



ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN CASES OF ONLINE HARASSMENT AND CYBERBULLYING: SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

In the age of the new era, where the internet is a universal extension of life, communications that once took place in classrooms, offices, and public halls now transpire in cyberspaces. While the digital shift has expanded access to connection and expression, it has simultaneously increased the prevalence of issues like online harassment and cyberbullying. From trolling by anonymous accounts to calculated defamation and psychological bullying, online abuse can leave a victim with scars that are every bit as tangible as physical attack. The special problem is that the internet amplifies harm: something posted once can be seen by thousands, and something said behind a screen tends to cut more deeply because it is permanent and far-reaching. Once the content is posted on the internet, it is almost impossible to completely eradicate it, which only worsens the plight of the victim.

Here, the victims are often reluctant to seek formal recourse. The adversarial and public nature of court proceedings is likely to intimidate them, particularly if the harassment has already made them feel vulnerable and exposed. This is where Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) becomes a responsive and understanding mechanism. Processes like mediation and arbitration permit the victims to voice themselves in a secure, private setting, where their dignity is respected, and solutions can be fitted to their emotional and social requirements. Confidentiality, flexibility, and the potential for interaction ensure that ADR is an arena where victims might feel more at ease discussing harm without fear of additional public exposure. For example, mediated settlement can offer not only recognition and apology but behaviour modification, as well as remediation that a traditional court decree may struggle to guarantee.

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At the same time, it is essential to establish a clear distinction. Some forms of online harassment are not simply interpersonal conflict but criminal offences, threats, extortion, sexual exploitation, cyberstalking, and other extremely depriving types of abuse. Such cases are crimes as per the law and must be pursued through the criminal justice system, where the State assumes responsibility to punish offenders and protect society at large. ADR cannot substitute for prosecution in these instances, though it can sometimes complement criminal proceedings by offering restorative avenues.

Thus, the work of ADR in the cases of online harassment and cyberbullying is that it can provide a human, confidential, and reparative method to disputes that are personal in nature, but at the same time acknowledge that the most severe cases of digital abuse require the strong hand of law. It is in this equilibrium between sensitivity and responsibility that ADR is pertinent in the era of digital interactions.

UNDERSTANDING ONLINE HARASSMENT AND CYBERBULLYING

The online world is now a primary space of human engagement, where individuals can talk to each other, exchange ideas, and create communities. But the same spaces that facilitate connection have also created new sources of harm. Online harassment is abusive or threatening behaviour that is done via digital means like social media, messaging apps, or forums. Cyberbullying, a synonym, is generally defined as repeated, directed harassment meant to humiliate or distress, commonly occurring in peer-to-peer contexts. While the two terms blur into each other, both describe the use of technology as a medium for the infliction of psychological, social, and even physical harm.

The harms take several forms. Victims can suffer trolling, in which offensive or taunting remarks are posted with the express purpose of enraging or disturbing the targeted individual.

Doxxing, sometimes spelt "doxing," is the act of disclosing someone's personal or identifying information in public without that person's consent, usually online, with the intention of hurting, intimidating, or harassing them. The phrase is derived from "dropping docs" (documents). The idea is to expose the victim by posting personal "documents" online, such as a home address, phone number, place of employment, or even family information. Cyberstalking is repeated monitoring or intimidation, which undermines the security sense of a victim.

Impersonation through the use of false profiles for the purpose of disseminating misinformation or reputational harm is common.

Gender abuse pervades, with victims facing sexual harassment such as unsolicited messages or sharing intimate pictures. Even those forms that seem less severe, like cyber defamation, can have lasting effects in determining the perception others have of a person.

The impact on victims is severe and long-lasting. Victims report feelings of fear, depression, and anxiety, with the abuse then extending into real life. The permanence of online material makes it that much more difficult to recover from, since, once offensive material has been posted, it is nearly impossible to completely remove, leaving victims open to ongoing exposure. Social damage is just as SEVERE, with reputations having the potential to be ruined overnight, and victims then isolating themselves both in and out of online communities to prevent further damage.

