

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR CYBER CRIME: ARE CITIZENS PREPARED?

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*Suman Khokhar **Suraj

ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study thoroughly examines the awareness levels of Chandigarh residents regarding various cybercrime prevention strategies and measures. It critically evaluates the effectiveness and reach of multiple public information campaigns initiated by government and police authorities. By systematically analyzing official police records, media reports, and survey data collected between 2023 and 2025, this research offers an insightful overview of the increasing prevalence of cybercrime in Chandigarh. The study highlights the significant financial losses suffered by citizens and explores their preparedness to tackle such crimes. The findings are presented through detailed tables and supported by empirical evidence to formulate robust, data-backed recommendations aimed at enhancing overall digital safety and resilience within the Chandigarh community.

Keywords: *Cybercrime ,awareness and prevention strategies*

***Assistant Professor, Government College of Education, Sector20-D/Chandigarh**

****B.Ed student, Government College of Education, Sector20-D/Chandigarh**

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid adoption of digital technologies and internet connectivity in Chandigarh over recent years, the city has experienced a significant escalation in cybercrime incidents. Cyber threats range from online fraud, identity theft, ransomware attacks, to digital harassment, impacting individuals,

businesses, and government institutions alike. Alarmingly, over 17,000 cybercrime complaints were officially recorded within just two years, underscoring the magnitude of this emerging public safety challenge. This surge necessitates urgent and effective public education and preventive measures to empower citizens to protect themselves in an increasingly digital age. This study aims to rigorously evaluate current public awareness levels concerning cybercrime, critically assess government and police intervention strategies, and identify prevailing gaps in outreach and preparedness that need addressing. By understanding these dimensions, the research seeks to contribute to more targeted, inclusive, and adaptive policy formulations and awareness programs that can successfully mitigate cyber risks faced by Chandigarh's residents.

METHODS

Study Design: Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis of secondary data and qualitative survey feedback from Chandigarh residents.

Data Sources:

- Official Chandigarh Police cybercrime records (2023–2025)
- Media coverage and government reports
- Public surveys and feedback from Cyber Wellness Clinic sessions and police awareness drives

Data Collection: Compilation of complaint statistics, FIRs, arrests, and financial loss data from official portals and publications.

Survey Details: Structured questionnaires assessing resident knowledge and behavior towards cybercrime prevention, conducted at community centers and through digital platforms.

Analysis: Descriptive statistics, categorization of complaint types, and trend visualization through tables and charts.

RESULTS

Cybercrime Statistics Overview

The figures indicate a large gap between reported complaints and successful investigations, with only 16% of financial losses recovered.

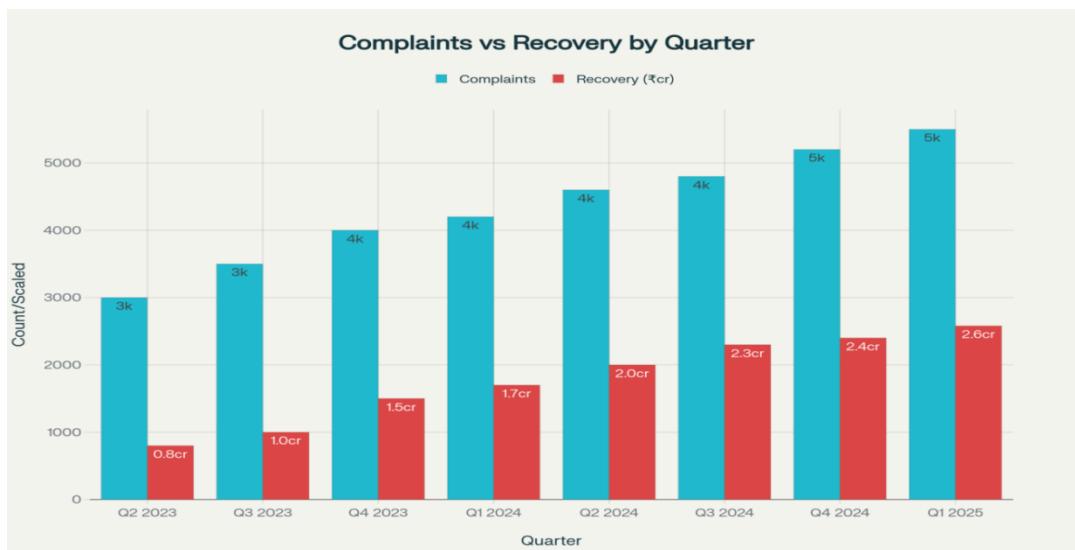
Metric	Value	Source
Complaints Filed	17,075	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/cybercrime-complaints-two-years-firs-registered-10166789/
FIRs Registered	244	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/cybercrime-complaints-two-years-firs-registered-10166789/
Arrests Made	200	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/cybercrime-complaints-two-years-firs-registered-10166789/
Financial Loss	₹95 crore	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/cybercrime-complaints-two-years-firs-registered-10166789/
Recovery	₹14.86 crore	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/cybercrime-complaints-two-years-firs-registered-10166789/

