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## 'Hope for such swift crackdowns for everyone'

TNN | Jul 6, 2018, 03:11 IST



Representative Image

The prompt arrest has impressed cybercrime experts, but some are sceptical whether this case will serve as a deterrent for trolls or spell hope for citizens at the receiving end of online abuse.

"I don't think this serves as sufficient deterrent for the everyday user. The victim here was a high-profile individual and action was taken after specific instructions from the Union home ministry towards both the police and Twitter," said Pranav MB of the Centre for Internet and Society, a non-profit whose focus areas include digital privacy and cybersecurity.

Pavan Duggal, chairman of the International Commission of Cyber Security Law, too felt the "high-profile stature" of the complainant means this could be an example of "customised justice" and not "generic justice". "The police invariably give step-motherly treatment to the common man whose issues are low priority to them," he said.

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Duggal stressed on the need to adopt a "holistic approach" to deter anonymous trolls as a matter of "de facto routine". "We need to come up with strong legal provisions to deal with trolls," he said.

Such steps are becoming imperative given that a recent study by a global cybersecurity firm showed that eight out of 10 persons in India reported some form of online abuse. Another study by a Delhi NGO detailed how vocal women often have to deal with violent threats and [sexual remarks](#). After the arrest, Priyanka Chaturvedi herself pointed out that "they like to target women who have a different opinion" and stressed the need to send a strong message.

"Threatening the [rape](#) of a child is the lowest thing. It's disgusting," said women's rights lawyer Flavia Agnes. Pointing out the vicious trolling of foreign minister Sushma Swaraj over her ministry's clearance to the passport of a Hindu-Muslim couple, Agnes said: "This has been happening again and again and it is getting out of hand. Arresting is one thing but we need to put an end to this menace."

The swift police action has impressed Mumbai cybercrime investigator Ritesh Bhatia. "It is not too difficult to catch trolls using fake ID these days since [social media](#) platforms are ready to provide the police with user logs that help track their IP address. I am glad Twitter responded quickly," said Bhatia. "I also hope that such speedy action is taken for all those who are threatened and abused, irrespective of their profession, status and political affiliations."

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