

Preface

Telecommunications worldwide have experienced rapid change since the accessibility to emails and e-commerce facilities were made easily and readily available to the common citizens starting in the early 1990s. Such e-communication got legalized with the European conventions on Information Technology, which was followed by some developed and less developed nations. E-communication gained popularity among men and women in a short span of time. Along with the emails came the electronic ways to express and expose oneself in front of a large global audience through their personal blogs, personal and professional websites, digital albums, electronic banking, and shopping facilities, which became hugely popular with homemakers; and then electronic socialization, which literally turned human beings to e-living.

Human relations have considerably improved since the beginning of the public usage of emails, chat rooms, public forums, popular websites, and social networking websites. Seeing from the perspective of third wave feminism and usage of the electronic media to practice third wave feminism, women of post millennium era are more benefited than their predecessors belonging to the second and first wave feminism. The digital media created a huge platform for women of Web 2.0 era to expand their world to build new relationships, renew old friendships, and practice and profess own ideologies about various issues including feminism. The digital era witnessed new phase of feminism whereby women who belonged to more orthodox patriarchal societies were now enabled to practice self dependence norms through electronic shopping, “digital awareness camps” (blogs and open forums) for healthcare and baby care, higher education, modes to transform leisurely passions into profitable professions, et cetera. Ironically, this digital freedom also made women unknowingly / knowingly open Pandora’s Box and explore the evil side of the Internet. Indeed, the “box” was opened long back, but it successfully hid its whiff of inside-danger for a long time. Media reports on morphed pornographic images of female movie stars, cyber stalking female celebrities, blackmailing female celebrities through email or mobile phones, et cetera, provide us some good examples of victimization of women in the cyber space. However, until recently, common Internet users, including adult men and women (especially) never realized that such mischief can happen to them.

Cyber crime against women was largely ignored and therefore, not truly addressed until the first cyber crime convention, which was adopted at Budapest in 2001. International conventions, as well as domestic laws of many countries, may have developed legislatures to protect society as a whole from the clutches of the “dark side” of cyber technology. Academics, researchers, as well as lawmakers kept themselves occupied with discussing and analyzing problems of cyber crime targeting the economic front and children. But full attention was not given to several cyber crimes like adult bullying, stalking, defamations, et cetera, from women victim’s perspective even though women often outnumber men in

becoming victim of interpersonal cyber crimes. There is an unequivocal need to highlight this important issue by bringing attention, as far as the role women play in cyber victimization, to scholars and laypersons. This book is one small effort in that direction.

The key inspiration to write this book came from myriad forms of victimization of women in the cyber space and lacuna of necessary laws to mitigate it. Women victims are near invisible in the eyes of universal cyber crime conventions and domestic internet and cyber communication related laws. The effect of this lawlessness is so huge that government-reporting agencies also sometimes deny any help to the woman in need. This book was also largely motivated by the personal experiences of the lead author who works as counselor for cyber crime victims and takes keen interests in the legal issues involving victimization of women in the cyber space and several painful stories retold by female friends and relatives who had gone through the trauma of being victimized in cyber space.

We have formed this book on presumption that the velocity of victimization of women in the cyber space is unmatched with the legal efforts to regulate the same. The goal of this book is to identify and explain the mostly unexplored crimes of the Internet targeting women in particular. This book is designed to define cyber victimization from women victim's perspective, analyze the trends of victimization, formulation of core rights of women internet users and examine the legal protections towards women victims of cyber crimes in five prime countries. We have concluded this book with a model charter for prevention of victimization of women in the cyber space.

We take responsibility of any errors or omissions in the book that would have crept out of our oversight. All the Urls / websites cited in this book are up to date, until this book went to print. We have taken adequate efforts to precisely cite the references / authors and quote laws / sections of laws, and sought permission from copyright holders and have reproduced them with apt acknowledgments; however, if there are any issues on citations or quotes that are overlooked, we take the accountability to rectify them in the future editions.

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