
A SOCIO-LEGAL ANALYSIS OF VOYEURISM AND STALKING IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Voyeurism and stalking are two concerning behaviours that continue to draw significant attention from researchers, policymakers, and society at large. Voyeurism involves surreptitiously observing or spying on individuals without their consent, often invading their privacy in various settings, both physical and digital. On the other hand, stalking entails a pattern of unwanted attention, persistent monitoring, and harassment, causing fear and distress to the victims. Both offences have detrimental effects on the psychological well-being and sense of security of those targeted. This paper explores the underlying motivations and psychological factors that drive individuals to engage in voyeuristic and stalking behaviour while emphasising upon the devastating effects suffered by victims which takes a severe emotional toll. An understanding of the root causes enables one to devise a mechanism and/or examine the existing mechanism to address the impacts of such invasive practices. This paper critically evaluates the efficacy and problems of prosecuting voyeurism and stalking cases through an exhaustive assessment of existing legal frameworks and jurisprudence. Further, the aspect of gender neutrality in the legal provisions of such offences has also been analysed. In light of the hidden nature of these acts and the resulting challenges in gathering concrete evidence, this paper highlights the gaps in the law, which frequently impede the successful prosecution of criminals and also suggests appropriate measures for ensuring effective and efficient legal enforcement and implementation in this regard.

Keywords: Voyeurism, stalking, gender neutrality, privacy, psychological impact, gender inequality.

Introduction

Every individual and community has the right to privacy, which is a basic human right. Nonetheless, despite strict restrictions, new types of illegal conduct that violate personal privacy have evolved. These acts have a significant influence on the victim's reputation, dignity, and personal privacy, particularly in the case of women. To address these concerns, the Indian Penal Code¹ and the Information Technology Act² have been altered to add new offences such as voyeurism, stalking, and penalty for invasion of privacy. These offences existed prior to the enactment of these regulations but in various forms such as sexual harassment, eve-teasing, and so on.

Due to the use of contemporary technology and the internet, the new offences of voyeurism and stalking fall within the category of information technology crimes. Physical and online stalking can have serious negative effects on the victim's privacy and dignity. To lessen offences that violate women's dignity and privacy, the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 includes many new sections³ that address these offences. The fundamental goal of including these offences is to defend women's rights and to prevent them from any intrusions of their privacy.

There is a special need to incorporate more information technology into the investigation process, as well as to divide the police force to better manage law enforcement and investigation. Furthermore, public knowledge and vigilance are critical in preventing and treating these crimes, and a gender-neutral definition is required to guarantee that all victims are legally protected.

To lessen the impact on personal privacy, dignity, and safety, particularly for women, the criminal justice system must regulate and address the societal concerns generated by rising crimes such as stalking and voyeurism. We can strive towards a safer and more just society for all by implementing ongoing changes and improvements to the criminal justice system.

Moreover, the socio-legal analysis of voyeurism and stalking adds to academic exploration by offering deeper insights into these behaviours within the Indian context. This

¹ Indian Penal Code 1860, (Act 45 of 1860).

² Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 (Act 10 of 2009).

³ Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008,(Act 10 of 2009)s. 66A, 66C, 66D, 66E, 67, 67A.

encourages ongoing research, discourse, and scholarly investigation, enriching the comprehension of how law, society, and individual actions interact.

In the end, the overarching goal of this analysis is to catalyze positive social change. By fostering a culture of respect, consent, and privacy, it seeks to initiate meaningful dialogues, question harmful behaviours, and contribute to shaping a safer and more just society for all individuals.

Voyeurism

"Voyeur" originates from the French term that refers to an individual who watches or examines others, tied to the Latin word "videre" meaning "to see." Essentially, a voyeur derives sexual satisfaction from secretly observing someone else's intimate actions. This inclination for voyeurism can encompass activities such as recording, watching, and disseminating private moments of others, sometimes even on social media, without their agreement. Covert devices like concealed cameras, pen cameras, and tube cameras can enable such behaviours. In India, taking pictures or videos of someone's private body parts without their consent constitutes a breach of privacy.