Evidence confirms the extent of the problem. A 2022 UNICEF report estimated that almost one in every three young people globally has been subjected to some type of online bullying.¹ A 2022 McAfee Connected Family Study reported that India had the highest rate of children experiencing cyberbullying among the 10 countries surveyed, with 85% of children admitting to being victims of cyberbullying. The study, which surveyed children aged 10-18 from 10 countries, also highlighted that children in India were more likely to have been cyberbullied by a stranger than by someone they know.² The statistics underscore a sad fact: what seems like momentary online interactions frequently inflict deep-rooted wounds on people and communities. Grasping these definitions, forms, and effects is critical before considering whether Alternative Dispute Resolution can offer effective remedies in such a scenario.

¹ UNICEF, "UNICEF poll: More than a third of young people in 30 countries report being a victim of online bullying" (4 September 2019) <https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/unicef-poll-more-third-young-people-30-countries-report-being-victim-online-bullying> accessed 11 August 2025.

² McAfee, "New Global McAfee Cyberbullying Report Reveals Children Now Regularly Face Threats of Racism and Physical Harm Online" (10 August 2022) <https://www.mcafee.com/blogs/consumer/parental-controls/new-global-mcafee-cyberbullying-report-reveals-children-now-regularly-face-threats-of-racism-and-physical-harm-online/> accessed 11 August 2025.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK: INDIA AND BEYOND

Dealing with online harassment and cyberbullying demands more than social consciousness; it demands a clear comprehension of the legal safeguards in place. In India, two significant sets of laws come into play:

- the Information Technology Act (IT), 2000.
- the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 (now Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023).

The Information Technology Act, 2000, is particularly focused on offences committed online. Protecting individuals from online harassment and cyberbullying

Section 66C³ makes identity theft an offence, i.e., the fraudulent or dishonest use of another person's electronic signature, password, or other unique identification feature, with an imprisonment of up to three years and/or a fine of up to ₹1 lakh.

Section 66E⁴ of the Information Technology Act, 2000, safeguards individuals from privacy violations by penalising the intentional capturing, publishing, or transmission of the image of a person's private area without consent. It was introduced through the 2008 amendment to address growing concerns of digital voyeurism and misuse of mobile cameras. The offence is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, or a fine of up to ₹2 lakhs, or both.

Section 67⁵ penalises publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form. It prescribes up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹5 lakhs for the first conviction, with harsher penalties for repeat offences.

Section 67A⁶ deals with publishing or transmitting sexually explicit content online. The punishment is up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹10 lakhs on first conviction, with stricter penalties for subsequent offences.

Section 67B⁷ prohibits the publishing, browsing, or transmission of material depicting children in sexually explicit acts. It carries up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹10 lakhs on first conviction, with even heavier punishment for repeat offenders.

³ Information Technology Act 2000, s 66C

⁴ Information Technology Act 2000, s 66E

⁵ Information Technology Act 2000, s 67

⁶ Information Technology Act 2000, s 67A

⁷ Information Technology Act 2000, s 67B

In addition to the IT Act, there are also provisions of the Indian Penal Code that are used to prevent/punish online harassment. Stalking is a crime under BNS 2023.⁸ including repeated online communication or surveillance.⁹ Acts which are done with the intent to insult a woman's modesty or intrude upon her privacy are punishable with simple imprisonment of up to three years and a fine.¹⁰ The applicability of this section extends to digital contexts like online messages, thus offering broader protection for women's dignity. This section is generally used for lewd or indecent online messages.

Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, now addresses defamation, which was previously covered by Section 499 of the IPC. Any imputation made or published against an individual, whether by written or spoken words, signs, or outward manifestations, is illegal if done with the knowledge, intent, or reasonable belief that it will damage that person's reputation. The law explicitly states that defamation can occur "in any manner," which includes online settings like social media, emails, and digital publications, as was upheld in the Tata vs Greenpeace case.¹¹ Although relaxations are given to statutory exceptions, such as fair comment or truth made for the public good, the punishment is community service, a fine, or simple imprisonment for up to two years.¹²

Together, these provisions create a strong legal framework that enables criminal prosecution for various forms of online abuse, from defamation and privacy violations to stalking, cyber terrorism, and the circulation of obscene or explicit content.

