
A STUDY ON PUBLIC OPINION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON CRIME RATE

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ABSTRACT

Cyberspace has taken up a new form of crime where nonstop attempts by one person to communicate with another by causing a sense of trouble in the mind of similar other people. This crime is known as cyber stalking. It involves the conduct of draining or hanging an individual constantly. Cyberstalking involves using the internet, social media or any other electronic communication device to stalk another person. Empirical exploration is followed for the purpose of the study. From the survey 220 samples were collected through simple random sampling methods. And age, gender, occupation, area and education qualification are taken for independent variables. For dependent variables IT act provides effective protection to safeguard the crime happening in social media. Women and children are becoming victims of cyber crime, lack of knowledge, cyber crime affects the children's internal health, cybercrime against children can lead to, social media platforms has positive (alert the public about the local crime) impact on crime. Statistics tools used in this research through graphical representation. These crimes not only pose immediate risks to the victims but can also have long lasting impacts on their mental health, with high risks of depression and other psychological consequences. While laws and regulations, such as the IT act, aim to provide protection and safeguard against social media crime, there is a need for continuous education and awareness campaigns to empower individuals to protect themselves and prevent such crimes. For safeguarding privacy and development of new advanced technology software were designed by the Information Technology Act.

Keywords: Social media crime, Cybercrime, Children, Women Threatening and Cyberbullying.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rise of social media has transformed the way we communicate, connect and share information. While it has brought about numerous benefits and opportunities for individuals and communities worldwide, there is growing recognition of the potential influence of social media on crime rates. This introduction aims to provide an overview of the complex relationship between social media and crime, highlighting both the positive and negative aspects associated with the phenomenon. Social media platforms have become virtual spaces where people engage in various activities, ranging from personal interactions and entertainment to business promotion and activism. However, these platforms also present new challenges to society, as they can be exploited by individuals involved in criminal behaviour. From cyberbullying and identity theft to organized crime and cybercrime, social media has emerged as a fertile ground for criminal activities.

One of the primary concerns related to social media is the prevalence of cyberbullying and harassment. Online platforms provide anonymity and distance, enabling individuals to engage in harmful behaviours without facing immediate consequences. The psychological impact of cyberbullying can be severe, leading to emotional distress, anxiety and even suicidal ideation among victims. Furthermore, social media facilitates identity theft and fraud. With the abundance of personal information shared on these platforms, cybercriminals can exploit vulnerability and engage in various fraudulent activities. This includes using stolen information for financial gain, such as accessing bank accounts, making unauthorized purchases, or creating false identities. Cybercrime too, has flourished in the realm of social media. Malicious actors employ tactics such as spreading malware, conducting phishing scams, hacking accounts and distributing illicit content. These activities not only harm individuals directly but also comprise the security of organizations and compromised privacy.

However, it is crucial to note that social media platforms are not solely responsible for crime rates. They serve as facilitators and amplifiers of existing criminal tendencies or behaviours. Social economic factors, cultural influences and personal circumstances also play significant roles in shaping crime rates. Moreover, social media can be harnessed positively to prevent crime, raise awareness and enable law enforcement agencies to gather intelligence. Privacy settings play a crucial role in social media security, allowing users to control the visibility of

their posts, personal information and interactions. By comprehending and using the privacy settings offered by social media sites, users can manage their online presence, choose who has access to their material, and restrict the disclosure of personal data to a selected audience. The aim of the study is to control the social media crime rate and to enhance cybersecurity measures is crucial to prevent unauthorized access, data breaches and the spread of malware or viruses.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the causes of social media crime.
- To analyze the positive and negative impact on crime.
- To analyze the social media crime against women and children.
- To examine the effective safeguards under the IT Act.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study uses data from the public in Leeds , England to re examine patterns of violent crime. By leveraging social media data as a proxy for the population at risk, the research reveals that traditional crime hotspots shift significantly, particularly in the city centre. This challenges conventional crime mapping approaches based on residential population, suggesting that such methods may misallocate resources and fail to effectively reduce crime. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating mobile population data into crime analysis and its prevention strategies (**Malleson and Andresen 2014**).

This research used tweets from five regions in India to predict crime patterns. By applying data mining and semantic sentiment analysis (via BILSTM and feed forward neural networks), the study achieves 84.74% accuracy in sentiment classification. The results show a correlation between tweet- based predictions and actual crime incidents, highlighting the potential of social media data for informed crime prevention strategies (**Mahajan and Mansotra 2021**).