The author examines the term voyeurism and various forms of voyeurism activities in India in order to comprehend the legislative aim. Voyeurism is the practice of recording, sharing, and using the victim's images, video, and personal information for sex. In the current study, laws pertaining to women's protection in India are examined with a focus on criminal and information technology laws. The Information Technology Act, 2008⁴ and Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013⁵ play a very essential role in prohibiting voyeurism practices in India. The new gadgets constitute a major factor in understanding the concept of 'voyeurism' and 'voyeurism practices in India. In the present context the word 'voyeurism' and 'voyeurism practices' will be analyzed by the IT Act, 2008 and the CLA Act, 2013.

Voyeurism is broken down into three sections to help you comprehend it more clearly:

- i) Voyeur, ii) Voyeurism, iii) Voyeuristic .

⁴ Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 (Act 10 of 2009).

⁵ Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Act 13 of 2013).

i) Voyeur

A 'voyeur' means a person for his sexual pleasure observes and watches a private act of another person. The general concept of voyeurism is an act if a person for his sexual pleasure captures, observes and watches the private act or private parts of his/her neighbour, loved ones or colleagues.⁶ The term "voyeur" has two subparts that help to clarify its meaning more precisely:

a) A person who surreptitiously watches and examines a person's inside organs in order to delight and experience sexual pleasure.

b) A person installs a suspicious camera to monitor and view other people's sexual activity.⁷

ii) Voyeurism (Voyeur + ism)

The author wanted to study the "ism" inside the phrase voyeurism in order to comprehend the term voyeurism. Voyeurism is the act of taking pictures and movies of a victim's private parts without the victim's knowledge or agreement, either with the naked eye or by covertly placing a more sensitive camera. The phrase also refers to the framing of nouns to indicate a practice, system, theory, etc.

iii) Voyeuristic

Voyeuristic refers to a person who surreptitiously watches and observes others with their own eyes, also known as a peeping tom. Technically speaking, voyeuristic refers to someone who sets up dubious cameras, such as a webcam, pen camera, tube camera, or concealed camera, to observe and film others engaging in sexual activity.⁸ The definition of "voyeuristic" is evolving along with the times. Whereas in the past individuals would watch and observe people with their own eyes, there is now a variety of sophisticated technology like webcams, CCTV cameras, and other shady cameras.

⁶ Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Act No. 13 of 2013).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Smriti Irani spots camera facing trial room and police FIR against the store, *available at*: <http://www.indianexpress.com/article/india> (last visited on August 16, 2023).

Voyeurism is also an indication of sexual deviancy, according to forensic Psychiatric Dr. Suresh Bada Math. In the medical realm, voyeurism is associated with a sexual deviancy called as paraphilia. 'Paraphilias' refers to a person who, for sexual enjoyment, attempts to see and view the private parts of another person, or, in the modern notion, surreptitiously installs a concealed camera to film the individual's private act.⁹

Stalking

Stalking is defined as an intentional act committed by someone with the aim to follow and repeat the act in order to continue harassing the victim. The cyberstalker's goal is to molest, fear, threaten, intimidate, or harass the target.¹⁰ Stalking is defined as certain conduct aimed at a particular person against whom imitated visual or physical harassment, unethical communication or oral, drafted, or indirect threats, or amalgamation of all the acts that would create fear in the mind of that particular person.¹¹

The definition of stalking is "walking with slow, stiff strides, especially in a proud, self-important, or grim way." 'Stalking' is the act of following someone in such a way that they feel haunted or unsafe in some other way. It is not a single occurrence, but a continuous process that threatens or makes that individual fearful.¹²

As outlined in Section 354 (D) of the Indian Penal Code 1860,¹³ the act of stalking involves a man persistently tracking a woman's movements, trying to establish communication or repeatedly attempting to interact with her, even when the woman has clearly shown her lack of interest. Furthermore, if a man continuously surveils a woman's online activities, including internet usage, email communication, or any form of electronic interaction, he is considered to have committed the offence of stalking.¹⁴ Stalking is defined as the intentional and repetitive following, observing, or harassment of another individual. It differs from other crimes in that most crimes involve a single act, whereas stalking involves a sequence of actions that occur

⁹ Atin Kumar Das, "The Law Relating to Voyeurism in India: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward." 46 *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 1-14 (2021).