Crime Type Breakdown

Crime Type	2023 Cases	Characteristics	Source
Cyber Fraud & Cheating	23	Phishing, social engineering	https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/chandigarhs-2023-crime-profile-cyber-fraud-obscene-content-financial-scams-on-the-rise/
Economic & Financial Crimes	312	Predominantly bank frauds	https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/chandigarhs-2023-crime-profile-cyber-fraud-obscene-content-financial-scams-on-the-rise/
Senior Citizens Targeted	67	Older adults victimized in scams	https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/chandigarhs-2023-crime-profile-cyber-fraud-obscene-content-financial-scams-on-the-rise/
'Digital Arrest' Fraud Cases	23	Fake police impersonation scams	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/chandigarh-cyber-crime-digital-arrests-fir-police-10152305/
Bank/Card Frauds	2,900	Most common type in recent years	https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/digital-arrests-alone-cost-chandigarh-rs-10-37-crore-police-records-10271542/

Financial Loss Trend (Six months of 2024)

- Losses show both increasing crime severity and expanding victim pools.
- Graph: A bar chart tracks complaints and recoveries (₹ crore) quarterly from 2023 to 2025, showing consistently low recovery rates.



Public Awareness Campaigns

- Cyber Wellness Clinic: Trained 1000+ residents via partnerships with ISAC and tech firms, promoting AI-based threat detection and response (web)
- Schools & Colleges: Awareness drives in local institutions reached 1500+ youth on cyber threats, AI risks, and online safety best practices ().
- Police Outreach: Chandigarh Cyber Crime Cell executed multiple public seminars and distributed educational material in local markets and festivals () (web)
- Survey Feedback: Revealed knowledge gaps, especially among senior citizens and rural populations, who remain vulnerable despite campaigns.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

- Chronic under-reporting of cybercrimes likely caused by awareness deficits and fear or mistrust about reporting mechanisms.
- High prominence of bank fraud and digital scams implies urgent need for financial literacy and cyber hygiene education.
- Cyber wellness initiatives and police efforts are positively impacting short-term awareness but require continual, expanded programming.
- Vulnerable groups identified warrant focused communication strategies and easy-to-use reporting tools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sustained Awareness Drives: Enhance frequency and outreach through multimedia and local languages tailored to diverse demographics.
- School and College Programs: Integrate cyber safety lessons into curricula and conduct annual workshops.
- Mobile & Digital Outreach: Deploy apps and hotlines like "ISAC CopConnect" for instant reporting and alerts. (
- Specialized Training: For seniors, women, and rural communities, through collaborations with NGOs and community leaders.
- Law Enforcement Upgrading: Leverage AI and analytics to accelerate investigations and financial recoveries.

CONCLUSION

Chandigarh shows progressive steps toward mitigating cyber threats through awareness and enforcement. Nonetheless, data reveals widening challenges and a critical need for comprehensive, ongoing educational efforts backed by technology and policy support to enhance community resilience against cybercrime.

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