
Gendered Silences in the Digital Sphere: Everyday Cyber Violence and the Politics of (In) Visibility

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ABSTRACT

In a world that is becoming increasingly more digitized, visibility is synonymous with voice, participation, and empowerment. But visibility even online can prove dangerous to a lot of women, especially those occupying both sides of caste, class religion, and region. In this paper, the author questions the paradox of digital inclusion on the premises that cyber violence generates regimes of gendered silencing. The research is informed by the understanding of concepts of subaltern counter-publics by feminist theorist Nancy Fraser (1990) and performative agency under constraint by Judith Butler (1997) to rebuke structural character of any given day-to-day cyber harms that lie beyond individualized acts of mistreatment to interpret more seeing asymmetries of power, appreciation, and accessibility. Cyberstalking, doxxing, non-consensual distribution of images, and morphing, are not merely deviations of misuse of technology but are enclosed in larger patterns of socio-cultural management, humiliation, and privacy invasion. According to the Cyber Crime Division of



National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2023) cyber-crimes against women in India have increased by 54 per cent in the last five years. In a similar way, UN Women (2022) underlines how women with publicly identifiable positions disproportionately experience online violence, which registers in the form of emotional discomfort, career losses, and online retreats, which researchers label as so-called forced digital invisibility (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Jane, 2017). The present paper is a critical analysis of how the architecture of the platforms, the logic of the algorithms, and the lack of proper redressal systems reproduce a politics of (in)visibility wherein women are hyper-visible as victims but invisible in their plea of justice. The study re-contextualizes cyber violence within a feminist digital justice framework to avoid considering it an isolated issue or that of a single instance and rather as one form of exclusion that reflects deeply gendered and systematic reality, which limits the participation in democracy. In that process, the paper also identifies the emerging forms of resistance modes such as: collective use of hashtags, digital literacy movements that question the hegemony norms of speech, safety, and surveillance. By so doing, the paper also points at some emerging forms of resistance such as collective hashtag interventions as well as digital literacy movements that undermine hegemonic norms of speech, safety, and surveillance. Within the framework of the lived experience of women in the Global South, especially, India, the paper draws attention to reimagine digital citizenship through life-sustaining concepts of equity, caring, and shared responsibility.

I. Introduction

1. Introducing the Paradox of Digital Visibility and Gendered Silencing

Digital age has been hailed as the means of new possibilities of participation, expression, and connection especially to those considered as being marginalized. But this increased visibility has also increased the susceptibility of women and gender minorities to emerging types of violence. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) comments that the digital culture is commonly discussed as the economy of visibility, which tends to



strengthen rather than undermine patriarchal power. Specifically, the online presence of women turns into a two-sworded tool: on the one hand, it empowers them by giving them a voice, on the other, it opened the door to surveillance, harassment, and abuse.

This is the paradox of being in the spotlight (digitally) and being at a higher risk that compose the central issue of this paper.

2. Key Concepts Definition of Cyber Violence, (In) Visibility and Gendered Harm

Cyber violence is expressed by the utilization of technology to harm or harass individuals or use technology to control people, typically women, by performance of cyberstalking, image-based abuse, trolling, doxxing, and content sharing without consent. UN Women (2021) describes that even compared to other online harms, such as cyber-bullying, online violence is not simply a digital version of offline harm, as it poses thoroughly new types of persistent, anonymous, and ubiquitous threats. Invisibility as feminist and postcolonial theory has addressed, is the concomitant hyper-visibility of the marginal body as the object of restraint and attack and the veiling of this body in decision-making, status ascendancy and justice. In her work, Judith Butler (1997) associates' visibility with vulnerability making an argument that being visible in the public place presupposes becoming a target first of all in the case when the dominant models are violated. In that regard, gendered harm is material as well as symbolic- it harms the mental capacity, the online presence, professional prospects, even the civic

discourse. Adrienne Massanari (2017) refers to digital media as the world of toxic techno- cultures, which values gendered bullying and even trivializes it.

3. Putting into the context through recent events: Bulli Bai, Sulli Deals

This question is encouraged by practical events. Sulli Deals and Bulli Bai cases were observed in 2021 and 2022 in India where Muslim women, journalists, students, and activists were being auctioned to the highest bidder than the others over GitHub-based apps. Such examples can be regarded as the vindication of misunderstood misogyny, Islamophobia, and casteism that intersect on a digital platform to shame and silence the women who demand a voice in the open. With the reporting of Khabar Lahariya and The Wire, these are not just privacy degradations but also, they bring fear to the table and many women end up censoring themselves or abandoning platforms altogether.