This paper reviews the legal framework for addressing social media crimes in India, analyzing key laws and provisions, including Information Technology Act, 2000, Draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2010 and Indian Penal Code. It explores how these laws safeguards citizens from online and protects their interests (**Pareek and Sole 2021**).

This paper examines the digital threats faced by women in India, including cyber bullying, stalking, identity theft, and harassment. It proposes strategies to combat these issues, such as Digital literacy initiatives, Enhanced cybersecurity measures, Robust legal frameworks and Support networks. The goal is to help women safe, including online environment (**Vidani 2024**).

This study explores workplace cyber bullying through the lens of sense making theory, revealing distinct differences in how men and women experience and respond to online harassment. Women tend to approach the issue socially, taking assertive steps to protect their reputation, whereas men often handle it privately with more passive responses. The research highlights how gender stereotypes and cultural norms influence individuals' sense making processes and reactions to cyberbullying. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the gendered dynamics at workplace cyber bullying, shedding light on the complex ways men and women navigate these challenging situations (**Adikaram and Ratnayake 2024**).

The author examines the pervasive issue of cyber- violence on social media, encompassing various forms such as cyber harassment, stalking, revenge porn, trolling, and hate speech. It focuses on the impact of these behaviours on vulnerable groups, including teens, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. The study reviews social media platforms policies, identifies loopholes, and analyzes legal frameworks, highlighting notable cases in India, the USA and the UK. By reviewing existing literature and identifying gaps, the research aims to suggest effective strategies to prevent cyber bullying and promote safer online environments (**Advocate and Chitranjali 2023**).

This study investigates how social media contributes to rising crime rates in India, especially among youth, by facilitating cyber crimes like identity theft, cyber bullying, and financial fraud. It shows weakness, challenges for law enforcement and gaps in policy and digital skills, and suggests a complete solution is needed to address the problem (**Mir and Wani, n.d.**).

The author examines how social media has transformed the world, offering global connectivity and influencing lives. However, it also poses significant risks, including misinformation, cybercrime, mental health concerns, and privacy issues. To maximise benefits and minimize

harm, it's essential to use social media responsibly and maintain a balanced approach (**Kumar 2024**).

This article investigates the relationship between Facebook penetration and violent crime rates across 148 countries, revealing a complex dynamic. While there's an overall negative relationship between Facebook use and crime rates, regional variations emerge, with Facebook associated with lower crime rates in the Middle East and North Africa, but higher crime rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (**Asongu et al. 2019**).

This study looks into how social media linked with crime, especially cyberbullying. The research suggests that social media can increase the fear of crime and that regions with high social media usages often overlap with areas of high crime rate. However, the relationship between social media and crime is multifaceted, with varying correlations across different regions. Cyberbullying has severe and long lasting consequences, including mental issues and social withdrawal. To mitigate these effects, interventions are necessary, and parents and school staff can play a crucial role in providing support and facilitating reintegration for victims. By acknowledging social media's significant influence, concerted efforts can be made to harness its potential while ensuring user safety (**Zhang 2023**).