Although these legal provisions are important, they are primarily of a punitive nature. They are concerned with punishing the offender by fines, prison, or both. For victims, though, harm is not just legal but also emotional and social. A criminal conviction can establish culpability, but it does not necessarily bring the closure, confidentiality, or reassurance sought by many victims. Court proceedings, being public and adversarial, can discourage victims from reporting the offence in the first place. Not to mention that court proceedings are time-consuming and costly, and the focus of the judiciary cannot possibly be solely on one case. It is exactly here that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) comes into the picture. Processes like Arbitration, mediation or conciliation enable victims to speak out in a secure and

⁸ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, s 78

⁹ Ibid, s 78(ii)

¹⁰ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, s 79

¹¹ Tata Sons Limited vs Greenpeace International & Anr CS(OS) No. 1407/2010

¹² The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, s 356(2)

confidential environment, where solutions can be crafted in terms of healing, acknowledgement, and prevention of continued harm. In such proceedings, the focus is undivided, i.e. only on the case at hand. ADR mechanisms are less time-consuming, economical and a quick remedy is ensured by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act. In domestic arbitration, the award must be made within 12 months from the tribunal entering upon reference, with a possible 6-month extension by party consent. If not completed within this period, further extension can only be granted by the court.¹³ ADR provides remedies that the conventional justice system is not always capable of providing in a speedy, confidential, and overall efficient manner.

A comparative examination of other jurisdictions reveals how this equilibrium between criminal legislation and restorative methods is developing. In most European states, restorative justice is increasingly applied in juvenile cyberbullying cases. Instead of exposing young culprits to criminal records, mediation procedures are aimed at making them understand their actions, accept responsibility, and work on restoring the damage done.¹⁴ Within the United States, schools and community programs also embrace mediation and restorative circles to tackle peer-to-peer cyberbullying, making it a behaviour change-oriented and victim-supporting rather than solely punishment-based intervention.¹⁵

These instances show that while criminal law is essential for addressing the most serious and harmful online offences, it often falls short of meeting the deeper needs of victims. Legal punishment can discourage offenders and uphold social norms, but it does not always restore a victim's sense of safety, dignity, or emotional well-being. Alternative Dispute Resolution provides an important complementary path. Through mediation, conciliation, restorative justice, and online dispute resolution, victims can access a confidential and supportive environment where their experiences are genuinely acknowledged and their voices are fully heard. This allows for remedies such as apologies, assurances that the harmful behaviour will not be repeated, and guidance for behavioural change. ADR also reduces the psychological and social burden of lengthy court proceedings, helping victims regain control over their lives without enduring the added stress of drawn-out litigation. In the digital age, where online

¹³ Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996, s 29A

¹⁴ Alma Zizzola, 'Restorative Justice Responses to Cyber Harm: Cyberbullying, Cyberstalking and Online Abuse/Harassment' (European Forum for Restorative Justice) <https://www.euforumrj.org/en/restorative-justice-responses-cyber-harm> accessed 11 August 2025.

¹⁵ JL Weaver and JM Swank, 'A Case Study of the Implementation of Restorative Justice in a Middle School' (2020) 43 *RMLE Online* 1 <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2020.1733912> accessed 11 August 2025.

content can be permanent and harassment can feel relentless, such restorative and empathetic approaches are not just helpful; they are vital for ensuring justice truly responds to the human impact of these offences.

ROLE OF ADR IN CYBERBULLYING AND HARASSMENT CASES

Mediation and Conciliation: Mediation provides a peaceful, comforting environment in which the experience of a victim is recognised. Instead of a trial struggle, there is a respectful dialogue. This is where the victim can express their sentiments, demand an apology, or come to terms with behaviour modification measures. While there is limited case law for cyberbullying mediation in India, general studies indicate that victim-offender mediation has a substantial impact on repeat offending and victim satisfaction.¹⁶ These results indicate that ADR may be an effective means of resolving digital harm cases with more empathy and in a restorative manner.

Arbitration: Arbitration commonly pertains to conflicts over contractual obligations. In the matter of workplace harassment, particularly where online interactions are part of professional behaviour. In today's era, employment contracts almost always carry arbitration clauses. Though we have no public arbitration cases regarding cyberbullying, pertaining to the confidentiality of Arbitration cases, the general principle is well known: arbitration is utilised to resolve workplace conflict confidentially and effectively without tying up courts.