4. Problem and Relevance in Global South and in India in particular



Although the data shows that online abusers cut across all geographies, Global South women experience multiple exclusions on account of digital divides, patriarchal norms and underdeveloped enforcement. According to GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report (2023), women in South Asia tend to use mobile internet 41 percent less likely than men. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2023) in India, there are more than 24,000 cases of cybercrime, and the number related to cyber victimization of women increased dramatically. However, these numbers hide the fact that there is mass scale underreporting under the impact of stigma, unawareness, and mistrust in systems. The Indian specificities such as high regional, class, caste differences provide a special location where the questions of the reproduction of the gender-based inequalities in digital infrastructures can be explored. Gendered access to technology in India is a socio-cultural power that is built into the processes of utilizing and controlling technology (Nimmi Rangaswamy 2020; Usha Raman 2019).

5. Paper Objectives and Scope of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is:

- Theorize the concept of gendered silences on the internet based on feminisms and intersectionality.
- Mapping daily instances of cyber violence that are faced by women in India.
- Explain the role of digital space, algorithms, and law enforcement processes in politics of (in)visibility.

The scope is interdisciplinary, drawing from feminist theory, media studies, digital sociology, and legal critique, with a specific focus on the Global South, particularly India.

II. Theoretical Framework

1. Judith Butler: Performativity, Precarity, and the Risk of Visibility

The theory of gender performativity introduced by Judith Butler (1990) discusses the fact that gender is not a temperate identity but a repetition of performance, which depends upon the social norms. Even the performances by women in the digital platform, a tweet, a selfie, political sentiments are also performative acts. Nonetheless, this exposure actually subjected them to precarity (Butler, 2004) of being subjected to violence, trolling and erasing. Such a framework aids us in recognizing that the nature of



digital participation is determined by fear and vulnerability, so visibility is both a source of power and powerlessness. In a typical case, when a subject talks politically, it talks with an ability of being denied. Butler (2004)

2. Nancy Fraser: Subalterns Counter-publics and Misrecognition

The notion of subaltern counter-publics advanced by Nancy Fraser (1990) comes handy in theorizing the creation of an alternative discourse space by marginalized people, as in the case of women, caste-oppressed populations, and queer people, on the Internet. Nonetheless, the actions of trolling (online harassment), surveillance, and moderation of platforms maintain even such counter-publics. Fraser has used the term misrecognition to describe how non-dominant forms of identities are not recognized by dominant structures, which seems to characterize the experience of women in digital space given that their experiences are not necessarily credible or even acknowledged. Although it is not psychologically caused, misrecognition is a kind of institutional subordination. Fraser (1998)

3. Gayatri Spivak: Epistemic violence and question of voice

The question of whether the subaltern can speak posed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) is vital even in the age of the Internet. Women are silenced through trolling, minimizing and co-opting even when they talk online. According to the theory of epistemic violence formulated by Spivak, it is the process of eliminating marginal knowledge systems and other experiences. In online environments, one can observe this through platform algorithms and content moderation that in many cases do not prevent, and in many cases are even unable to identify, gendered harm. The subaltern does not speak; not because she has no voice, but because the voice is non-existent in major units. Spivak (1988)

4. Algorithmic Oppression by Safiya Umoja Noble

The distinction by Safiya Umoja Noble as studied in *Algorithms of Oppression* (2018) is that the search engines and algorithms reproduce racialized and gendered hierarchies. Her notion of an algorithmic oppression plays a crucial role in comprehending the lack of neutrality of digital infrastructures which is coded with the biases of the communities that construct it. As an example, platforms tend to promote inflammatory content but silence feminist voices, which value the suppression of women. Search engines are not the public goods; search engines are advertisement companies. -Noble (2018)

5. Kimberle Crenshaw: Intersection and Multiple Vulnerability



The concept introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) on the intersectionality of identity allows us to understand that various forms of identity, gender, caste, religion, and class, sexuality, increase the risks posed to the marginalized women on the Internet. There are different methods of cyber violence towards Dalit women, Muslim women, queer women, and rural women, and they are not only dependent on patriarchy, but on the conjuncture of engines of oppression. We are all going to fall between the cracks unless we are intersectional, with some of the most vulnerable among us. Crenshaw (1989)

6. Miranda Fricker Epistemic Injustice and the Credibility Deficit

Miranda Fricker (2007) coined the concept of epistemic injustice the injustices inflicted upon others with regard expressly to their knowledge-seeking capacity. The testimonies of women with regard to cyber violence are, in most cases, doubted, dismissed, or not believed and this is what Fricker refers to as a credibility deficit. This aids in considering the digital silencing of women not only as harassment, but as an instance of structural injustice, one that restricts whose knowledge can be considered legitimate. When the prejudice makes a hearer ascribe less credibility to the word of a speaker than the speech should obtain, the credibility deficit becomes incurred. Fricker (2007)

III. Mapping Everyday Cyber Violence

The present section is an informed mapping of the terrain of cyber violence against women in terms of its typologies, patterns, intersectional nature and empirical trends. This section, will look into these occurrences as discrete digital mis-demeanours, but as perched along a single continuum of gendered structural oppression which is advanced and embedded by layers of technological infrastructures.

