This involves viewing, using, sharing, disseminating and manipulating data such as photographs, personal information, etc. without consent. This breach of personal privacy is often done by stealing passwords, hacking, identity theft. The practice involves using personal data for the purposes of defaming the individual or harnessing personal profits.

iv)   Cyber bullying and Harassment

Mantilla (2013) found that cyber bullying is the practice of deliberately abusing or harassing someone over the Internet. This form of harassment can include threats, incitement to physical violence, vandalism, blackmail, sexual remarks and false accusations that are meant to humiliate, threaten or discredit the victim.

v)   Cyber stalking

Mantilla (2013) found that cyber stalking is the practice of tracking, monitoring and collecting information or pictures of an individual to monitor their daily activities. This is done through the use of blogs, photo-sharing websites and social media. It usually involves sending individuals threatening instant/text messages, emails and social media posts. In this sense, cyber stalking is often accompanied by cyber bullying and harassment offline.

Underlying Factors

As laid out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, human rights apply both offline and online, with "fundamental freedoms", such as free speech and right against discrimination, and the obligations that accompany them, being applicable online as well. All internet users have certain freedoms and obligations with respect to others that they must take into consideration when using the Internet.

Internet Governance Forum (2015) found that it is not always necessary for women to have an online presence in order to suffer gendered violence that originated online. For those that do, however, online and offline spaces are interconnected and interrelated, as there is usually a calculable link between online and offline harassment. As noted earlier, offline socio-cultural issues extend to the online sphere, and the socio-cultural backdrop of Pakistan, with its prevailing notions and realities of gender disparity and discrimination, feeds online gender-based violence. For a lot of women there is a lack of awareness about what constitutes online abuse and the action that can be taken to prevent or report it.

2.   Online harassment study in Pakistan

According to a survey by Haque (2013), the Express Tribune English-language Pakistani news daily – measured internet use in Pakistan and found that approximately 70% of users on Face book were men. Zahid (2015), during a session on tackling online misogyny, the author of the report went on to reiterate that 75% to 80% of the users online were men. This effectively renders women a minority, and turns them into a marginalized community online.

Alexy (2005) mentioned that measure harassment has focused on the impact on college and university students, given that they are more prone and susceptible to online harassment and abuse, due to their extended and prolific use of digital spaces. Technology and Business Magazine (2015) in Pakistan, despite the dearth of data around online harassment, the official reporting figures provides some insight into the extent of the problem. The Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) has stated that in 2015 only five per cent of cases of harassment were reported and followed by legal action of any kind. Al-Jazeera (2016) reported that the authority has also separately pointed out that during 2015 around 3,000 crimes were reported, and 45% of these consisted of women being targeted on social media.

Law for online harassment

Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (PECA)

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) was passed in August, 2016 amid criticism from civil society and digital rights organizations. The vaguely-worded nature of the law meant that it could, and ultimately was, be used to silence opposition and clamp down on free speech.

Nevertheless, PECA has several sections that pertain to online harassment and protection of women in online spaces. Section 21 of PECA ("offences against modesty of a natural person and minor") address the exploitation of sexual imagery without consent:

"Whoever intentionally and publicly exhibits or displays or transmits any information which, (a) superimposes a photograph of the face of a natural person over any sexually explicit image or video; or (b) includes a photograph or a video of a natural person in sexually explicit conduct; or (c) intimidates a natural person with a sexual act, or any sexually explicit image or video of a natural person; or (d) cultivates, entices or induces a natural person to engage in a sexually explicit act, through an information system to harm a natural person or his reputation, or to take revenge, or to create hatred or to blackmail".

There are other two laws, section 20 and section 24 which also deal with online harassment. Section 20 contains offences against dignity of a natural person whereas section 24 contains cyber stalking. Both the section had pitfalls related to human rights law.

Law Enforcement Agencies

While there are several issues with the existing legislation, its implementation and the institutions tasked with the implementation create several hurdles for women and other victims of online violence.

The National Response Centre for Cyber Crime (NR3C) of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is the designated authority to conduct investigations under PECA. The NR3C is severely understaffed and under-resourced, which hampers its ability to effectively deal with the scale of the problem at hand. The offices of the NR3C are limited to only major cities within Pakistan (Quetta, Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad). The lack of geographical access of these offices

is a real concern, as it means that women living outside these select cities will have to leave their area of residence to simply file a complaint—which has the effect of particularly disadvantaging women in remote areas. While the NR3C does have an online complaint mechanism in place, it still adheres to a paper-based system and thus a formal complaint requires at least one visit to the office to start one's application.

