

#BreakTheSilo

STREAMLINING GENDER SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL SPACE



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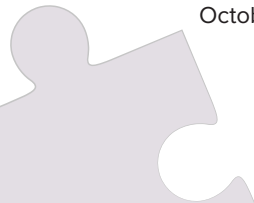
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AUTHORS



SHRUTI SHREYA

Senior Programme Manager, Platform Regulation and Gender and Tech, The Dialogue™

Shruti Shreya is a Senior Programme Manager at The Dialogue, overseeing two key verticals: 'Gender and Tech' and 'Platform Regulation'. Trained as a lawyer and honored with a Gold Medal from Symbiosis International University, she is deeply engaged in conducting interdisciplinary research on various aspects of social media governance and online safety.



GARIMA SAXENA

Research Associate, The Dialogue™

Garima Saxena is a Research Associate at The Dialogue. She pursued her undergraduate degree from Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab. Her prime interest lies in how our society interacts with technology and its impact on individuals. She actively advocates for privacy and digital freedom through her work.



EDITOR

Kazim Rizvi, Founding Director, The Dialogue™



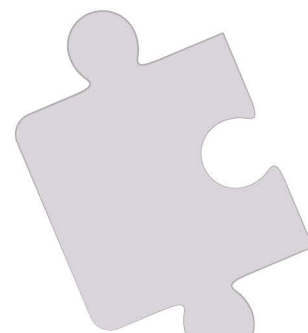
COPYEDITOR

Akriti Jayant, Head of Communications, The Dialogue™



DESIGNER

Shivam Kulshrestha, Senior Communications Associate (Graphic Design), The Dialogue™





FOREWORD

We are proud to partner with The Dialogue to support their critical research and this multi-stakeholder framework that aims to enable a unified, collaborative and equitable approach to tackle gender-based violence in India. This partnership has been the result of a shared vision – Bumble’s mission of creating a safer and accountable Internet by elevating the public discourse around online safety – and for The Dialogue’s interest in contributing new, survivor-centric thinking around the complex issue of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).

The framework serves a dual purpose: at its core, it is a “one-stop” document that maps the critical stages around TFGBV and identifies different stakeholders that can positively address these stages – and it serves as an educational tool for citizens at large. We hope it will aid survivors to demand for their rights, for the media to ask pertinent questions, and for citizens to better understand how TFGBV must be responded to - all in all, building a constructive dialogue which will hopefully lead to visible change in the years to come.

The process itself has been a learning curve, and we hope the report is able to comprehensively bring out how TFGBV is perceived, experienced and addressed in India. The final recommendations of the report – the framework – through which the right questions and the right stakeholders can come together in ways to have tangible impact – will be extremely useful to policymakers and organisations alike. It has been wonderful to see many civil society organisations already endorsing this framework and we hope to build this conversation out so that many more people can benefit from the right interventions; across the identified pillars. We are also very grateful that many legislators have sent letters of endorsement to us for the framework, paving the way for future work on the subject after the framework is published.

I would like to congratulate The Dialogue on a complex and thorough policy document, and encourage others who would like to join this conversation in reaching out to us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mahima Kaul".

Mahima Kaul
Director, APAC, Public Policy, Bumble

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere thanks to Prof. Nicola Henry, Professor and Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellow, RMIT University and Dr. Jasleen Kewlani, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, for reviewing the framework and sharing their inputs on the draft.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the 7 Hon'ble Members of the Parliament for their endorsement of this framework. Kindly find their letters of endorsement attached in Annexure 1.

We are also deeply grateful to all the 14 organisations who have endorsed this framework. Kindly find their logos attached in Annexure 2.

We are also thankful to Bumble for supporting this framework's development.

Special thanks to Ms. Akriti Jayant for copyediting the report and Mr. Shivam Kulshrestha for the thematic design.

We would like to thank all the stakeholders whose valuable contributions have formed the basis of this framework. We interviewed a total of 57 people from diverse backgrounds and expertise. These include amongst others:

- Aditi Narayani Paswan, Delhi University
- Aiswarya Ananthapadmanabhan, Women at Work at Arthan
- Akhil Neelam, Centre for Gender and Politics
- Chitraganda Sharma, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)
- Dr. Ranjana Kumari, Centre for Social Research
- Ekta Rohra Jafri, TechBridge
- Elsa Marie D'Silva, Red Dot Foundation
- Grijesh Dinker, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights
- Isha Suri, Centre for Internet and Society
- Julie Thekkudan, Equality Now
- Jyoti Vadhera, Centre for Social Research
- Kanav Narayan Sahgal, Nyaaya
- L.N. Rao, Former Deputy Commissioner of Police, New Delhi
- Malavika Rajkumar, Researcher
- Megha Bhagat, Project DEFY
- Neysara, Transgender India

- Nisha Dhawan, EMpower
- Pari Saikia, Journalist
- Pawan Dhall, Varta Trust
- Prof. Charu Malhotra, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)
- Raj Pagariya, CyberBlog India
- Rama Vedashree, Former Chief Executive Officer, Data Security Council of India
- Rashmi Anand, Woman of the Elements Trust
- Rasika Sundaram, Imaara Survivor Support Foundation
- Renuka Motihar, Independent Consultant
- Rubina Akhtar, Independent Researcher
- Samriddhi, Public Finance
- Prof. Shilpa Phadke, Tata Institute of Social Science
- Shruti Kapoor, Founder, Sayfty
- Sonali Patankar, Responsible Netism
- Tarunima Prabhakar, Tattle Civic Tech
- Varna Sri Raman, PinPoint Ventures India
- Vrinda Bhandari, Advocate
- Yamuna Chengappa, Sasha India

STRUCTURE

This framework does not require reading from the first page to the last. If you are looking for specific information, you can find it by referring to the Contents page. This framework is structured into six chapters:

- 1. Executive Summary:** This contains a broad overview of the entire report to help understand the main research gap and how the framework will fill this gap.
- 2. Chapter 1: Introduction:** This chapter introduces the idea and scope of this research, our vision behind this work and the methodology that we have undertaken.
- 3. Chapter 2: Understanding TFGBV and its Various Forms:** This chapter discusses the various forms of Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, mapped from different academic literature and policy documents, as well as the violence forms we were informed of during our primary interactions.
- 4. Chapter 3: A Whole of Society Framework for Gender Safety in the Tech Space:** This chapter introduces the framework and explains the underlying rationale behind all its key stages - Access, Prevention, Intervention, Report & Redressal, Recovery & Healing, and Research.
- 5. Chapter 4: Action Items to Realise the Vision of the Framework:** This chapter brings the framework into action. It lays down the specific action items for all the critical stakeholders at every stage.
- 6. Chapter 5: Visualising the Outcome of Actioning the Framework:** This chapter highlights the intended outcomes from implementing the framework - the changes in the current scenario that we can aspire for if the framework is successfully operationalised across all its stages.
- 7. Chapter 6: It Starts with YOU: Advocate against TFGBV:** Here, we have listed down the different ways in which you can help us spread this framework approach far and wide, encouraging more people to discuss and try out the ideas it suggests.
- 8. Annexure 1:** This annexure includes the endorsement letters from 7 Members of the Indian Parliament for the adoption and implementation of this framework by the respective stakeholder groups.
- 9. Annexure 2:** This annexure includes the names and logos of the 13 Civil Society Organisations that have endorsed this framework.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FIR	First Information Report
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and others
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
TFGBV	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations

LIST OF INCLUSIVE TERMINOLOGIES

When understanding violence against women and other vulnerable sexual and gender groups in the digital space, it is paramount to be specific about language and conceptual framing. We have provided key definitions and explanations of key concepts used in

this framework here, including sex, gender, survivors, etc. We encourage you to go through this carefully as these definitions and explanations provide a lens through which the framework should be comprehended.

Ally	Someone who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals.
Asexuality	A lack of sexual attraction to others or a lack of interest in sexual activity.
Body Shaming	Targeting individuals, especially women, with derogatory comments or content about their body, appearance, or attire on digital platforms.
Bisexuality	Sexual attraction to both men and women.
Cisgender	A term for people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
Coercive Control	The physical and psychological behaviours of one partner are used to break down the personality, self-worth, and agency of the other in an intimate partner-violence relationship. Such a form of control flows from systemic inequalities such as gender inequality and employs ongoing harmful behaviours that can severely impact the survivor.
Consent	Voluntary and clear agreement to something, especially in the context of sharing personal or intimate content online.
Continuum of Violence	TFGBV, like other forms of sexual GBV, exists on a continuation or continuum of attitudes, beliefs, and actions that uphold sexual violence and are often interconnected with harmful physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological acts.

Digital Empowerment	The process of equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to use digital technologies confidently and safely.
Digital Footprint	The trail of data that is left behind by users on digital services, which can be used to track or identify individuals.
Feminism	The belief in and advocacy for gender equality and the rights of women.
Gay	Describes a person whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is toward people of the same gender. The term is most commonly applied to men, although some women use this term as well.
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group based on gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, power abuse, and harmful norms. The term is primarily used to underscore that structural, gender-based power differentials place women and girls at risk for multiple forms of violence.
Gender Roles	Societal norms dictate what behaviours are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for a person based on their actual or perceived sex.
Genderqueer	A gender identity that is not exclusively masculine or feminine.
Gender Fluid	A gender identity that may shift or change over time.
Gender Dysphoria	Distress experienced by some individuals whose gender identity does not align with their assigned sex at birth.
Gender Fluid: Two-Spirit	A gender identity specific to some Indigenous cultures encompassing a range of gender roles outside of the typical male/female binary.
Gender Roles	Societal norms dictating what behaviours are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for a person based on their actual or perceived sex.

Heterosexuality	Sexual attraction to members of the opposite gender.
Homosexuality	Sexual attraction to members of the same gender.
ICT (Information and Communication Technology)	An umbrella term that includes all technologies for the facilitation and communication of information, including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums.
Inclusivity	Inclusivity is about recognising and embracing diversity in all forms and creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued and included.
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, leading to overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectionality can be understood as a prism for seeing the way in which different forms of inequality often intersect and exacerbate each other.
Intersex	A term for people born with physical sex characteristics that don't fit typical definitions of male or female.
Lesbian	Describes a woman whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards other women.
LGBTQIA+	An acronym representing the diverse spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and more.
Misogyny	Dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.
Non-Binary	A gender identity that doesn't fit within the traditional binary of male or female.
Pansexuality	Sexual attraction to people regardless of their gender.
Patriarchy	A social system in which power is held by men through cultural norms and customs that favour men.

Perpetrators	Individuals or groups who commit, instigate, or facilitate acts of technology-facilitated gender-based violence. They are responsible for causing harm, distress, or violating the rights of others through their actions, often using digital platforms or tools as a medium for their abusive behaviour.
Queer	Originally a pejorative term for gay, now often used self-referentially by the LGBTQIA+ community without offensive intent.
Sexual Agency	The ability of individuals to act independently and make choices about their sexual behaviour.
Sexual Assault	Any involuntary sexual act in which a person is threatened, coerced, or forced to engage against their will.
Sexual Harassment	Unwanted sexual advances, comments, or behaviours.
Sexual Orientation	A pattern of emotional, romantic, or sexual attractions to men, women, both genders, neither gender, or another gender.
Sexual Violence	Sexual violence is an umbrella term for “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the survivor , in any setting.
Survivors	Individuals who have experienced and endured acts of technology-facilitated gender-based violence or any form of violence and abuse. The term “survivor” emphasises resilience, strength, and the process of healing and recovery rather than defining individuals solely by the events they have experienced.
Survivor-Centred Approach	The survivor-centred approach emphasises the significance of prioritising the rights of each survivor at the forefront of all actions and ensuring that they are treated with dignity and respect. Putting the survivor at the centre of processes ensures and promotes recovery and reduces the risk of further harm while respecting their agency and self-determination.

Transgender

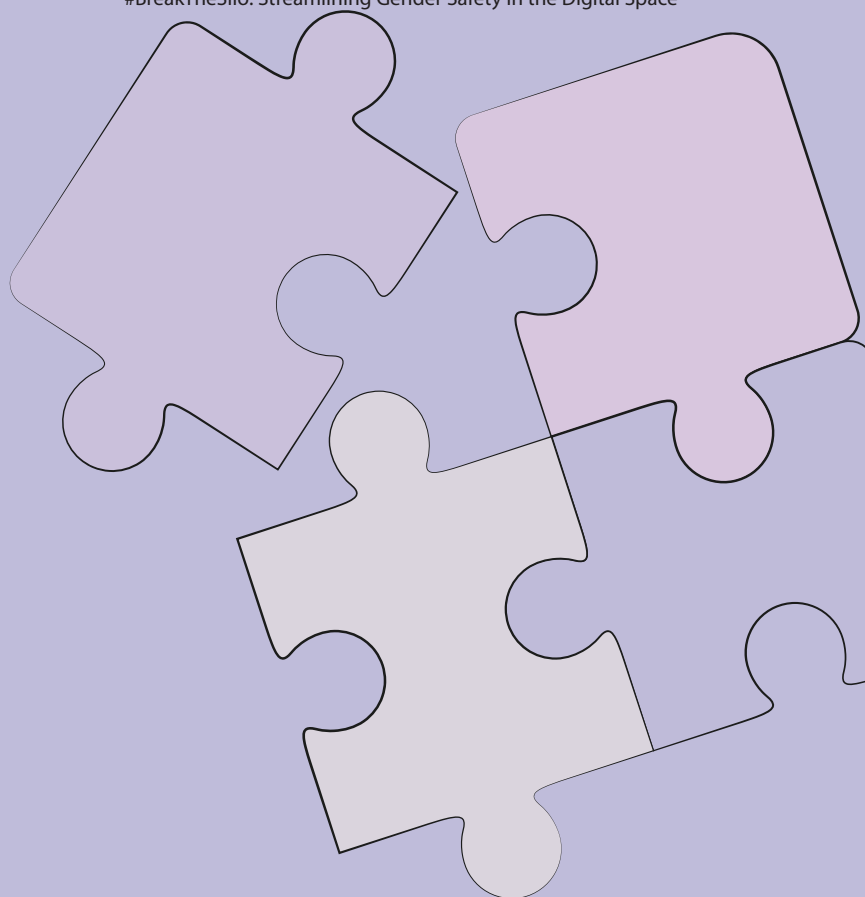
Refers to people whose gender identity or expression is different from the sex assigned at birth.

Virality

This refers to the rapid and widespread dissemination of information, images, videos, or content across the internet.

Whole-of-Society Approach

The whole-of-society approach underscores the need for coordination and collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector to build ownership, support human-centred design, mitigate risks, and establish accountability. At its core, it promotes coordination and collaboration, shared responsibility and mutual accountability and leverages their strengths and resources towards a common goal.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context and Problem Statement:

In today's digitally interconnected world, the advent of tech-based services has not only brought people closer but has also introduced a new spectrum of harms. These harms, unfortunately, impact communities disproportionately. In fact, deeply rooted patriarchal and misogynistic mindsets have allowed over-exploitation of certain vulnerabilities, necessitating a focus on issues such as Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence.

Although both government and non-government institutions are beginning to address this issue, this research identifies the following key gaps in the current approach:

- fragmented interventions and suboptimal collaboration has limited the success of the initiatives by different stakeholders, such as government bodies, online platforms, community organisations including digital literacy NGOs, self-help groups, aid givers and counsellors, important social institutions like parents, teachers and families, as well as the research community;
- stakeholders are often unaware of the overlaps in their responsibilities and the underlying gaps in their approach, leading to suboptimal utilisation of their roles and contributions;
- the work around diverse pillars of digital safety is disproportionate, with some aspects like prosecution and content takedown receiving more attention than research and rehabilitation;
- present mechanisms lay greater focus on addressing issues on a case by case basis rather than applying an end to end perspective.

This research introduces a comprehensive framework that provides a deeper understanding and causes of the tech-based harms, harmonises each stakeholder's roles and efforts, and ensures proportionate shared responsibility and equitable emphasis on all aspects of digital safety in India.

The Framework's Significance:

Open conversation among all stakeholders lies at the heart of this research. By identifying the critical pillars of action, the framework helps the stakeholders to break away from their silos and recognise their collective roles. It encourages stakeholders to view the challenge of TFGBV holistically and

harmonise their efforts, understanding not just their individual contributions but also the broader interconnected efforts required across all stages. By nurturing this collaborative mindset, stakeholders can develop a deeper understanding, respond more effectively, and bridge the existing gaps in combating TFGBV.

An Overview of the Framework:

The framework comprises six stages: Access, Prevention, Intervention, Report and Redressal, Recovery and Healing, and Research. These stages allow stakeholders to adopt a broader view of tech-based harms and play their respective roles at different junctures rather than just focussing on a few aspects, thereby facilitating comprehensive solutions.

While the report talks about each of the stages and the consequent action items for the stakeholders at every stage in detail, in this summary, we delineate the rationale behind identifying these stages and the main impact that we aim to achieve through the operationalisation of the framework:

Stage 1: Access

Rationale: Ensuring equitable and continued access to technology is critical to enable women and sexual and gender-based minorities to seek critical aid during times of crisis, such as in cases of intimate partner violence, where denial of technological access can cut off the survivors from support systems and aggravate the harms inflicted.

Outcome: Individuals with continued technological access will be able to mobilise support for their causes and seek effective and timely aid.

Stage 2: Prevention

Rationale: Addressing TFGBV requires transforming societal norms and attitudes that foster such violence.

Outcome: By championing gender equality at the societal level itself, the voices of women and sexual and gender-based marginalised groups will be amplified better, creating a foundation for positive interactions across diverse backgrounds and instilling healthier perceptions of gender roles.

Stage 3: Early Intervention

Rationale: Despite undertaking measures to reform societal attitudes, certain communities will continue to remain more vulnerable than others as reformative efforts cannot lead to instantaneous changes. This makes it important to prioritise the voices and concerns of vulnerable communities and focus more significantly on their empowerment.

Outcome: Armed with resources, the vulnerable communities will be able to proactively shield themselves against online threats, and if such threats

arise, streamlined interventions will ensure minimised harm.

Stage 4: Response and Redressal

Rationale: A harmonised approach combining accessible reporting mechanisms on digital platforms with a responsive legal framework is vital for justice.

Outcome: Effective and efficient redressal mechanisms will ensure that survivors can have timely and equal access to justice, restoring faith in the system and deterring potential perpetrators.

Stage 5: Recovery and Healing

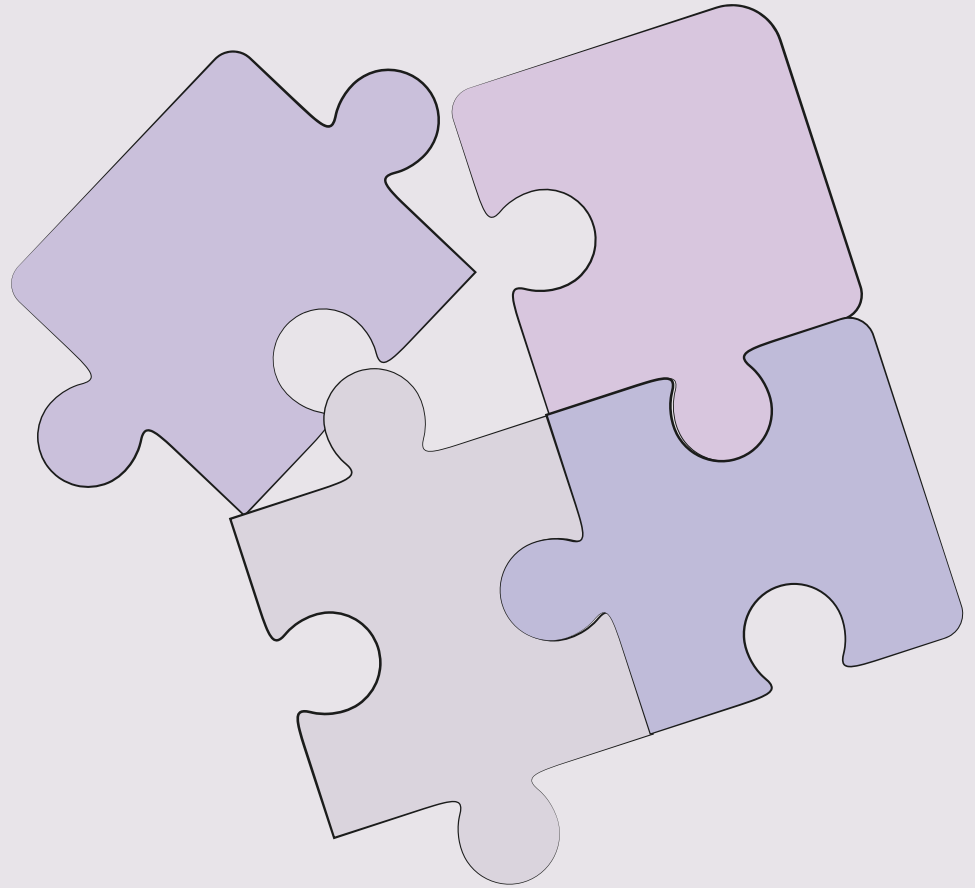
Rationale: Beyond immediate interventions, the aftermath of TFGBV requires dedicated efforts to heal and reintegrate survivors into the society.

Outcome: A compassionate and non-judgmental environment will validate survivors' experiences, encouraging them to seek professional support and ensure their long-lasting well-being and recovery.

Stage 6: Research

Rationale: The dynamic nature of TFGBV, influenced by the ever-evolving digital landscape, necessitates continuous sharing of data points by the companies and law enforcement agencies to the research community to ensure continuous growth and adaptation of our response strategies.

Outcome: Building research capacities in academic and institutional spaces will lead to more informed strategies against TFGBV. Moreover, inclusive research methodologies will ensure that solutions resonate with and address challenges faced by the most vulnerable.



CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION



Technological evolution and the proliferation of tech-based services hold unprecedented potential to shape societies, economies, and cultures. However, despite the immense benefits, they also cast a shadow - the disturbing rise of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV),¹ particularly impacting women, girls, and sexual and gender-based² minorities.³

Consider the story of Sarika, a young

woman who experienced the dark side of the digital world. She was an active internet user, using digital platforms to connect with friends, share her thoughts and pursue her hobbies. However, what started as innocent online interactions took a disturbing turn when she started receiving unsolicited explicit messages, threats and malicious comments about her appearance. The relentless cyberbullying eroded her self esteem, leaving her anxious and depressed.⁴

¹United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls. (2022). The Challenges and Potential of Harnessing Technology for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Violent Extremism. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-violence-against-women>

²Office of Strategic Coordination - The Common Fund. (2021). Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/SGMStrategicPlan_2021_2025.pdf

³United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls. (2022). The Challenges and Potential of Harnessing Technology for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Violent Extremism. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-violence-against-women>

⁴In our interviews, survivors highlighted how both online and offline violence are often interlinked and lead to continuous state of vigilance and fear. They highlighted how the incidents have not only impacted their mental and emotional well-being but have also limited their ability to participate in various other aspects of life.

Governments⁵ and social institutions⁶ across the globe have taken notice of this pressing issue and initiated various critical steps to combat TFGBV. However, despite their well-intentioned efforts, a crucial problem persists - the lack of synergy⁷ among stakeholders. This research aims to address this lacuna by devising a framework to align the initiatives of all stakeholders - be it the state machinery, the private sector or the grassroots community, and ensure proportionate emphasis on all actionable aspects.

In this chapter, we discuss our purpose behind this study, the vision and the relevance of the research, and the methodology adopted to design this comprehensive framework to address TFGBV.