1. Taxonomies of Gender-Based Cyber Violence

Cyber violence cannot be summarized through just a single perspective. Based on the typologies presented by UN Women (2021), APC (Association for Progressive Communications, 2015), and in the works of researchers such as Kee (2005) and Henry & Powell (2018), the following forms could be distinguished as the most commons ones:

- Cyberstalking non-stop monitoring, threat and intimidation notes.
- Internet sexual harassment- unwanted sexual content, messages or picture.
- Non-consensual image distribution (NCII) or revenue porn or image-based sexual abuse.
- Doxxing, sharing of personal information with the aim of causing real-life damage.



- Trolling and gang stalking - targeted harassment in order to shut down or to discredit.
- Deepfakes and morphing - AI-generated or edited pictures to sham a sexual humiliation.
- Cyberflashing and impersonation: displaying or impersonating unsolicited with the aim to degrade credibility.

These are not only technological associations but also very gendered demands, to humiliate, to discredit, to watch, or to make the target one without voice. Cyberviolence is not a novel form of violence it is a novel way of using old patterns of power. UN Women (2015)

2. Patterns and Motivations by Gender: Policing Presence and the Punishment of Speech

Cyber violence is grossly targeted to women who are aggressive, vocal or publicly engaged in the discourse. According to Adrienne Massanari (2017), social media networks such as Twitter and Reddit have now transformed into misogynistic, racist, and casteist, toxic techno-cultures based on the reception of free speech. Journalists, academics, activists, and content creators who are women, frequently have to contend with:

- Retaliation and retribution in terms of expression of political differences.
- Sexualized abuse that aims at shaming them into submission.
- Religious slurs and slurs based on caste (e.g. Bulli Bai, Sulli Deals cases).
- Family threats, job and physical safety.

This violence serves as a social control and exercises patriarchal ideas of who should be listened to.

3. Empirical Evidence: Reports, Statistics and the Bit of Darkness

Although cyber violence is underrated in terms of incidences, the data observed portrays an increasing trend towards it: NCRB (2023): Recorded more than 24,000 cases of cybercrime, of which 15,836 were as women-related, although specialists confirm that underreporting is huge because of a sense of shame, fear or ignorance in the field of digital literacy.

- UN Women (2022): Online abuse against women is prevalent globally, and 38 percent of women have experienced it in their lifetime; the rate is even higher among younger women, who in



certain settings reach 70 percent. NCW (India): More than 10,000 complaints to do with cyber violence have been made by women in 2022 alone, most of which involve stalking, impersonation, and photo morphing.

- Amnesty International (2020): Women of marginalized groups became more severely and enduringly abused, with Dalit, Muslim, and queer women affected most of all, aggravating the effect, as there is an overlap of forms of oppression.

Online abuse is patterned, targeted and disproportionately silences people who confront power structures in the society. Amnesty International (2020)

4. Intersectionality and Inequitable Access to Digitally-Induced Harm

This section discusses using the concept of intersectionality as proposed by Crenshaw (1991) on how particular women are more vulnerable because of the combined aspects of identities: The Dalit and Adivasi women, in particular, are subjected to casteist sexual epithets, and known to be the target of the offense of crossing the boundaries of either locution or locomotion (Rege, 1998).

- Muslim women are dehumanized especially Muslim women in their public positions as they are threatened by Islamophobic and sexualized threats (Sulli Deals). In both anonymous and localized types of digital space, queer and trans women have to contend with impersonation, outing, and psychological damage.
- The inaccessibility, awareness and institutionality of rural women makes online embarrassment a case of double marginalization. This stratified, online form of oppression has led to the fact that access is skewed both to the internet and to safety, expression, and justice.

5. Technological Complicity and Platform Architectures

Cyber violence is enhanced by the possibilities and breakdowns of the digital platforms. Women also have it worse due to a lack of highly effective content moderation, biased algorithm, and proper grievance processes. Facebook documents (According to Frances Haugen Whistleblowing, 2021) revealed that the company was conscious of the damaging impact of its platform among women, particularly in the non-Western contexts but did little to respond to it. Nudity is more likely to be removed by platforms quickly compared to hate speech or threats, which demonstrates that moderation priorities are gendered with moral hierarchy.



Inflammatory content is frequently increased by the algorithms in order to drive engagement, to ensure abusers have increased reach and visibility. Platforms are not neutral mediums to carry content, they determine what is observable, what may be said and what may be endured. Safiya Umoja Noble (2018) In this passage, the author shows that ordinary cyber violence is not a chance, secretive, or insignificant practice, but rather an ingrained system of gendered, inter-sectional domination in the internet age. Its normalization keeps the rule of digital patriarchy in which speech, presence, and dignity are allocated arbitrarily. In the following section, I will examine this violence in terms of translating it into (in)visibility, that is, they can be hyper-visible in terms of being targeted, and at the same time invisible as producers of knowledge or rights claimants.