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR): Online Dispute Resolution takes ADR into cyberspace. Social media platforms already employ ODR-like mechanisms, such as Facebook's Oversight Board, which, for example, hears content removal decisions and can issue binding results. This model illustrates how organised, online forums can resolve conflicts confidentially, with no requirement for physical presence. In India, platforms like SAMA are already conducting mediation and conciliation online for consumer and family disputes, with a scalable model that could be extended to cases of cyberbullying as well.

Restorative Justice: Restorative justice restructures the emphasis from punishment to repairing injury. It's particularly well-suited for mistakes made by youth because it balances

¹⁶ W Bradshaw and D Roseborough, 'The Effect of Victim Offender Mediation on Juvenile Offender Recidivism: A Meta-Analysis' (2006) 24 *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 87 <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.159> accessed 18 August 2025.

both responsibility and rehabilitation.¹⁷ Multiple jurisdictions have applied approaches such as family conferencing in cases of youth cyberbullying. For instance, family conferences in South Australia are used as a diversionary process within youth courts—aiding victims and offenders to interact positively rather than being placed through formal prosecution procedures.¹⁸ The restorative approach promotes understanding, empathy, and behaviour change through facilitated conversation.

The European experience similarly underpins this method. The European Forum for Restorative Justice emphasises the way that restorative practices, such as conferences or circles, are used with the intent to empower victims of cyberbullying and encourage empathy in perpetrators.¹⁹ This is particularly helpful in schools where community building is of paramount importance.

WHY ADR MATTERS HERE

Criminal law does its part to deal with serious cybercrimes like defamation, stalking, or sexual exploitation. But it fails in its duty in dealing with the emotional and psychological toll such incidents take on victims, especially where the perpetrator is familiar to the victim. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes, including mediation and conciliation, assist in bridging this gap by creating a safe and formal setting where victims can narrate their experiences freely and feel really heard without fear of public disclosure or escalation.

In most instances, online aggressors are not strangers but co-workers, classmates, or peers, and it becomes a multi-dimensional conflict. ADR procedures facilitate face-to-face interaction between the victim and the offender, allowing empathy and shared understanding. For example, in a school environment, an offender who posts negative comments about a classmate on the internet is convened with the victim in a mediation session. With the guidance of an experienced facilitator, the offender is made to realise the actual emotional impact of his or her behaviour, and the victim gains recognition and reassurance. Likewise, in the workplace setting, an officemate who forwards offensive and deceptive messages concerning another co-

¹⁷ R Reyneke, 'A Restorative Approach to Address Cyber Bullying' in *Rethinking Teacher Education for the 21st Century* (2019) 340 <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvpb3xhh.26> accessed 11 August 2025

¹⁸ C Langos and R Sarre, 'Responding to Cyberbullying: The Case for Family Conferencing' (2015) Deakin Law Review <https://ojs.deakin.edu.au/index.php/dlr/article/view/525> accessed 12 August 2025.

¹⁹ Alma Zizzola, 'Restorative Justice Responses to Cyber Harm: Cyberbullying, Cyberstalking and Online Abuse/Harassment' (European Forum for Restorative Justice) <https://www.euforumrj.org/en/restorative-justice-responses-cyber-harm> accessed 11 August 2025.

worker on the internet can, through mediation, learn about the professional and personal damage inflicted and work on redemptive actions like apology, clarification, or behavioural modification.

Through such processes, ADR not only resolves the immediate injury but also induces behavioural change, reconciliation, and responsibility over punitive impulses. Victims feel a sense of closure and empowerment, and offenders are directed towards true reparation and cultivating responsible online behaviour. By focusing on dialogue, comprehension, and restorative solutions, ADR converts online disputes into chances for healing, relationship reconstruction, and building a more compassionate and responsible digital society. Through these processes, ADR not only addresses the immediate harm but also promotes behavioural change, reconciliation, and accountability rather than purely punitive measures. Victims often experience a sense of closure and empowerment, while offenders are guided toward genuine reparation and the development of responsible digital conduct. By prioritising dialogue, understanding, and restorative outcomes, ADR transforms online conflicts into opportunities for healing, relationship repair, and the cultivation of a more empathetic and accountable digital community.