1.1 WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?

TFGBV encompasses all actions that use tech as a medium to exploit, demean, and sexualise individuals based on their gender or sexual orientation, without consent.⁸ It manifests in various forms, including but not limited to cyberstalking,⁹ digital voyeurism,¹⁰ doxxing,¹¹ and online sexual harassment,¹² inflicting profound harms on survivors, families, and communities.¹³

Given the escalating severity of TFGBV¹⁴ and its ramifications¹⁵, addressing this widespread issue has never been more crucial. However, amidst the evolving dialogue and interventions, significant

⁵ Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches “stay safe online” campaign and “G20 Digital Innovation Alliance” as part of India’s G20 presidency. Press Information Bureau. (2022, December 28). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1887114>. See also, Majumder, B. G. (2023, January 3). Keeping women safe in Digital World: IT Ministry’s New Year Resolution Through Online Calendar. News18. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.news18.com/news/india/keeping-women-safe-in-digital-world-it-ministrys-new-year-resolution-through-online-calendar-6749791.html>

⁶ UN Women. (2020). Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Brief-Online-and-ICT-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-COVID-19-en.pdf>

⁷ Bridget, H., Molly, D., & Delanie, W. (2020). Technology, Domestic Violence Advocacy and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Emerald Handbook of Crime, Justice and Sustainable Development. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78769-355-520201017>

⁸ Technology-facilitated gender-based violence: A growing threat. United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.unfpa.org/TFGBV>

⁹ Stevens, F., Nurse, J. R. C., & Arief, B. (2021). Cyber stalking, cyber harassment, and Adult Mental Health: A Systematic Review. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 24(6), 367–376. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0253>

¹⁰ Clough, J. (2015). *Principles of Cybercrime* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139540803>

¹¹ Anderson, B., & Wood, M. A. (2021). Doxxing: A scoping review and typology. *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse*, 205–226. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83982-848-52021015>

¹² Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2023). Online Sexual Harassment in Adolescence: A Scoping Review. Springer Link. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13178-023-00869-1>

¹³ National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. The White House. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/National-Strategy-on-Gender-Equity-and-Equality.pdf>

¹⁴ Technology-facilitated gender-based violence: Preliminary landscape analysis. Social Development Direct. (2023, July 1). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Global%20Partnership%20TFGBV%20Preliminary%20Landscape%20Analysis.pdf>

¹⁵ UN Women. Accelerating efforts to tackle online and technology facilitated violence against women and girls (VAWG). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Accelerating-efforts-to-tackle-online-and-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-en_0.pdf

gaps and inadequacies in research, policies, and evidence-based solutions persist, reflecting a disjointed and fragmented approach.¹⁶ For instance, during our conversations with stakeholders,¹⁷ several legal aid organisations highlighted the reluctance of law enforcement to file First Information Reports promptly.¹⁸ They highlighted that such reluctance often results in the erosion of crucial evidence and affords perpetrators the opportunity to escalate their activities with impunity.¹⁹ Community organisations also stressed on the problem of underreporting due to the stigma attached to online harassment,²⁰ a lack of awareness and

understanding of digital platforms and their interface by the survivors,²¹ and a lack of clear provisions²² that adequately address the entire spectrum of tech-based abuse.²³

Various entities are working independently, focusing on disparate aspects such as awareness,²⁴ legal reform²⁵, or support services²⁶, but there is an absence of coordination and synergy between their efforts. This often results in significant aspects being overlooked, and survivors find themselves navigating a patchwork of interventions with varying degrees of effectiveness.²⁷

¹⁶ Landscape Analysis of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: Findings From The Asia Region. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z7GS.pdf

¹⁷ In our FGDs, community experts highlighted that survivors often face challenges in reporting cases of online violence to the law enforcement, including victim-blaming, scepticism from the police officers and reluctance to file such cases.

¹⁸ Ghosh, B. (2015). Access to Justice for Women: India's Response to Sexual Violence in Conflict and Social Upheaval. *UC Davis Journal of International Law & Policy*, 21(1), 49-108. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from [delivery.php https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2758851](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2758851)

¹⁹ Nagarathna, A. (2019). Investigation of Sexual Offences against Women in India—A Review of Legal Procedural Mandates and Directives. *National Law School Journal*, 15(1), 11. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3922556

²⁰ Kshetri, N. (2016). Cybercrime and cybersecurity in India: causes, consequences and implications for the future. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 66, 313-338. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10611-016-9629-3>

²¹ Six ways tech can help end gender-based violence. (February, 2021). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/eap/blog/six-ways-tech-can-help-end-gender-based-violence>

²² In our interviews, legal experts highlighted that legal frameworks and policies need to be more comprehensive and accessible to the general public. There should be clear demarcations between different forms of online violence, and these should be communicated effectively to users.

²³ In our interview, law enforcement officials highlighted the lack of necessary provisions and enforcement mechanisms under IT Act, 2000, to address online gender-based violence. See also, Mukherjee, M., Ratho, A., & Jain, S. (2021, May 18). *Unsocial Media: Inclusion, Representation, and Safety for Women on Social Networking Platforms*. Observer Research Foundation. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.orfonline.org/research/unsocial-media/>

²⁴ Women's online safety and inclusivity: Booking online safety training. CSR India. (2023, April 11). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.csrindia.org/womens-online-safety-and-inclusivity/>. Survivors' Toolkit. Sayfty. (2020, October 16). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://sayfty.com/survivorstoolkit/>. #SwipeSafe India's Latest Survey on Online Dating. Social Media Matters. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.socialmediamatters.in/our-work/online-safety/survey-on-online-dating>

²⁵ Publications. Project 39A. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.project39a.com/publications>. Probono India. Probono India. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.probono-india.in/>

²⁶ Empowering women and children: Combating gender-based violence. Society for Nutrition, Education & Health Action (SNEHA). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.snehamumbai.org/prevention-of-violence-against-women-and-children/>. Woman of the Elements Trust. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.womanoftheelementstrust.com/>. Crisis Intervention and Counselling Centre. Shakti Shalini. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://shaktishalini.org/crisis-intervention-and-counseling-centre/>

²⁷ Gupta, H. (2023). Delivering justice to women and girls in India. *The Lancet Regional Health - Southeast Asia*, 10, 100149. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lansea.2023.100149>

BOX 1: ANALYSING THE GAPS IN THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF TFGBV ADDRESSAL

Evaluating the Current Ecosystem Gaps

Our conversations with experts from diverse stakeholder groups including the legal and policy experts as well as the community organisations revealed the following key gaps in the current approach to address TFGBV:



Fragmented Interventions and

Collaboration: Current initiatives often work in silos. For example, in our conversations, digital literacy NGOs revealed that quite often their safety training programmes for school children overlap with the modules created by the Central Board of Secondary Education. They highlighted that the impact of these programmes can be better if CBSE would consult them in designing their modules. They also mentioned that there can be more long lasting impact if such programmes are conducted for teachers, also as training the trainers can optimise the impact by ensuring that they continue to share their learnings with multiple batches of students. Furthermore, they also highlighted that there is merit in involving parents in such conversations and training, so that they understand the evolving trends of digital harms and guide their children optimally. Towards this, the NGOs

have been reaching out to schools with collaboration proposals to jointly conduct gender sensitisation and digital harms workshops for parents, however the interest shown from the schools has been limited, especially in tier 2 and tier 3 cities. If the schools and educational boards consult the grassroots skilling experts in their modules and curriculum development, they can ensure deeper and more sustainable impact.

Overlap and Lack of Role Clarity:

Many stakeholders operate without a clear understanding of the boundaries of their responsibilities, leading to overlaps. Our conversations with public policy experts revealed that many of the major tech platforms are already undertaking innovations to identify and eliminate harmful content to the best possible extent. Despite these efforts, there are instances where governments proposed strict timelines for tech platforms to remove harmful content. Such stringent mandates, while trying to ensure swift action, may not always take into account the complexities and challenges involved in content moderation. Hasty decisions can inadvertently result in the suppression of genuine speech or critical discourse, infringing on user's rights to express and communicate.

The experts emphasised that the reason for such challenges often emanate from the lack of clear understanding among stakeholders about each other's roles and efforts. Both tech companies and government bodies often find themselves trying to regulate content without a unified strategy. This lack of consolidated action can lead to inconsistencies, potential gaps in content moderation, and, in some cases, duplicated efforts. Such overlaps not only result in inefficiencies but also leave key issues unaddressed.

Disproportionate Focus on Digital Safety Pillars: While certain aspects of digital safety, such as the prosecution of offenders and takedown of harmful content, are given significant attention, others are often sidelined. For instance, representatives from self help groups mentioned in their inputs that while efforts to remove harmful content from platforms are swift, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis on research into the root causes of TFGBV or the creation of rehabilitation programmes for survivors. This skewed focus might address immediate concerns but doesn't provide a holistic solution.

Several digital literacy organisations and academics added to this point by highlighting that even during safety training there is a greater emphasis on training users to protect their passwords and maintain privacy settings. However, there is less emphasis on educating them about the psychological impacts of digital interactions. Users are often equipped

to handle technical threats but are left unprepared for the emotional toll of negative online encounters, further exacerbating the effects of TFGBV.

Case-by-Case Addressal vs. Granular Analysis: Current mechanisms tend to address TFGBV issues on an incident-specific basis. For example, an important aspect revealed by law enforcement personnels was that when a case of online harassment is reported, it is generally dealt with individually, without analysing patterns or systemic issues that lie at the root of such behaviours. When asked further, they added that our criminal justice system is so overwhelmed with caseload that officers seldom have time to put their minds on the underlying causes of crime or interact with experts from other fields such as family welfare experts and rehabilitation professionals whose expertise and involvement in the criminal justice system can help in better analysing the causes and patterns of crimes.

Another perspective highlighting this gap came from digital literacy NGOs who mentioned that while individual incidents of online bullying were often addressed, there was seldom any investigation into the broader school or household culture or online dynamics that might be fostering such behaviour. Addressing individual cases without understanding or tackling the broader context often meant that the root causes remained unaddressed, allowing for recurrence of such issues.

This report proposes a ‘whole-of-society’²⁸ responsibility-sharing framework to address these gaps and foster a more inclusive and equitable online environment in India. Underpinned by the principles of collective effort and differentiated responsibilities, it seeks to unify the efforts being made by different stakeholders to institutionalise a more harmonised approach to eliminate TFGBV.

1.2 WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

inclusive solutions to combat the effects of such violence.

While women and non-binary genders²⁹ are the primary targets of TFGBV, in this report, we also focus on the remedies for communities facing violence due to their sexual orientation³⁰ (gays, lesbians, bisexuals etc.). This expansive approach is crucial as the implications of TFGBV are vast and interconnected. By combining the challenges faced by sexual and gender-based minorities³¹, we present a cohesive and comprehensive examination of TFGBV, illustrating the multifaceted nature of the issue. Integrating sexual and gender minorities into the TFGBV discussion is crucial. It not only enriches our understanding and takes into account their perspectives but also underscores the shared challenges these groups face. This integration paves the way for



²⁸. The whole-of-society approach underscores the need for coordination and collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector to build ownership, support human-centred design, mitigate risks, and establish accountability. At its core, it promotes coordination and collaboration, shared responsibility and mutual accountability and leverages their strengths and resources towards a common goal.

²⁹. UN Women. Frequently asked questions: Tech-facilitated gender-based violence. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/tech-facilitated-gender-based-violence>

³⁰. Harvey, S., Mitchell, M., Keeble, J., McNaughton Nicholls, C., & Rahim, N. (2014). Barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in accessing domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and sexual violence services. Welsh Government Social Research. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/140604-barriers-faced-lgbt-accessing-domestic-abuse-services-en.pdf>

³¹. Office of Strategic Coordination - The Common Fund. (2021). Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/SGMStrategicPlan_2021_2025.pdf

1.3 WHAT IS OUR VISION?

This framework is inspired by successful models implemented across geographies to reduce gender-based violence³², customised to address the unique characteristics and nuances of the Indian context. We want to foster a culture where every institution that has a stake to combat TFGBV engages in harmonious dialogue and collaborative efforts.

- **Foster a survivor-centric response:** It positions the needs, rights, and experiences of survivors at the core of all strategic endeavours and actions. This vision emphasises that at no stage we should lose sight of the survivor. The actions of all the stakeholders across all stages must endeavour to secure greater protection and empowerment of the survivor, be it through safe and secure access to technology, swift response and redressal of their concerns, wholesome healing mechanisms or through continuous research and feedback that helps us to continue evolving as a society and ensure greater protection for them in the future.
- **Cultivate a holistic perspective:** It aims to change our focus from addressing singular points of success and failures to adopting a more panoramic view of all the interconnected elements, where the

duties of all the stakeholders are more holistically defined, appropriate emphasis is laid on everyone's role and their contributions are duly recognised.

- **Synchronise global standards with local nuances:** Developed through an analysis of globally recognised frameworks coupled with India specific literature review and primary analysis - the framework aims to harmonise international best practices with India's unique social and legal sensitivities. It underscores the imperative of aligning international standards with local realities, ensuring that the solutions are both globally informed and locally relevant.
- **Nurture a culture of more informed and open conversations:** It aims to break the existing silos by sparking greater conversations between different stakeholder groups. The idea here is to create a collective discourse, encouraging diverse stakeholders to deliberate together, share insights with each other and implement more synergised strategies.

³² Department of Social Services. (2022). National plan to end violence against women and children 2022-2032. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence>; Singapore Council of Women's Organisations. (2022). White Paper on Singapore Women's Development. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.scwo.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/White-Paper-on-Singapore-Womens-Development.pdf>; U.S. Department of State. (2022). U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally: Fact Sheet. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/GBV-Strategy_Fact_Sheet_v4-Accessible-1282022.pdf

1.4 WHO SHOULD USE THIS FRAMEWORK?

Whether you are a policymaker engaged in developing policies, a civil society organisation researching on TFGBV, an educator guiding youth users, a technology company or platform looking to tackle gender-based abuse and harassment, a law-enforcement agency responding to TFGBV cases, or a health practitioner at the forefront of providing support to survivors- this framework provides valuable insights and actionable strategies for all the stakeholders.

The framework is designed to be a

downloadable PDF, easily accessible for anyone to read and understand, and can serve as a useful guide for anyone involved in addressing online abuse and harms. It can also be used to raise awareness and empower individuals.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

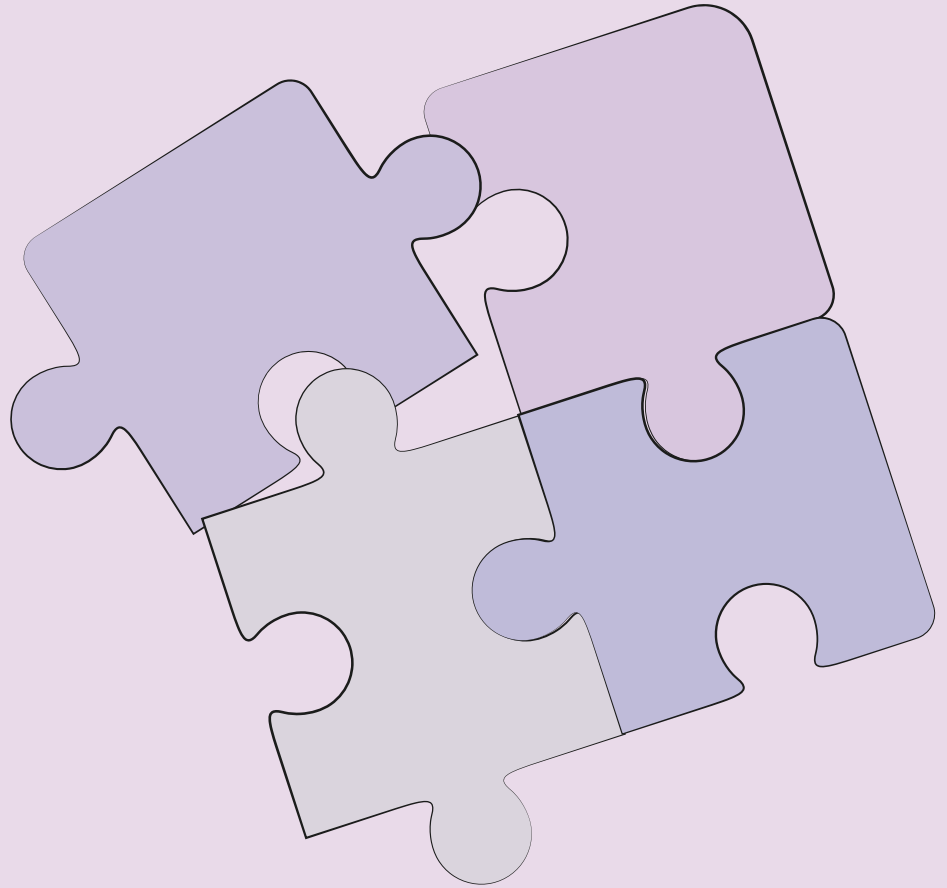
This framework is a synergistic blend of primary and secondary research. It is based on both deep scholarly insights gathered through meta-analytic literature review and diverse experiential narratives gathered through stakeholder engagement, to ensure a multifaceted understanding of feminist jurisprudence, gender-based violence, and digital rights.

Literature Review: We kickstarted with an extensive exploration of academic literature and policy documents – both international and India specific.

Focus Group Discussions and One on One Interviews: Our approach was further informed through interviews and discussions with a pool of 57 stakeholders coming from diverse spheres including gender studies, digital rights, and online safety, along with policy and legal analysts, law enforcement, mental health practitioners, journalists, community NGOs, and notably, the survivors.

Report Writing: We converted the findings from literature review, and discussions into a structured report, highlighting key insights and actionable recommendations.

Peer Review and Finalisation: The report was refined through review of experts to ensure accuracy and comprehensive coverage.



CHAPTER 2:

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF TFGBV



In an age marked by technological revolution, India finds itself grappling with the dark realities of TFGBV³³, a malevolent shadow to the countless boons technology brings. In India, where over 700 million people have access to the internet³⁴, the magnitude of this menace is grave, reverberating through every layer of the society³⁵. A startling revelation by the National Family Health Survey indicates that approximately 1 in 3 women in India have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence, a

substantial portion of which is orchestrated through technological mediums.³⁶

³³. ICRW. (2021). Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence India. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/USAID-TFGBV-India.pdf>

³⁴. Kemp, S. (2023). Digital 2023: India - Data Reportal- Global Digital Insights. Data Reportal. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-india>

³⁵. U.S. Department of State. (2022, April 13). 2022 roadmap for the global partnership for action on gender-based online harassment and abuse - united states department of state. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.state.gov/2022-roadmap-for-the-global-partnership-for-action-on-gender-based-online-harassment-and-abuse/>

³⁶. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. (2021). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-21: India. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/NFHS-5_Phase-II_0.pdf

BOX 2: THE JURISPRUDENCE OF GENDER RIGHTS

International Human Rights

Principles: Gender rights and equality are integral to the foundational principles of international human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),³⁷ which stands for the equal dignity and rights of all human beings. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³⁸ is another vital instrument that mandates state parties to undertake measures to eliminate discrimination against women in every aspect, be it political, economic, or social, which invariably includes digital spaces.

Indian Constitutional Principles: The Constitution of India is a beacon for gender rights, embodying principles of equality and prohibition of discrimination. Article 14 ensures equality before the law, Article 15 specifically prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, and Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. The essence of these articles is the upholding of dignity and equal treatment, extending their relevance and applicability to the digital domains as well.

Judicial Principles from the Indian Supreme Court:

The Supreme Court of India has been proactive in acknowledging and strengthening gender rights through several landmark judgments. The notable case of Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)³⁹ was pivotal in recognising sexual harassment as a violation of constitutional rights and laying down guidelines to ensure gender justice at workplaces, including those with digital connectivity. Furthermore, judgments such as Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union Of India (2017)⁴⁰ have affirmed the right to privacy under Article 21, having profound implications on privacy and safety in digital spaces, particularly for women and the LGBTQ+ community. The progressive verdicts in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)⁴¹ and Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)⁴² respectively decriminalised homosexuality and adultery, emphasising individual autonomy, equality, and rights in relationships, echoing the spirit of gender justice in online and offline spaces.

International Courts and Mechanisms:

³⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948). United Nations General Assembly. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

³⁸ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). (1979). United Nations General Assembly. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

³⁹ Supreme Court of India. (1997). Vishaka v. State Of Rajasthan (AIR 1997 SC 3011).

⁴⁰ Supreme Court of India. (2017). Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union Of India (Writ Petition (Civil) No. 494 of 2012).

⁴¹ Supreme Court of India. (2018). Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India. (Writ Petition (Civil) No. 76 of 2016).

⁴² Supreme Court of India. (2018). Joseph Shine v. Union of India. Criminal Appeal No. 1949 of 2017.

jurisdictions, with courts like the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, have played pivotal roles in establishing and affirming gender rights. These institutions, along with international mechanisms like the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5), which emphasises gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, have highlighted the importance of addressing and resolving issues related to technology-facilitated gender-based violence to maintain international peace, security, and development.

Renowned Feminist Scholars: The works of feminist scholars such as Gloria Jean Watkins,⁴³ Simone de Beauvoir,⁴⁴ and Kimberlé Crenshaw⁴⁵ have significantly contributed to the

understanding and expansion of gender rights. Further, Indian scholars have also added depth and nuance to these discussions by highlighting region-specific challenges and dynamics. Dr. Ritu Menon, co-founder of the feminist publishing house “Kali for Women,” has provided seminal insights into South Asian women's issues, making her an invaluable voice in Indian feminist literature⁴⁶. Another pivotal figure is Urvashi Butalia, who, alongside Menon, pioneered “Kali for Women.” Butalia's works delve deep into the gendered histories and partitions of the subcontinent. Their combined efforts, among others, have enriched the discourse on gender rights, intertwining local contexts with broader feminist theories, offering a holistic perspective on the challenges and opportunities in the digital and physical spaces of India.

In this chapter we have delineated the diverse manifestations of TFGBV, as recognised by legal and technological authorities. Some forms have been subsumed under broader classifications to present a more organised view. The list is not exhaustive, as the landscape of technology and digital interaction is ever-evolving, and new forms of TFGBV continue to emerge. It is also important to note that not all of them are necessarily ‘illegal’ and ought to invite

criminal sanctions, for instance, emotional manipulation or coercive control that can manifest through tech. This is another reason that re-emphasises the significance of the framework approach whose pillars not just focus on sanction and prosecution but other critical actions as well such as addressing the underlying social drivers of violence, rehabilitation of survivors etc. which might be more well suited in certain cases.



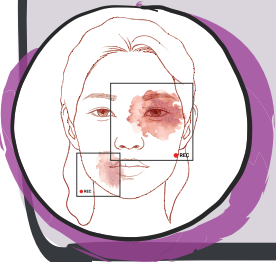
⁴³ Hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. South End Press. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/Feminist_Theory/uviQBop4cdsC?hl=en&gbpv=0

⁴⁴ de Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex* (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). Vintage Books. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/The_Second_Sex/lgDZB8nE8XcC?hl=en

⁴⁵ Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, (1), 139-167. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf>

⁴⁶ Menon, R., & Bhasin, K. (1998). *Borders & Boundaries Women in India's partition*. Kali for Women.




TABLE 1: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF TFGBV

Form	Meaning	Example
<p>Cyberstalking or stalking through tech</p> 	<p>Persistent online harassment, tracking, and unwanted attention directed at an individual. This can include constant messaging, tracking online behaviour, or even using digital tools to track physical location⁴⁷.</p>	<p>A young professional realises that a follower consistently likes and comments on all her posts and keeps an update of all her locations by monitoring her location tags, public events, and commenting on her check-ins. Despite the woman's attempt to block and limit the follower, he creates multiple accounts to approach her. This leaves her feeling vulnerable and anxious about her online activities and offline presence.</p>
<p>Digital Defamation</p>	<p>Spreading false and damaging information about someone online to damage their reputation, often with gendered or sexual implications⁴⁸.</p>	<p>A disgruntled former employee resorts to posting false accusations about another employee's professional conduct and character on social media, owing to their gender or sexual identity.</p> 
<p>Digital Domestic Abuse</p> 	<p>Using technology to control, stalk, or harass a current or former partner, including monitoring their online activities, using spyware on their devices, or controlling their digital accounts.⁴⁹</p>	<p>A partner insists on gaining access to their spouse's social media accounts and messages, systematically monitoring their online interactions, and infringing upon their privacy.</p>

⁴⁷ Kaur, P., Dhir, A., Tandon, A., Alzeiby, E. A., & Abohassan, A. A. (2021). A systematic literature review on cyberstalking. An analysis of past achievements and future promises. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 163, 120426. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120426>

⁴⁸ Chawla, A. (2022). Aspects Of Cyber Defamation in Digital Era. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4256845

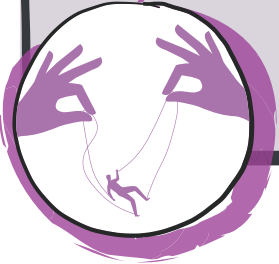

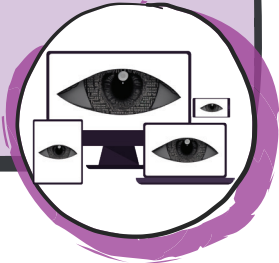
⁴⁹ Fiolet, R., Brown, C., Wellington, M., Bentley, K., & Hegarty, K. (2021). Exploring the impact of technology-facilitated abuse and its relationship with domestic violence: a qualitative study on experts' perceptions. *Global qualitative nursing research*, 8, 23333936211028176. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8246499/>

Form	Meaning	Example
Digital Voyeurism 	Unauthorised use of technology to spy on someone in private spaces, such as using hidden cameras or hacking webcams. ⁵⁰	A perpetrator unlawfully hacks into a woman's webcam, covertly observing them within the confines of their own home, without their knowledge or consent.
Doxxing	Sharing personal details without consent, often to incite harassment, publishing private conversations or correspondences without permission. ⁵¹	An ex-intimate partner publicly discloses personal information, such as a home address and phone number, about their partner with the malicious intent to harass or cause them harm. 
Gaming Violence 	Acts of aggression occurring within the virtual environment of video games, online gaming communities, or related platforms to target women primarily due to their gender. ⁵²	In an online multiplayer game, a player relentlessly harasses and taunts a fellow female player through, both voice and text chats, actively encouraging others to join in.

