General Studies – 3; *Topic: Role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security*

Cyberbullying

1) **Introduction**
   - Cyberbullying or cyber harassment is a form of bullying or harassment using electronic forms of contact.
   - Cyberbullying has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers.
   - Cyberbullying occurs through the use of electronic communication technologies, such as e-mail, instant messaging, social media, online gaming
   - Harmful bullying behavior includes posting rumours about a person, threats, sexual remarks and disclose victims' personal information.

2) **Ill Effects**
   - Victims may have lower self-esteem, increased suicidal ideation, and a variety of emotional responses, being scared, frustrated, angry, and depressed.
   - Individuals have reported that Cyberbullying can be more harmful than traditional bullying.
   - Strangers can conveniently access private photos or data and misuse them by creating fake accounts.
   - Problems like obesity, mood swings, and online addiction have been observed in recent times.
   - Children have found it difficult to cultivate real life inter-personal skills due to excessive dependence on social media.

3) **Changing use of Internet and Social Media**
   - Technological advancements have made aspects of our lives easier, made information and people more easily accessible.
   - Social media sites can be used for positive activities, like connecting kids with friends and family, helping students with school, and for entertainment.
   - But, it has also aggravated a kind of social alienation, relative deprivation, stress and poor lifestyle choices.
   - People who use social media excessively tend to neglect personal life, suffer from mental preoccupation and escapism and negative tolerance to any situation.
   - Increasing number of suicides, some attributed to Blue Whale, have put schools around India on alert.
   - The risk to children is also greater than before, as their accessibility and exposure on the internet increases.
   - One million children were harassed, threatened or subjected to other forms of Cyberbullying on Facebook during the past year
   - Internet addiction is now being included as a disorder which needs further study and research.

4) **Concerns / Challenges**
   - Cyber bullying, under the Information Technology Act, is not an offence.
   - The Act was last amended in 2008. Since then, social media has exploded in the country. The ground reality of 2017 is vastly different

- Under-reporting of cases. The reasons are People don't want unnecessary media publicity; the current process is very slow; and there is low confidence in the ability of the system
- The US has often failed to share information vital to dealing with cyber crime. It denies access to data held by companies such as Google and Facebook
- Indian laws like the Information Technology Act do not apply to US firms.
- Because Cyberbullying is difficult to track, many victims feel helpless and unable to cope with it, especially if the bullying is personal and long-drawn.

5) Way Forward

- As we are spearheading into the age of digitalization, there is a constant need to upgrade the knowledge about cyber security to deal with all consequences smartly.
- According to UNICEF's 2016 'Child Online Protection in India' report, "The transnational nature of cyber crime calls for international cooperation".
- It is essential for all involved parties, the government, the community and the online community to come together and resolve this problem as a whole.
- There is a need to head towards a safer digital India
- Spread awareness about the 'Blue Whale' game which is in the news lately for manipulating teenagers to commit suicide.
- Parents should regularly discuss Internet safety with their children and teens and ways to prevent problems
- Make counselling mandatorily available at local levels - at schools, colleges, communities, and so on.
- Parents need to restrict internet access and monitor their children's online activities in the form of parental controls that can be installed on devices.
- Make self-harm videos illegal, mandatory helpline notices, search result optimisation norms and putting age restrictions.