¹⁰ Victoria Heckels and Karl Roberts, Stalking and harassment, *available at*: <https://www.researchgate.net> (last visited on August 19, 2023).

¹¹ Tjaden P and Thoennes "Stalking in America : Findings from the National Women Survey, Washington DC : US Department of Justice, Reffer" *Journal Section* 306 (2008).

¹² S.R. Myneni, *Information Technology Law* 543 (Asia Law House, Faridabad, 1st edn., 2016).

¹³ Indian Penal Code 1860, (Act 45 of 1860).

¹⁴ S.K. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code* 98 (Allahabad Law Agency, Faridabad, 4th edn., 2019).

over a period of time, and the person who does this is known as a stalker.¹⁵ Stalking is defined as a pattern of purposeful, hostile, uninvited attention or behaviour that causes you to be frightened or afraid: you may be scared for your own or your family's safety. Stalking has turned into a national pandemic. Every year, 1.4 million Americans are stalked across the country. They are followed wherever they go, including work, the market, their fitness club, their place of worship, and their house, until they no longer feel secure anywhere. They are inundated with phone calls and letters ranging from declarations of everlasting love to threats that if I can't have you, no one can. The property has been vandalized. Physical attacks are occasionally committed. Friends and loved ones are also attacked or threatened. In short, fear becomes a constant companion. With a rising sense of panic, stalking targets look for help. There's not much to be found in the traditional arenas to which they turn. The stalker must commit more than one Act of unwanted harassment, pursuit, intrusion, or communication.¹⁶

According to the Oxford Dictionary, stalking is defined as "pursuing stealthily."

Stalking is a common occurrence in the celebrity industry. However, studies show that more than 80% of victims are average individuals. Stalking is a pattern of legal and unlawful goal-directed behaviour that is supported by delusional and narcissistic beliefs of a relationship and is meant to empower the predator to feel omnipotent and in charge while lowering the prey's empowerment. Stalking is defined in quasi-legal terms as an intentional course of behaviour, including persistent or continuing harassment of another individual, that truly causes the victim to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested, and that would cause a reasonable person to feel the same way.¹⁷

Cyber Stalking

The term cyberstalking originates from the word "cyber" meaning anything related to computers or computer networks like the internet while the term 'stalking,' means following a person with a view to harass or embarrass another person. When stalking takes place online by use of the Internet and computers, it is known as cyberstalking. Cyberstalking can take many forms, including stalking on social networking websites, through email or text messages, phone

¹⁵ Joseph A. Davis, *Stalking Crimes and Victim Protection* 20 (CRC Press, Boca Raton London, New York, Washington D.C., 2001).

¹⁶ Lyn Bates, *Safety for stalking victims* 11(i Universe, United States of America, 2019).

¹⁷ Nandan Kamath, *Law relating to computer, internet and E-commerce* 248 (Lexis Nexis, Hyderabad, 5th edn., 2019).

calls through the internet or cell phone, and emails. Cyberstalking is usually coupled with criminal intimidation, blackmail, or extortion and puts the victims to threat to life or property and causes emotional harassment to the victim.¹⁸

Cyberstalking is described as a cyber criminal's recurrent act of harassing or threatening behaviour directed at a victim via the internet. Stalking is defined as a way of harassing behaviour directed at a victim, such as following the victim, making harassing phone calls, murdering the victim's pets, vandalizing the victim's property, and leaving written messages on WhatsApp, social networking sites, and objects.¹⁹

According to Black Law Dictionary, cyberstalking is "the act of threatening, harassing, or annoying someone through multiple emails, messages, as through the internet."²⁰

Cyberstalking is a type of stalking that takes place online. Unsolicited electronic communication is used to seek, harass, or contact another person. The word refers to stalking another person's home or place of business using the internet, email, or other electronic communication devices, making harassing phone calls, leaving written messages on things, and destroying the victim's personal belongings.²¹

When a person is tracked and followed online, this is known as cyberstalking. Their privacy has been invaded, and their every move is being monitored. It is a sort of harassment that can interrupt the victim's life and make them feel fearful and intimidated.²²

Other internet-enabled crimes, such as data theft or hacking, are crimes against property, whereas cyberstalking is a crime against a person. With the rising usage of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Tumblr, and others that provide easy access to images, personal information, and whereabouts of a person while also acting as a channel of communication, the prevalence of cyberstalking has increased.²³

¹⁸ Kamika Seth, *Computer, Internet and New Technology Laws* 352 (Lexis Nexis, Kolkata, 2nd edn., 2013).