EMERGING TRENDS IN ADR IN CYBER OFFENCES

Though India does have strong laws to prosecute online harassment, there is increasing acknowledgement that not all victims will or even need to go through lengthy criminal prosecutions. For most, the greatest immediate need is acknowledgement, security, and closure. Current Alternative Dispute Resolution systems in India, while geared mainly toward civil, commercial, or workplace disputes, provide good models that can be applied to cases of cyber harassment.

One notable effort is the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), instituted by the Supreme Court of India. MCPC centres have traditionally conducted mediation in family, civil, and commercial disputes, creating a confidential and supportive space for resolving conflicts. Although they have not yet been used extensively in cyber harassment cases, the system is best placed to handle minor or restorative-centric cases. For instance, online harassment at work or student disputes can be handled via an ordered conversation, enabling victims to air their grievances and offenders to own up to harm and undertake remedial conduct.

India's Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platforms are another exciting advancement. Sites such as SAMA have already performed successful online conciliation and mediation for family and consumer disputes, illustrating that confidential and remote resolution is possible. Implementing these systems for use with cyber harassment cases could enable victims to contribute remotely from the comfort of their own homes, lessening the emotional burden of in-person hearings and facilitating quicker resolutions, especially when the perpetrators reside in other cities or states.

Schools and education centres have also started testing restorative anti-bullying programs, increasingly incorporating online harassment. In UNICEF-supported programs, victim-offender mediation is conducted with trained counsellors, who help the two parties acknowledge harm, apologise, and reach agreements about future behaviour.²⁰ These programs demonstrate that even non-formal ADR processes can yield significant restorative impacts, especially among young people, by balancing accountability with education and empathy.

Lastly, most Indian workplaces already have Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) under the POSH Act, 2013.²¹ Although their main emphasis is on sexual harassment, they usually receive cases of online misconduct as well. ICCs have an organised process to investigate complaints, facilitate mediatory interventions between the parties, and impose behaviour corrections without directly going to formal legal proceedings. Essentially, these committees work like mediation panels, proving that ADR premises can be effectively used within institutional settings.

Cumulatively, these efforts show that India already has the components necessary for an ADR-facilitated approach to cyber harassment. By leveraging existing mediation centres, ODR websites, school restorative interventions, and workplace grievance redressal systems, victims can have access to confidential, compassionate, and timely redressal. In a virtual age where abuse is ceaseless and online material might be permanent, such systems provide not only justice but healing, acknowledgement, and empowerment, which are not possible through standard criminal processes alone.

²⁰ UNICEF, 'Restorative Justice' <https://www.unicef.org/belarus/en/justice-children-and-adolescents> accessed 11 August 2025

²¹ PosHhelp, 'Navigating Workplace Respect: A Guide to Internal Complaints Committee Guidelines' (11 September 2023) <https://poshhelp.in/internal-complaints-committee-guidelines/> accessed 11 August 2025.

LIMITATIONS OF ADR IN RESOLVING CYBER OFFENCES

Although ADR processes have many benefits, such as confidentiality, flexibility, and restorative justice, ADR is not a one-size-fits-all process, particularly when it comes to online harassment. There are a number of limitations that require close examination.

Firstly, ADR cannot substitute criminal law where serious or extremely injurious offences are involved. Offences like sexual exploitation, serious threats, identity theft, or relentless stalking have high social and legal costs. These kinds of offences have to be dealt with through formal legal systems because ADR cannot take cognisance of criminal offences.²² Additionally, an ADR system is not equipped to inflict criminal sanctions or safeguard society in general. For instance, non-consensual intimate image sharing or massive harassment campaigns need to be investigated criminally and possibly prosecuted to hold perpetrators accountable.

Second, ADR processes are self-volunteered and depend significantly on the cooperative intent of both sides. If the offender is a bad actor, manipulative, or has power over the victim, e.g., in the workplace, business or schools, the process cannot give meaningful results. Power differentials can also affect the victim's choices, coercing them into premature settlements or agreeing to subpar remedies.

Third, enforcement of ADR agreements may be difficult. Whereas courts may find mediated settlements binding in civil matters, there is little legal support for ADR in cyber harassment cases. If a perpetrator breaches the stipulations of a mediated agreement, victims might still have to go through formal legal channels, which would in effect erase the time and emotional closure ADR first offered.