⁵⁰ Halder, D. (2013, April). A Brief Commentary on Verma Committee Report on Criminal Law Amendment with Special Reference to Crime Through Digital Medium. In Virtual Forum against Cyber Crime Monthly Newsletter (Vol. 22, pp. 16-18). Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2248

⁵¹ MacAllister, J. M. (2017). The Doxing Dilemma: Seeking a Remedy for the Malicious Publication of Personal Information. Fordham University School of Law, 85(5). Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol85/iss5/21/>

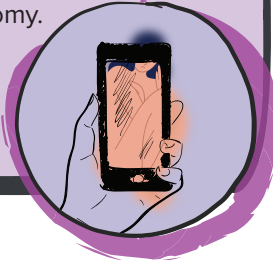


⁵² Fox, J., & Tang, W. Y. (2017). Women's experiences with general and sexual harassment in online video games: Rumination, organizational responsiveness, withdrawal, and coping strategies. *New media & society*, 19(8), 1290-1307.

Form	Meaning	Example
Gaslighting 	Misleading someone and making them question their own understanding or instincts. ⁵³	Following derogatory comments about a gender non-conforming individual on an online co-working platform, their co-worker dismisses their concerns as being overly sensitive or dramatic, casting doubt on the survivor's identity and character.
Impersonating/ Catfishing 	Creating fake profiles or websites to harm, defame, or impersonate someone. ⁵⁴	A malicious opponent creates fake social media profiles impersonating a well-known female celebrity. They posted offensive content, including doctored obscenes videos, causing confusion among her followers. This led to a flood of negative comments and messages directed at the celebrity.
Invasive Data Collection, Unauthorised Access and Privacy Invasion	Unauthorised collection, use, or disclosure of personal information; accessing devices or social media accounts belonging to them without permission. ⁵⁵	A device technician instals spyware to access and collect personal information from a survivor's smartphone, including private messages, emails, photos, location data, and browsing history. 

⁵³ Stern, R. (2018). The gaslight effect: How to spot and survive the hidden manipulation others use to control your life. Harmony.

⁵⁴ World Economic Forum. (2023). Typology of Online Harms. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Typology_of_Online_Harms_2023.pdf


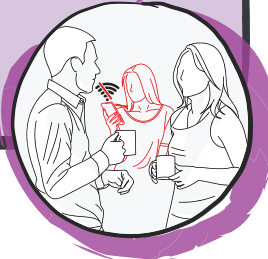
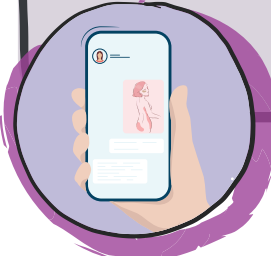
⁵⁵ UNFPA Technical Division. (2021). Making all spaces safe: Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence. United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa-tfgbv-making_all_spaces_safe.pdf

Form	Meaning	Example
Non-consensual Intimate Image Distribution	Non-consensual creation, distribution, and/or threat to distribute intimate or sexual materials (i.e. images, videos, or texts), is one of the recently studied forms of violence and abuse perpetrated through technologies, including publication or transmission of deepfakes. ⁵⁶	An adversary creates realistic-looking video footage of female public figures engaging in sexual activities, saying and doing things she never did to defame and discredit her. This leads to damaging of the figure's reputation and credibility while also violating her privacy and autonomy. 
Online Discrimination and Exclusion 	Facilitating discriminatory practices or excluding individuals from online spaces based on gender, sexual orientation, or identity. ⁵⁷	A group of college students exhibit discriminatory behaviours on an online group towards a student who identifies as a queer, and foster an exclusionary and unwelcoming environment by spreading harmful stereotypes and harassing the queer member.
Online harassment or harassment through tech	Sending threatening or abusive messages, often targeting individuals based on their gender, sexuality, or identity. ⁵⁸	A group of disgruntled fans threaten a female celebrity with rape and death threats on a tech platform, leading to severe mental health issues and physical safety concerns for the celebrity. 

⁵⁶ UNFPA Technical Division. (2021). Making all spaces safe: Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence. United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa-tfgbv-making_all_spaces_safe.pdf

⁵⁷ World Economic Forum. (2023). Typology of Online Harms. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Typology_of_Online_Harms_2023.pdf

⁵⁸ Banko, M., MacKeen, B., & Ray, L. (2020, November). A unified taxonomy of harmful content. In Proceedings of the fourth workshop on online abuse and harms (pp. 125-137). Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://aclanthology.org/2020.alw-116.pdf>

Form	Meaning	Example
<p>Online Hate Speech</p> 	<p>Using digital platforms to spread hate or discriminatory messages targeting individuals based on their gender, sexuality, race, or identity.^{59, 60}</p>	<p>A group of individuals mobilise on a forum to spread hate against a female politician and flooding their posts with derogatory comments based on their gender.</p>
<p>Restricting Access to Technology</p>	<p>Tampering with someone's digital devices or accounts, withholding access to digital devices or platforms.⁶¹</p>	<p>Parents confiscate their adult daughter's phone as a disciplinary measure, preventing her from accessing the Internet and loss of autonomy and agency.</p> 
<p>Sextortion</p> 	<p>Threatening to release intimate images unless the survivor complies with demands.⁶²</p>	<p>A classmate threatens a fellow female classmate to post her intimate images on social media if she refuses to provide him sexual favours.</p>




⁵⁹ Banko, M., MacKeen, B., & Ray, L. (2020, November). A unified taxonomy of harmful content. In Proceedings of the fourth workshop on online abuse and harms (pp. 125-137). Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://aclanthology.org/2020.alw-116.pdf>

⁶⁰ Wilk, A. van der. (2018). (rep.). Cyber violence and hate speech online against women. Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1ccedce6-c5ed-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1>

⁶¹ Levy, K., & Schneier, B. (2020). Privacy threats in intimate relationships. *Journal of Cybersecurity*, 6(1). Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/cybsec/tyaa006>

UNFPA Technical Division. (2021). Making all spaces safe: Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence. United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa-tfgbv-making_all_spaces_safe.pdf

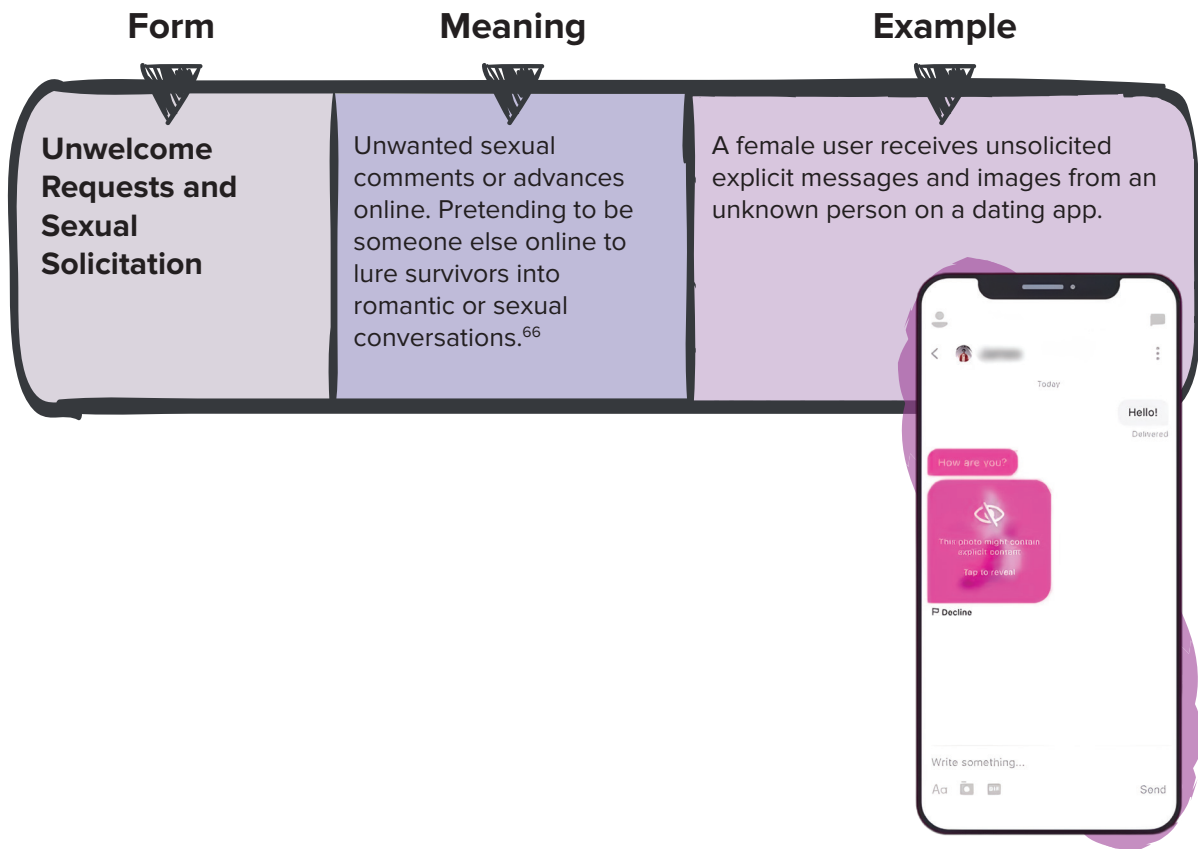
⁶² World Economic Forum. (2023). Typology of Online Harms. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Typology_of_Online_Harms_2023.pdf

Form	Meaning	Example
<p>Tech-Facilitated Trafficking</p>	<p>Using digital platforms, apps, or websites to facilitate human trafficking, especially targeting women and girls for sexual exploitation.⁶³</p>	<p>A trafficker lures vulnerable individuals with false promises of employment opportunities to exploit them in forced labour or sex trade.</p> 
<p>Technology-Enabled Financial Abuse</p> 	<p>Using technology to control, exploit, or deplete the financial resources of a survivor, often in the context of intimate partner violence.⁶⁴</p>	<p>An abusive partner uses technology to gain unauthorised access to their partner's online banking and financial accounts and transferring funds without their consent.</p>
<p>Trolling</p>	<p>Posting inflammatory, derogatory, or provocative messages on online communities or directly to individuals, often targeting them based on gender or identity.⁶⁵</p>	<p>An LGBTQIA+ influencer receives derogatory slurs and offensive memes for sharing their personal story online.</p> 

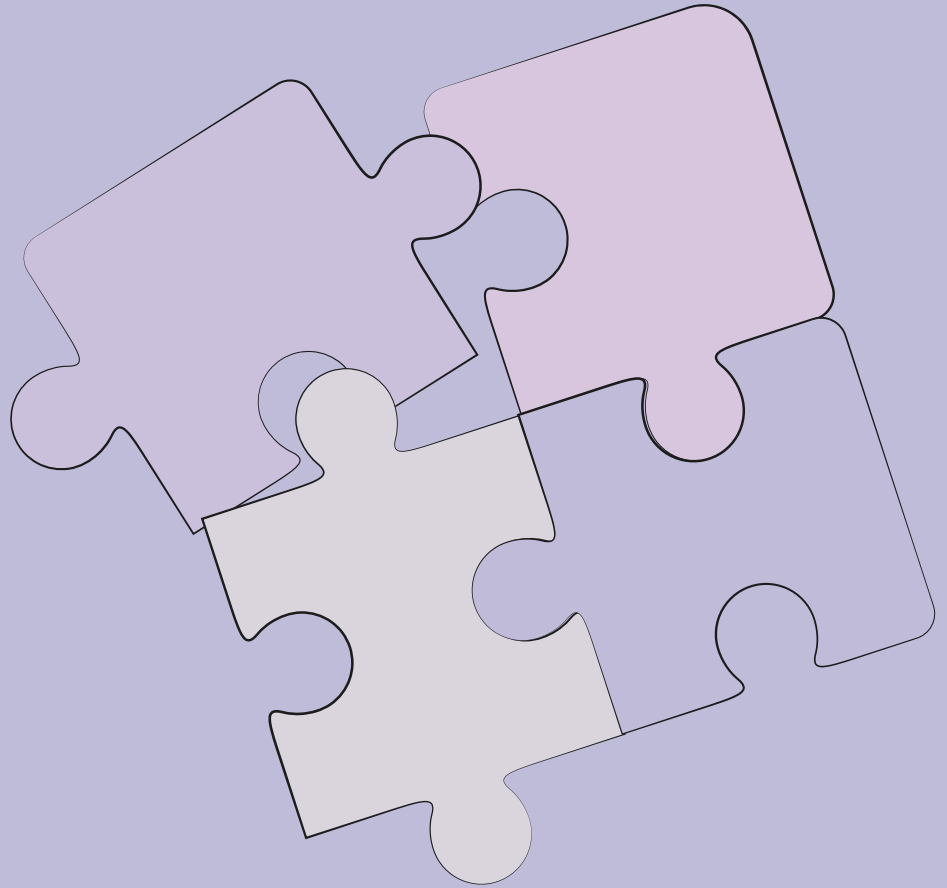
⁶³ Dixon Jr, H. B. (2013). Human trafficking and the internet (and other technologies, too). *Judges J.*, 52, 36. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/judgej52&i=38>

⁶⁴ PenzeyMoog, E., & Slakoff, D. C. (2021). As technology evolves, so does domestic violence: Modern-Day tech abuse and possible solutions. In *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse* (pp. 643-662). Emerald Publishing Limited. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/978-1-83982-848-520211047/full/html>

⁶⁵ eSafety Commission Australia. Online abuse targeting women. Retrieved 25 September 2023, from <https://www.esafety.gov.au/women/online-abuse-targeting-women>



⁶⁶ UN Women. (2022). Youth Guide to End Online Gender-Based Violence. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Youth-Toolkit_14-Dec_compressed-final.pdf



CHAPTER 3:

A WHOLE OF SOCIETY FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER SAFETY IN THE TECH SPACE



Maintaining a respectful and secure online environment is our collective responsibility. To eradicate Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), we must respect one another. Avoid engaging in harmful behavior, sharing inappropriate content, or promoting it. Instead, let's question those who do.

Your contribution is vital to ending TFGBV.

The whole of society framework comprises six stages: Access, Prevention, Intervention, Report and Redressal, Recovery and Healing, and Research.

Each stage is vital to address and mitigate TFGBV, guiding stakeholders through their roles to ensure comprehensive solutions. This chapter deep dives into the core principles of the framework, the rationale behind the six stages, its relation with TFGBV, and the manner in which optimal realisation

of each stage can contribute to the safety and empowerment of vulnerable sexual and gender-based communities.

This framework stands out due to its emphasis on harmonising efforts across a diverse range of stakeholders—from government bodies and tech companies to community organisations, educators, families, and researchers. While previous works by academicians⁶⁷ and research organisations⁶⁸ have explored the roles and contributions of different stakeholders, the uniqueness of our

⁶⁷ Suzor, N., Dragiewicz, M., Harris, B., Gillett, R., Burgess, J., & Van Geelen, T. (2018). Human rights by design: The responsibilities of social media platforms to address gender-based violence online. *Policy & Internet*, 11(1), 84–103. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.185>

⁶⁸ Crelinsten, R. (2022, June 23). What can we do to combat online Gender-Based violence? Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.cigion.org/articles/what-can-we-do-to-combat-online-gender-based-violence/>

approach lies in consolidating their contributions. This will ensure better recognition and effective leveraging of each stakeholder’s input, which shall amplify the impact of individual efforts.

3.1 ACCESS



3.1.1 UNDERSTANDING ACCESS

Access to technology is a foundational pillar to empower individuals, particularly women,⁶⁹ the LGBTQIA+ community,⁷⁰ and other marginalised identities,⁷¹ providing them avenues to exercise fundamental rights,⁷² mobilise support,⁷³ and acquire essential information and services.⁷⁴ In this stage, we underline the importance of two integral aspects: meaningful engagement with digital technologies,



FIGURE 1: THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY FRAMEWORK

and an understanding of digital safety norms. Meaningful engagement goes beyond merely having access to technology; it encompasses active and substantive interaction with digital platforms,⁷⁵ while awareness of digital safety norms revolves around a comprehension of secure and responsible online behaviour and digital literacy.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (October, 2018). Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

⁷⁰ The digital rights of LGBTQ+ people: When technology reinforces societal oppressions. European Digital Rights (EDRi). (2020, September 15). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://edri.org/our-work/the-digital-rights-lgbtq-technology-reinforces-societal-oppressions/>

⁷¹ Robinson, L., Cotten, S. R., Ono, H., Quan-Haase, A., Mesch, G., Chen, W., & Stern, M. J. (2015). Digital inequalities and why they matter. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(5), 569-582. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1012532>

⁷² Alix, F. (2021). LGBTQ Youth and Technology: Finding Their Way Through Online Communities. *The Stanford Journal of Science, Technology, and Society*, 14(2). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://ojs.stanford.edu/ojs/index.php/intersect/article/view/1847>

⁷³ Increased women’s, girls’ participation in digital technology crucial to economies, global sustainability, speakers tell Commission, as session continues | UN Press. (2023, March 9). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://press.un.org/en/2023/wom2224.doc.htm>

⁷⁴ Women’s Leadership and Participation: Case studies on learning for action. (2009). Oxfam Digital Repository. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/115530/bk-womens-leadership-091109>

⁷⁵ In our interviews, community experts emphasised that it is imperative to remember that access is not equal and marginalised communities continue to grapple with the stark reality of limited phone availability and sparse internet connectivity. They highlighted that this divide has far-reaching consequences, as seen during the COVID-19 crisis, where even a single smartphone in a household played an important role in determining who has the opportunity for online learning.

⁷⁶ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). (June, 2018). Policy guide on children and digital connectivity. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/3141/file/PolicyLab-Guide-DigitalConnectivity-Nov.6.18-lowres.pdf>

3.1.2 THE INTERPLAY OF ACCESS AND TFGBV

The absence of such meaningful access exacerbates safety and security issues,⁷⁷ particularly for those vulnerable to gender and sexual-based violence.⁷⁸ When individuals, especially from marginalised and diverse gender and sexual communities, lack the capability to engage meaningfully with technology,⁷⁹ they often find themselves devoid of the skills necessary to navigate digital spaces securely,⁸⁰ exposing them to various tech-based exploitations and cyber threats.⁸¹

In addition to the risks of cyber exploitation⁸² and the lack of informational access,⁸³ the absence of inclusive and user-friendly interfaces⁸⁴ also curtails autonomy and the ability to use technology meaningfully,⁸⁵ heightening vulnerability.⁸⁶ For instance, some technological platforms might lack the necessary inclusivity,⁸⁷ failing to provide features in multiple local languages or neglecting to accommodate the needs of the differently-abled.⁸⁸ This structural

⁷⁷ In our interviews, gender experts highlighted that the lack of access to the Internet and technology often leave women bereft with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the Internet and use technology safely. They added that the denial of access also in several cases aggravates the situation of physical violence, in instances such as those where survivors of domestic violence find it even more difficult to get support and help owing to the denial of access to phones, Internet etc.

⁷⁸ In our interviews, gender experts highlighted that while more and more people from the gender-based minorities are going online, they often lack necessary knowledge about online safety or online gender-based violence. See also, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (October, 2018). Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

⁷⁹ In our interviews, community experts highlighted the lack of dialogue and cultural embedding of internet safety at grassroots level, with limited awareness among parents and communities. They also emphasised the need to initiate conversations to educate parents and communities about internet safety, particularly in rural areas where access to technology is limited.

⁸⁰ Lala, G., Chandra, S., Ogun, N., Moody, L., & Third, A. (2022). Online safety perceptions, needs, and expectations of young people in Southeast Asia: Consultations with young people in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Young and Resilient Research Centre, Western Sydney University. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.26183/tz74-ev38>

⁸¹ UN Women. (2022). Youth Guide to End Online Gender-Based Violence. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Youth-Toolkit_14-Dec_compressed-final.pdf

⁸² Flynn, J. T. and A., True, J., & Flynn, A. (2022, November 25). The challenges and potential of harnessing technology for the prevention of gender-based violence and violent extremism . GNET. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://gnet-research.org/2022/11/25/the-challenges-and-potential-of-harnessing-technology-for-the-prevention-of-gender-based-violence-and-violent-extremism/>

⁸³ United Nations Development Programme.(2023). The impact of digital technology on human rights in Europe and Central Asia: Trends and challenges related to data protection, artificial intelligence and other digital technology issues. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-03/The%20Impact%20of%20Digital%20Technology%20on%20Human%20Rights%20in%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia.pdf>

⁸⁴ In our interviews, gender experts highlighted that platforms frequently rely on AI assistants to provide redressal without providing proper avenues for the complainant redressal through human intervention, which leaves individuals feeling unheard and without adequate redressal.

⁸⁵ In our FGDs, technology and policy experts emphasised that the absence of inclusive and user-friendly interfaces can significantly hinder individuals' autonomy and their ability to derive meaningful benefits from technology. It was recommended that it is essential to design interfaces that are accessible to a diverse user base and not only fosters independence but also aligns with legal and ethical obligations.

⁸⁶ Szlavi, A., & S. Guedes, L. (2023). Gender Inclusive Design in technology: Case studies and Guidelines. Design, User Experience, and Usability, 343–354. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35699-5_25

⁸⁷ In one of our FGDs, gender experts highlighted that some technological platforms fall short in providing adequate support for individuals with disabilities, encompassing a range of issues, from inadequate screen reader compatibility to insufficient contrast ratios, making it challenging for users with visual impairments to interact effectively.