IV. The Politics of (In)Visibility

This part is a critically unpacking in terms of which the conditions of erasure and visibility are mediated through the digital technologies. It posits that gender-based cyber violence is not just about hatred, but it is all about controlling who is allowed to see, hear and be heard. It points out the fact that the platform infrastructures, social norms, and algorithms all inform a politics of (in)visibility that is inherently gendered and intersectional.

1. The Visibility as Risk: The Empowerment to Exposure

A clear online presence has been widely regarded in techno-optimist stories as equated to voice, empowerment and participation. But feminist theorists keep pointing out the visibility is not necessarily liberating, to most it means surveillance, punishment, and withdrawal. Enactment of performativity Judith Butler (2004) writes of performativity under constraint, in which becoming visible makes the speaker vulnerable. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) has coined a term

of exposed publicness to state a point about visibility being the weapon against women (particularly those who are politically active, body-positive, or who break the norm). According to Alicia Kozma (2022), hyper-sexualization renders visible women who are otherwise out of sight on political matters, whereas platform moderation or a mob backlash can silence (derealize) them. Nor is being visible, being heard; nor is it necessarily that which is heard, being believed. Fighting feminism is not a new phenomenon, although it has taken new forms in recent years, especially following the mailing of pipe bombs to much-discussed actors, such as Elizabeth Warren and Ilhan Omar-Banet-Weiser (2018)

2. Constructing Digital Invisibility



As a Form of Survival through Silencing Being used as a reaction to constant abuse, lots of women isolate themselves in online space those scholars call forced digital invisibility. According to Emma Jane (2017) women tend to engage in self-censoring and deactivate accounts or forebear to speak politically online and this minimizes their emphasized audience activity. This is not a free choice strategic withdrawal; it is a coerced reaction to the violence that refutes silence as the lack of agency but instead as part of survival. According to the Amnesty International Troll Patrol Report (2018), 1/3 of women sampled in 8 countries had pointed out stressful exchanges with people they know or feel they are familiar with.

- The Amnesty International Troll Patrol Report (2018) found that 1 in 3 women surveyed across 8 countries had stopped expressing their opinions online out of fear of harassment. Among women of colour, the rate was even higher.
- In India, Oxfam India's 2022 report on online violence revealed that nearly 47% of women had experienced some form of abuse, and of these, 62% had considered reducing or stopping their online activity.

3. Platform Governance: Who Should Stay? Which People are Erased?

The social media platform though portraying themselves as being neutral facilitators of speech influence what is echoed, silenced, or deleted. The policies of their content moderations, algorithmic structure and community guidelines do not usually cover the marginalized users.

- Safiya Noble (2018) demonstrates that algorithms are an inadvertent extension of the existing inequalities in the society, or what she calls an algorithmic oppression.
- Jillian York (EFF, 2021) complains of the lack of transparency of moderation that is highly cultural and discriminatory against feminist and minority opinions, which instead allows hate speech to be disseminated.

In the cases where Black and brown women report abuse or injustice, the same studies by the MIT Media Lab (2019) show that their posts are more likely to get flagged or deleted than any other. The contemporary view of moderation in its least technical, not to say political, aspects is a truth. Jillian York (2021)

4. Algorithms to Socially Amplify Misogyny



The nature of the algorithms is such that they are programmed to encourage interactions and will therefore elevate outrageous, inflammatory, or violent voices at the expense of a more subtle or moral identity. The internal studies of Facebook (which were confirmed by whistleblower Frances Haugen in 2021) acknowledged that the algorithm of the service promotes divisive and extreme content, thereby delivering more exposure to hate and abuse, especially in such countries as India where contents are poorly controlled. Banet-Weiser and Miltner (2016) suppose that it is gendered humiliation, including revenge porn, slut-shaming, and organized trolling, which platform virality feeds on. Women in such a system are items to be seen and not items of voice. This is especially dangerous in the context of marginalized women, Dalit, Muslim, queer, or disabled whose presence is hyper-policed and frequently used against them as a weapon, whereas demands of justice are either disregarded or de-platformed.

5. The Double Bind of being seen at this paradigm, the visibility is seen as a two-fold bind:

- Being overexposed results in stalking and being followed and psychological abuse. Insufficient visibility results in obliteration, marginalization in discussion and policy obscurity.

“The problem is not that women are invisible; it is that their visibility is managed to serve the dominant gaze.” Anita Sarkeesian (2015)

6. Digital Citizenship Implication

Such politics of (in)visibility is a central element that determines who is allowed to be a digital citizen. Minal Hajratwala (2020) expresses that nowadays being online entails that women bear the emotional and strategic cost xxxof safety. The liberal inclusion in the public domain does not matter much to Nivedita Menon (2012), unless it is altered and devised in a way that not only embraces difference, dissent, and disobedience, but also nurtures it. Therefore, in a practical sense, digital citizenship, which is effectively envisioned as encompassing all people, is also highly differentiated and exclusionary, most notably in the Global South setting.