Fourth, technological and jurisdictional challenges complicate ADR in online harassment cases. Offenders may remain anonymous or operate from different states or countries, making it difficult to enforce agreements or even identify responsible parties. ADR systems need robust digital frameworks and legal recognition across jurisdictions to effectively address these issues.

Lastly, ADR cannot always deal with the psychological effects of harassment completely. While restorative justice and mediation provide closure and acknowledgement, they cannot substitute professional mental health care for victims suffering from trauma, depression, or

²² Vidya Drolia vs Durga Trading Corporation, AIR ONLINE 2020 SC 929

anxiety caused by online abuse. An integrated effort that is mediated by counselling and legal remedies is usually called for.

In spite of these constraints, ADR is a worthwhile ancillary tool. Its use is optimal in conjunction with criminal law, particularly in less serious cases involving juveniles or where restorative sanctions are preferable to punishment. Identifying such constraints assists in planning better systems that safeguard victims, uphold fairness, and preserve the integrity of justice in the information age.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In order to establish Alternative Dispute Resolution as an effective mechanism for resolving cyber harassment and online bullying, the following strategic actions can be initiated.

Establish Specialised ADR Platforms for Cyber Disputes: India needs specialised online platforms dedicated to cyber harassment cases. These would allow for mediation, conciliation, and restorative justice hearings in a secure, virtual space. Victims can participate remotely, maintaining confidentiality as they receive prompt assistance and resolution, particularly when the perpetrators are in different locations or states.

Train and Certify ADR Professionals in Cyber Issues: Mediators, conciliators, and arbitrators must be given specialised education in cyber laws, net behaviour, and web privacy issues. With this education, ADR professionals can grasp the intricacies of cyber harassment, determine the victimisation more effectively, and achieve meaningful restoration results instead of mere legal settlements.

Incorporate ADR into Legal Systems: Although ADR is not an adequate substitute for criminal law in cases of serious offences, it could be officially integrated into current legal frameworks for minor online harassment. Specific guidance on when conciliation or mediation is proper, how compliance with agreements is ensured, and how ADR decisions are documented would promote wider usage and add legal authority to settlement.

Increase Public Awareness and Accessibility: Most cyber harassment victims don't realise that ADR is available. Publicity campaigns, school and workplace awareness programs, and digital grievance redressal counselling can enable early access to help, lessening the psychological burden of long-standing disputes.

Partner with Technology Platforms: social media and online platforms must incorporate ADR principles into their internal grievance processes. Through structured channels of mediation, apology, or behaviour modification, these sites can avert escalation and deliver victims with quicker, safer resolution without recourse to litigation.

Help Victims through Complementary Services: ADR needs to form part of a comprehensive strategy that incorporates counselling, technical advisory, and legal aid. With the integration of restorative dispute resolution, mental health assistance, and online safety interventions, victims can heal emotionally and regain trust in cyberspace.

CONCLUSION

The advent of the digital era has introduced unprecedented possibilities for communication and expression, yet it has also opened up new pathways for harm in the guise of cyberbullying and online harassment. Whilst criminal law is still needed to tackle serious offences, it is often incapable of addressing the emotional, social, and restorative needs of victims. Alternative Dispute Resolution offers a parallel process, providing victims with a safe, confidential environment where their experiences are validated, their voices heard, and effective remedies like apologies, commitments to change, and assurances of safety can be sought.

India has started investigating ADR mechanisms by mediation centres, online dispute resolution websites, school restorative programs, and grievance committees at workplaces. These show the promise of ADR to deal with relatively milder cyber harassment, with speedy relief, and psychological empowerment and closure to victims. However, shortcomings lie in situations where there is extreme criminality, imbalances of power, or problems of enforcement.

Going forward, building resilience in ADR for cyber harassment involves specialised platforms, trained personnel, legal integration, public awareness, and partnership with technology companies. Synthesising restorative approaches with conventional legal remedies can help India develop a more comprehensive response to online harm that harmonises accountability with empathy, justice with healing, and protection with empowerment. In an age of digital content that can be permanent and harassment that can be relentless, ADR presents not merely an alternative procedure but a road to restorative justice that really puts the human effect at its core.

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