⁸⁸ Rowe, J. (2022, March 4). A language of no importance: The consequences of neglecting marginalized languages in the Digital World. Open Global Rights. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.openglobalrights.org/a-language-of-no-importance-the-consequences-of-neglecting-marginalized-languages-in-the-digital-world/>

exclusion⁸⁹ amplifies the vulnerability of already marginalised groups by isolating them from the protective⁹⁰ and empowering potentials that technology can offer.⁹¹

Moreover, in India, as in the case of many other global south countries,⁹² the interaction⁹³ between technology and gender is also shaped by pervasive patriarchal norms⁹⁴ within households,⁹⁵ where women and sexual and gender minorities are often the last to gain access to technology.⁹⁶ This constrained

access reflects deeply entrenched gendered power dynamics,⁹⁷ where control over technology becomes a means to reinforce patriarchal control and curb autonomy.⁹⁸

These social challenges are further exacerbated by connectivity challenges⁹⁹ arising from a lack of infrastructural development¹⁰⁰ and systemic neglect.¹⁰¹ The absence of robust digital infrastructure in remote terrains prevents communities residing

⁸⁹ Francis, S. (2021). Digital Transformations and Structural Exclusion Risks: Towards Policy Coherence for Enabling Inclusive Trajectories. *India Studies in Business and Economics* (pp. 13–44). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-6907-4_2

⁹⁰ Rowe, J. (2022, March 4). A language of no importance: The consequences of neglecting marginalized languages in the Digital World. *Open Global Rights*. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.openglobalrights.org/a-language-of-no-importance-the-consequences-of-neglecting-marginalized-languages-in-the-digital-world/>

⁹¹ Rowe, J. (2022, March 4). A language of no importance: The consequences of neglecting marginalized languages in the Digital World. *Open Global Rights*. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.openglobalrights.org/a-language-of-no-importance-the-consequences-of-neglecting-marginalized-languages-in-the-digital-world/>

⁹² Galpaya, H., & Zainudeen, A. (October, 2022). Gender and Digital Access Gaps and Barriers in Asia: But What About After Access? *UN Women*. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/EP.2_Helani%20Galpaya.pdf

⁹³ Sanders, C. K., & Scanlon, E. (2021). The Digital Divide is a Human Rights Issue: Advancing Social Inclusion Through Social Work Advocacy. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 6(2), 130–143. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-020-00147-9>

⁹⁴ In our interviews, gender experts highlighted that there power dynamics that persist in the space of technology as well; from unequal access to resources like smartphones, to disparities in online education opportunities, emphasising the urgent need for equitable access and inclusivity in the digital age. See also, UN Women. (2022). *Youth Guide to End Online Gender-Based Violence*. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Youth-Toolkit_14-Dec_compressed-final.pdf

⁹⁵ Galpaya, H., & Zainudeen, A. (October, 2022). Gender and Digital Access Gaps and Barriers in Asia: But What About After Access? *UN Women*. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/EP.2_Helani%20Galpaya.pdf

⁹⁶ Barboni, G., Field, E., Pande, R., Rigol, N., Schaner, S., & Moore, C. A Tough Call: Understanding Barriers to and Impacts of Women's Mobile Phone Adoption in India. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://epod.cid.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/2018-10/A_Tough_Call.pdf; Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2015). Embodied harms. *Violence Against Women*, 21(6), 758–779. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801215576581>

⁹⁷ Bailey, J., Henry, N., & Flynn, A. (2021). Technology-facilitated violence and abuse: International Perspectives and experiences. *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse* (pp. 1–17). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83982-848-520211001>

⁹⁸ Bailey, J., Henry, N., & Flynn, A. (2021). Technology-facilitated violence and abuse: International Perspectives and experiences. *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse* (pp. 1–17). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83982-848-520211001>

⁹⁹ Brooks, D., Menon, J., & Elgar, E. (2012). *Infrastructure for Supporting Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction in Asia*. Asian Development Bank. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29823/infrastructure-supporting-inclusive-growth.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Laskar, M. H. (2023). Examining the emergence of digital society and the Digital Divide in India: A comparative evaluation between urban and rural areas. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1145221>

¹⁰¹ Laskar, M. H. (2023). Examining the emergence of digital society and the Digital Divide in India: A comparative evaluation between urban and rural areas. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1145221>

there (Scheduled Tribes, Adivasi)¹⁰² from the benefits and opportunities afforded by technology, restricting their access to information, education, healthcare, and economic prospects.¹⁰³ The compounded impact of geographical remoteness and digital inaccessibility constrains the realisation of their rights¹⁰⁴ and hinders their socio-economic empowerment.¹⁰⁵

Denial of technological access can also be a means of perpetuating greater violence in certain situations, for instance, in cases of intimate partner violence.¹⁰⁶ In such cases, abusers often use technology as a tool to maintain control, monitor, and isolate their partners.¹⁰⁷ They may surveil their partner's phone, control access to digital communication tools, or use technology to track their movements.¹⁰⁸ This form of

digital entrapment further isolates the survivor, denying them access to vital resources, support systems, and avenues to seek help or escape the abusive environment.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the survivor may be unaware of, or lack the means to, utilise safety apps or online resources designed to support those in abusive situations.¹¹⁰ The amalgamation of physical constraints and the lack of digital freedom can trap the survivor in a vicious cycle of abuse, exacerbating the challenges they face in reaching out for assistance or even acknowledging the abusive situation.¹¹¹ In a world that increasingly relies on digital means for safety and communication, being denied this access is akin to being rendered voiceless and invisible, reinforcing the perpetrator's dominance and control.

¹⁰² Malik, S., & Akhtar, N. (29 June, 2022). Digital Divide and the Scheduled Tribes in India: Extent, Consequences, and Challenges. SPRF India. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://sprf.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SPRF-2022_DP_Digital-Divide-and-ST.pdf.

¹⁰³ Muller, C., & Aguiar, J. P. de V. (2023). What is the digital divide?. Internet Society. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2022/03/what-is-the-digital-divide/>

¹⁰⁴ International Telecommunication Union. Digital Inclusion of All. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/digital-inclusion-of-all.aspx>

¹⁰⁵ Sepúlveda, A., & Bogdan, D. (2020). The digital transformation of education: connecting schools, empowering learners. UNESCO Digital Library. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000374309>

¹⁰⁶ Freed, D., Palmer, J., Minchala, D. E., Levy, K., Ristenpart, T., & Dell, N. (2017). Digital technologies and intimate partner violence: A qualitative analysis with multiple stakeholders. Proceedings of the ACM on human-computer interaction, 1(CSCW), 1-22. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://nixdell.com/papers/a046-freed.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Woodlock, D. (2017). The abuse of technology in domestic violence and stalking. *Violence Against Women*, 23(5), 584-602. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801216646277>

¹⁰⁸ Dimond, J. P., Fiesler, C., & Bruckman, A. S. (2011). Domestic violence and information communication technologies. *Interacting with computers*, 23(5), 413-421. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intcom.2011.04.006>

¹⁰⁹ Cuomo, D., & Dolci, N. (2021). New tools, old abuse: Technology-enabled coercive control (TECC). *Geoforum*, 126, 224-232. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.08.002>

¹¹⁰ Bradbury-Jones, C., & Isham, L. (2020). The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 29(13-14), 2047-2049. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jocn.15296>

¹¹¹ Woodlock, D. (2017). Technology-Facilitated Domestic and Family Violence: Women's Experiences. *British Journal of Criminology*, 57(6), 1460-1477. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/57/6/1460/3862494>



(INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW)

3.1.3 SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

Addressing the lack of technological access for women and gender-based minorities is essential in the broader quest to challenge TFGBV. The solution lies in fostering equity,¹¹² inclusivity,¹¹³ and intersectionality¹¹⁴ regarding the unique challenges of different groups. This is

where a united framework comes into play. This framework would bring various stakeholders together to work hand in hand. Currently, many entities are striving to bridge this access gap but often work in isolation. For instance, while governments are formulating new

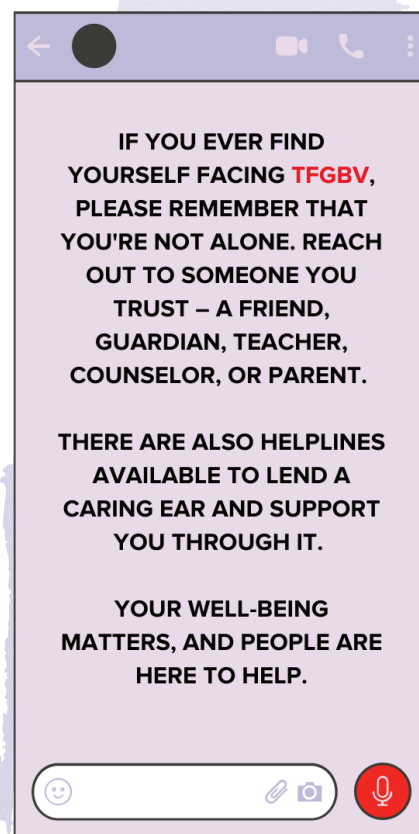
¹¹² The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

¹¹³ The practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those having physical or intellectual disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

¹¹⁴ The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage

policies to combat gender-based violence, it is not optimally tapping into the immense potential of community organisations.¹¹⁵ These groups can play a pivotal role on the ground, educating survivors to access tech-based support services in such crises. If the government and these organisations collaborate, the impact could be much more profound.

It is akin to assembling a puzzle; if each piece or stakeholder understands the bigger picture and knows how other pieces fit, the outcome is more cohesive and effective. By combining their strengths and sharing responsibilities, we can build a digital landscape that is more accessible for all, making significant strides against TFGBV.



3.2 PREVENTION



3.2.1 UNDERSTANDING PREVENTION

Prevention, in the context of TFGBV, refers to proactive measures and interventions aimed at addressing the

underlying drivers¹¹⁶ and mitigating the occurrence of violence from the outset. It implies the need to alter societal conditions, institutional frameworks, and systemic structures that excuse, justify, or promote violence.¹¹⁷ Prevention is paramount as it addresses TFGBV at its roots, facilitating a safer and more equitable environment¹¹⁸ for all individuals, regardless of their gender. It contributes to establishing gender

¹¹⁵ In our interviews, a community expert underscored the need for collaborative effort between governments and grassroots organisations to address gender-based violence in the tech space. They emphasised that this collective effort should primarily center around amplifying awareness and offering survivor-focused education.

¹¹⁶ Das, V. (2008). Violence, gender, and subjectivity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 37(1), 283–299. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.36.081406.094430>

¹¹⁷ Hong, L. (2000). Toward a transformed approach to prevention: Breaking the link between masculinity and violence. *Journal of American College Health*, 48(6), 269–279. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448480009596268>

¹¹⁸ In our interviews, community experts highlighted that focusing on prevention can help us tackle issues at their roots, which ultimately leads to a safer and more equitable environment for everyone, regardless of their gender. It was highlighted that such an approach plays a crucial role in establishing genuine gender equality, promoting respect, and fostering a sense of harmony and inclusivity within our society.

equality,¹¹⁹ respect, and reducing violence,¹²⁰ fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.¹²¹

3.2.2 THE INTERPLAY OF PREVENTION AND TFGBV

The process of prevention involves actively confronting and mitigating stereotypes and ingrained cultural notions of masculinity.¹²² Engaging men and boys in the conversation and actions aimed at preventing TFGBV is essential¹²³ because of the significant influence they have on societal norms and structures surrounding gender.¹²⁴ They are instrumental in restructuring societal norms and transforming attitudes and behaviours related to gender,¹²⁵ which are foundational steps

in the prevention of TFGBV.

Starting within households, creating an environment conducive to conversations about positive self-expression is vital.¹²⁶ Encouraging open, inclusive, and constructive dialogues with boys about equality and respect for all communities can lead to a more balanced understanding of such sensitive issues.¹²⁷ Similarly, in the professional domain, conducting employer-led programmes around the significance of gender equity¹²⁸ can foster greater respect between employees for people coming from diverse sexual and gender-based identities.

Educational institutions can play an equally important role at this stage¹²⁹ by incorporating modules centred on the ethos of consent and the principles of

¹¹⁹ Barker, K., & Jurasz, O. (2020). Online violence against women as an obstacle to gender equality: A critical view from Europe. *European Equality Law Review*, 2020(1), 47-60. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://oro.open.ac.uk/71877/>

¹²⁰ Suzor, N., Dragiewicz, M., Harris, B., Gillett, R., Burgess, J., & Van Geelen, T. (2019). Human rights by design: The responsibilities of social media platforms to address gender-based violence online. *Policy & Internet*, 11(1), 84-103. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/poi3.185>

¹²¹ Staub, E. (2003). Notes on cultures of violence, cultures of caring and peace, and the fulfilment of basic human needs. *Political psychology*, 24(1), 1-21. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/0162-895X.00314>

¹²² Rice, S., Oliffe, J., Seidler, Z., Borschmann, R., Pirkis, J., Reavley, N., & Patton, G. (2021). Gender norms and the mental health of boys and young men. *The Lancet Public Health*, 6(8). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667\(21\)00138-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(21)00138-9)

¹²³ Kersten, J. (1996). Culture, masculinities and violence against women. *British Journal of Criminology*, 36(3), 381-395. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjc.a014101>. See also, UN Women. (2022). Youth Guide to End Online Gender-Based Violence. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Youth-Toolkit_14-Dec_compressed-final.pdf

¹²⁴ Dragiewicz, M., Burgess, J., Matamoros-Fernández, A., Salter, M., Suzor, N. P., Woodlock, D., & Harris, B. (2018). Technology facilitated coercive control: Domestic violence and the competing roles of Digital Media Platforms. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4), 609-625. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447341>. See also, Men, boys must speak out, take action to end Gender-Based violence, delegates tell Commission on Status of Women | UN Press. (2013, March 11). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://press.un.org/en/2013/wom1949.doc.htm>

¹²⁵ Programming Idea 7: Social norms marketing/edutainment or behaviour change communication campaigns. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://apps.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/violence/16ideas/files/7.pdf>

¹²⁶ In our interviews, gender experts highlighted that violence is sometimes perpetuated from within families, and there is a need to emphasise the importance of safety within these spaces. They emphasised that these crucial concepts must be integrated from an early age and should be woven into the very fabric of their upbringing, so they can identify violence and develop strategies to address it.

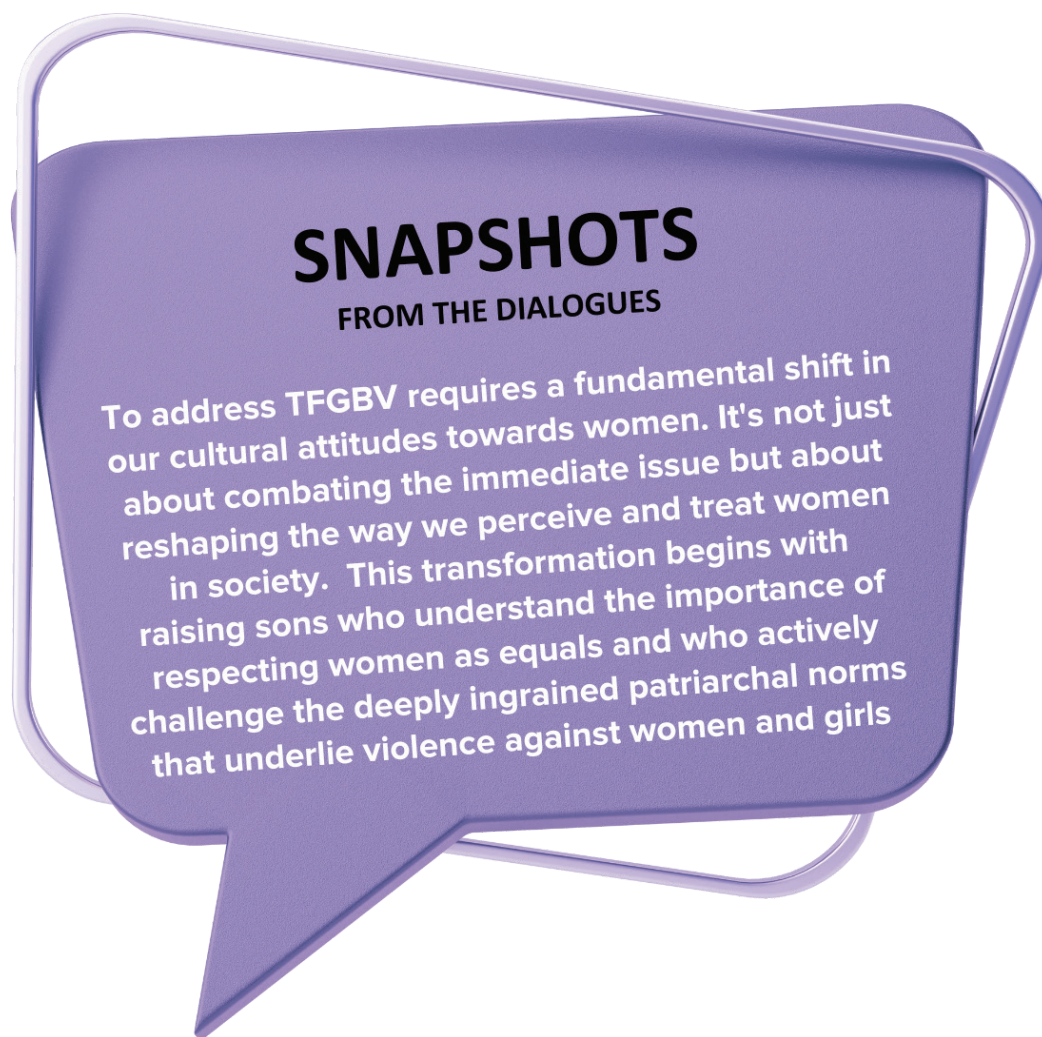
¹²⁷ The Trustees of Princeton University. Healthy masculinity | U Matter. Princeton University. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://umatter.princeton.edu/respect-matters/healthy-masculinity>

¹²⁸ International Labour Organization. (2018). Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments: A practical guide. International Labour Organization. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_613536.pdf

¹²⁹ Wilson, M. J., Gwyther, K., Simmons, M., Swann, R., Oliffe, J. L., Casey, K., & Rice, S. M. (2022). Exploring teacher and parent perspectives on school-based masculinities in relation to Mental Health Promotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.86412>

respectful interpersonal relationships.¹³⁰ Similarly, media entities can strive for responsible reporting on incidents of gender-based violence,¹³¹ ensuring sensitivity and avoiding perpetuating harmful stereotypes.¹³² Additionally, the

policy sphere can benefit immensely from gender-responsive analyses, ensuring that any public policy developed is cognisant of gender dynamics and strives for equity.¹³³



(INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW)

¹³⁰ UNESCO. Fostering open educational practices. UNESCO Digital Library. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000210854>

¹³¹ In our FGDs, journalists and media professionals emphasised that the media bears a moral responsibility to consistently cover issues like trafficking and how technology is being used to exploit individuals. They highlighted that the media often relegates these matters to a standard crime page, failing to delve into the depth of the situation.

¹³² In our interviews, policy experts highlighted the role of responsible media reporting and presenting incidents of gender-based violence in an informative yet empathetic manner. They also emphasised that this will allow the public to understand the issue's gravity while empathising with survivors and mentioned that media entities should abstain from sensationalising incidents, as this can trivialise the experiences of survivors and divert attention from the larger societal issue at hand.

¹³³ In our interviews, community organisations emphasised that the role of gender is critical in understanding and addressing various issues, policies and programs. They also highlighted that gender is a fundamental dimension of human identity and social organisation and it influences how individuals experience and interact with the world around them.

3.2.3 SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

Addressing the root causes of technology-facilitated gender-based violence requires a holistic understanding of the deep-seated societal drivers. While numerous stakeholders are actively trying to combat these drivers, there is often a missing link, which is coordination.

Take tech companies, for instance. They are trying to empower users by introducing safety guides, explainer videos, etc., teaching them how to navigate digital spaces securely.¹³⁴ On the other hand, educational institutions are also educating children about concepts like consent and good touch-bad touch¹³⁵ along with instilling values that discourage violent behaviours. Both are crucial, but their individual efforts can be better optimised if combined. There are

already glimpses of this collaborative spirit, with some tech companies training educators on their safety tools and resources.¹³⁶ This ‘train the trainers’ approach ensures that knowledge trickles down effectively to students, magnifying its impact.

Recognising and understanding each stakeholder’s role can lead to a more concerted effort. By empowering one another, stakeholders can ensure that their efforts are not just additive but multiplicative. This is precisely the essence of the framework approach: to shift the onus from individual responsibility to a united front.

Everyone, from parents and teachers to tech companies, has a stake in shaping societal values and behaviours^{137, 138}. By adopting a framework that encourages collaborative actions, we can create a society where prevention of TFGBV is a shared ambition, with every member working in harmony to achieve it.

¹³⁴. Google. Be Internet Awesome. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/. See also, Google. Hate speech policy - youtube help. Google. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801939?hl=en>

¹³⁵. Varghese, H. M. (2022, January 19). ‘I know “good touch-bad touch”; have learnt in school’: 9 Year Old’s statement leads to man’s POCSO conviction. Live Law. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.livelaw.in/news-updates/kerala-court-finds-man-guilty-under-pocso-after-9-year-old-testifies-about-bad-touch-against-him-189834>. See also, India Today. (2023, August 26). Rajasthan government launches campaign to educate school students on “Unsafe touch.” India Today. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/rajasthan-government-launches-campaign-to-educate-school-students-good-touch-bad-touch-2427104-2023-08-26>; Educating the children about good touch and bad touch. St Andrews World School. (2022, July 16). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.standrewsworldschool.com/educating-the-children-about-good-touch-and-bad-touch/>

¹³⁶. Google. Google for education - online resources for teachers & students. Google. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://edu.google.com/intl/ALL_in/

¹³⁷. Zachry, A, Early Childhood Education Unit. Nature, Aims and Objectives of Pre-school Education. DDCE, Utkal. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_Education/Paper_19.pdf. See also, Nye, D. E. (2007). Technology matters: Questions to live with. MIT Press. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262640671/technology-matters/>

¹³⁸. In our interviews, community experts emphasised that the development of a person’s attitudes and values is a collective effort that begins with their immediate environment and parents play a foundational role in shaping a child’s beliefs and principles from an early age. They instil core values and provide the initial framework for understanding the world. See also, Kollmayer, M., Schultes, M.-T., Lüftenegger, M., Finsterwald, M., Spiel, C., & Schober, B. (2020). Reflect – a teacher training program to promote gender equality in schools. *Frontiers in Education*, 5. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2020.00136>

3.3 EARLY INTERVENTION



3.3.1 UNDERSTANDING EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention is the third stage in addressing TFGBV. While the prevention stage focused on identifying and addressing all the major underlying societal attitudes that perpetuate violence, this stage goes a step further and aims to identify and provide additional support to the communities that are most susceptible to violence. This focus on vulnerable communities is crucial for tailoring interventions to those who are most at risk, often due to disparities in access to resources, information, and support.¹³⁹

3.3.2 THE INTERPLAY OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND TFGBV

In the diverse socio-cultural fabric of India, women, girls, transgender people,



and those identifying as part of the wider LGBTQIA+ community often find themselves particularly vulnerable to tech-based violence and harassment¹⁴⁰ due to prevalent patriarchal norms¹⁴¹ and societal biases.¹⁴² Additionally, women from marginalised communities such as Dalits, Adivasis, and those belonging to minority religious groups face exacerbated risks¹⁴³ and impacts of tech-based violence¹⁴⁴ due to intersectionality.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹. In our interviews, legal experts emphasised that it is crucial to streamline the reporting process on online platforms as an early intervention measure and highlighted that there is a need to make it as straightforward as possible, with accessible resources like instructional videos to ensure clarity.

¹⁴⁰. A safer digital public sphere: Addressing online gender-based violence. IDRC. (2022, December 8). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://idrc-crdd.ca/en/research-in-action/safer-digital-public-sphere-addressing-online-gender-based-violence>. See also, Hinson L, Mueller J, O'Brien-Milne L, Wandera N. (2018). Technology-facilitated gender-based violence: What is it, and how do we measure it?. International Center for Research on Women. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICRW_TFGBVMarketing_Brief_v8-Web.pdf

¹⁴¹. Chandrasekhar, R. Policing online abuse or policing women? Our submission to the United Nations on online violence against women." Internet Democracy Project. (2017). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://internetdemocracy.in/reports/un-srvaw-report>

¹⁴². United Nations. OHCHR and the Human Rights of LGBTI People. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

¹⁴³. Intersection of identities: Online gender and caste based violence. Intersection of identities: Online gender and caste based violence | GenderIT. (2018, June 7). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.genderit.org/articles/intersection-identities-online-gender-and-caste-based-violence>

¹⁴⁴. Glimpse from the Globe. Understanding Caste in the Indian Cyberspace. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.glimpsefromtheglobe.com/topics/technology-and-cyber/understanding-caste-in-the-indian-cyberspace/>

¹⁴⁵. Intersection of identities: Online gender and caste based violence. Intersection of identities: Online gender and caste based violence | GenderIT. (2018, June 7). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.genderit.org/articles/intersection-identities-online-gender-and-caste-based-violence>

Furthermore, members of vulnerable sexual and gender groups with disabilities and those with limited access to education and digital literacy are also more susceptible to tech-based exploitation and harm.¹⁴⁶ They often lack the necessary knowledge or means to safeguard themselves against threats and abuses.¹⁴⁷ This digital marginalisation of these vulnerable

groups is not an isolated phenomenon. Instead, it mirrors the larger structural inequalities, prejudices, and discrimination that are rampant in the offline world. The tech-based manifestations of violence and discrimination are, in many ways, a digital reflection of the age-old biases and structural challenges they face in everyday life.



(INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW)

¹⁴⁶ eSafety Commissioner. (2021, August). Protecting LGBTIQ+ Voices Online: Resource Development Research. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/LGBTQI%2B%20cyber%20abuse%20resource%20development%20-%20Report.pdf>

¹⁴⁷ In our interviews, the gender expert highlighted that women and individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community are not often equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate and protect themselves from situations involving TFGBV. The respondent underscored the urgent need for comprehensive education and empowerment programs tailored to their specific needs.