¹⁹ Krishna Pal Malik, *Computer and Information Technology Law* 224 (Allahabad Law Agency, 2nd edn., 2013).

²⁰ Bryan A Garner, *Black's Law Dictionary*, 472 (11th edn., 2019).

²¹ Satish Chandra, *Cyber Law in India* 71 (ABS Books, New Delhi, 5th edn., 2017).

²² Naresh Kumar Sharma and Kanwar Dipu Singh Rawat, *Short notes on Cyber Law* 97 (Allahabad Law Agency, Hyderabad 2nd edn., 2019).

²³ Siddharth Mehta, *Law and Technology* 107 (Singhal Law Publications, Delhi, 2nd edn., 2015).

According to Webster's dictionary, cyberstalking is defined as using the Internet, including chat rooms and email, as establishing identity and plan a meeting with a person whom one intends to criminally victimize, as well as sending multiple emails on a regular basis to annoy, embarrass, initiate, or threaten a person, scare them that she or a member of her family or household will be harmed. It's also known as email harassment.²⁴

According to Ellison (1999), "Cyberstalking can be classified as the type of communication online used to stalk the victim both privately and publicly. Cyberstalking can be defined as threatening actions or unwanted advances directed at the victim using the internet and other forms of online communication."²⁵

Possible Causes of Voyeurism and Stalking

Voyeurism and stalking are intricate behaviours that may result from a combination of psychological, social, and cultural factors. Although individual motivations may differ, some common reasons have been identified as possible causes for these actions. Voyeurism and stalking are intricate behaviours that may result from a combination of psychological, social, and cultural factors. Although individual motivations may differ, some common reasons have been identified as possible causes for these actions:

1. **Power and Control:** Voyeurism and stalking often stem from a desire to exert power and control over another individual. The perpetrators may derive satisfaction from invading the victim's privacy, creating a sense of dominance and superiority.
2. **Sexual Gratification:** For some individuals, voyeurism is linked to sexual arousal derived from observing others in intimate or compromising situations. This sexual component can motivate individuals to engage in secretive and intrusive behaviour.
3. **Lack of Boundaries:** A lack of understanding of personal boundaries and respect for privacy can contribute to voyeuristic tendencies. Some individuals may not comprehend the ethical and moral implications of invading another person's private space.
4. **Psychological Factors:** Certain psychological conditions, such as exhibitionism or

²⁴ J.P. Mishra, *An Introduction to Cyber Law* 190 (Central Law Publication, Allahabad, 5th edn., 2014).

²⁵ Amita Verma, *Cyber Crime in India* 127 (Central Law Publications, Allahabad, 1st edn., 2017).

voyeuristic disorder, can lead to voyeuristic tendencies. These disorders involve sexual fantasies or behaviours centered around exposing oneself or observing others without consent.

5. Social Isolation: Individuals who experience social isolation or loneliness might turn to voyeurism or stalking as a way to feel connected to others, even though it's through an invasive and inappropriate means.

6. Obsession and Fixation: Stalking often arises from an obsessive fixation on a particular individual. The stalker may become consumed by thoughts of the victim, leading to persistent monitoring, following, and intrusive behaviour.

7. Rejection or Observed Loss: Some stalkers may emerge from a history of perceived rejection or loss, seeking to regain a sense of control over the individual who rejected them. This behaviour can be driven by a desire to win back the victim's attention or affection.

8. Reinforcement from Media and Entertainment: Media portrayals that romanticize persistent pursuit or intrusive behaviours might contribute to distorted perceptions of what is acceptable in relationships. Such portrayals can inadvertently normalize stalking behaviours.