Aslam (2017) further mentioned that the NRC offices are criminally understaffed. For instance, the office in Lahore only has 13 investigators (field officers), which includes 2 assistant directors, 4 inspectors and 5 Sub-Inspectors. The Deputy Director of the Lahore branch admits that these "13 men have to cover territorial jurisdiction within 32 districts within Punjab with only one available official vehicle.". These officials are tasked with handling a plethora of cybercrimes cases, not just online harassment. The sheer volume of complaints compared to the amount of resources available means that it is riddled with a severe backlog and institutional delays

2. Literature Review

Women in Pakistan and Social Media Usage

According to the study of Forbes (2007), the older generation is also utilizing social media to again connect with their family members and friends and those who are living abroad. He further explained that among all type of social media face book is the most popular, as it is used for both personal and professional use. However Zahid (2016) mentioned in Pakistan Telecom meeting from 191 million Pakistan Population 18% of Pakistani use internet which means 34.4 million. Social media or face book users are 14% or 27 million. Mobile users are 66% or 126.3 million. Mobile social media users are 12% or 22 million. Report further shows that women face book users are 22% which means 27 million.

Junco (2012) mentioned that for the college student development and success, there is fair amount of popular interest and also professional interest in social media effects. The study of Jones and Fox (2009) mentioned that for the college students, one of the most popular website of social media is face book

and 99% of the students are face book users. However Smith and Zickuhr (2010) found that young adult's college ages between the percentage of 67 and 75, even those who are not enrolled in college, they use social networking sites. Recent data of US in the study of Smith and Caruso (2010) shows that from 126 US universities and one Canadian university, from sample size of 36,950, 90% of the University students are using social networking sites and 97% percent of the students says that they use face book. Similarly the study of Zulqarnain (2017) shows that in Pakistan more than four hours per day 67.1 % of the students use social media comparatively to the traditional media i.e. 25.2%. He concluded that 51% of people are using social media on daily basis.

The study of Nylander and Rudstrom (2011) found that many women have made their profile pages for the business purposes on social media networks, where they have given their detailed information, either it sis related to personal or business or product information. But besides these advantages Hasan and Fatima (2012) mentioned that Pakistani women on social media have to face many hurdles and barriers to grow their businesses. The important barrier is literacy and infrastructure problems. Many women are in opinion that they have education, freedom of choice and facilities availability and harassment issues as compared to men. Similarly Roomi (2006) identified that women face other challenges also such as inferior status of women in the society, economic underestimation issues and gender bias issues in the regional. Further he explained that in name of Islam feudal and tribal culture of Pakistan is also a major factor to grow for women. According to previous studies Shabbir and Di Gregorio (1996), Shah (1986) and Hibri (1982) stated that notion of Purdah, Izzat is also a major challenge for women while using social media as it is their mobility restriction and they are not allowed to do work with men and go out as it might affect in their marriages etc.

Users Pattern of Social Media

According to Smith and Kidder (2010) social media became a way to shape young people and their personal identities in the society. Several scholars have studied the impact of women motivation against the usage of social media. Smock et al., (2011) highlighted that maintenance of any relationship is one motivator for facebook users, it follows for passing time and for entertainment females use it more. However Special and Li-Barber (2012) mentioned that coolness and companionship is not very much important factor of their social media motivation. A study of Balan and Rege (2017) found that most of females post their topics related to small business such as on Twitter account, the number of female posts are greater than the males. Cardon and Marshall (2015) stated social media now started to impact on women's lives and its use of study became significant. However Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that it created a massive content as users do share their experience and opinions on different topics in social media.

Kemp (2012) mentioned that 30% is about the total internet users in world and 22% are social media users. A study of Athulya (2015) indicate that communication has been changed by SNS, as age of adulthood between 18 to 25 is the age between adolescence and between the adulthood period of transition. This age virtual world interaction have role in emotional, social and physical development. He further described that this age focus on SNS use more and it impact on their self-esteem and also more on formation of social capital among the adults emerging.