This part displays that the most viewed spaces of the digital spaces are neither equally available nor empowering or safe. It is mediated with care by the platforms, policed by society, and formed by interacting structures of oppression. Gendered hierarchies of voice, vulnerability, and value are amplified through digital infrastructures that make certain people and practices (in)visible with specific politics.



In the proceeding part, the paper will further elaborate this argument by looking at how silencing is structural and epistemic violence, which delegitimizes not just women as presence but also as knowledge carriers.

V. Silencing as Structural and Epistemic Violence

This sub-section reverberates definition (in)visibility with a conjecture on how gendered digital silences are not only a personal experience or an incident of episodic violence, but also a structural and epistemic state of matters. It is informed by critical feminist forms of knowledge, postcolonialism, and digital forms of governance criticism in exhibiting how some of the bodies, voices, and forms of knowledge have been dis-credited, delegitimized or have been erased through systemic processes of marginalization.

1. Structural Silencing to Harassment

The majority of the related talk in the world of people is that cyber violence is a complex of personal bad actions, trolling, and false accusation, these xenophobic manifestations of poorly behaved individuals. Yet, feminist thinkers claim that all these harms need to be positioned within structural inequalities which have been long present.

- As Sylvia Walby (2009) puts it, it is an instance of structural power that circuits gender violence that upholds patriarchy in institutions including the digital one. The Web Foundation (2020) report on Online Abuse 101 lays stress on the fact that by letting the users go unprotected, and there being impunity, by relying on the systems to do it, the tech platforms themselves turn into a certain active agent of reproducing this harm.
- Noble (2018) and Massanari (2017) explain that the web architecture of the network, including its algorithms, moderation policies, and design logics allows instituting the systemic silencing by focusing on virality, engagement, and profit rather than the issue of safety and justice.
- Cyber harassment is not a hitch of the system. It is an attribute of alpha digital patriarchy.” Along with many others, Massanari (2017)

2. Epistemic Injustice Who Counts?

The theory of epistemic injustice presented by Miranda Fricker (2007) offers one of the conceptual tools here. She characterizes it as wrong to a person in his or her role as knower, i.e., either by:



- Testimonial injustice meaning that the word of a person is rejected on the basis of prejudice that is identity-based (e.g. On the basis of identity prejudice, the reporting of the women about being abused is dismissed as such that women are sensitive or that women seek attention).
- Hermeneutical injustice, when lacking collective hermeneut IC, one does not have enough means to frame and justify their experiences (e.g., when image-based abuse or doxxing is not addressed in the legal framework).

Survivors of cyber violence encounter both versions in online space where, instead of credibility, they do not receive the language or institutional means to understand their injury. It is not that it is bad just to be disbelieved; it is that it is not even possible to make heads or tails over what has happened to you. Fricker (2007)

3. The Subaltern Online: Can Subaltern Speak?

This paper uses and extends the controversial question by Gayatri Spivak (1988), who posed the question, Can the Subaltern Speak? by reviewing the possibility of women having a voice, in particular, women at the margins of caste, class, and religion, when it comes to digital voice. Platforms seem to democratize speech, but the governance of platforms and the social construction of them will usually lead to the fact that only some voices get to be heard, rewarded, and/or safeguarded.

Here the concept of epistemic violence that Spivak articulates is relevant: oppressed women are speaking with words but nothing is kept and instead that speech is neglected, distorted, or eliminated within algorithmic and discourse systems. The announcement of elite or urban abuse that can also be met with an outpouring of social media outrage does not carry over to Dalit, Adivasi or rural women or trans women, showing that the digital gaze is not only distributed, which is confirmed by the facts of proximity to power.

4. Disenfranchisement of Feminist Testimonies and Activism

Feminist speech is not readily accepted; it is always either countered as illogical and captured under the “cancel culture” term or labelled as angry. Such a delegitimizing of feminist protests qualifies as a type of epistemic silencing, on its part. Banet-Weiser (2018) notes that intentions to feminism can be effectively critiqued, appropriated, or totally wiped out even when the respective feminist movements take place on digital platforms (such as MeToo).



- Journalists (Rana Ayyub, Ismat Ara and Sukanya Shantha) and online activists have been subject to coordinated assaults to not only attack their personal security, but also their reputation as producers of knowledge. Not only does such attacks infringe on the individual rights, but it also serves to delegitimize feminist knowledge systems and it reifies the epistemological hegemony of patriarchal and majoritarian knowledge systems.