9. Poor Social Skills: Individuals with limited social skills might resort to stalking as a misguided attempt to establish a connection with someone they admire. They might struggle to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate ways to engage with others.

10. Perceived Anonymity of Technology: The rise of digital technology has enabled stalking through online platforms and social media. The perception of anonymity provided by the internet might embolden individuals to engage in behaviours they wouldn't consider offline.

11. Cultural Norms and Gender Dynamics: Cultural norms that reinforce gender-based inequalities can contribute to both voyeurism and stalking. In societies where men are taught to pursue women persistently and where women's autonomy is limited, these behaviours might be normalized.

12. Lack of Empathy: Some individuals engaging in voyeurism or stalking might lack empathy for their victims. They may not fully comprehend the emotional distress or fear their actions cause.

Legal Provisions

Certainly, let's explore the legal provisions of voyeurism and stalking in India and their implications:

1. **Voyeurism (Section 354C):** The introduction of Section 354C in the IPC addresses privacy violations, particularly in the context of technology. It empowers victims by penalizing acts like capturing images without consent or observing private acts. The provision aims to:
 - i. Empower victims to seek legal action against privacy invasion.
 - ii. Deter potential offenders through penalties and imprisonment.
 - iii. Uphold the importance of personal privacy expectations.

2. **Stalking (Section 354D):** Section 354D tackles persistent and unwanted attention, including online stalking. It acknowledges the evolving digital landscape and emphasizes the victim's disinterest. The provision:
 - i. Recognizes digital communication's role in stalking.
 - ii. Upholds personal boundaries and consent.
 - iii. Offers legal recourse to victims experiencing distress.

The success of these provisions hinges on their proper enforcement, public awareness, and societal commitment to respecting personal privacy and boundaries. In conclusion, while the inclusion of legal provisions against voyeurism and stalking in the IPC is a positive step towards safeguarding privacy and personal safety, challenges in implementation and evidentiary requirements must be addressed. Additionally, fostering a culture of respect for privacy, consent, and personal boundaries is essential to effectively combat these behaviours and create a safer society for all individuals.

Gender-Neutral Analysis

In some cases “National Crime Record Bureau” (NCRB) Reports, show that females

also are involved in peeping tom activities. According to NCRB Reports the ratio of female peeping toms is lesser than males but the ratio is not zero. So, we can say that women can also be perpetrators and men can be a victim.²⁶ The only thing that is required in voyeurism practices is how to operate smartphones and gender does not matter whether it is male or female.

The Section 354C is not a gender-neutral law as the very first line of the section uses the word “woman”. The recent cases like *Animesh Boxi @ Any Boxi @ AnyBookish v. State of West Bengal*²⁷, women being victims of sexual offences such as voyeurism, stalking, disrobing etc. is far more than the number of men being victims of the same. Even though the number of male victims of sexual offences is far less that does not mean that the number is negligent or non-existent. The NCRB Reports show the proportion of men suffering from such offences is small does not mean we can shove the problem under a carpet of oblivion. There are victims of voyeurism in India who have no remedy under the law because they are males and their gender acts as a barrier between offences and justice. We have various acts for the protection of working women but no such acts have been introduced for the other genders.

The author believes that adopting a gender-neutral definition empowers all victims of sexual offences, ensuring equal opportunity to voice their experiences. An inclusive approach dismantles biases and brings justice closer. The outdated notion of women's weakness must end; fairness requires addressing offences regardless of gender. Restricting crimes to one gender hinders progress. Gender-neutral laws benefit both genders by promoting accountability and granting victims recourse. It's a balanced solution where wrongdoers face consequences and victims receive justice, irrespective of gender.

However, this is still a great amendment as it aims at protecting and safe-keeping women from various offences such as cyber stalking, disrobing, cyber voyeurism etc. India has taken a huge step in protecting women, who form a larger proportion of the victims of various sexual crimes across the country.²⁸ Section 354C says only males are the culprits and females are the only victims in Voyeurism cases. But through the NCRB Reports in 2015, it seems that out of the 64 cases registered in connection with Voyeurism three (3) of them were registered against the female and four (4) of them were arrested under Section 354C IPC and 66E of IT

²⁶ The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), available at: <https://ncrb.gov.in/> (last visited on August 15, 2023).