Cases in Pakistan

A report by Digital Rights Foundation (2017) explored the laws in order to deal with the women online harassment cases and it shows the lived experience structure of women who are facing online harassment. DRF's analyzed about the harassment team helpline who are working for cyber, which includes behavior array, blackmailing, personal information distribution and defamation etc. Report explained further that behind the online violence, there are several different motivation and women are often major target of it. According to the Digital Rights Foundation (2017) survey, many online harassment victims are women in which self reported harassment cases are 63%. Whereas men calling on the behalf of the women are 107.Hence there are no official online harassment figures on this subject. Despite

this, government has not provided gender data yet. Out of 3027 cases of cyber crime that was reported to Federal Investigation Agency, 45% of cases are violence against women during the year of 2014 to 2015. FIA have repeatedly failed to report in Parliament about their several operations as under the section of 53. According to DRF helpline the major experiences of harassment of women are 20% consist of blackmailing, 19% are information of nonconsensual, 21% is the reason of impersonation and 12% are the wrong messages.

Zakaria (2016) mentioned in his study about a recent case of a professor in Karachi University, he made five fake face book accounts of a female colleague. This case was happened in 2015, and her picture was used in immoral content and lewd. Only not this case happened, in 2014 to 15 there were 3027 cases of cyber crime. 45% of cases are only concerned with females. Similarly according to the NGO Hamara Internet, profile picture stolen are routine cases, in which some are those where women are forced completely to stop the sites of social media and blackmailed. Zakaria (2016) further explained that in many cases women were manipulated through the software of photo modification which is easy to modify and then they were used to blackmail them. The victims were especially those who don't know how to complaint on social media, and some of female not complaint to the harassment law enforcement agencies because of the consequences and censure of male family. Dad and Khan (2017), DAWN (2014) and Fazal (2017) mentioned that online harassment may lead to the swear case of suicide, as it can also cause distress emotions, fear and other facts etc. So it cannot be ignored as it can be a death. According to survey of Digital Rights Foundation (2017), 70% of the women were agreed that in online harassment cases they were more afraid of the pictures being online posted. However 40% of females said that they were being stalked and harassed with help of messaging apps etc.

Harassment Cases:

The Cyber Harassment Helpline Report (2016 - 2017) shows that 513 online harassment complaints in email face book and calls form and they deal 62% of cases which are reported by women. 37% of the chunk is also been men who open up their own experiences in order to break stereotypes and encouraging trend. One of fact is that National Response center for cyber crime is only located in some areas of Pakistan such as six major cities. According to Gabol and Subhani (2016), a recent case of "Qandeel Baloch", who was murdered as a result of online content and she was murdered by her brother, as according to him online activity of the girls brought dishonor in their family etc. This is another case which highlights the violence continuum from online spaces to the offline as death. Similarly another case mentioned by Siddiqui (2016) about digital media and honor killing in 2012, which was case of Kohistan video. In this case incident, a video of four dancing girls was leaked. All girls were murdered by their family in honor name. However the Pakistan Supreme Court side lined this case when the team of fact finding went to visit the area that was misled by the locals. Siddiqui (2016) further explained that the case of Kohistan highlighted at highest judiciary level act for the investigation and to providing time to time justice for the victims of online harassment. According to the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act (2016), Pakistan has been gentle to work on the laws related to cyber crime issues and several laws are used offline to run these spaces. Acknowledgement of these laws is an important step to resolve the issue. The penal code of Pakistan has different laws sections for online cyber crime for example there are some sections as 509, 499, and 25 D. These sections explains a clear understanding of laws regarding defamation, penalty for causing annoyance and insulting modesty or sexual harassment cause etc.

Awareness Trainings to avoid Online Harassment

According to the UNESCO (2015), it is important to address and create several awareness trainings for women in order to secure themselves from online or digital harassment. Digital literacy trainings are important to adopt as it may bring the change for example laws can be adopt to internet crimes regulation. It is also important to increase the self awareness of women and girls about the cyber crime laws, their privacy understanding while using digital media and use of mobile phones and also their rights to raise voice against violence. Further

UNESCO (2015) mentioned that safety and privacy of apps always enhance the confidence of using social media. There is a need to develop such solution of technology which can help to protect the girls and avoid risk. As the study of Burke et al. (2015) concluded that social media and the internet is widely used in the digital technology now a days, and there is a need to educate people about their personal data safety online and to prevent their identities. Further they should know about the policies and actions can be taken after the harassment case. Further they explained that health educator counselors are other participants that can be helpful in preventing the harassment as this is a public health issue. Social workers can be involved to advocate for the laws which deters cyber harassment as a criminal.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Research Design