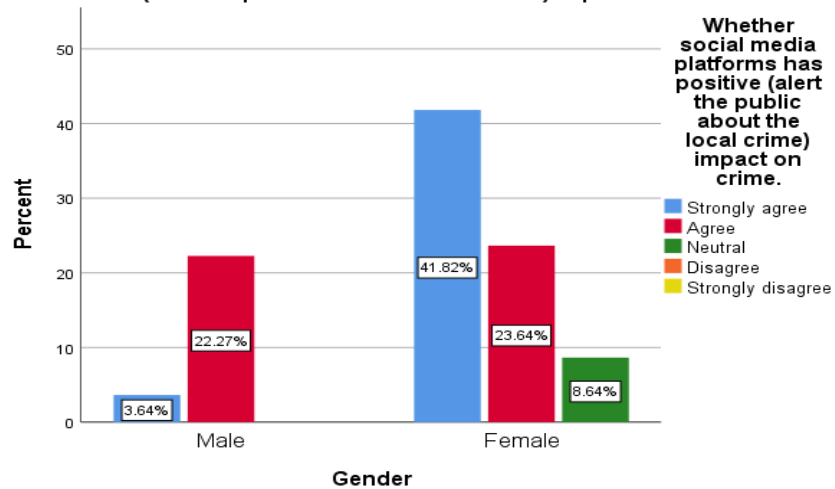
METHODOLOGY

In this study empirical research was followed and 220 samples were collected through simple random sampling methods. The sample frame was taken from all over the Tamil Nadu people. The independent variables are age, area, educational qualification, and gender. Dependent variables are IT Act provides effective protection to safeguard the crime happening in Social Media, Women and children are becoming victims of cybercrime, lack of knowledge, cybercrime affects the children's internal health, Cybercrime against children can lead to, social media platforms has positive(alert the public about the local crime) impact on crime. Statistical tools used for this analysis are graphical representations taken for this survey.

ANALYSIS

FIGURE 1

Clustered Bar Percent of Gender by Whether social media platforms has positive (alert the public about the local crime) impact on crime.

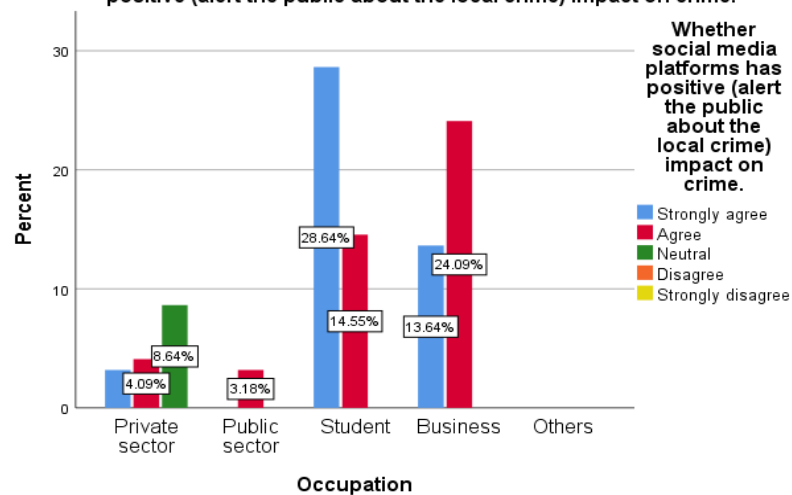


LEGEND

Figure 1 shows the opinion of respondents that social media platforms have a positive (alert the public about the local crime) impact on crime based on gender.

FIGURE 2

Clustered Bar Percent of Occupation by Whether social media platforms has positive (alert the public about the local crime) impact on crime.



LEGEND

Figure 2 shows the opinion of the respondents that social media platforms have a positive (alert the public about the local crime) impact on crime based on occupation.

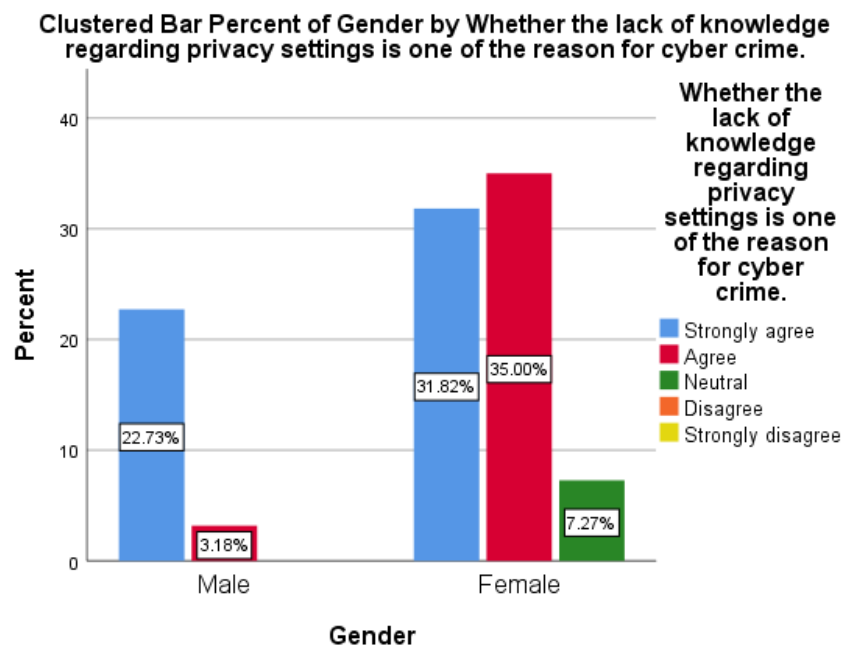
FIGURE 3**LEGEND**

Figure 3 shows the opinion of the surveyee that lack of knowledge regarding privacy settings is one of the reasons for cyber crime based on gender.