²⁷ C.R.M. NO.11806 of 2017 rc.

²⁸ Lavanya Chandra, “Voyeur Alert”, 2(1) *Indian Journal on Criminology* (2017).

Act. The NCRB Reports of 2016 it seems that out of the 95 cases registered in connection with Voyeurism two (2) of them registered against the female. So, it is clear from the NCRB report, that males as well as females, are also can do this kind of heinous crime like Voyeurism. So, the concept of Cyber Voyeurism under the said provision is not justified according to the NCRB Reports.²⁹

Section 354D of the Indian Penal Code³⁰ defines the offence of stalking as the act of a man following a woman and contacting or attempting to contact her repeatedly despite her clear indication of disinterest or monitoring her use of electronic communication. However, this section raises concerns about gender bias as it assumes the offender to be a man and the victim to be a woman, which goes against the principle of equality before the law enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution of India.

The provision should be amended to make it gender-neutral, using the terms "any person" or "anyone" instead of "man" and "woman". Moreover, the section provides certain exceptions where the conduct will not amount to stalking, which should be rephrased to ensure that the exception applies to any person, regardless of their gender. The punishment for the offence of stalking should be severe to act as a deterrent to potential offenders, while also considering the victim's safety and well-being.

Stalking is a serious offence that can cause severe emotional distress to the victim, and it should be treated as such. A gender-neutral approach to the offence of stalking will ensure that all individuals are protected equally under the law, and the punishment will act as a strong deterrent for anyone who might consider engaging in such behaviour.

Female stalkers are less common than male stalkers. In India, there is little evidence of women stalkers, but in the US, Canada, and Australia, research has been done on the topic. Dr Reid Meloy conducted a study on the behaviour and psychology of women stalkers and found that many of the women studied had personality disorders but did not exhibit symptoms of mental illness during the time of the stalking. Stalkers were categorized into acquaintances, previous sexual contacts, strangers, and family members, with those in the initial intimate sex group being the most likely to exhibit violent behaviour. Stalkers often use emails, faxes, phone

²⁹ Statistics on Voyeurism Offences, *available at*: <http://www.ncrb.gov.in> (last visited on August 16, 2023).

³⁰ *Supra* note 13.

calls, and other forms of communication to track their targets. Female stalkers are typically middle-aged, single, educated, and have pursued their victims for about a year. They often suffer from severe mental health and personality disorders, and while they may threaten violence, weapons are rarely used and injuries are typically minor.

A gender-neutral approach to addressing voyeurism and stalking in legal frameworks recognizes that both men and women can be victims and perpetrators of these behaviours. Such an approach ensures that the laws apply equally to all individuals, irrespective of their gender. Here's an analysis of the benefits and considerations of adopting a gender-neutral approach to these issues:

Benefits of a Gender-Neutral Approach to Addressing Voyeurism and Stalking:

1. **Inclusivity:** Protects all individuals, regardless of gender, from these behaviours.
2. **Reflects Reality:** Acknowledges that both genders can be victims or perpetrators.
3. **Bias Reduction:** Prevents gender-based biases in legal processes.
4. **Encourages Reporting:** Reduces stigma, encouraging all genders to report incidents.

Therefore, choosing to embrace a gender-neutral approach to addressing voyeurism and stalking in legal frameworks ensures that the law provides equal protection to all individuals, regardless of their gender. This approach contributes to a more inclusive and just society by recognizing that these behaviours transcend gender boundaries. However, the approach must be thoughtfully implemented, considering the complexities of gender dynamics and intersectionality, to ensure that it effectively addresses the diverse experiences of victims and perpetrators.

Suggestions

Certainly, here are specific suggestions for addressing voyeurism and stalking as crimes:

Addressing Voyeurism:

1. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch awareness campaigns that educate the public

about the seriousness of voyeurism, the importance of consent, and the legal consequences. These campaigns should also emphasize the emotional and psychological impact on victims.