5. Infrastructural Biases and Gaps Silencing Through Design Platform design is also digital silencing:

- Reporting systems are usually not accessible, non-responsive, or even unsafe, particularly to the non-English speaker or those who do not understand the law.
- AI content moderation systems are often unable to pick up culturally-specific slurs, regional-language abusive language, or casteist abuse, but have been found to over- remove feminist content as being abusive.
- Gender/ cultural safety of privacy settings and data governance tool is not considered, which allows users to become susceptible to abuse. Technological infrastructures are not value-free, their development and use will reproduce and re-establish who is heard, who is forgotten, and who is safeguarded. Noble (2018)

6. Silencing Costs,

Psychological and Political Epistemic and structural silencing does not only have social but also psychological effects: Women state that they have been feeling depressive, anxious, unable to sleep, and withdrawn because they constantly face attacks online (UNESCO, 2021). The hesitant survivors seek to avoid being discredited and will not speak out or seek justice as a chilling effect discouraging democratic participation. Intersectional-marginalized women experience the highest expense and very minimal or no redressal by institutions or within the community. This part has shown that silencing in the new digital world is not a way of harassing or abusing people, it is a structural and an epistemic state of affairs, which is determined by technology, powers and ideology. Women in general and those of marginalized communities specifically, are never completely epistemically capable according to their methods of delegitimization, erasure and algorithmic exclusion. The second part switches to female protest: how do women occupy space, forge their shared knowledge, and envision justice in their own language?



VI. Digital Resistance and Feminist Interventions

In this segment, this resistance is put in the front by the women and other marginalized groups not only reactively to digital violence, but also by developing counter-publics, creating feminist infrastructure, and making the case of transformative digital justice. It undermines passive construction of victimhood by shedding light on the fact that forms of resistance are political and epistemic and are realized due to intersectional, lived experiences of harm.

1. **Feminist #MeToo campaigns:** Talking Back to Power Hashtag campaigns have become one of the most notable forms of feminist counterpoints on the internet as a discourse of debate against silence, shame, and individualist blame.
 - **MeTooIndia: Counter-Public Testimonies** The MeTooIndia movement was one such wave where the power of testimonial politics has taken on the role of dislocating hegemonic institutions by revealing the trauma as a personal experience as a means of critical observance against the institution. The testimonies are not merely the moments of disclosure as they are represented by Nancy Fraser (1990) as epistemological ruptures or counter-publics of subalterns. MeTooIndia is not just disclosure; it is a break of the prevailing silence through the politics of the protesting voice.
 - **PinjraTod: Activism Feminist in Student Resistance to Surveillance** Pinjra Tod, embedded in the tradition of online mobilization and grounded in offline protest, is an example of the opposition to institutionalized control of the free will of women. It was an efficient mechanism of misregulation of nearby women by the father, and the campaign can be viewed as a rebuke both to cultural and administrative gatekeeping, built around the digital platform and supported with the help of social media. This trend of mobilization by PinjraTod is an example of how digital spaces have become a booster source of feminist protest against the mundane patriarchal rule.
 - **Girls at Dhabas: Digital reclamation of Public and Semi- Public Space** This brand of campaign was clever in that it disturbed the boundaries between on-line action and off- line mobilization by bringing the spatial exclusions of women towards the fore in South

Asian societies. The performance-based visibility and popular participation transformed ordinary actions of occupations into political action. Girls at Dhabas plays with the invisible to make



visible the female presence in Indian male dominant street culture, which is, in turn, a feminist cartography of resistance.

2. Construction of Feminist Facilities: Safety Tool to Community Guidelines Feminist activities (re)build feminist networks of communication, care, and support in addition to protests, a form of resistance in itself. Groups such as Point of View, Digital Rights Foundation, and Tactical Tech have created digital safety kit and consent-based model of security approaches to women and queer communities in the Global South. The Take Back the Tech! campaign involves digital storytelling and capacity-building on technology and focuses on the voices of survivors. The interventions are part of feminist ethics of care, and they encourage a vision of justice beyond punishment, which entails healing, accountability, and change at the structural level. In resistance, it is not merely a loud protest, but also the design of quiet tools and the drafting of community norms and stating that feminist ethics apply in the code. Nighat Dad

3. Intersectional Feminist Coalitions: Re-writing Voice of the Margins The dimensions of caste, religion, region, and sexuality, should be taken into consideration within Feminist digital justice. Minority groups are more susceptible to abuse on the Internet and are excluded in many dominant arguments of feminism. Dalit Women Fight: Intersectional Marginal Feminism DalitWomenFight is reclaiming the virtual discourse by confronting both the caste-patriarchy and savarna feminism. It records the violence in a place of epistemic power that cannot be erased because of its digital presence. Dalit Women Fight does not merely protest, but it is a demand that caste be the focus of feminist and digital justice narratives. Queer Muslim, Bahujan, and trans groups are examples of resistant visibility as they do not want to hand over the internet to the many. The sociality of their activism tells how digital space is a caste space, a communal space and a gendered space. Resistance must be feminist when it opens a space to the voices that least likely will be erased. Nivedita Menon

4. Reimagining Participation: Data Justice and Feminist Digital Pedagogies

The political economy of the internet has also been theorized by feminists as political interventions that question not only content, but also infrastructure, algorithms and data regimes.