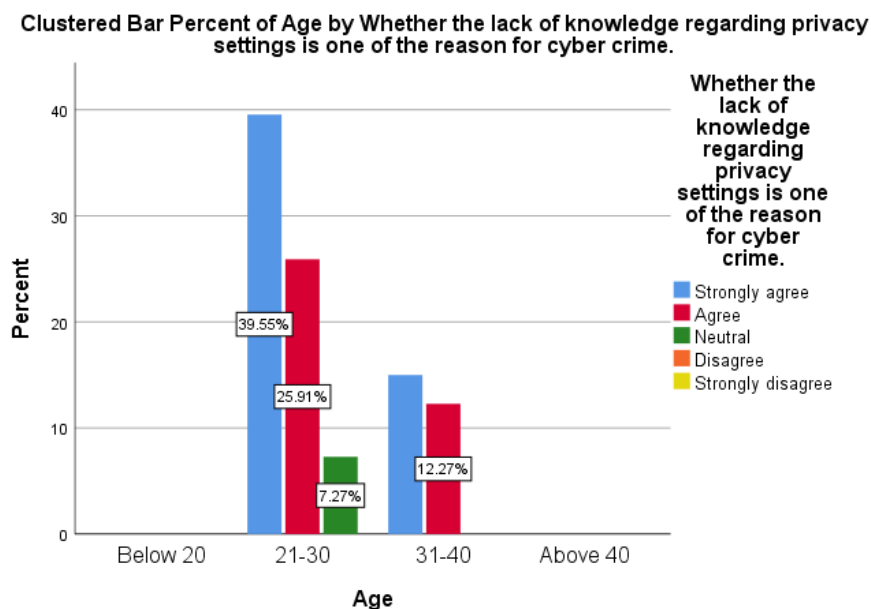
FIGURE 4**LEGEND**

Figure 4 shows the opinion of the respondents that lack of knowledge regarding privacy settings is one of the reasons for cyber crime based on age.

FIGURE 5

Clustered Bar Percent of Age by Whether most of the women were becoming the victims of crime on social media.

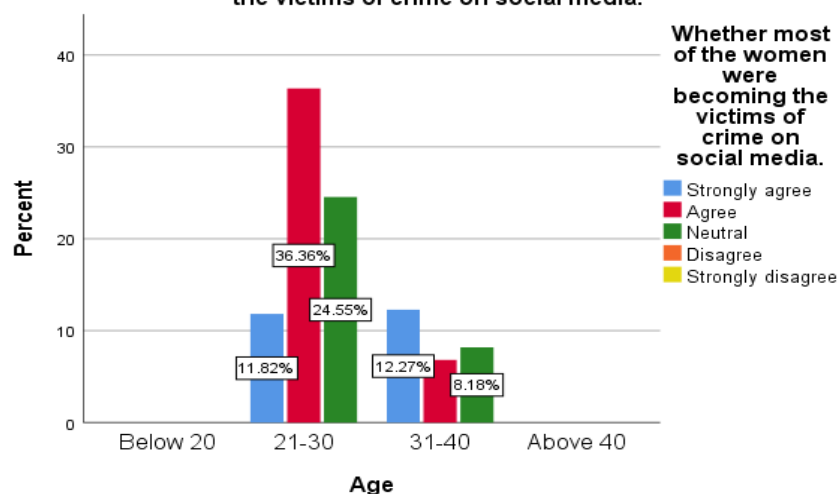
**LEGEND**

Figure 5 shows the opinion of the respondents that most of the women were becoming the victims of crime on social media based on age.

FIGURE 6

Clustered Bar Percent of Area by Whether most of the women were becoming the victims of crime on social media.