3.3.3 SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

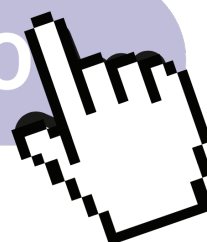
A holistic and integrated strategy is essential for proactively intervening to protect the most vulnerable groups. While many stakeholders are taking steps to safeguard these groups, there is often a gap in coordination and collaboration.

For instance, an Australian NGO launched a commendable initiative, providing a helpline for men with the message that if they felt they were acting inappropriately, they could reach out for support and guidance.¹⁴⁸ The non-judgmental approach resonated with the public, and many took the opportunity to seek guidance. Tech companies, on their part, have made product-level changes to tackle issues like hate speech and non-consensual

image sharing.¹⁴⁹ However, imagine the potential impact if these NGOs teamed up with tech companies as safety partners. By pooling their insights about the needs of specific communities,¹⁵⁰ they could inform and refine the digital interventions of the companies, leading to safer online environments.¹⁵¹

The real power lies in synergy. Through a cohesive framework, the diverse stakeholder groups can come together, share knowledge, and bolster each other's efforts. Such a structure promotes informed dialogues, ensuring that interventions are not just individual bursts of activity but rather a coordinated march towards the shared goal of empowering the marginalised. By bridging the current silos, we can ensure that early interventions are not just proactive but also potent, transforming the digital space into a safe haven for all.

#BREAKTHESILO



¹⁴⁸. No to Violence (NTV). What we do. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://ntv.org.au/about-us/what-we-do/>

¹⁴⁹. Safety & Impact – Page 3. Snap Inc. (2021, November 22). Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://snap.com/en-US/safety-and-impact/page/3>

¹⁵⁰. In our interviews, gender experts emphasised that beyond data and research, there is a need to foster dialogue and positivity to bring substantial change. They highlighted that platforms should collaborate with community organisations and leverage their reach to promote positivity and influence behaviour.

¹⁵¹. In our interviews, gender experts emphasised the need to empower platforms with a nuanced understanding of gender, sexuality and intersectionality. They underscored that this would enable the development of solutions and interventions tailored to address the challenges faced by individuals, such as navigating issues of femininity and masculinity.

3.4 RESPONSE AND REDRESSAL



3.4.1 UNDERSTANDING RESPONSE AND REDRESSAL

Response and redressal emerge as a post-harm stage, and gets operational once the harm has been inflicted. It serves as the conduit through which survivors seek justice from the inflicted harm. It provides avenues for the reporting of violence¹⁵² and the assurance of swift, effective grievance redressal.¹⁵³ It extends beyond the immediacy of addressing a complaint and delves into the realms of securing actual justice for the survivor.¹⁵⁴ A swift and apt response is integral to fostering a sense of security and trust amongst survivors,¹⁵⁵ rendering them more inclined to report instances of violence

and to believe in the possibility of attaining justice and reprove.¹⁵⁶

3.4.2 THE INTERPLAY OF RESPONSE AND REDRESSAL WITH TFGBV

The contemporary landscape, unfortunately, depicts a scenario where response and redressal mechanisms are often not as accessible or inclusive as they need to be, particularly for vulnerable gender groups.¹⁵⁷ For instance, women, especially those from marginalised communities, often encounter a profound lack of understanding and acknowledgement of their experiences and tribulations. Their grievances are often belittled or dismissed due to entrenched patriarchal norms and stereotypes, creating an environment rife with reluctance and fear to report instances of violence.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, sexual and gender minorities and people from vulnerable gender groups with disabilities confront even more heightened barriers in accessing response and redressal mechanisms.¹⁵⁹ The profound lack of

¹⁵² Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2018). Technology-facilitated sexual violence: A literature review of empirical research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 19(2), 195-208. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1524838016650189>

¹⁵³ Daly, K., & Bouhours, B. (2010). Rape and attrition in the legal process: A comparative analysis of five countries. *Crime and Justice*, 39(1), 565-650. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/48380757_Rape_and_Attrition_in_the_Legal_Process_A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Five_Countries

¹⁵⁴ In our interviews, legal experts emphasised that there is a need to prioritise effective content removal and evidence handling, requiring capacity building and a clear framework to foster collaborative efforts among the stakeholders.

¹⁵⁵ In our FGDs, policy experts highlighted that there is a prevailing lack of trust in the system and sensitivity within law enforcement, with cases where sensitive information gets leaked or distorted. They highlighted that many officers are unfamiliar with handling such cases, lacking knowledge of procedures and evidence collection.

¹⁵⁶ Ullman, S. E. (2007). Relationship to perpetrator, disclosure, social reactions, and PTSD symptoms in child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 16(1), 19-36. Retrieved 26 September 2023, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17255075/>

¹⁵⁷ In our interviews, gender rights experts emphasised that the existing institutions and structures are less accommodating towards the needs of women and gender-based minorities. They highlighted that there is an urgent need for reform and improvement in the systems in place and creating more inclusive and supportive structures to ensure that individuals, especially those affected by TFGBV, have the resources and environment they need to thrive.

¹⁵⁸ Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299. Retrieved 26 September 2023, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039>

¹⁵⁹ UN Human Rights Council. (2015). Discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/LGBTReports.aspx>

representation and acknowledgement of their unique needs and concerns augments their struggles in navigating redressal mechanisms.¹⁶⁰

Different stakeholders can play a crucial role in ensuring effective response and redressal. Platforms and the police are central entities, holding the onus of facilitating the reporting of violence and ensuing legal proceedings, but the responsibility is a shared one.¹⁶¹ Educational institutions and workplaces need to foster environments conducive to open dialogue and reporting,¹⁶² where individuals feel safe to share their concerns without fear of reprisal¹⁶³ or stigmatisation.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, community organisations can act as the bridge between the survivors and the formal redressal structures,¹⁶⁵ empowering individuals to voice their grievances and

seek support. By creating spaces where dialogue is encouraged and support is rendered,¹⁶⁶ different social institutions can contribute to the dismantling of the barriers preventing individuals, especially from vulnerable sexual and gender groups, from accessing justice.¹⁶⁷

3.4.3 SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

For a truly impactful response and redressal against TFGBV, harmonised effort from all corners is critical. While different stakeholders are currently striving towards this objective, there are certain critical elements that are often overlooked.

For example, the government is enacting new legislation and policies to simplify the reporting of online crimes

¹⁶⁰ United Nations Development Programme. Resources and needs of vulnerable and marginalized young people for digital literacy, safety, and participation. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.undp.org/publications/resources-and-needs-vulnerable-and-marginalized-young-people-digital-literacy-safety-and-participation>

¹⁶¹ Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2018). Technology-facilitated sexual violence: A literature review of empirical research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 19(2), 195-208. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1524838016650189>

¹⁶² Von Peter, S., Aderhold, V., Cubellis, L., Bergström, T., Stastny, P., Seikkula, J., & Puras, D. (2019). Open dialogue as a human rights-aligned approach. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 10, 387. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2019.00387>

¹⁶³ In our interviews, gender experts emphasised that empowering educational institutions to address sexual harassment through organised support systems, including dedicated counsellors, can pave the way for a safer learning environment.

¹⁶⁴ Pina, A., Gannon, T. A., & Saunders, B. (2009). An overview of the literature on sexual harassment: Perpetrator, theory, and treatment issues. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 14(2), 126-138. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1359178909000044>

¹⁶⁵ In our FGDs, community experts emphasised that addressing TFGBV requires a multi-faceted approach and there is a pressing need for targeted content and awareness campaigns. They emphasised that collaborative efforts with organisations already entrenched in this space are crucial.

¹⁶⁶ In our interviews, law enforcement officials emphasised that a dedicated help desk for women in police stations has proven to be instrumental in improving the quality of complaint narratives. They highlighted that the integration of a cyber help desk alongside a women's desk enhances accessibility for women to report incidents in their local police station. This eliminates the need to travel to district headquarters solely for cyber-related complaints, streamlining the process for women seeking assistance.

¹⁶⁷ Goodman, L. A., & Epstein, D. (2008). Listening to battered women: A survivor-centred approach to advocacy, mental health, and justice. American Psychological Association. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077801208328376>

and guarantee prompt action.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, tech companies are constantly refining their grievance mechanisms, ensuring timely responses and extending support to law enforcement agencies.¹⁶⁹ However, questions arise: Is law enforcement adequately equipped to comprehend the intricacies of all forms of online harassment?¹⁷⁰ Do they fully grasp the newly-established channels that tech companies have laid out for assistance? Moreover, do the tech companies ensure that they provide consistent updates to the law enforcement regarding their innovations around TFGBV?

Simply creating laws or response channels is not enough. The government and tech companies must also focus on equipping law enforcement. This means not just handing them tools, but also training them to use these tools effectively. Collaborating with skilling partners can bridge this knowledge gap, ensuring that every link in the redressal chain is robust.¹⁷¹

Here lies the power of the proposed framework. It not only promotes coordinated efforts but also offers a holistic lens through which stakeholders

can envision more tangible solutions. This approach ensures that all pieces of the puzzle, from creating laws to understanding them and effectively implementing them, fit together seamlessly. With this collaborative spirit, we can foster a society where everyone, irrespective of their gender or sexual identity, can navigate the digital world with confidence, knowing that a robust and understanding redressal system backs them.

3.5 RECOVERY AND HEALING



3.5.1 UNDERSTANDING RECOVERY AND HEALING

Recovery and healing imply not just aiding survivors to navigate through the extensive ramifications of violence¹⁷⁴ but also enabling them to regain a sense of

¹⁶⁸. CYBER CRIME PREVENTION AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN (CCPWC). National Commission for Women. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <http://ncw.nic.in/ncw-cells/legal-cell/new-bills-laws-proposed/cyber-crime-prevention-against-women-and-children-ccpwc>. See also, Press Information Bureau. (2022, February 11). Initiatives by NCW to help and protect women from violence and harassment. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1797705>. See also, Press Information Bureau. (2019, June 25). Safety and security of women and girls. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1575574>

¹⁶⁹. Stuart, R. D. (2013). Social media: Establishing criteria for law enforcement use. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 82(2), 1-3. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <http://www.icje.org/news/1302.pdf>

¹⁷⁰. Citron, D. K. (2014). *Hate crimes in cyberspace*. Harvard University Press. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674735613.c13>

¹⁷¹. In our interviews, legal experts highlighted that there is a need for increased manpower, especially investigating officers who are skilled and trained to handle such sensitive cases. They also underscored the importance of providing tailored trainings to investigating officers in close collaboration with skilling professionals in the field.

¹⁷². Barak, A. (2005). Sexual harassment on the Internet. *Social Science Computer Review*, 23(1), 77-92. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0894439304271540>

safety, well-being, and normalcy.¹⁷³ This stage highlights the necessity for robust support systems designed to address the diverse and intricate repercussions of violence that survivors experience and facilitate their healing.¹⁷⁴

Recovery is not about reverting to a pre-trauma state¹⁷⁵ but rather is an evolving journey focusing on the holistic well-being of survivors,¹⁷⁶ which includes addressing psychological trauma,¹⁷⁷ physical injuries,¹⁷⁸ financial instability,¹⁷⁹ and social exclusion.¹⁸⁰ It is about ensuring the survivors' health, resilience, economic security,¹⁸¹ and ability for post-traumatic growth,¹⁸² necessitating

an empathetic, individual-centred approach¹⁸³ considering the varied ways individuals experience and cope with trauma.¹⁸⁴

3.5.2 THE INTERPLAY OF RECOVERY AND HEALING WITH TFGVBV

In the current landscape, the processes of recovery and healing are often undermined and trivialised due to prevailing societal norms and attitudes, marking them as dispensable components in responding to TFGVBV.¹⁸⁵ The lack of emphasis and the widespread trivialization of survivors' experiences lead to limited access to

¹⁷³. Our Watch, & Women with Disabilities Victoria. (2022). Changing the landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities. Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. Retrieved 22 September 2023, from <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-landscape/>

¹⁷⁴. Powell, A., & Henry, N. (2019). Digital harassment and abuse: Experiences of sexuality and gender minority adults. *European Journal of Criminology*, 16(5), 586-606. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1477370818771329>

¹⁷⁵. Dworkin, E. R., Menon, S. V., Bystryński, J., & Allen, N. E. (2017). Sexual assault survivorization and psychopathology: A review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 56, 65-81. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272735817300515>

¹⁷⁶. In our FGDs, community experts stressed upon the significance of empowering women economically and socially. They emphasised that financial independence is identified as a factor that enables women to speak out against violence and support groups and survivor networks should play an active role in providing a safe space for survivors to share experiences and seek assistance.

¹⁷⁷. Dworkin, E. R., Ullman, S. E., Stappenbeck, C., Brill, C. D., & Kaysen, D. (2018). Proximal relationships between social support and PTSD symptom severity: A daily diary study of sexual assault survivors. *Depression and Anxiety*, 35(1), 43-49. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/da.22679>

¹⁷⁸. Marwick, A., & Matias, J. N. (2017). Media, technology, and society: Intimate partner digital abuse. *Data & Society Research Institute*. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/Intimate_Partner_Digital_Abuse_2017.pdf

¹⁷⁹. Conner, D. H. (2013). Financial freedom: Women, money, and domestic abuse. *Wm. & Mary J. Women & L.*, 20, 339. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/wmjwl20&div=19&id=&page=>

¹⁸⁰. Damonti, P. (2014). Can gender-based violence result in a process of social exclusion? A quantitative-qualitative analysis. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 161, 41-47. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814061011>

¹⁸¹. In our interviews, community experts emphasised that empowerment is not just about acquiring skills; it's about understanding the complex factors that bind women in challenging situations like marriages. Economic empowerment is a critical tool in breaking these chains and by providing livelihood opportunities, we offer women a path to independence and agency. When working with survivors of violence, addressing their social needs is paramount. For younger girls, instilling self-efficacy and financial literacy lays the foundation for a future of strength and self-sufficiency.

¹⁸². Bryngeirsdottir, H. S., & Halldorsdottir, S. (2022). "I'm a winner, not a victim": The facilitating factors of post-traumatic growth among women who have suffered intimate partner violence. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(3), 1342. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/3/1342>

¹⁸³. Meng, L. (2003). Counselling rural battered women in China: Individual-centred or family-centred?. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development*, 13(1), 59-80. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21650993.2003.9755913>

¹⁸⁴. Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence - from domestic abuse to political terror*. Basic Books. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://psychotherapy.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.psychotherapy.2015.69.4.455>

¹⁸⁵. Dragiewicz, M., Burgess, J., Matamoros-Fernández, A., Salter, M., Suzor, N. P., Woodlock, D., & Harris, B. (2018). Technology facilitated coercive control: Domestic violence and the competing roles of digital media platforms. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4), 609-625. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/technology-facilitated-coercive-control-domestic-violence-and-the>

crucial support systems and services.¹⁸⁶ This inadequacy obstructs the healing process and prolongs the distress of survivors.¹⁸⁷

The current TFGBV landscape often operates under the notion that the fulfilment of judicial processes and the consequent penalisation of the perpetrators signify the culmination of intervention efforts. This one-dimensional approach fails to acknowledge that the resolution of legal processes does not address the myriad challenges experienced by the survivors. Their journey, fraught with the remnants of trauma, requires ongoing, tailored support aimed at addressing the multifaceted repercussions of violence,

whether physical, psychological, social, or economic.¹⁸⁸ Legal remedy is but one aspect of a much broader, more intricate process of restoration and healing that the survivor must navigate.

The emphasis must shift from a mere legalistic approach to one that places the well-being of the survivor at its core. The focus should transcend the realm of retribution and prosecution and delve into the holistic well-being of the survivor. It is crucial that recovery and healing initiatives are survivor-centric, recognising and responding to their specific, evolving needs and facilitating an environment conducive to their overall rehabilitation and well-being.¹⁸⁹



(INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW)

¹⁸⁶ In the interviews, many community experts highlighted the need for confidential and accessible support networks for survivors. They emphasised that these networks can provide survivors with a space to share their experiences, seek advice, and gain emotional support and highlighted the success of models like Alcoholics Anonymous in fostering peer support.

¹⁸⁷ Dworkin, E. R., Menon, S. V., Bystrynski, J., & Allen, N. E. (2017). Sexual assault survivorization and psychopathology: A review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 56, 65-81. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28689071/>

¹⁸⁸ Campbell, R., Dworkin, E., & Cabral, G. (2009). An ecological model of the impact of sexual assault on women's mental health. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 10(3), 225-246. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19433406/>

¹⁸⁹ In our interviews, many on ground empowerment experts highlighted that it is not just about providing training to survivors, but also about raising awareness and educating those around them. In the event of an incident, it is crucial that friends and family know how to offer support and assistance in navigating the next steps as survivors might not always be in a position to take immediate action due to various reasons, including trauma or emotional distress.

3.5.3 SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

If a survivor does not undergo healing and rehabilitation, then every preceding pillar loses its essence. After all, what is the value of any action if it does not enable the survivor to reclaim their sense of agency and confidence?

This is where the importance of this framework again comes into play.¹⁹⁰ It underscores recovery and healing as integral pillars of action, rather than mere afterthoughts. By elevating the significance of this pillar, the framework not only demystifies and combats the stigma associated with recovery¹⁹¹ but also strengthens the role and voices of institutions championing these efforts.¹⁹²

To explain this aspect better, imagine

Priya, a survivor of online harassment. While her harassers are legally prosecuted, the trauma persists. She is apprehensive about digital interactions and relives the incident constantly. Here, therapy could be her path to healing. However, societal biases often question its necessity, suggesting her to “just move on”. Such attitudes undervalue therapists’ roles. Now, through this framework, therapy becomes an integral part of the recovery process. As Priya reports her suffering, she is offered counselling. Society recognises that her emotional recovery is just as vital as the legal action. Therapists are seen as essential in helping survivors like Priya find their footing again. In this framework, both justice and healing are given equal emphasis, ensuring survivors are fully supported, with therapists rightfully acknowledged for their pivotal role in the recovery journey.

FIGURE 2



¹⁹⁰ In our interviews, mental health professionals and community experts emphasised the importance of trauma-informed systems and approaches and suggested that society should focus on promoting survivor-centred and gender-equal strategies. They added that raising awareness and sensitising families to be supportive and proactive in the healing process is considered crucial.

¹⁹¹ In our FGDs, community experts highlighted that survivors often face critical challenges when sharing their experiences of violence, such as normalisation of online abuse, victim blaming, and misconceptions about mental health, which prevent addressing the issue effectively. They also stressed the need to create safe spaces where survivors feel supported and heard.

¹⁹² In our FGDs, mental health professionals highlighted the need for collaboration among organisations, support groups, and stakeholders to address TFGBV comprehensively and further discourse around such issues is essential to enhance the credibility and recognition of organisations working on gender-based violence in the tech space.

3.6 RESEARCH



3.6.1 UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH

To effectively counteract TFGBV, understanding and analysing its ever-evolving nature is crucial. Herein

lies the pivotal role of research. By creating regular feedback loops, research can act as the bedrock of continuous learning, offering a systematic means of extracting insights from each TFGBV incident.¹⁹³ It can facilitate the crafting of effective tools, the design of evidence-based policies, and the initiation of appropriate societal reforms aimed at mitigating and responding to such violence.¹⁹⁴



(INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW)

¹⁹³. In our interviews, several researchers emphasised the limitations of relying solely on anecdotal evidence or isolated incidents when developing solutions and approaches. They stressed the indispensable need for comprehensive data to gain a true understanding of the extent of TFGBV. They also underscored collaboration among stakeholders as crucial in aggregating a substantial body of data to address such violence.

¹⁹⁴. Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2018). Technology-facilitated sexual violence: A literature review of empirical research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 19(2), 195-208. Retrieved 27 September, 2023 from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1524838016650189>

3.6.2 THE INTERPLAY OF RESEARCH WITH TFGBV

The realm of academic research on TFGBV is currently suboptimal, marred by limited focus and scant resources allocated to universities and scholars dedicated to this field. Further, the gap and lack of synergy between platforms and governmental bodies in India are other notable hindrances to the fulfilment of the potential of research in this domain.¹⁹⁵ The restrictive access to detailed data from platforms pertaining to reporting,¹⁹⁶ grievance redressal, and other relevant metrics poses substantial challenges to conducting comprehensive and meaningful research.¹⁹⁷

Enhancing the focus on and investment in research is crucial to drive the creation of novel and effective tools, services, and policies, thereby contributing substantially to the broader fight against TFGBV.¹⁹⁸ The need for intensified research efforts is especially salient considering the dynamically evolving nature of technology¹⁹⁹ and the

corresponding shifts in the modalities of gender-based violence.²⁰⁰ To stay abreast of these changes and to proactively address the emerging challenges, a continuous, iterative learning process is indispensable.



3.6.3 SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

Bridging the current silos is imperative to facilitate a more harmonious and cooperative interaction between different stakeholders, enabling access to granular data crucial for in-depth analysis and research.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ In our interviews, policy experts and researchers highlighted the need to have more seamless communication channels for reporting incidents of TFGBV between the government agencies and platforms to help analyse trends, patterns, and impacts of TFGBV, informing evidence-based approaches.

¹⁹⁶ Sadowski, J., Viljoen, S., & Whittaker, M. (2021). Everyone should decide how their digital data are used—not just tech companies. *Nature*, 595(7866), 169-171. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01812-3>

¹⁹⁷ Quan-Haase, A., & Sloan, L. (2017). The SAGE handbook of social media research methods. *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, 1-728. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://methods.sagepub.com/book/the-sage-handbook-of-social-research-methods>

¹⁹⁸ In our interviews, policy experts highlighted the lack of comprehensive and detailed data on different forms of TFGBV and highlighted that more granular data collection was essential to understand the nuances of the problem and develop effective solutions. They also added that there was a need for gender disaggregated data for a deeper understanding of the issue.

¹⁹⁹ UN Women. Research and data: Ending violence against women. UN Women. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/research-and-data>

²⁰⁰ PenzeyMoog, E., & Slakoff, D. C. (2021). As technology evolves, so does domestic violence: Modern-day tech abuse and possible solutions. *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse*, 643–662. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83982-848-520211047>

²⁰¹ Bailey, J., & Burkell, J. (2021). Tech-facilitated violence: thinking structurally and intersectionality. *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, 5(3), 531-542. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1332/239868021X16286662118554>

In the current scenario, consider tech companies. They delve into market studies to understand perceptions of their products and services.²⁰² Parallely, academic institutions, think tanks, etc. undertake ethnographic research and other forms of primary studies to understand societal attitudes towards violence and user challenges.²⁰³ While we see occasions where the two are collaborating,²⁰⁴ there is certainly a potential to do more, especially in terms of the companies sharing the actual data of harms and redressal mechanisms of their platforms to help the researchers analyse these issues better. The companies could benefit immensely from the nuanced expertise of researchers, who can intricately dissect case trends and societal reactions.²⁰⁵ Conversely, researchers can derive richer insights by accessing product-related data from companies and possibly leveraging their financial support.

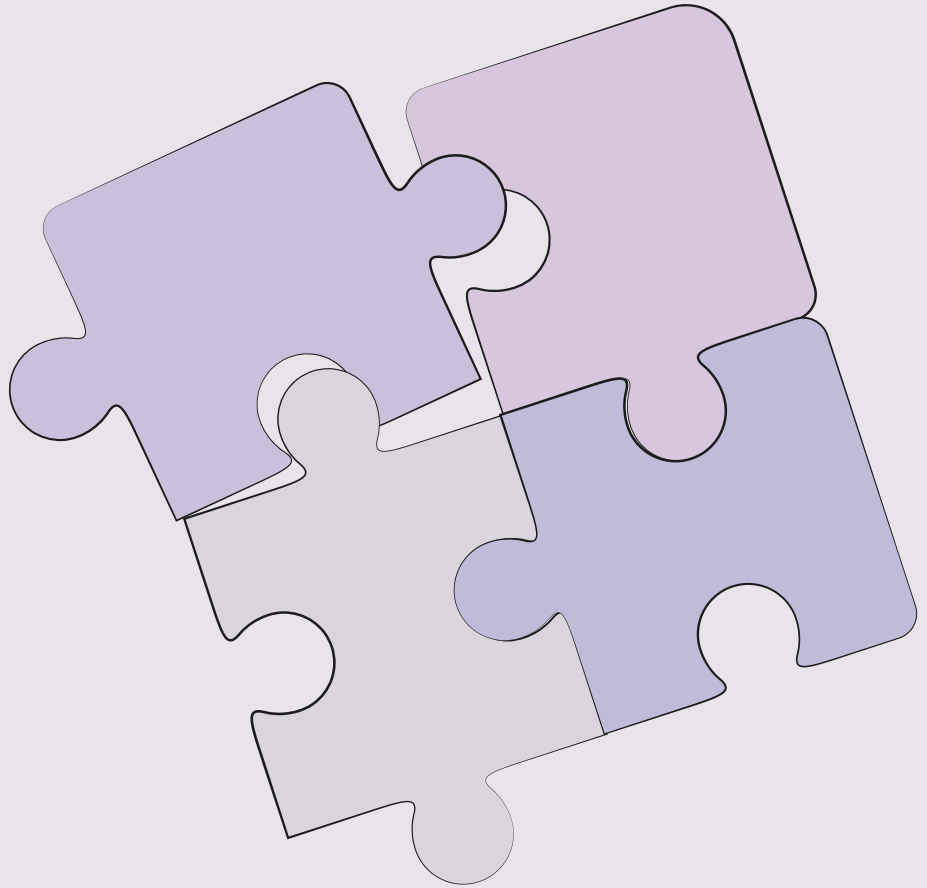
Here again, the framework can be helpful. It can bridge these existing gaps and champion the power of collaborative research. It can help the stakeholders recognise the immense value each brings, prompting them to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise. Such collaboration can lead to richer data, more informed analyses, and, subsequently, more effective strategies against TFGBV.