- **Data Justice to the People:** Decolonizing Data Feminism Movements with this name require the replacement of the individualistic models of privacy and the introduction of collective responsibility, visibility, and fairness in information activities. Such initiatives are echoed by such critiques of algorithmic bias by Safiya Noble (2018) and demands made by Paola Ricaurte of



decolonial data ethics. Data Justice for All makes good use of expanding the field of resistance in addressing algorithmic harm to include principles of equity, dignity, and care. Feminist digital pedagogy, based on bell hooks (1994), focuses on critical digital literacy which allows the marginalized communities to question the digital practice than only questioning their own usage patterns but also the systems with which they come in contact with.

5. Policy Lobbying and Institutional Intervention

It is important that feminist involvement in policy and governance system prevents structural silencing and systemic impunity. Among them, such groups as IT for Change, Internet Democracy Project and Internet Freedom Foundation promote gender-transformational tech policy which implies platform accountability, data protection, and intersectional regulation.

- In India, feminists have been collaborating in the draft propositions of criminalization of deepfakes, reporting approaches, and gender-sensitive cyber-crime policies. UN Women (2022) has requested gender-responsive models of digital governance, and it should be noted that feminist activism has significantly contributed to advancing such initiatives in question. Policy and feminist struggle are not apart; policy is one of the terrains of feminist struggle. Well, yes, though this is not what I mean. Instead, I mean to be more like Takei, who always makes sure to be true to his convictions. Always take heed to be true to your convictions. Anja Kovacs
- Feminist mechanics of digital resistance are very dynamic- social media hashtags all the way to helplines, teaching methods to governmental legislation. These actions are not reactionary rather, they are restorative, and seek to create the digital spaces based on justice, care, and transformation. Making vocal its demands through its calls to visibility with safety, voice with recognition and participation with dignity, these movements invert the internet into a place of feminist possibility.

VII. Rethinking Digital Citizenship and Policy Implications

In this conclusive section, digital citizenship becomes less about the right to access the internet or free expression, but rather the right to dignified, safe and fair access to benefit in digital life.

It states that the existing frameworks of digital governance based on the approaches of techno-solutionism and market logics are inefficient in recognizing the structural component of gender-based



violence in the online environment. Based on feminist theory, digital rights promotion and intersectional theory, the section presents avenues in introducing a restructuring of the concept of digital citizenship as a political, ethical, and social endeavours.

1. The Transcendence of Technocratic concept of Access The question of digital inclusion tends to be discussed with a very narrow focus because of gadget ownership or internet penetration, or even digital literacy. Yet, these technocratic understandings overlook the social disparities that socially predetermine involvement in the sphere of digital activity. In the GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report (2023), it is revealed that women in South Asia have a mobile gender gap of 41%, meaning that 41 percent fewer women than men use mobile internet. Yet the mere access does not imply the safety, voice and agency. According to Usha Raman (2019) and Nimmi Rangaswamy (2020), cultural traditions, family surveillance, and the economic need to keep women dependent are other factors that need consideration in any true digital participation as they determine how and when women can speak or appear on technology. Freedom without fear lacks and, instead of being the gateway of digital sociability, it is performative, a kind of connectivity without citizenship. How does one have the internet is not the question, but who has the right to speak, be heard and be safe as one does. Nimmi Rangaswamy (2020)

2. Feminist Templates of Digital Citizenship

In the reimagination of digital citizenship one has to think beyond rights-as-access to rights- as-recognition, safety and redress.

- Based on the participatory parity model developed by Nancy Fraser (2000), feminist digital citizenship requires that we provide the terms of engagement which everyone could equally engage and be privileged in digital societies.
- Radhika Gajjala (2012) and Srinivasan & Diepeveen (2018) call to follow a postcolonial and feministic approach that should put the focus on collective belongingness, infrastructural justice, and epistemic inclusivity. This will involve testing some prevailing ideas of citizenship that relies on legal identity or consumer identity and offer a response of relational belonging, contextual belonging as well as digitally-based care.
- Digital citizenship should be based on the ethics of care, equity and co-presence and not just access to bandwidth or platforms. Gajjala (2012)



3. Accountability and Governance

Instead of a serious approach, corporations and states sometimes react to digital crimes with a token response i.e., by deciding to block a personal account or by releasing an instruction that is not enforced. Feminist critiques require transparency in platforms and algorithms, and participatory governance with respect to irregular practices and cultural blindness of moderation practices, especially in the Global South. One means of action, as given by organizations such as Access Now, IT for Change, and Internet Democracy Project is the promotion of gender-sensitivity in content moderation and the publication of abuse statistics to the general population, as well as retaining third parties to audit the AI systems. India The Intermediary Guidelines (2021) introduced in India are still too weak, with no specifications on how long redressal should take, furthermore, mentioning survivor-centric mechanisms and/or the intersection of caste-gender. Online security is a right that lacks systemic accountability, and therefore takes on the character of privilege. IT for Change (2022)