The quantitative research designs are used to obtain information according to posed research question or described and assessed accurately an observable phenomenon. By keeping in view the limitation of qualitative research methods, quantitative methods are adopted to ensure credibility and accuracy of research. Quantitative examination was employed to direct this research investigation due to significant amount of participants. The goal of utilizing quantitative approach as a part of this research was to test and primary data collected. This examination was intended to describe the relationship between the different online harassment cases in Pakistan and its impact on young girl's and experiences. Along these lines, this research outline had been utilized as a part of this research which looked to address the online harassment cases in Pakistan and the young social media user's experiences.

3.2 Method

Survey is one of the most important common methods of study. It mainly includes the process of asking questions from the selected sample. For the current study, a survey method was designed and different university female students were asked regarding their online harassment experiences and responses. To get better and in-depth insight survey methods was opted as it is an ideal option to

record and explain online harassment cases of young girls and their experiences. The questions designed helps to evaluate, if these harassment cases are major problem of our society, if problem is so cruel that is unable to handle, if online harassment cases are difficult to tackle and affecting the young girls badly. Then how such online harassment cases are being ignored in the society and why young girl's not raising voice against this phenomenon. The Cross-sectional data has been collected from the students. It is a type of observational study that analyzes data collected from a population in a specific time period.

3.3 Population

According to Polit and Hungler (1999) population is a cumulative or whole of all the things, subjects or members to conduct the study. Meays et al. (2004) quoted that population which varies from numbers and framework of the study.

Target population or participants are a generalized group of people or objects to which the researcher wishes to conduct the study like universities female students. In this study the population was enrolled different University's female students. The respondent age was measured by age group categories starting with 16 to 30 years and above. The population of the current study was female students (youth); these are the students who are using social media and have access to use internet.

3.4 Sampling Technique

According to Wood and Haber (2013) the selection of the major potential sample is to ensure representation and generalization of the study.

For this study 110 respondents were selected who represented the characteristics of actual population to obtain maximum accurate results and validate findings. Though survey method actual participants were easily approached and data collection was done purposively. 110 students responses were used on basis of usable data from questionnaires specifically those students who use social media and have access.

3.5 Research Instrument

The closed-ended questionnaire was structured to collect data for the current study.

This study was adapted as many researches related to online harassment cases and experiences of young girls. In the questionnaire, research started with the demographics that included age and education level of respondents. Mention no of question??
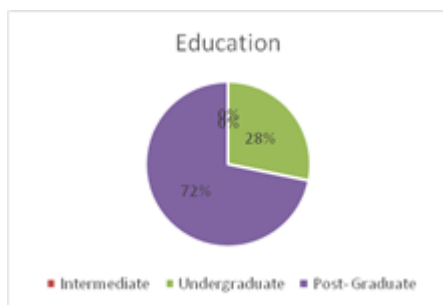
4. Findings and Discussion

A survey was conducted in 110 young girls in different universities of Islamabad what are those??, Pakistan.
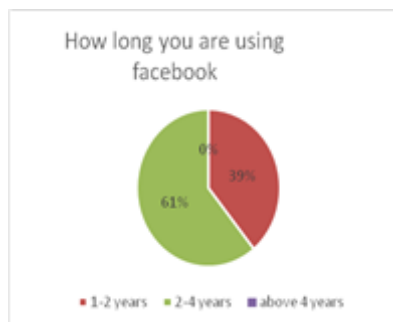
Age		
16-20	20	18%
21-25	35	32%
26-30	45	50%
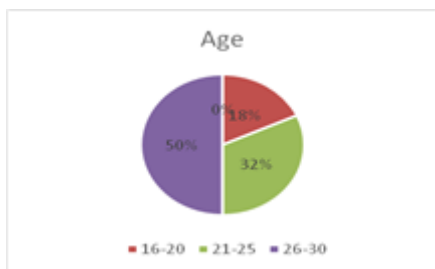
Education		
Intermediate	0	0%
Undergraduate	31	28%
Post- Graduate	79	72%

The education level was undergraduate 28% and post-graduate 72%.

| Part 2: General Data		
1-2 years	0	0
2-4 years	43	39
above 4 years	67	61

Girls who are using Facebook 2-4 years is 39% and 61% girls are using Facebook more than 4 years.