²⁰² Google. Future of Cloud Computing. Retrieved 27 September 2023, from <https://cloud.google.com/resources/future-of-cloud-computing-ebook>

²⁰³ Hine, C. (2015). *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Google Books.

²⁰⁴ Sklar, A. (2023, February 21). Study by Gallup and AWS shows digital skills drive economic growth across APAC. Amazon Web Services. <https://aws.amazon.com/blogs/training-and-certification/aws-gallup-digital-skills-study-asia-pacific-2023/>

²⁰⁵ In our interviews, community experts highlighted that access to data has been a major challenge for researchers, particularly in obtaining information regarding forms of online violence, the number of complaints received and the resolution process, which hinders their ability to understand the issue comprehensively.



CHAPTER 4:

ACTION ITEMS TO REALISE THE VISION OF THE FRAMEWORK



This chapter outlines the measures required to bring each of the stages and the framework into action. Towards this, we underscored the key roles and duties each stakeholder group should undertake at every stage of the framework, emphasising the intertwined and collaborative nature of these responsibilities. The respective stakeholder groups for each stage have been identified based on our primary research, coupled with the evaluation of similar frameworks from other jurisdictions.²⁰⁶ While we distinctly

highlight the duties of those groups who play a pivotal role at each stage, this demarcation does not imply the absence of a stake for other entities not mentioned at that particular stage. Every stakeholder's contribution is paramount and interdependent, enriching the strength and efficacy of the overall framework.

Moreover, given the evolving nature of digital spaces and the multifaceted manifestations of violence within them, the action items outlined are not

²⁰⁶ Department of Social Services. (2022). National plan to end violence against women and children 2022-2032. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence> ; Singapore Council of Women's Organisations. (2022). White Paper on Singapore Women's Development. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from <https://www.scwo.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/White-Paper-on-Singapore-Womens-Development.pdf> ; U.S. Department of State. (2022). U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally: Fact Sheet. Retrieved 29 September 2023, from https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/GBV-Strategy_Fact_Sheet_v4-Accessible-1282022.pdf

exhaustive, nor is the responsibility confined to the mentioned stakeholders only. This framework is dynamic, designed to continually evolve and adapt, responding to societal shifts and the invaluable feedback received during its practical implementation on the

ground. We encourage stakeholders to tailor the framework to suit local and community-centric needs, while ensuring alignment with the foundational principles laid down here.

FIGURE 3: EVOLVING PHASES AND ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS




4.1 ACCESS

This table identifies the key stakeholder groups with a prominent role at the access stage and their respective action items. The critical underlying driver of action at this stage is to empower

women and other sexual and gender-based vulnerable communities with technological mediums to avail greater opportunities for socio-economic advancement and seek help during crisis.

TABLE 2: STAKEHOLDER ACTIONS AT THE ACCESS STAGE

4.1.1. GOVERNMENT	
	
<p>a. Develop Gender-Responsive Digital Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Comprehensive Policies: Formulate well-defined, comprehensive policies that guarantee equal access to digital resources, services, and opportunities for all genders without discrimination. • Ongoing Evaluations: Continuously review and improve these policies to accommodate changing societal requirements and technological advancements, maintaining their relevance and effectiveness. • Enact Legal Measures: Enforce robust legislation to prohibit gender-based discrimination in digital access and technological environments. <p>b. Bridge the Digital Divide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Access Infrastructure: Construct digital infrastructure with inclusivity in mind, guaranteeing equal access to digital services and resources for women, sexual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and gender-based minorities. • Seamless Connectivity: Prioritise the expansion of connectivity to rural and remote regions. Additionally, make sure that marginalised groups have access to affordable internet plans, including subsidised options and public Wi-Fi hotspots. • Gender-Inclusive Design: Take into account the distinct needs and preferences of various genders when designing and developing digital infrastructure and services. <p>c. Implement Gender-Inclusive Digital Literacy programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored Literacy Initiatives: Launch programmes explicitly designed to address the unique barriers faced by women and other marginalised genders in acquiring digital literacy. • Collaboration with NGOs: Partner with NGOs and women's organisations to co-create literacy modules that align with and reflect the experiences of diverse

genders.

- **Targeted Outreach:** Focus on reaching remote and historically underserved areas, ensuring that digital literacy reaches even the most marginalised segments of society.

d. Support Women's

Participation in Technology:

- **Promotional Initiatives:** Actively promote and support women-led tech initiatives and startups through incentives, grants, and mentorship programmes.
- **Education and Training:** Provide scholarships, vocational training, and educational resources to encourage women to pursue careers in STEM fields.
- **Recognition and Awards:** Regularly acknowledge and reward women who have made significant contributions to the field of technology to inspire more women to join the sector.

e. Address Societal and Cultural Barriers:

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Carry out nationwide awareness campaigns to confront and challenge societal norms and stigmas that restrict women's access to technology.
- **Community Dialogues:** Organise

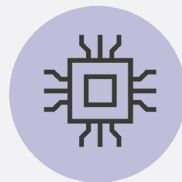
community-level discussions and workshops to explore sexual and gender equality in technology access and promote a more egalitarian mindset.

- **Engagement with Traditional Leaders:** Collaborate with local leaders, including religious and community elders, to champion sexual and gender equality in digital access and dismantle deeply ingrained discriminatory practices.

f. Undertake Data Collection and Research:

- **Gender-Disaggregated Data:** Collect and analyse data on technology access and usage, broken down by gender, to inform policy-making and programme development.
- **Research on Gender and Technology:** Fund studies to gain insights into the distinct experiences, requirements, and obstacles faced by women and marginalised genders in technology access and utilisation.
- **Policy Impact Assessment:** Periodically assess the influence of current policies and initiatives in enhancing digital access for women and marginalised genders, and adjust strategies based on the findings.

4.1.2. TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES



a. Develop Gender-Inclusive Products and Services:

- **Inclusive Design Principles:** Incorporate design principles that give precedence to inclusivity and accessibility, guaranteeing that products and services meet the requirements and experiences of a wide range of users.
- **User-Centred Design:** Involve women and marginalised genders in the product design and development processes to gain insight into their distinct needs, preferences, and challenges.
- **Regular Assessments:** Conduct periodic evaluations of products and services to detect and rectify any gender biases and improve inclusiveness.

b. Foster a Diverse and Inclusive Work Environment:

- **Diversity Hiring Initiatives:** Enact hiring practices designed to nurture diversity and secure equitable representation of all genders within the workforce.
- **Equal Opportunity Policies:** Institute and enforce policies that champion equality, forbid discrimination, and guarantee a nurturing work environment for all.
- **Promote Women in Leadership:** Advocate for and facilitate the progression of women into

leadership positions through mentorship programmes, career advancement strategies, and tailored training.

c. Engage with Women Users and Communities:

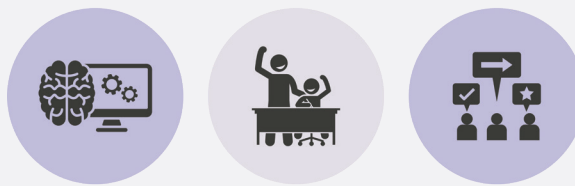
- **Targeted Outreach:** Actively reach out to women and marginalised gender communities to understand their technological needs and to solicit feedback on products and services.
- **Community Engagement:** Establish partnerships with women's organisations, NGOs, and community groups to co-create solutions that address the specific needs of women and marginalised genders.
- **Accessible Support Services:** Provide user-friendly and accessible support services, including helplines and chat support, to assist women and marginalised genders in navigating digital spaces.

d. Promote Digital Literacy and Education:

- **Educational Initiatives:** Launch programmes and resources focused on enhancing digital literacy and skills among women and marginalised genders, tailored to address their unique needs and barriers.

- **Collaboration with Educational Institutions:** Work with schools, colleges, and vocational training centres to promote STEM education and career paths among women and marginalised genders.
- **Scholarships and Grants:** Provide scholarships, grants, and support to encourage and enable women and marginalised genders to pursue education and careers in technology.

4.1.3. PARENTS AND FAMILIES



a. Foster an Environment of Equality and Encouragement:

- **Promote Equal Access:** Ensure that all family members, regardless of their gender, have equal access to technological resources and the internet.
- **Encourage Exploration:** Encourage women and marginalised genders to explore and learn about different technologies, online platforms, and digital services.
- **Support Educational Pursuits:** Actively support and encourage the pursuit of education and careers in STEM fields, especially among girls and marginalised genders.

b. Educate and Empower on Digital Literacy:

- **Prioritise Digital Education:** Make digital literacy and online safety a priority within the household, ensuring that everyone is well-informed and confident in navigating digital spaces.

• Utilise Online Resources:

Leverage available online resources, tutorials, and platforms to enhance the family's digital literacy and skills.

c. Challenge Societal Norms and Stereotypes:

- **Address Gender Biases:** Recognise and challenge inherent biases and stereotypical beliefs within the family that limit technology access for women and marginalised genders.
- **Open Dialogues:** Encourage open and inclusive discussions within the family on gender equality, the significance of technology, and the empowerment it can bring to all individuals.
- **Support Gender-Inclusive Activities:** Promote activities and hobbies that are gender-neutral and inclusive, breaking the stereotypes associated with technology and digital spaces.

4.1.4. COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING DIGITAL LITERACY NGOs



a. Promote Digital Literacy and Inclusion:

- **Tailored Literacy programmes:**

Develop and implement digital literacy programmes that are specifically tailored to address the unique needs, challenges, and experiences of women and marginalised genders. Incorporate user-friendly and relatable content, focusing on practical, everyday applications of technology to enhance engagement and learning.

- **Inclusive Outreach:** Actively reach out to underrepresented communities and demographics, ensuring that digital literacy initiatives are accessible and inclusive. Leverage local languages and culturally relevant materials to enhance understanding and acceptance.

b. Advocate for Equal Access and Representation:

- **Policy Advocacy:** Engage in advocacy to inform for progressive policies and legislation, ensuring equitable access to technology and digital resources for all, regardless of gender. Collaborate with other organisations, stakeholders, and policymakers to amplify advocacy efforts and

impact.

- **Raise Awareness:** Conduct awareness campaigns to educate communities about the importance of digital equality and the benefits of technology for women and marginalised genders. Utilise various platforms and mediums, including social media, workshops, and community meetings, to reach diverse audiences.

c. Foster Community Empowerment and Participation:

- **Empowerment Initiatives:** Launch initiatives aimed at empowering women and marginalised genders through technology, focusing on skills development, economic opportunities, and self-expression. Provide support, resources, and mentorship to help individuals leverage technology for personal and professional growth.
- **Community Engagement:** Facilitate community discussions and forums to understand the specific needs, preferences, and concerns of women and marginalised genders regarding technology. Encourage community members to participate in decision-making processes and co-create solutions to address digital inequality.

4.2 PREVENTION

This table identifies the key stakeholder groups with a prominent role at the prevention stage and their respective

action items. The critical underlying driver of action at this stage is to reform the underlying societal practices and beliefs that foster sexual and gender-based discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes.

TABLE 3: STAKEHOLDER ACTIONS AT THE PREVENTION STAGE

4.2.1 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



a. Integrate Values and Ethics Education:

- **Curriculum Development:** Design and integrate comprehensive values and ethics education into the core curriculum, ensuring that students from an early age are exposed to concepts of equality, respect, tolerance, and human rights. Moreover, develop learning materials and activities that encourage critical thinking, reflection, and open dialogue on societal norms, values, and behaviours, allowing students to question, challenge, and reformulate their understanding of right and wrong.
- **Educator Training:** Provide regular training and professional development opportunities for educators on values education, enabling them to effectively facilitate learning experiences, address students' questions and concerns, and model positive values and behaviours.

b. Foster Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environments:

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Promote respect for individual differences and cultural diversity, encouraging students to appreciate and learn from one another's unique perspectives and experiences. Implement policies and practices that prevent discrimination, bullying, and harassment, ensuring that the school environment is safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning for everyone.
- **Service Learning and Engagement:** Encourage students to engage in service-learning projects and community service activities, fostering a sense of social responsibility, empathy, and civic engagement.

4.2.2 PARENTS AND FAMILIES



a. Foster Open and Inclusive Family Environments:

- **Value-Based Upbringing:** Instil values of respect, empathy, equality, and tolerance from an early age, emphasising the importance of treating everyone with kindness and dignity, irrespective of their background, appearance, or beliefs.
- **Positive Role Modelling:** Exhibit behaviours and attitudes that reflect inclusivity, respect, and equality in daily interactions, decisions, and responses to others. Demonstrating these values in action will reinforce their importance and guide children in developing similar attitudes and behaviours.

b. Engage in Continuous Learning and Dialogue:

- **Educational Support and Dialogue:** Actively participate in the educational journey of children

by showing interest in what they learn, discussing various subjects and topics, especially those related to societal values, ethics, and behaviours. Provide support and resources needed for learning and exploration, encouraging children to seek knowledge, think critically, and develop informed opinions on societal issues and norms.

- **Awareness and Sensitisation:** Keep abreast of societal developments, challenges, and discourses, enhancing the ability to guide and support children in navigating a rapidly changing society. This awareness enables parents to contextualise societal norms and values and fosters a nuanced understanding of right and wrong.

4.2.3 GOVERNMENT, POLICYMAKERS AND JUDICIARY



a. Integrate Legal Awareness and Ethical Responsibility:

- **Policy Formulation:** Frame and endorse policies promoting online safety, digital literacy, and ethical online behaviour. These policies should prioritise awareness of gender-based biases and the rights and responsibilities of online users.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Launch nationwide campaigns emphasising the importance of online respect, equality, and human rights. Use real-life scenarios, legal provisions, and case judgments to demonstrate the consequences of online harassment and gender-based violence.

b. Establish Inclusive Governance and Judicial Environments:

- **Diversity Representation:** Ensure representation from diverse backgrounds in policy-making, government offices, and the judiciary. Such representation ensures a holistic understanding and approach to issues, fostering trust among marginalised communities.

• Collaborative Workshops:

Organise workshops and consultations that bring together stakeholders from different sectors – including educators, tech companies, NGOs, and community leaders – to brainstorm and develop preventive strategies against TFGBV.

c. Strengthen Support Systems and Access to Justice:

- **Judicial Sensitization:** Implement regular training for judges and judicial officers, emphasising the social and psychological dimensions of TFGBV. This will ensure empathetic and informed adjudication of cases related to online harassment and gender-based violence.
- **Community Engagement:** Collaborate with grassroots organisations to gain insights into local beliefs, behaviours, and challenges. These collaborations can help in tailoring awareness campaigns and policy interventions to the unique needs of different communities.

4.2.4 WORKPLACE



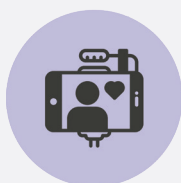
a. Promote Ethical Behaviour and Corporate Responsibility

- **Code of Conduct:** Draft and implement a clear code of conduct that emphasises zero tolerance towards any form of harassment and discrimination, whether verbal or through actions. Ensure that all employees are well-informed about this code and its implications.
- **Training and Workshops:** Organise regular training sessions and workshops that focus on workplace etiquette including respectful and equitable treatment of employees. Encourage active participation and ensure that these sessions are updated based on evolving behaviours and risks.

b. Create Inclusive and Supportive Work Environments:

- **Diversity Initiatives:** Foster diversity and inclusion in hiring and promotion practices. Encourage diverse teams, which can provide varied perspectives and ensure inclusivity and representation in all decisions and policies.
- **Open Dialogue:** Facilitate platforms where employees can openly discuss their concerns and share feedback. Such dialogues can help in identifying potential threats and developing strategies to counter them.

4.2.5 MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY



a. Promote Responsible Representation and Content Creation:

- **Diverse and Inclusive Representation:** Ensure that content accurately and fairly represents the diversity of society,

avoiding stereotypes, and providing varied and nuanced portrayals of individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles. Diverse representation fosters understanding, acceptance, and respect among audiences.

- **Educational and Values-based Content:** Develop and promote content that educates audiences on societal values, ethics, and social issues, encouraging reflection, dialogue, and understanding. The incorporation of educational elements within entertainment can subtly shape viewers' attitudes and behaviours towards social vices and crimes.

b. Implement and Adhere to Ethical Standards and Guidelines:

- **Content Review and Moderation:** Establish robust content review and moderation policies and processes to ensure that content

adheres to ethical standards, respecting human rights, and avoiding harm, discrimination, and misinformation. Responsible content moderation can prevent the dissemination of harmful narratives and ideologies.

- **Literacy Programmes:** Support and collaborate in media literacy initiatives aimed at equipping audiences with the skills and knowledge needed to critically analyse media content, discerning between facts, opinions, and biases. Partner with educational institutions, NGOs, and other stakeholders to develop and deliver media literacy programmes, expanding their reach and impact across diverse audience groups.

4.3 INTERVENTION

This table identifies the key stakeholder groups with a prominent role at the intervention stage and their respective action items. The critical underlying driver of action at this stage is to

envisage additional empowerment and support mechanisms for women and other sexual and gender-based vulnerable communities, so that they are better equipped to navigate the digital space securely and respond to any instance of violence more effectively.

TABLE 4: STAKEHOLDER ACTIONS AT THE INTERVENTION STAGE

4.3.1 GOVERNMENT	
	
<p>a. Develop Targeted Intervention Programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Vulnerable Communities: Conduct thorough research and analysis to identify communities that are most susceptible to online 	<p>violence and digital risks, focusing especially on women and marginalised genders. Develop partnerships with community organisations and NGOs to gain insights into localised needs and challenges.</p>

- **Design Specialised Programmes:** Based on identified needs, create targeted intervention programmes aimed at empowering vulnerable communities, enhancing their digital resilience, and reducing their susceptibility to online risks. Collaborate with experts and stakeholders to ensure programme effectiveness and relevance.

b. Enhance Legal Protections and Resources:

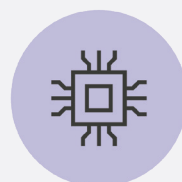
- **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Review and reinforce legal frameworks to address all forms of online violence, harassment, and abuse, ensuring comprehensive protection for vulnerable communities. Implement stringent penalties for perpetrators of online violence and ensure swift and fair enforcement of laws.
- **Provide Accessible Legal Recourse:** Establish accessible and user-friendly mechanisms for reporting online violence and seeking legal recourse, ensuring support and justice for survivors. Develop specialised support

services, including legal aid and counselling, to assist survivors throughout the legal process.

c. Foster Economic and Social Empowerment:

- **Enhance Economic Opportunities:** Launch initiatives aimed at enhancing economic opportunities for vulnerable communities through digital means, such as skill development programmes, access to online marketplaces, and financial support. Partner with the private sector and civil society organisations to expand economic empowerment initiatives and reach wider audiences.
- **Promote Social Inclusion:** Develop programmes and policies to promote social inclusion and community cohesion in digital spaces, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, can participate and benefit from the digital landscape. Encourage dialogues and collaborations among diverse community groups to foster mutual understanding and respect.

4.3.2 TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES



a. Develop Gender-Inclusive Products embedded with Safety in Design Features:

- **Inclusive Design Principles:** Implement design principles that

prioritise inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring products and services cater to diverse user needs and experiences.

- **User-Centred Design:** Engage women and marginalised genders in product design and development processes to understand their unique needs, preferences, and challenges.
- **Regular Assessments:** Periodically review products and services to identify and rectify any gender biases and enhance inclusivity.

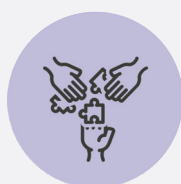
b. Engage with Women Users and Communities:

- **Targeted Outreach:** Actively reach out to women and marginalised gender communities to understand their technological needs and to solicit feedback on products and services.
- **Community Engagement:** Establish partnerships with women's organisations, NGOs, and community groups to co-create solutions that address the specific needs of women and marginalised genders.

c. Create Safe Online Spaces:

- **Enhanced Security Measures:** Implement robust security measures and protocols to protect users, especially women and marginalised genders, from online harassment, abuse, and cyber threats.
- **User Education:** Offer resources and education on online safety, digital rights, and responsible technology use to empower vulnerable user groups to protect themselves online.
- **Effective Moderation Policies:** Develop and enforce effective content moderation policies to identify and remove harmful content and ensure a safe and respectful online environment.

4.3.3 COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS



a. Facilitate Targeted Empowerment Programmes:

- **Community-Based Learning:** Develop and deliver tailored empowerment programmes focusing on digital literacy, online safety, and responsible internet use, addressing the unique needs and contexts of vulnerable

communities. Engage community members in co-creating and refining learning content and methodologies, ensuring relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness.

- **Capacity Building:** Conduct workshops and training sessions to equip individuals with the skills and

knowledge needed to navigate the digital world safely and confidently. Collaborate with local leaders, educators, and experts to enhance the reach and impact of capacity-building initiatives, fostering community resilience and digital empowerment.

b. Foster Community

Engagement and Feedback:

- **Community Dialogues:** Facilitate open dialogues within communities to discuss their experiences, concerns, and ideas related to digital participation and online safety, fostering a sense of agency and collective action among community members. Utilise

community insights to inform the development and refinement of intervention strategies, programmes, and services, ensuring responsiveness to community needs and priorities.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement robust feedback mechanisms to gather community members’ opinions, suggestions, and feedback on intervention efforts, using their input to enhance programme effectiveness and relevance. Empower communities to actively participate in shaping intervention strategies and solutions, leveraging their lived experiences and insights to create more impactful and sustainable outcomes.

4.4 RESPONSE AND REDRESSAL

This table identifies the key stakeholder groups with a prominent role at the

response and redressal stage and the respective action items for them. The critical underlying driver of action at this stage is to ensure seamless and inclusive reporting mechanisms and timely and effective response.

TABLE 5: STAKEHOLDER ACTIONS AT THE RESPONSE AND REDRESSAL STAGE

4.4.1 LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES



a. Develop and Implement Clear, Accessible Reporting Mechanisms:

- **User-Friendly Reporting Platforms:** Create multiple, accessible avenues for survivors to

report crimes, including online platforms, hotlines, and physical locations, ensuring that every individual, irrespective of their access to technology or physical abilities, can report crimes with

ease. Moreover, regularly update and enhance these platforms, incorporating feedback from users and stakeholders to ensure continued accessibility, responsiveness, and user-friendliness.