4. Survivor-based justice and Legal Reform

Existing laws tend to categorize cyber violence as a tech offense not considering gender and psychosocial impact of abuse. Such laws as Section 66E and 67 of the IT Act in India concern themselves with obscenity rather than comprehensively cover doxxing, deepfakes, or sharing of images without consent. The feminist legal activists demand reforms which: Extend the definition of cyber violence to comprise psychological harm and epistemic harm. o Take care of anonymity and language accessibility combined with sensitivity of reporting structures. o Quantify caste, religion and sexuality as a component of sentencing aggravators or bottom-line harm. Justice cannot just be punitive but must be reparative and transformative. Vrinda Grover (2020)

5.A Feminist Internet: The Possibilities of a Feminism of the Internet In the end, the feminist digital citizenship is not a request of inclusion in the structures as they are, on the contrary, it is the contradiction to change the structures.

It shall demand:

- Re-appropriation of digital spaces, over re-appropriation of commodities.
- Coming up with platforms that give centre stage to marginal voices, affirm consent and privilege care above uproar.
- Developing policies that ascribe value to experience-based knowledge and see digital harm as an



element of more extensive systems of difference. A blueprint of creating these futures is available in the Feminist Internet Manifesto (2019) and the UN Women Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation (2021).

- Feminist internet is not a state. The challenge is also epitomized by the idea that people are trying to maintain online spaces, where people can not merely live, speak, and flourish, but where people who do not conform to dominating standards can do so as well.” Feminist Internet Collective (2019)

This Paper re-positions digital citizenship as a politico-ethical practice based on care, accountability, and epistemic justice. Feminist digital resistance is more than survival, is actually reclaiming digital futures. As discussed in this paper, cyber violence is a structural, intersectional, phenomenon, that requires not only the better legislation, or security tools, but a reimagining of how we develop, regulate, and live in online space.

VIII. Conclusion

The above paper has been critical of the complex nature of gender-based cyber violence by placing it not as a technological malfunction or interpersonal oddity, but as a structural, systemic, and epistemic trend of silencing within the infrastructures of the digital communal domain. It has shown, through a feminist and intersectional perspective, that the way (in)visibility within the digital world is dispersed is not fair, but it is meticulously tended to by the platform logics, social structures, and legal negligence. Starting with the paradox of digital presence in which exposure of women can easily result in violence and disappearance, the paper charted the typologies of and trends on everyday cyber abuse with the cases of the dawn of Bulli Bai and Sulli Deals campaigns as the background. Relying on the theorists like Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Gayatri Spivak, Safiya Umoja Noble, and Miranda Fricker, it laid the framework of how digital silencing works not only through harassment but also through epistemic erasure, credibility deflation, and structural exclusion. The analysis also highlighted the fact that the platforms are not neutral vehicles, rather vehicles of algorithmic bias and surveillance capitalism that boosts misogyny and conspires to conceal feminist discourse. Women (particularly those at the marginalized locations of caste, class, religious and queer subjectivities) are made hyper-visible as objects and known as unknowns, and, therefore, face

a two-pronged violence of digital violence. But it is not a defeat story. The paper brought out the way women are evolving through networked feminism, infrastructure construction and policy mobilization.



MeTooIndia, Pinjra Tod, and Dalit Women Fight are the very examples of the formation of counter-publics, and Take Back the Tech! Data Justice for All, and Feminist Internet Manifesto have actual vision of how to reimagine the life in the digital world as feminists. According to these movements, digital justice is more than security, but also concerning the right to speak, the right to be heard, and to construct the architecture of the future internet. Lastly, the paper demanded a reconsideration of digital citizenship not as a fixed right to participation on the basis of connectivity or legal determination, but as a dynamic practice that is built on recognition, equity, care and shared responsibility. To be effective in bringing about positive change it is important that we go beyond techno-solutionism and push real change through allowing feminist ideas of digital governance that are less concerned with superficial changes and more about structural change.

Future Directions The interrogation creates opportunities towards new studies of:

- AI and gender bias of moderation, particularly in cases of regional language usage. Mental health effects of cyber violence among young people and the queer communities.
- The importance of tech design by the community to create survivor driven platforms.
- Documentation of comparative studies between movements in the Global South of digital justice to inform the cross-learning of policy.

When constructing digital futures, we also need to acknowledge the dirty secret of that space of much-touted liberty, the net has also been a part of replicating social violence, even increasing it. However, with the help of feminist critique, intersectional opposition and transformational solidarity, one can create digital spaces where voice, dignity and justice are prioritised. It is no longer a question of whether women have the voice in the digital world, and the answer is whether we are aware enough, ready enough, and willing enough to listen, to act and to rebuild.

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