Usage of face-book on daily basis		
0-2 hours	98	89%
2-4 hours	12	11%
4 and above	0	0%
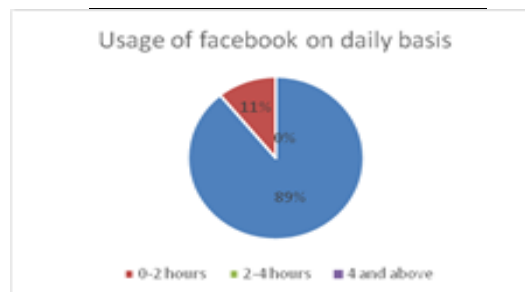
89% use Facebook 0-2 hours on daily basis and 11% spend 2-4 hours daily on Facebook.

| Sources of facebook users		
Smartphone	77	70%
Laptop	33	30%
Desktop	0	0%
Tab	0	0%
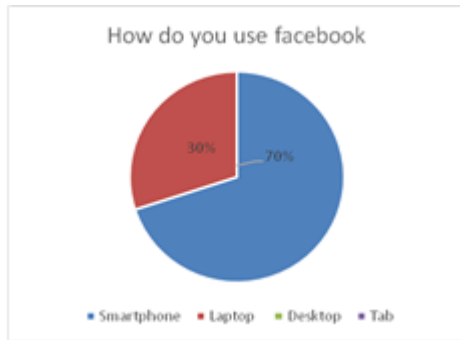
70% girls use Facebook on the smartphone as it is a portable technology and 30% use laptop to login to Facebook.

| Reason of Using Facebook		
To know about your friends	65	59%
Update your status	23	21%
Want to share photos	22	20%
To follow your favorite celebrities	0	0%
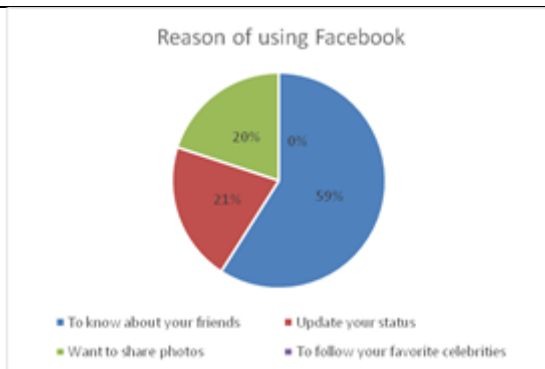
59% use Facebook to know about the updates of friends in their list, 21% want to update their life events, routines and status on Facebook and 20% likes to share their pictures on Facebook.

Users privacy concerns on facebook		
Yes	110	100%
No	0	0%
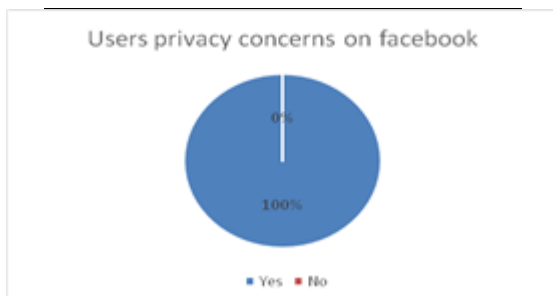
Almost every girl has privacy concerns on Facebook and they were well aware of online harassment.

Faced online harassment or not		
Yes	67	61%
No	43	39%
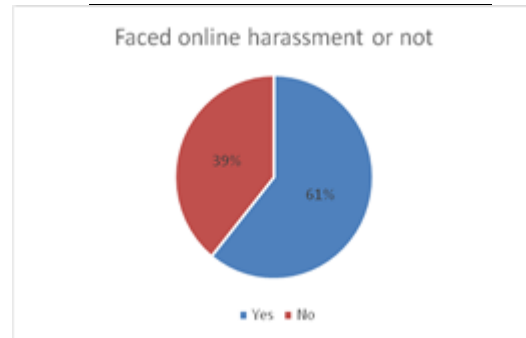
Girls who faced online harassment through Facebook are 61% and 39% never been harassed through Facebook.