- **Public Awareness and Education:** Conduct ongoing public awareness campaigns to inform people about the available reporting mechanisms, how to use them, and the support available to survivors. Collaborate with community organisations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to disseminate information about reporting mechanisms and to educate the public about their rights and the law enforcement process.

b. Ensure Timely, Empathetic Response and Support:

- **Specialised Training for Responders:** Provide regular, specialised training for officers and responders to ensure they approach survivors with empathy, respect, and sensitivity, recognising the trauma and distress experienced by survivors.
- **Sufficient Resource Allocation:** Develop specialised units or teams trained to handle specific types of crimes or vulnerable groups, ensuring that survivors receive prompt and timely support and assistance from officers with the right skills and knowledge.

c. Conduct Thorough, Fair Investigations and Legal Proceedings:

- **Transparent, Accountable Investigation Processes:** Adhere to clear, fair, and transparent processes in investigating reports, keeping the survivors informed about the progress and ensuring their rights and dignity are respected at all stages.
- **Collaboration with Legal and Judicial Entities:** Work closely with prosecutors, judges, and other legal entities to ensure that cases are properly presented and adjudicated, respecting the rights of both survivors and accused individuals.

d. Continuous Learning and Improvement:

- **Performance Review and Feedback Integration:** Regularly review performance in handling reports and redressals, identifying areas for improvement and integrating feedback from survivors, stakeholders, and external experts to enhance effectiveness and responsiveness.
- **Community Engagement and Partnership:** Leverage partnerships with communities and stakeholders to enhance law enforcement's understanding of societal dynamics, crime patterns, and community needs, and to co-develop solutions and initiatives that address the root causes and manifestations of crimes.

4.4.2 JUDICIARY



a. Develop and Implement Clear, Accessible Reporting Mechanisms:

- **Easy-to-Navigate Judicial Procedures:** Design straightforward, well-documented processes that guide survivors through the legal maze when they seek redressal. Ensure that court documents, forms, and procedural information are available both online and offline, catering to individuals of varying technological proficiency and physical abilities. Periodically review these processes and adapt them based on feedback from users and legal professionals to ensure relevance and accessibility.
- **Judicial Awareness Initiatives:** Organise seminars, webinars, and workshops aimed at educating the public about their rights, the legal recourse available, and how the judiciary can support them. Foster partnerships with law schools, bar associations, and civil society groups to facilitate a widespread understanding of judicial procedures related to gender-based violence.

b. Ensure Timely, Empathetic Response and Support:

- **Capacity Building among Judicial Officers:** Implement regular training programmes for judges,

magistrates, and court staff, focusing on the nuances of tech-facilitated gender-based violence. Equip them with the necessary skills to approach such cases with the required sensitivity, understanding the unique challenges faced by survivors.

- **Protection and Privacy for Survivors:** Enforce strict measures to protect the identity and personal information of survivors, both within the court system and in the public domain. Offer options for in-camera trials, video testimonies, or the use of pseudonyms to ensure that survivors can seek justice without fearing further victimisation or public scrutiny.

c. Promote Collaborative Justice:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborate with tech companies, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders to understand the evolving nature of tech-facilitated gender-based violence. This will ensure that the judiciary remains updated on technological advancements and their implications for gender-based crimes.
- **Restorative Justice Initiatives:** Explore the potential of restorative justice programmes, where appropriate, to facilitate healing

and resolution for survivors while ensuring accountability for perpetrators. This approach can

promote community involvement and a holistic understanding of the crime's impact.

4.4.3 GOVERNMENT AND POLICYMAKERS



a. Formulate Robust Legal Frameworks for Reporting and Redressal:

- **Develop Comprehensive Legislation:** Enact clear, comprehensive laws and regulations to govern the reporting and redressal of crimes, ensuring that they cover all types of offences and are adaptable to emerging trends and technologies. Further, establish mandatory reporting requirements and standards for platforms and entities, specifying the responsibilities, protocols, and timelines for action, to ensure prompt, effective response to reports.
- **Enhance Legal Clarity and Certainty:** Regularly review and update the legal frameworks to address ambiguities, inconsistencies, and gaps, and to incorporate advancements in knowledge, technology, and best practices.

b. Allocate Adequate Resources and Support to Enforcement Entities:

- **Adequate budgetary allocations and funding:** Allocate sufficient resources to law enforcement agencies to develop the necessary infrastructure, technology, and manpower to effectively handle reports, investigations, and redressals.
- **Capacity building:** Invest in continuous training and development for law enforcement personnel, focusing on enhancing their skills, knowledge, and sensitivities to deal with survivors and crimes effectively.

c. Establish Effective Oversight and Accountability

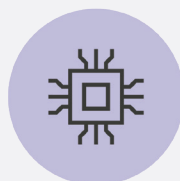
Mechanisms:

- **Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** Establish robust mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the reporting and redressal systems, using the insights to inform policy enhancements and interventions.
- **Ensure Accountability of Platforms and Entities:** Enforce effective compliance with reporting requirements and standards by

platforms. Conduct regular audits and assessments of platforms and entities to ensure adherence to

laws, regulations, and standards, and to identify areas for improvement and intervention.

4.4.4 TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES



a. Develop Efficient and User-friendly Reporting Mechanisms:

- **Implement Easy Reporting Tools:** Develop simple, intuitive, and accessible tools and processes for users to report abuses, harassment, or any form of content that is illegal or violates platform policies. Ensure multi-language support and culturally sensitive interfaces to cater to a diverse user base and to facilitate reporting by individuals from varied backgrounds.
- **Maintain Transparent Communication:** Acknowledge receipt of reports promptly and communicate clearly and transparently with the reporting user about the status and outcomes of their report. Regularly update users on any developments or actions taken in response to their report, maintaining confidentiality and privacy.
- **Provide chatbot facilities:** Develop intuitive chatbots that guide users through the reporting and redressal processes, ensuring immediate, user-friendly assistance

b. Strengthen Content Moderation and Response Teams:

- **Invest in Skilled Personnel:** Employ well-trained, diverse, and multilingual moderation teams to review reports and ensure a contextual understanding of content, reducing false positives and negatives. Provide continuous training on emerging trends, technologies, legal requirements, and platform policies to maintain high moderation standards.
- **Optimise Response Time:** Allocate sufficient resources to maintain low response times to user reports, ensuring swift actions and resolutions. Develop automated systems to prioritise reports based on severity and potential harm, directing immediate attention to critical cases.

c. Enhance Accountability and Compliance:

- **Establish Clear Enforcement Policies:** Develop and enforce strict policies for dealing with reported content and users who

violate platform rules, including warnings, suspensions, bans, and legal actions where necessary. Maintain transparency around enforcement actions and decisions, providing clear explanations and avenues for appeal to affected users.

- **Comply with Legal Requirements:**

Regularly review and update platform policies to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations regarding user reports and content removals. Collaborate with law enforcement agencies and provide necessary assistance and information, within legal and ethical bounds, for investigations and prosecutions.

d. Promote User Awareness and Education:

- **Provide Educational Resources:** Develop and disseminate user-friendly resources and guides on platform policies, reporting mechanisms, online safety, and digital literacy. Engage with users through various media, forums, and events to educate them about their rights, responsibilities, and available support on the platform.
- **Foster Community Engagement:** Encourage and support user communities and groups in

fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment on the platform. Collaborate with community leaders, influencers, and experts to amplify awareness and education efforts and to gather feedback and insights for improvement.

e. Foster Innovation in Safety Measures:

- **Invest in Safety Technologies:** Allocate resources for the research and development of advanced technologies and solutions to enhance user safety, such as AI-driven content moderation, user behaviour analysis, and encrypted reporting. Regularly update and optimise safety features based on user feedback, performance data, and emerging trends and threats.
- **Collaborate with External Stakeholders:** Engage with academia, industry peers, NGOs, and governmental agencies to exchange knowledge, insights, and best practices in online safety and content moderation. Participate in joint initiatives and partnerships to advance collective efforts in combating online abuses and crimes and in supporting survivors and vulnerable populations.

4.4.5 COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING LEGAL AID NGOS



a. Provide Immediate Legal Assistance:

- **Establish 24/7 Helplines:** Set up accessible, multi-lingual helplines to provide immediate legal advice, support, and information to survivors reporting crimes or abuses. Ensure trained and empathetic personnel are available to handle diverse and sensitive cases, maintaining confidentiality and dignity of the survivors.
- **Offer Pro Bono Legal Representation:** Facilitate legal representation for survivors, particularly those lacking the resources to seek justice, and guide them through the legal processes and requirements.

b. Facilitate Reporting and Documentation:

- **Assist in Filing FIRs and Complaints:** Actively support survivors in filing First Information Reports and official complaints, ensuring proper documentation and adherence to legal protocols. Coordinate with law enforcement agencies to expedite the reporting process and to address any issues or barriers faced by the survivors.
- **Preserve Evidence:** Guide survivors in securely preserving

and documenting evidence related to the crime, such as screenshots, messages, and other relevant information. Collaborate with tech platforms to secure digital evidence and to ensure its admissibility in legal proceedings.

- **Supporting Class Action Suits:** Actively participate and facilitate class action suits related to TFGBV, harnessing collective strength to address systemic issues and amplify the call for gender justice in the tech space.

c. Advocate for survivor Rights and Justice:

- **Raise Awareness on Legal Rights:** Conduct awareness campaigns and workshops to educate the public, particularly vulnerable populations, on their legal rights, reporting mechanisms, and available support services. Develop and distribute accessible, multilingual resources and materials on legal rights, processes, and protections. Engage in Policy Advocacy: Advocate for stronger legal protections, rights, and support for survivors of online crimes and abuses. Collaborate with policymakers, legal experts, and

other stakeholders to influence and contribute to the formulation

of effective, survivor-centred policies and laws.

4.5 RECOVERY AND HEALING

This table identifies the key stakeholder groups with a prominent role at the recovery and healing stage and the

respective action items for them. The critical underlying driver of action at this stage is to facilitate the wholesome healing of the survivor and their continued and fearless engagement with technology.

TABLE 6: STAKEHOLDER ACTIONS AT THE RECOVERY AND HEALING STAGE

4.5.1 CAREGIVERS AND COUNSELLORS



a. Provide Comprehensive Emotional Support:

- **Individualised Counselling and Therapy:** Offer tailored counselling and therapy sessions to address the unique needs, traumas, and recovery paths of each survivor, ensuring a holistic approach to healing. Provide trauma-informed care that is sensitive to the experiences of the survivors and aids in processing their trauma without re-traumatisation.
- **Group Support and Therapy:** Facilitate group therapy sessions and support groups where survivors can share their experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in a supportive and confidential environment. Encourage the development of a supportive community among survivors to share insights, strength, and hope.

b. Facilitate Rehabilitation and Empowerment:

- **Rehabilitation Programmes and Services:** Develop and offer rehabilitation programmes focusing on life skills, resilience, and empowerment, assisting survivors in regaining control over their lives. Coordinate with other service providers, like vocational training centres and educational institutions, to facilitate the socioeconomic rehabilitation of the survivors.
- **Empowerment and Self-Efficacy Workshops:** Conduct workshops focusing on self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment, aiding survivors in rebuilding their sense of self-worth and confidence. Encourage the development of coping mechanisms and resilience, supporting survivors in navigating life post-trauma.

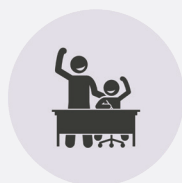
c. Encourage Long-Term Healing and Growth:

- **Continued Support and Follow-ups:** Provide continued support and regular follow-ups to monitor the progress of the survivors and address any ongoing challenges or needs. Offer resources, support, and referrals for long-term healing, personal

growth, and development, ensuring sustained wellbeing and recovery.

- **Educational and Resource Provision:** Educate survivors on self-help strategies, coping mechanisms, and available resources to encourage self-sufficiency and sustained healing.

4.5.2 PARENTS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS



a. Cultivate a Supportive and Safe Environment:

- **Maintain Open Communication:** Keep lines of communication open, ensuring survivors can express their emotions, thoughts, and needs freely and without judgement. Listen empathetically to their experiences, validating their feelings and reinforcing a sense of safety and acceptance.
- **Foster a Positive and Secure Atmosphere:** Create a home environment characterised by love, respect, and positivity, minimising stressors and triggers for the survivor. Regularly check in with the survivor on their needs and comfort, making necessary adjustments to maintain a conducive environment for recovery.

b. Facilitate Access to Professional Support:

- **Coordinate with Caregivers and Counsellors:** Arrange for professional counselling and therapy sessions for the survivor, encouraging them to attend and benefit from professional support. Work closely with counsellors and caregivers to understand the survivor's progress and needs, implementing suggested support strategies at home.
- **Support Rehabilitation Programs:** Encourage and assist the survivor in accessing rehabilitation services, such as life skills training and vocational programs, supporting their empowerment and self-sufficiency. Advocate for the survivor's rights and wellbeing, ensuring they receive all the necessary support and accommodations for effective rehabilitation.

c. Empowerment and Reinforcement:

- **Encourage Personal Growth:**

Support the survivor in exploring and pursuing personal interests, hobbies, and goals, fostering a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. Reinforce their strengths, resilience, and progress regularly, helping build self-esteem and confidence.

- **Educational and Skill**

Development Support: Encourage and support the survivor in pursuing educational and skill development opportunities, fostering independence and self-efficacy. Help in exploring and accessing resources, courses, and training that align with the survivor's interests and goals, facilitating lifelong learning and growth.

4.5.3 WORKPLACE



a. Develop and Implement Supportive Policies:

- **Create Comprehensive Support Policies:** Develop clear and robust policies addressing support mechanisms for employees who have been survivors, detailing provisions such as flexible working conditions, additional leaves, and confidential counselling services.

- **Employee Assistance programmes:** Implement Employee Assistance programmes that provide professional psychological support, counselling services, and resources aimed at addressing the emotional and mental well-being of the survivor.

b. Create a Supportive Work Environment:

- **Maintain a Safe and Respectful Workplace:** Ensure the work environment is safe, inclusive, and respectful, upholding the dignity and well-being of all employees, and particularly supporting survivors in their recovery process.

- **Train and Sensitize Co-workers and Managers:** Conduct awareness sessions and sensitivity training for co-workers and managers to foster understanding, empathy, and support towards the survivors.

c. Enable Flexible Working Conditions:

- **Provide Flexible Work Arrangements:** Offer flexible work schedules, remote working options, and reduced workload to

accommodate the needs and constraints of the survivor, facilitating their gradual reintegration into the workplace.

- **Maintain Regular Check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins with the survivor to understand their concerns, needs, and progress, making adjustments as needed to their work conditions and support mechanisms.

d. Encourage Professional Development:

- **Support Skill Development and**

Training: Encourage and facilitate access to skill enhancement and professional development opportunities, allowing the survivor to rebuild their career and regain their sense of self-worth and accomplishment.

- **Career Counselling and Guidance:** Provide career counselling and guidance to help survivors explore their professional aspirations and potential, creating a roadmap for career progression and fulfilment.

4.5.4 GOVERNMENT AND POLICYMAKERS



a. Develop and Implement Specialised Rehabilitation Policies:

- **Develop Comprehensive Laws:** Legislate and implement comprehensive laws with a survivor-centred approach that lays formal emphasis on the rehabilitation and healing needs of the survivors of TFGBV.
- **Tailored Psychological Support Services:** Develop State-aided programmes offering specialised psychological services and counselling for survivors, addressing the unique aspects and ramifications of such violence.

b. Financial Support and Economic Empowerment:

- **Economic Support Schemes:** Design economic support schemes that are specifically aimed at survivors of TFGBV, addressing their distinct needs for economic recovery and empowerment.
- **Skill Development and Training:** Provide survivors with training in digital literacy and cybersecurity, empowering them to safely navigate the online environment and protect themselves from future instances of online violence.

4.5.5 TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES



Foster a Supportive Community Environment:

- **Promote Positive Community Interactions:**

Encourage community-led initiatives and discussions aimed at supporting survivors and fostering a positive and inclusive online environment.

- **Implement Resourceful Support Centres:** Develop online support centres within the platform, providing information, resources, and direct links to local support services and helplines.

4.6 RESEARCH

This table identifies the key stakeholder groups with a prominent role at the research stage and the respective action

items for them. The critical underlying driver of action at this stage is to foster a process of continuous feedback and study to understand the evolving facets of TFGVBV and update the response mechanisms.

TABLE 7: STAKEHOLDER ACTIONS AT THE RESEARCH STAGE

4.6.1 RESEARCHERS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THINK TANKS



a. Conduct In-Depth Research and Analysis:

- **Undertake Comprehensive Studies:** Conduct detailed studies on the patterns, impacts, and nuances of tech-facilitated gender-based violence to understand its multidimensional aspects.
- **Analyse Emerging Trends and Technologies:** Regularly review new technological developments and their potential implications on gender-based violence, identifying risks and proposing mitigative measures.
- **Develop Case Studies and Document Incidents:** Create comprehensive case studies on reported incidents to understand the context, dynamics, and consequences better, contributing to a richer, more nuanced knowledge base.

b. Collaborate and Engage with Diverse Stakeholders:

- **Foster Multidisciplinary Collaborations:** Engage with experts from various disciplines, tech industry representatives, policymakers, and survivor support

groups to develop holistic insights and solutions.

- **Organise Conferences and Workshops:** Host platforms for discussion and knowledge sharing on tech-facilitated gender-based violence, bringing together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and affected communities.
- **Build Partnerships with Tech Platforms:** Collaborate closely with technology companies to better understand impact of TFGBV.

c. Develop Innovative Solutions and Interventions:

- **Propose Evidence-Based Policy Recommendations:** Develop informed, practical policy suggestions and intervention strategies based on rigorous research, addressing the identified challenges and gaps.
- **Design Technological Tools and Solutions:** Innovate and create tech solutions to prevent, detect, and counteract gender-based violence, ensuring they are user-friendly, accessible, and effective.
- **Create Educational Resources and Awareness Materials:**

Develop comprehensive educational content, awareness campaigns, and training materials to inform and empower diverse audiences about tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

d. Disseminate Knowledge and Advocate for Change:

- **Publish Research Findings**
Openly: Share research outputs, insights, and recommendations widely through publications, reports, and online platforms to reach a broad audience.
- **Advocate for Policy Reforms and Social Change:** Leverage research findings to advocate for necessary reforms, platform policies, and societal norms to address and prevent tech-facilitated gender-based violence.
- **Raise Public Awareness and Education:** Engage in public discourse, educational outreach, and media engagements to raise

awareness about the issue and promote informed discussions and actions.

e. Continual Learning and Adaptation:

- **Update Research Methodologies and Focus Areas:** Regularly refine research approaches and adjust focus areas to stay relevant with the evolving tech landscape and emerging forms of gender-based violence.
- **Evaluate the Effectiveness of Interventions:** Assess the impact and effectiveness of implemented interventions and policies, learning from successes and failures to enhance future strategies.
- **Incorporate Feedback and Diverse Perspectives:** Actively seek and integrate input from diverse communities, affected individuals, and other stakeholders to enrich the understanding and approach to tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

4.6.2 GOVERNMENT, POLICYMAKERS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT



a. Facilitate Access to Data and Information:

- **Provide Comprehensive Crime and Prosecution Data:** Regularly release detailed and anonymized

data on incidents, investigations, and prosecutions related to tech-facilitated gender-based violence, ensuring accuracy and comprehensiveness.

- **Enhance Data Sharing with Research Institutions:** Establish collaborations with academic institutions and research bodies to share relevant data securely and ethically, fostering research and analysis.

b. Legislate Research-Centric Policies:

- **Formulate Policies Supporting Research and Analysis:** Develop and implement legislations that facilitate research on tech-facilitated gender-based violence, addressing any legal barriers impeding research activities.
- **Engage with Researchers in Policy Formulation:** Actively involve academic and research communities in policy development processes, ensuring policies are informed by empirical evidence and expert insights.
- **Address Privacy and Ethical Concerns:** Establish clear guidelines and protocols for ethical research practices, ensuring the privacy and safety of individuals involved in or affected by research activities.

c. Allocate Funds and Resources for Research:

- **Invest in Research Initiatives:** Allocate substantial funding and resources to support research projects, studies, and initiatives

focusing on tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

- **Promote Research Grants and Scholarships:** Establish specialised grants, scholarships, and funding opportunities for scholars and institutions researching tech-facilitated gender-based violence.
- **Support Capacity Building for Research:** Provide financial and logistical support for training, workshops, and capacity-building programmes aimed at enhancing research skills and knowledge.

d. Foster Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange:

- **Create Multisectoral Collaboration Platforms:** Develop forums and platforms for dialogue and collaboration between researchers, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders.
- **Promote Inter-Agency Cooperation:** Encourage collaborations between different government agencies, departments, and external entities to synergize efforts and share insights.
- **Facilitate International Collaboration:** Engage with international bodies, governments, and research institutions to exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices on addressing tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

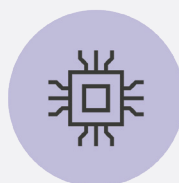
e. Encourage Innovation and Development of Solutions:

- **Incentivise Development of Technological Solutions:** Provide incentives and support for the development of innovative tech solutions aimed at preventing and addressing tech-facilitated gender-based violence.
- **Support Pilot Programmes and Solution Testing:** Facilitate the

implementation and testing of newly developed solutions, assessing their effectiveness and scalability.

- **Promote Research on Intervention Effectiveness:** Support studies evaluating the impact and efficacy of interventions and solutions, aiding the refinement and optimisation of strategies.

4.6.3 TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES



a. Insights and Transparency:

- **Insights:** Tech companies should share insights around the aspects TFGBV with accredited research institutions and think tanks, while respecting user privacy and data protection laws, to facilitate more informed discourse.
- **Release detailed Compliance Reports:** Regularly publish compliance reports detailing the different aspects of gender-based violence and actions taken thereof to foster a culture of openness and accountability.

b. Support Independent Research:

- **Funding Research Projects:** Allocate resources and funding to support independent research

projects studying the implications, prevalence, and nature of tech-facilitated gender-based violence, ensuring the autonomy and objectivity of the research.

- **Collaborate with Academia:** Establish partnerships with academic institutions and think tanks to support and undertake multidisciplinary research on tech-facilitated gender-based violence, contributing to the development of more informed policies and interventions.

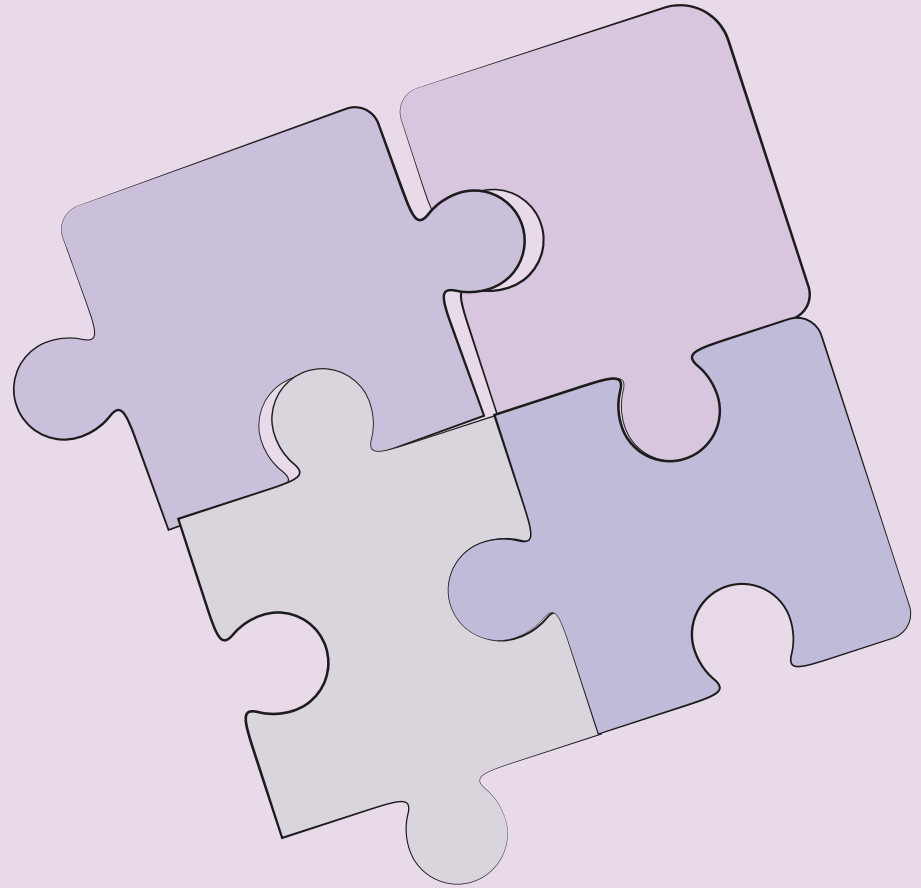
c. Create Platforms for Knowledge Exchange:

- **Host Workshops and Webinars:** Organise and host workshops, webinars, and other

knowledge-sharing platforms where researchers, policymakers, and industry representatives can discuss the latest findings, challenges, and best practices in addressing tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

- **Engage in Multi Stakeholder Dialogues:** Actively participate in dialogues with civil society, government bodies, and other stakeholders to discuss and

collaborate on findings and implications of research on tech-facilitated gender-based violence.