2. **Education in Schools:** Integrate discussions on privacy, consent, and online behaviour into school curricula. Teach students about respecting personal boundaries and the legal implications of invading someone's privacy.
3. **Technological Solutions:** Work with technology companies to develop tools that alert individuals when their images are being captured or shared without consent. Empower users to take control of their own privacy.
4. **Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish user-friendly online platforms or mobile apps that allow victims to report incidents of voyeurism anonymously, making it easier for them to seek help without fear of retaliation.
5. **Collaboration with Social Media Platforms:** Collaborate with social media platforms to swiftly remove and report accounts sharing non-consensual explicit content. Implement mechanisms for victims to report such content easily.
6. **Support for Victims:** Set up dedicated victim support centres that offer counselling, legal assistance, and resources specifically tailored to victims of voyeurism. Ensure these services are accessible to all genders.

Addressing Stalking:

1. **Educational Workshops:** Conduct workshops in schools, workplaces, and communities to educate individuals about healthy relationships, personal boundaries, and the consequences of stalking behaviours.
2. **Early Intervention Programs:** Develop early intervention programs that identify individuals displaying early signs of stalking behaviour and provide them with counselling and support to prevent escalation.
3. **Training for Law Enforcement:** Provide specialized training to law enforcement officers to handle stalking cases sensitively and effectively. Encourage officers to

believe in and support victims from all genders.

4. **Online Safety Guidelines:** Collaborate with online platforms to create guidelines and resources for users to safeguard their online presence. Educate users about setting privacy settings and dealing with online harassment.
5. **Emergency Hotlines:** Establish dedicated helplines that victims can call for immediate assistance in cases of stalking. These helplines should be accessible to everyone, regardless of gender.
6. **Legal Aid:** Ensure that legal aid is available to victims pursuing cases against stalkers. Facilitate the process of obtaining restraining orders and support victims through legal proceedings.
7. **Community Support Groups:** Establish support groups where victims can share their experiences and strategies for coping with stalking. These groups can provide emotional support and guidance.
8. **Media Literacy Programs:** Educate individuals about the impact of media portrayals on stalking behaviours. Promote responsible media portrayals that discourage the glamorization of stalking.
9. **Engage Men as Allies:** Create campaigns that engage men as allies in the fight against stalking. Encourage them to intervene and discourage friends or peers from engaging in such behaviours.

By implementing these suggestions, societies can take a proactive approach to preventing and addressing voyeurism and stalking, creating a safer environment for all individuals. It requires collaboration among government agencies, law enforcement, educational institutions, NGOs, technology companies, and the public to effectively combat these harmful behaviours.

Conclusion

To help prevent instances of voyeurism and stalking, it is essential for people to be vigilant in their surroundings, both online and offline. In cases of intimacy, people should also be careful of foreign objects nearby to avoid potential voyeurism-related offences. The police

can only carry out effective investigations if the procedure of the law gives them flexibility.

Innovative ideas, such as community policing, should be given importance, with limited power and restrictions. Police patrolling should be increased in deserted urban and rural areas, and there should be regular checks on the misuse of power by police personnel. Police stations must be reformed to include a police officer to take cases of gender-based violence and to be trained in handling victims of gender-based violence with a more humane and compassionate approach.

The new Committee on Criminal Law Reform should be constituted to make suitable changes in criminal law to include new forms of crimes in India is a step in the right direction. The modernization of the Indian police force with science and technology, such as wearing cameras in their uniforms to record the entire process of investigation and capture the offender's act while arresting them, can be a significant help in ensuring transparency in the investigation process.

There is also a need for gender-sensitive infrastructure and services, such as feminist urban planning that can help prevent stalking instances in public spaces. It is crucial to raise awareness among people about how to counter offences of stalking and voyeurism effectively. The definition of voyeurism and stalking in the Indian Penal Code, 1860, is not gender-neutral and needs to be amended to include both genders as victims. Public participation in law enforcement is the best remedy, and the public must act as guardians and protectors if any stalking-related incidents take place in public places.

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