No of times being harassed		
Once	36	33%
Twice	29	26%
Often	45	41%
Frequently	0	0%
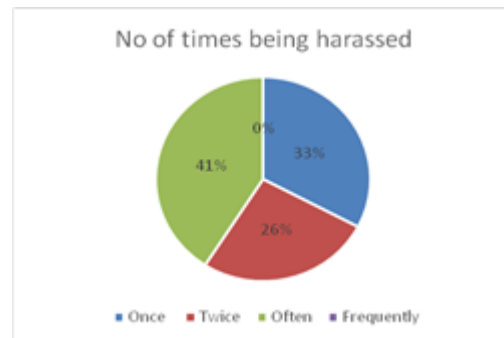
33% girls had been victim of online harassment one time only, 26% had been harassed twice and 41% girls oftenly face online harassment.

Types of harassment faced		
Friend request	0	0%
Message on messenger	46	42%
Abusive words	64	58%

Types of harassment faced

42% says they receive unwanted messages through messenger and 58% got harassed by using abusive words in comments on Facebook.

Action taken against harassment		
Block	60	55%
Delete	0	0%
Ignore	11	10%
Report	39	35%

Action taken against harassment

55% blocked the harasser, 10% ignored it and 35% report the harasser Facebook ID to admin.

Action you took		
Decide not to update my status	22	20%
Avoid using facebook completely	0	0%
Deactivate your account	52	47%
None	36	33%

Action you took

33% girls did not take any action, 20% decided not to update their status or share their pictures on Facebook and 47% decided to deactivate their Facebook account due to serious online harassment.

Online harassment shared with		
Family	22	20%
Friends	58	53%
Not shared	30	27%

Online harassment shared with

20% girls shared their issue of online harassment with their family, 53% with friends and 27% girls did not share it with anyone.

| Reported to the facebook management		
Yes	63	57%
No	47	43%

57% girls report about the harasser to Facebook management while 43% did not report it.

| Facebook Management response against the report		
Effective	33	30%
Not Effective	77	70%

The response of Facebook management was not effective according to 70% girls whereas 30% says their response was effective.

Ever been harassed before social media		
Yes	48	44%
No	62	56%
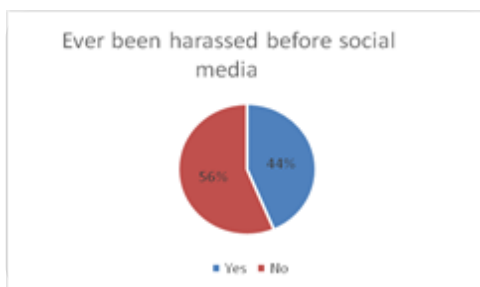
56% girls had not been harassed before social media while 44% had been harassed before social media.

Someone tried to purposely harassed		
Yes	67	61%
No	43	39%
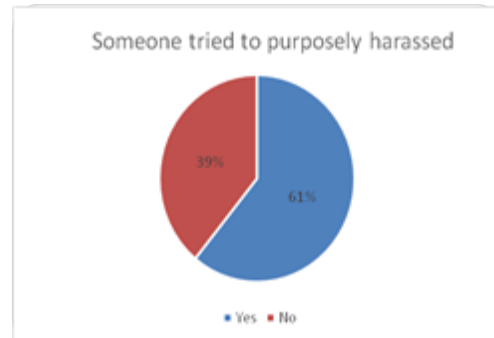
61% were purposely harassed but 39% had not been purposely harassed.

Harasser Identity		
Known	44	40%
Unknown	66	60%

In 40% cases the harasser was known while 60% were unknown.

Known complaint authority in the area or country		
Yes	55	50%
No	55	50%

Known complaint authority in the area or country

50% know about the complaint authority in their area while 50% do not know about any complaint authority related to online harassment.

Ever got training to deal with such cases		
Yes	0	0%
No	110	100%

Ever got training to deal with such cases

None of the girls who participated in the survey had any training related to online harassment.

5. Conclusion

World is taking advantage of uses of internet as well as many issues are attached to the usage of internet. Online harassment or cyber harassment is a global issue and mostly women are the victims of it. Country like Pakistan where usage of internet and social networking sites is increasing but the cyber control laws are not up to the mark hence online harassment cases are increasing. This study was descriptive in nature and was aimed to find out the online harassment cases and the experiences of the Pakistani young social media users. The findings showed that majority of the respondents have clear understanding about online harassment. They are unaware to deal with such situations therefore they are reluctant to report the formal complaints because of lack of proper training, unaware of where to report and have fear of the outcomes if they report it. The results stressed upon the government and other relevant institutions to arrange online trainings, strict laws and an organized mechanism of implementation of the cybercrime laws.

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