CHAPTER 5:

VISUALISING THE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF ACTIONING THE FRAMEWORK



It is crucial for institutions to recognise the potential of adopting this framework to not only enhance the manageability of their efforts but also significantly increase their impact. Our vision for this framework extends beyond being merely a guideline; it is intended to

serve as a catalyst for a more coordinated and accountable digital landscape. In this chapter, we outline the expected outcomes that can materialise when this framework is successfully put into practice.

A. ACCESS: OUTCOMES RELATED TO AVAILABILITY OF TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT AND DIGITAL LITERACY

- Addressing the specific needs of all the sexual and gender-based vulnerable groups will ensure equitable access to technology.
- Vulnerable groups will gain the skills to navigate the digital realm safely while fully understanding their rights and potential risks.

- Cultivating safe digital environments will guarantee freedom of expression without the fear of retaliation or violence.
- Leveraging technology will empower vulnerable groups to seek aid and support in times of emergency.

IMPACT

Empowered women and sexual and gender minorities with safe and inclusive digital access that fosters their economic growth and provides a secure lifeline during crises.

B. PREVENTION: OUTCOMES RELATED TO SOCIETAL ATTITUDE AND AWARENESS CHANGES

- Challenging underlying societal attitudes will lead to the prevention of violence across various settings.
- Promoting gender equality will amplify the voices of women and sexual and gender-based minorities in both public and private spheres.
- Ensuring respectful interactions among individuals from diverse backgrounds in India will solidify positive and equal relationships.
- Supporting men and boys in adopting healthier masculinity norms will reshape societal perspectives on these concepts and contribute to the creation of safe spaces, preventing underlying cases of abuse like intimate partner violence.

IMPACT

An inclusive Indian society where gender biases and stereotypes are dissolved and mutual respect, equality and universal dignity prevails.

C. EARLY INTERVENTION: OUTCOMES RELATED TO EMPOWERMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

- Actively listening to the voices of vulnerable communities and providing them with additional support will ensure a holistic approach to combating gender-based violence.
- Developing advanced safety by design features will enable the vulnerable communities to protect themselves from potential online violence.
- Establishing efficient and responsive interventions mechanisms and processes will act as a safety net, minimising the repercussions of such violence.

IMPACT

Digitally independent women and sexual and gender-based minorities with appropriate knowledge, skills and safety resources that drastically reduces their vulnerability.

D. RESPONSE AND REDRESSAL: OUTCOMES RELATED TO EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT REDRESSAL

- Establishing accessible and responsive reporting mechanisms on digital platforms will simplify the reporting of violence.
- Encouraging inclusive policies and procedures will ensure equal access to justice and support for all.
- Aligning legal frameworks with digital policies will offer an integrated approach against TFGBV.
- Ensuring timely legal recourse will lead to prompt justice delivery.

IMPACT

Streamlined justice delivery system that fosters deterrence in the society and leads to a reduction in TFGBV.

E. RECOVERY AND HEALING: OUTCOMES RELATED TO SUPPORT AND AID

- Creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment will validate and respect survivors' experiences.
- Legitimising the roles of professional support systems will make their services more accessible.
- Addressing the multifaceted impacts of violence holistically will foster resilience and post-traumatic growth among survivors. Initiatives focused on economic security will help reintegrate survivors into workplaces and communities.
- Implementing long-term support mechanisms will ensure sustained well-being and recovery.

IMPACT

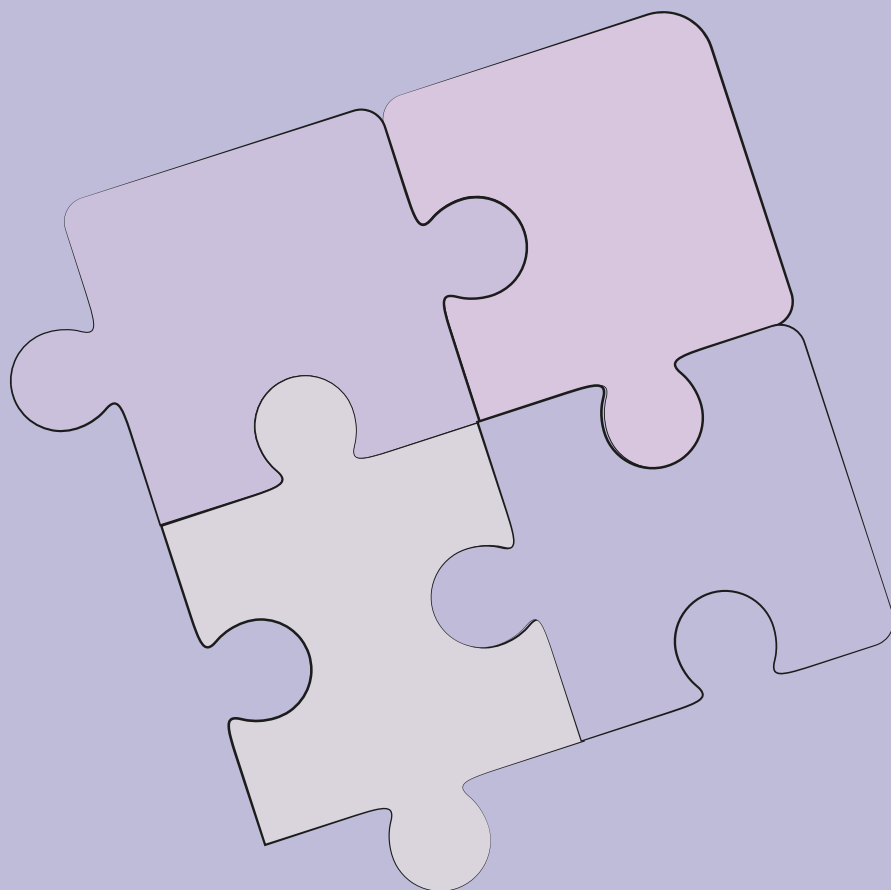
Creation of a more compassionate and inclusive society that prioritises holistic well-being, valuing mental recovery as paramount to physical healing.

F. RESEARCH: OUTCOMES RELATED TO KNOWLEDGE BUILDING AND DISSEMINATION

- Building capacity in academic institutions will lead to impactful research on TFGBV. awareness and understanding.
- Ensuring continuous learning and adaptation will guarantee that strategies remain relevant amidst the evolving digital landscape.
- Utilising research findings in policy-making will enhance public awareness and understanding.
- Addressing knowledge gaps will ensure interventions are based on a profound understanding of technology-facilitated violence dynamics. Conducting inclusive research will ensure the challenges of the most vulnerable communities are addressed in the fight against TFGBV.

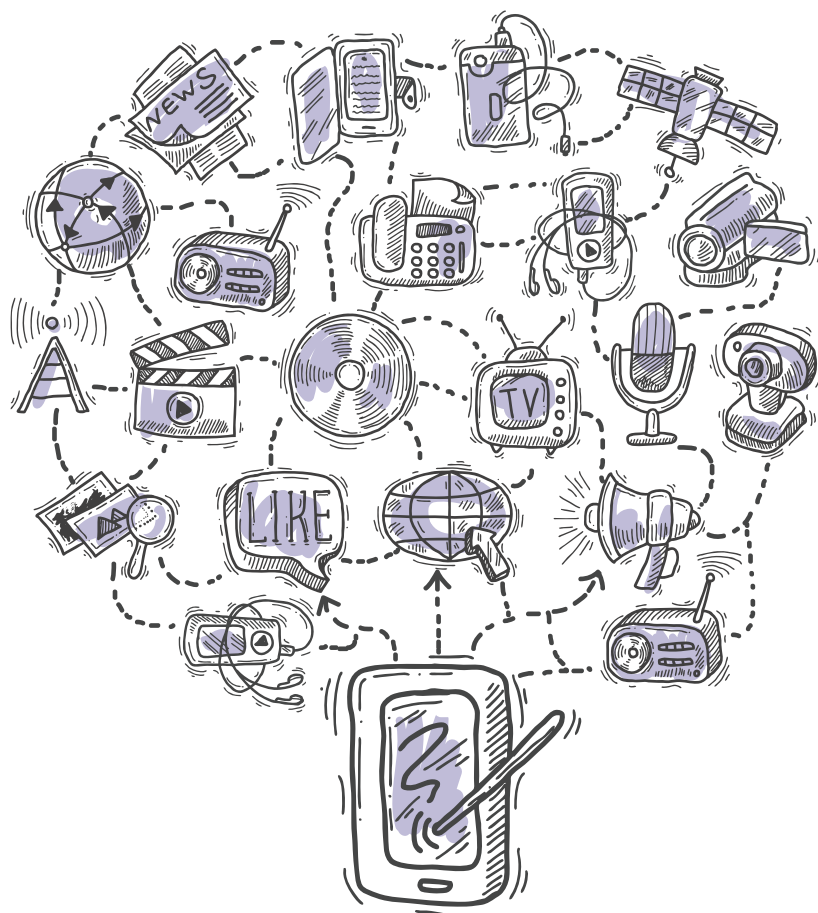
IMPACT

Creation of a more informed society, championing continuous research, and weaving scholarship into the fabric of understanding and countering TFGBV



CHAPTER 6:

*IT STARTS WITH YOU:
ADVOCATE AGAINST TFGBV*



The journey towards creating a safer and more inclusive digital landscape requires a collective will and shared responsibility. To bring our vision of a society as a whole into reality, we call

upon every reader, stakeholder, and participant in the digital realm to unite with us, reinforcing our determination and amplifying our impact.

- **Support:** Stand with us by actively engaging in our initiatives aimed at promoting the adoption of the framework.
- **Endorse:** Add your voice and credibility to the framework, helping to affirm its importance in addressing TFGBV to a broader audience.
- **Promote:** Utilise your platforms, networks, and spheres of influence to raise awareness about the framework and encourage more advocates to join this cause.

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES FOR CYBER SAFETY

Reporting cybercrime incidents has been made accessible through multiple channels. Individuals can lodge complaints via the helpline number 1930 or through the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal at <https://cybercrime.gov.in/> to empower victims and witnesses to take swift action against digital offences.

Community organisations like the Centre for Social Research and Sayfty are empowering individuals with valuable toolkits to enhance safety and awareness, offering practical guidance and information on addressing gender-based violence and creating safer environments.

Over 19,600 Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) personnel, judicial officers, and prosecutors have received specialised training in cybercrime awareness, investigation techniques and forensic towards enhancing digital safety for vulnerable populations.

In a bid to combat cybercrime, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is utilising platforms like Twitter (@cyberDost), conducting radio campaigns, and distributing a Handbook for Adolescents / Students.

Recognising the importance of cyber safety, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has taken a proactive step by issuing guidelines to schools to mandate the installation of robust firewalls, filtering, and monitoring software on all computers, along with the implementation of effective security policies to ensure a safe online environment for students.

ANNEXURE 1



This annexure comprises a compilation of endorsement letters from Hon'ble Members of the Indian Parliament who have lent their invaluable support to this framework. We are profoundly grateful to Dr. Fauzia Khan; Dr. Heena Gavitt; Shri Pratap Rao Jadhav; Smt. Rita Bahuguna Joshi; Shri Sujeet Kumar; Smt. Sulata Deo and Dr. T. Sumathy. Their endorsements not only strengthen our initiative but also signify the importance of this cause.

Dr Fauzia Khan
Member of Parliament
(Rajya Sabha)



**Member, Standing Committee
of Consumer Affairs,
Food and Public Distribution
Member, Standing Committee
of Empowerment of Women**

**MP/PBN/2023/352
Date: 12.10.23**

Message

I write to express my appreciation to **The Dialogue** for undertaking this critical research titled “#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space”. The rapid advancement of technology has undeniably transformed our lives for the better, however, it has also given rise to a distressing trend—the proliferation of online harms, disproportionately affecting women.

As we engage in the comprehensive overhaul of our legal frameworks to address these pressing concerns, it becomes even more critical that we continue to invest in research efforts like these. These efforts serve as the bedrock for the development of innovative solutions to combat tech-based harms against women and to foster a more empowering online space.

I appreciate and endorse the framework proposed by this research which urges stakeholders to move beyond looking at online harms in isolation and to adopt a more comprehensive view of this challenge which emanates from the underlying societal biases itself. Accordingly, it is important that our solutions also focus on not just improving the technology ecosystem but also on addressing the prevalent stereotypes and prejudices in the society that undermine the rights of women.

I encourage all stakeholders, both within the legislative chambers and outside to recognise the gravity of this issue and to lend their support to this framework. It is incumbent upon us to collectively address these concerns and work towards a digital landscape that is safer, more inclusive, and conducive to the full exercise of women's rights.

Dr Fauzia Khan

Address: Nandkheda Road Parbhani (Maharashtra) 431401 Mobile: 9823144575 E-mail: fauziakhan.51@rediffmail.com
Delhi Address: Bungalow Number C-1/5 Humayun Road New Delhi 110003 Phone: 011-24641101 E-mail: pbncamp11@gmail.com

DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)
Nandurbar, Maharashtra
CHAIRPERSON
Committee on Empowerment of Women



- MEMBER:**
- Public Undertakings
 - Standing Committee on Water Resources
 - General Purposes Committee
 - Consultative Committee on Tribal Affairs

Office : 213, Parliament House Annexe
Extension Building,
New Delhi-110 001

Tel. : 011-21410283
011-23035735

Resi. : 30, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi-110 001

Tel. : 011-23381942

Endorsement Letter for the Framework on Streamlining Women Safety in the Digital Space

I write to congratulate The Dialogue and Bumble Inc. in India for their framework titled “#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space”. This is noteworthy research towards promoting online safety of women in India through the collaboration of all social institutions and stakeholders.

The framework recognizes the multifaceted nature of online abuse and harassment and the role of involving all segments of society to tackle its repercussions. By bringing together government bodies, online platforms, community organizations, educational institutions, families, and other key stakeholders, the framework lays the foundation for a more comprehensive and effective response mechanism to this pervasive issue. The framework also acknowledges that online violence is not confined to one specific domain, but rather, it permeates various facets of our society and should be addressed through a unified and coordinated response. By engaging all community members, the framework also fosters a culture of shared accountability in combating tech-based violence and empowers every individual to take an active role in creating a safer and more respectful digital space.

I extend my support and endorsement to the framework. Such inclusive and collaborative efforts are essential for achieving meaningful progress in this area, and I look forward to witnessing the positive impact that it creates in due course.

(Dr Heena Vijaykumar Gavit)

Plot No. 6, Viral Vihar Colony, Khodai Mata Road, Nandurbar Distt., Nandurbar-425 412, Maharashtra
Tel. No. :02564-220777, E-mail : drheenagavit@gmail.com, drheenagavit.ndboffice@gmail.com



प्रतापराव जाधव

संसद सदस्य (लोक सभा)

सभापति:
संचार और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी संबंधी स्थायी समिति
पूर्व मंत्री, महाराष्ट्र सरकार

सदस्य:

- हिन्दी राजभाषा समिति
- परामर्शदात्री समिति, श्रम एवं रोजगार मंत्रालय
- सामान्य प्रयोजनों संबंधी समिति, लोक सभा



PRATAPRAO JADHAV

Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)

Chairperson:

Standing Committee on Communication and
Information Technology
Former Minister, Maharashtra Government

Member:

- Committee of Parliament on Official Language
- Consultative Committee,
Ministry of Labour and Employment
- General Purposes Committee, Lok Sabha

No.001/TD-PRJ/10/23

12th October 2023

Namaskar,

I write to extend my heartiest congratulations to The Dialogue and Bumble Inc. in India for their notable framework titled "#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space". This framework is a commendable effort towards gender equality and will play an instrumental role in shaping a safer and more inclusive future for the technological landscape.

We have made noteworthy strides towards achieving gender equality in the tech space in recent years. However, it is imperative that we continue to advocate for even greater representation and opportunities for women in the tech space. By recognising the significant role that gender equality plays in fostering innovation, creativity, and holistic problem-solving, we are not only empowering women but also strengthening the entire tech ecosystem. The recommendations contained in the framework are particularly interesting in the light of the challenges that persist in this domain. From addressing gender disparity in STEM fields to encouraging and empowering more women to take up leadership roles, the framework highlights various fronts where action is required.

I support and endorse the framework and encourage all other stakeholders with a stake in the digital space to consider and adopt the recommendations presented therein and work towards a safer and more empowering digital ecosystem.

Best regards,

[PRATAPRAO JADHAV]

Office: Room No. 120, Parliament House Annexe Ext. Building, B-Block, New Delhi-110 001 Tel. 011-23035763, 21410264
Residence: 23, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 Tel. 011-23740412, 011-23740413, 23345478
Office: Khasdar Jansampark Karyalay, 'Buldana Pride' Building, Infront of Tehsil Office, Buldana (Maharashtra)- 443 001
Phone No.: 07262-247777, E-mail: prataprao.jadhav@sansad.nic.in



PROF. RITA BAHUGUNA JOSHI
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)

CHAIRPERSON

Joint Committee on Salaries & Allowances
for Members of Parliament



CONVENER

Committee of Parliament on Official Language

MEMBER

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural
Development;

Parliamentary Consultative Committee on
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Endorsement Letter for the Framework on Streamlining Women Safety in the Digital Space

I write to congratulate The Dialogue and Bumble Inc. in India for their significant framework titled “#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space”. I believe that the framework holds the potential to play an important role in the upcoming policy discourse on online safety in India, particularly for women and other marginalised communities.

The framework takes a comprehensive and collaborative approach to address the issue of online gender based harms by dividing the requisite interventions into different stages. This approach reflects a more holistic approach towards addressing the safety challenges in the digital space. By recognising the different stages of harm and recognising the shared role of all the critical stakeholders in the online space, be it the government and the tech companies or the community organisations and the educational institutions, this framework aims to not only tackle immediate concerns but also pave the way for consistent feedback and improvement.

It is also commendable that the framework sheds light on aspects that are sometimes overlooked, or not prioritised, such as digital literacy and skilling initiatives by grassroots organisations and the need to focus on the rehabilitation of the victims.

I applaud and endorse this framework and urge that the recommendations provided therein should be closely reflected upon by all the stakeholders who have a stake in the digital safety space. I believe that the collaborative efforts outlined in the framework are essential for achieving meaningful progress in this area, and urge all stakeholders to actively participate in its implementation.

(Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi)

Office: Room No. 211, Block B, Parliament House Annexe Extension, New Delhi-110 001, Phone: 011-23035767, Telefax: 011-21410280

Delhi Address: 3, Harish Chandra Mathur Lane, New Delhi-110 001

Constituency Address: 20, Minto Road, Prayagraj (Allahabad)-211 001, Uttar Pradesh

Email: ritahoshooffice@gmail.com



सत्यमेव जयते

Sujeet Kumar

Member of Parliament
Rajya Sabha

Greetings!!!

I am writing to express my endorsement and support for the framework titled "#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space," developed by The Dialogue and Bumble Inc. in India. The relevance of this framework in addressing the issue of online safety for women, particularly those belonging to marginalised communities, is commendable.

Over the years, we have made significant strides towards the realisation of women's rights, but it is evident that we can do better. Online safety for women is undeniably one of the most critical challenges that requires our collective attention and action. Violence against women, whether it occurs offline or in the digital realm, is a deeply rooted societal harm that necessitates the support and coordination of all institutions and stakeholders. Towards this, I applaud the recommendations put forth in this framework, particularly the emphasis on fostering a culture of more meaningful coordination mechanisms between different stakeholders be it the government and the private sector or households and the community organisations. I believe that these recommendations will help in widening our perspectives and looking at women empowerment through a more wholesome lens with a recognition of all the critical pillars of action, be it their inclusion in leadership roles or creating an environment of equality and non-discrimination in the households and workplaces.

I encourage a detailed deliberation of the recommendations provided in this framework by all the critical parties and look forward to seeing the positive impact that this framework will have on the lives of women in the digital space.


(SUJEET KUMAR)

C-1/12, Humayun Road, New Delhi-110003
Plot-152, Next to Aum Building, Patia Square,
Bhubaneswar-751024, Odisha

sujeetkumar.mp@sansad.nic.in
+91-11-2461115, +91-674-2744814
+91-7978758134, +91-9967376283

 SujeetKOfficial



Sulata Deo
Member of Parliament
(Rajya Sabha)



Delhi Add: C-404, Swaran
Jayanti Sadan,
New Delhi- 110001

Mob: +91 9438380755
+91 9868181105

Ref No. MP-SU/B-32

17/10/2023

Letter of Appreciation for the Framework on Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space

I write to express my support for the commendable initiative presented by The Dialogue and Bumble in their framework – “#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space”. It is heartening to witness efforts directed towards the online safety of women, especially those coming from marginalised socio-economic groups.

With the ongoing consultations towards amending the Information Technology legislation of India as well as the Indian Penal Code, it is important to keep the safety and security of women at the core of our upcoming policy interventions. The recommendations of this framework, focusing on the need to foster greater collaboration among diverse stakeholders – from government bodies and tech enterprises to grassroots community groups, households, and academic institutions – are indeed noteworthy. Gender based violence is an extremely deep-rooted pervasive challenge that can only be addressed through the synergy and cooperation between all societal groups. Moreover, with the tech space being a reflection of the physical world, our interventions need to start at the societal level itself to ensure long-term solutions.

I endorse this framework and extend my appeal to all my colleagues and other key stakeholders in the digital space to support this cause. Only through mutual support and collective ingenuity can we find effective and sustainable solutions against gender-based harms, and create a digital environment where safety and inclusivity are not mere aspirations but lived realities for every individual.

With kind regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Sulata Deo

(Sulata Deo)

Website : <http://rajyasabha.nic.in>





**Dr. T. Sumathy (a)
Thamizhachi Thangapandian**

M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

**Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)
South Chennai Constituency - Tamil Nadu**

MEMBER :

- Standing Committee on Information Technology
- Consultative Committee - Social Justice & Empowerment



सत्यमेव जयते

Residence :

Plot No.8, 1st Main Road, Raja Nagar,
Neelankarai, Chennai-600 115, Tamilnadu

Phone : 044-24491858

Mobile : +91-9344833508

Office :

No.115, Dr.Muthulakshmi Salai,
Greater Chennai Corporation, Zone-13

Annex Building (Thiruvengadam Salai),
Adyar, Chennai - 600 020, Tamilnadu

Phone : 044 - 24401858

Appreciation Letter for the Framework on Harmonising the Approach Towards Online Safety of Women

I write to express my appreciation for The Dialogue and Bumble Inc. in India for their framework titled “#BreaktheSilo: Streamlining Gender Safety in the Digital Space”. This is a noteworthy research which will be helpful towards furthering a progressive discourse around the intersection of online safety and women rights in India.

The digital space, while offering connectivity and resources, also presents unique challenges to the rights and dignity of women in the form of a range of online harms like cyberbullying, stalking and doxxing, amongst others. The framework prioritises the well-being and recovery of survivors as an essential component in the fight against online safety challenges. By placing survivors at the centre of the approach, the framework recognises not just the need for immediate interventions to tackle a crime but also the requirement of long term solutions that facilitate the appropriate recovery of the victim, both physically and emotionally.

Recovery and rehabilitation encompass the journey towards reclaiming agency, self-worth, and a sense of normalcy. The framework highlights the same by recognising the importance of counselling, economic empowerment, and skilling as essential elements of recovery and rehabilitation to instil hope, empowerment, and a renewed sense of agency in survivors of online violence.

I am confident that this framework has the potential to facilitate a more informed response towards threats to women safety and in the digital space. Accordingly, I endorse its adoption and implementation by all the relevant stakeholder groups.

Dr T Sumathy (aka) Thamizhachi Thangapandian

Dr. T. Sumathy (a) Thamizhachi Thangapandian
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)
Chennai South Constituency
TAMIL NADU.

C-3, Sindhu Apartment, A-Block, MS Flats, BKS Marg, New Delhi - 110 001
E-mail : contact@ithamizhachi.com • Website : www.ithamizhachi.com



ANNEXURE 2



In this annexure, we wish to convey our profound appreciation to the organisations that have wholeheartedly endorsed this framework as we work together in our collective endeavor to address TFGBV in India. Their steadfast dedication and support have played a pivotal role in advancing our mission to cultivate a safer and more equitable society. Collectively, we are effecting substantial change, and their invaluable contributions are genuinely cherished.



W O M A N
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