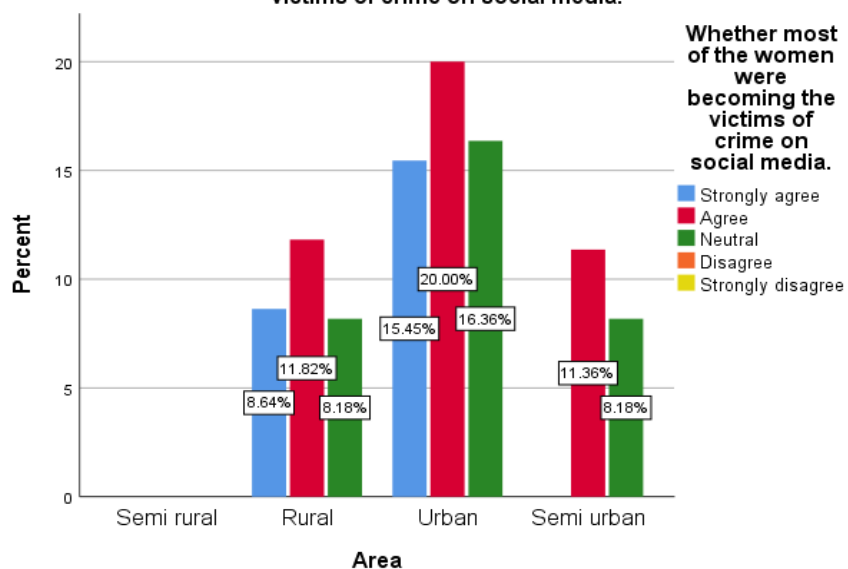
**LEGEND**

Figure 6 shows the opinion of the respondents that most of the women were becoming the victims of crime on social media based on area of residence.

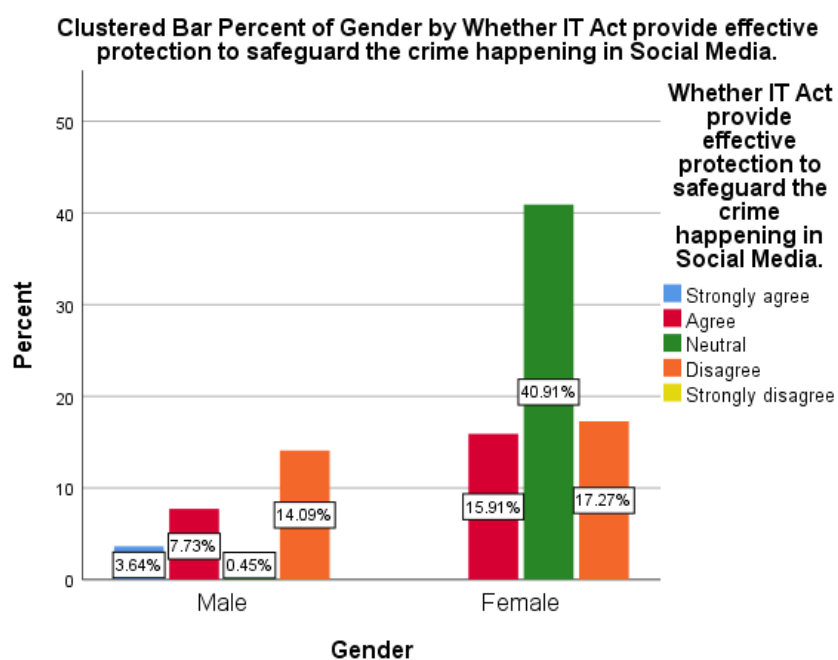
FIGURE 7**LEGEND**

Figure 7 shows the opinion of the respondents that IT acts provide effective protection to safeguard the crime happening in social media based on gender.

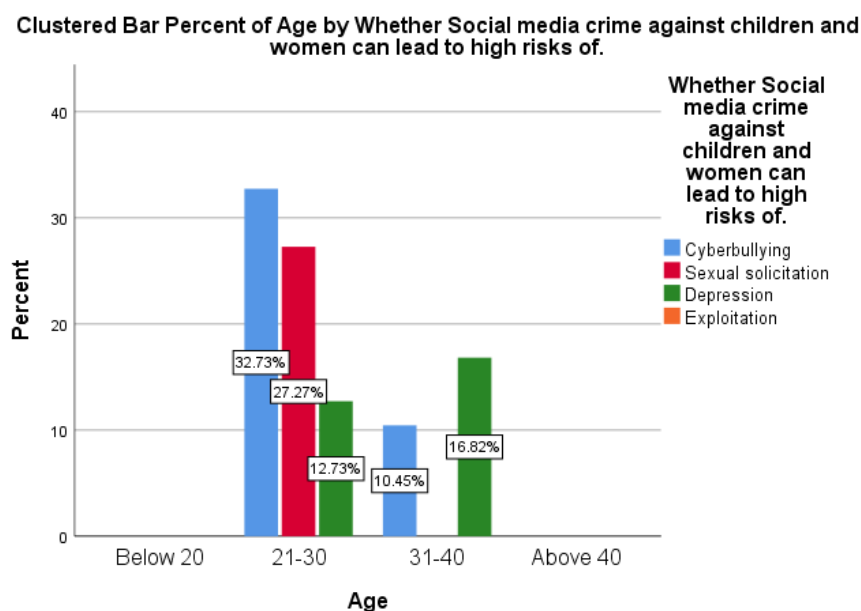
FIGURE 8**LEGEND**

Figure 8 shows the opinion of the respondents that social media crime against children and women can lead to high risks of cyberbullying based on age.

FIGURE 9

Clustered Bar Percent of Gender by Whether Social media crime against children and women can lead to high risks of.

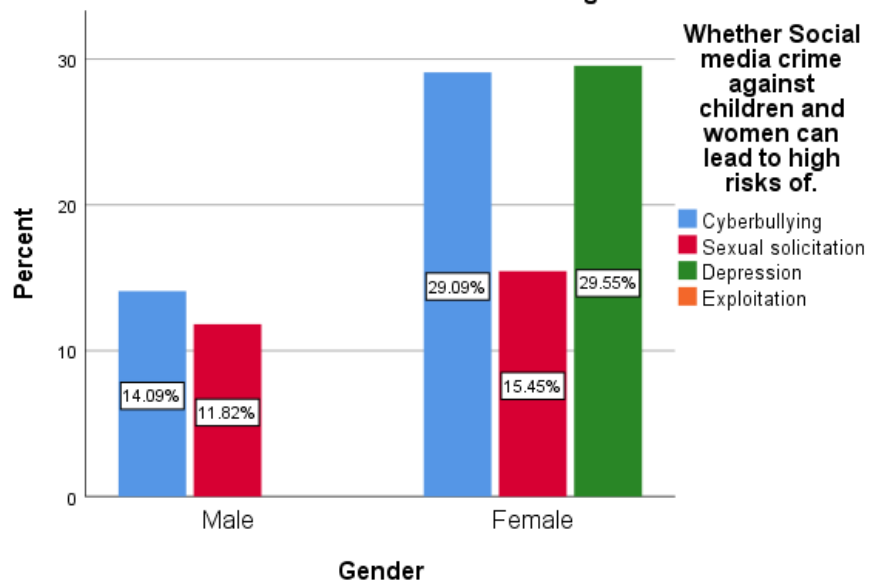
**LEGEND**

Figure 9 shows the opinion of the respondents that social media crime against children and women can lead to high risks of depression based on gender.

FIGURE 10

Clustered Bar Percent of Gender by The crime rate has increased due to social media-Rate it.

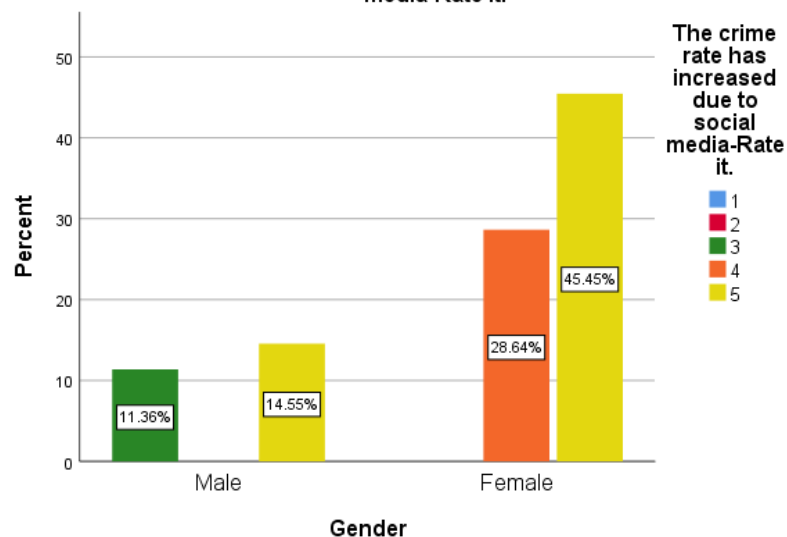
**LEGEND**

Figure 10 shows the opinion of the respondents that crime rate has increased due to social media rate the sentence, based on gender.

RESULTS

From **figure 1** it is clear that 41.82% of female respondents strongly agree that social media platforms have a positive (alert the public about the local time) impact on crime. From **figure 2** it is clear that 28.64% of students respondents strongly agree that social media platforms have a positive (alert the public about the local time) impact on crime. From **figure 3** it is clear that 35.00% of female respondents agree that lack of knowledge regarding privacy settings is one of the reasons for cyber crime. From **figure 4** it is clear that 39.55% of people belonging to 21-30 strongly agree that lack of knowledge regarding privacy settings is one of the reasons for cyber crime. From **figure 5** it is clear that 36.36% of people belonging 21-30 agree that most of the women were becoming the victims of crime on social media. From **figure 6** it is clear that 20.00% of urban residence respondents agree that most of the women were becoming the victims of crime on social media. From **figure 7** it is clear that 40.91% of females responded that neutrality about the IT acts provide effective protection to safeguard the crime happening in social media. From **figure 8** it is clear that 32.73% of people belonging 21-30 said that social media crime against children and women can lead to risks of cyberbullying. From **figure 9** it is clear that 29.55% of females responded that social media crime against children and women can lead to high risks of depression. From **figure 10** it is clear that the 45.45% majority of females rated 5 for the crime rate has been increased due to social media.

DISCUSSION

From **figures 1 and 2** shows that social media platforms play a significant role in alerting the public about local crime, enhancing community awareness. They also provide real time updates and foster communication between law enforcement and citizens, which can contribute to crime prevention and increased public safety. From **figures 3 and 4** it shows that most of the people are not aware of the potential consequences of sharing personal information publicly on social media platforms or other online platforms. Lack of knowledge about the privacy settings can make individuals more susceptible to these attacks. Lack of awareness about the strong password practices and multi factor authentication can make individuals more vulnerable to cybercrime. From **figure 5 and 6** shows that women face online sexual harassment in the form of unwanted advances, explicit messages or unsolicited explicit media. This behaviour creates a hostile online environment and can cause distress, anxiety and a sense

of vulnerability. From **figure 7** shows that IT act may include provision to address cyberbullying and harassment, providing legal resources for victims. It may require social media platforms to have privacy policies and practices in place to protect user data. From **figures 8 and 9** shows that social media has a wide region in which people can expose their day to day lifestyle, constant exposure to negative comments, threats, and derogatory messages can erode self esteem, create a sense of fear, and lead to feelings of sadness and hopelessness. And also children and women may encounter body shaming, objectification and relentless scrutiny of their appearance. From **figure 10** shows the rise of social media has provided new avenues for cybercriminals to exploit individuals and organizations. The increase of social media crime is due to cyber hacking, identity theft, online fraud and scams which has the highest growth in the cybercrime platforms.

LIMITATION

The major limitation of this study is the sample size and sample frame. It only collected through surveys within Chennai because of which most responses are from people within Chennai and not from other cities. And only responses were collected. For this study it is needed to take a sample frame all over India but it is only collected from a specific one. These are the only drawbacks faced in this study.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The rise of social media platforms has provided opportunities for cyber criminals to exploit individuals, spread malicious content, and engage in various illegal activities. The consequences of social media crime can be far- reaching, affecting not only individuals but also businesses, communities, and society as a whole. Efforts to combat social media crime require a multifaceted approach, including enhanced cybersecurity measures, digital literacy programs, and strengthened legal frameworks. By educating individuals about the potential dangers of social media, teaching them how to identify and respond to cyber threats, and promoting responsible online behaviour can empower users to protect themselves and reduce their vulnerability to social media crime. The laws and other effective acts can be passed for this because if the punishment is severe then the rate of crime will be decreased, so the

government has to take initiatives to bring new laws to the society according to the needs or to stricter up the existing laws.

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