COVID-19 and Online Violence in India

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BACKGROUND

Access to the Internet has grown at a rapid rate with 4.33 billion active Internet users - more than half of the world's population [1]. Digital access is embedded into our daily lives and has brought a myriad of impacts, from shaping economies to catalyzing social movements.

One of the negative impacts is how violence has taken new forms in the digital world - what we call online violence. Online violence is the use of technology to cause, facilitate, or threaten violence against individuals that may result in physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm and suffering and includes the exploitation of the individuals' circumstances, characteristics, or vulnerabilities [2].

In India, online violence has seen a steady increase with women reporting more frequent online violence than men. Evidence also shows that online violence disproportionately impacts women, girls and LGBTI individuals [3].

Despite growing research on online violence, there is a lot we don't know, especially in low- and middle-income countries, like India. For example, there is limited research on how online violence manifests across rural and urban areas. As Internet usage rises exponentially during COVID-19, with rural India leading the way, it is critical to understand how the pandemic has impacted the prevalence of online violence. This has led to a Quilt.AI and ICRW partnership that aims to enrich the existing research with new insights.

STUDY OVERVIEW

Research Questions

1. How are certain aspects of online violence trending and reflecting in people's online behaviors?

2. How do these online behaviors differentially express themselves (a) across geographies (rural/urban) and (b) before and after COVID-19?

Study Population

The study population of online users draws from 4 urban and 4 rural areas in India. We did not specify specific gender identities. Geographic areas were selected based on high internet penetration and smartphone usage.
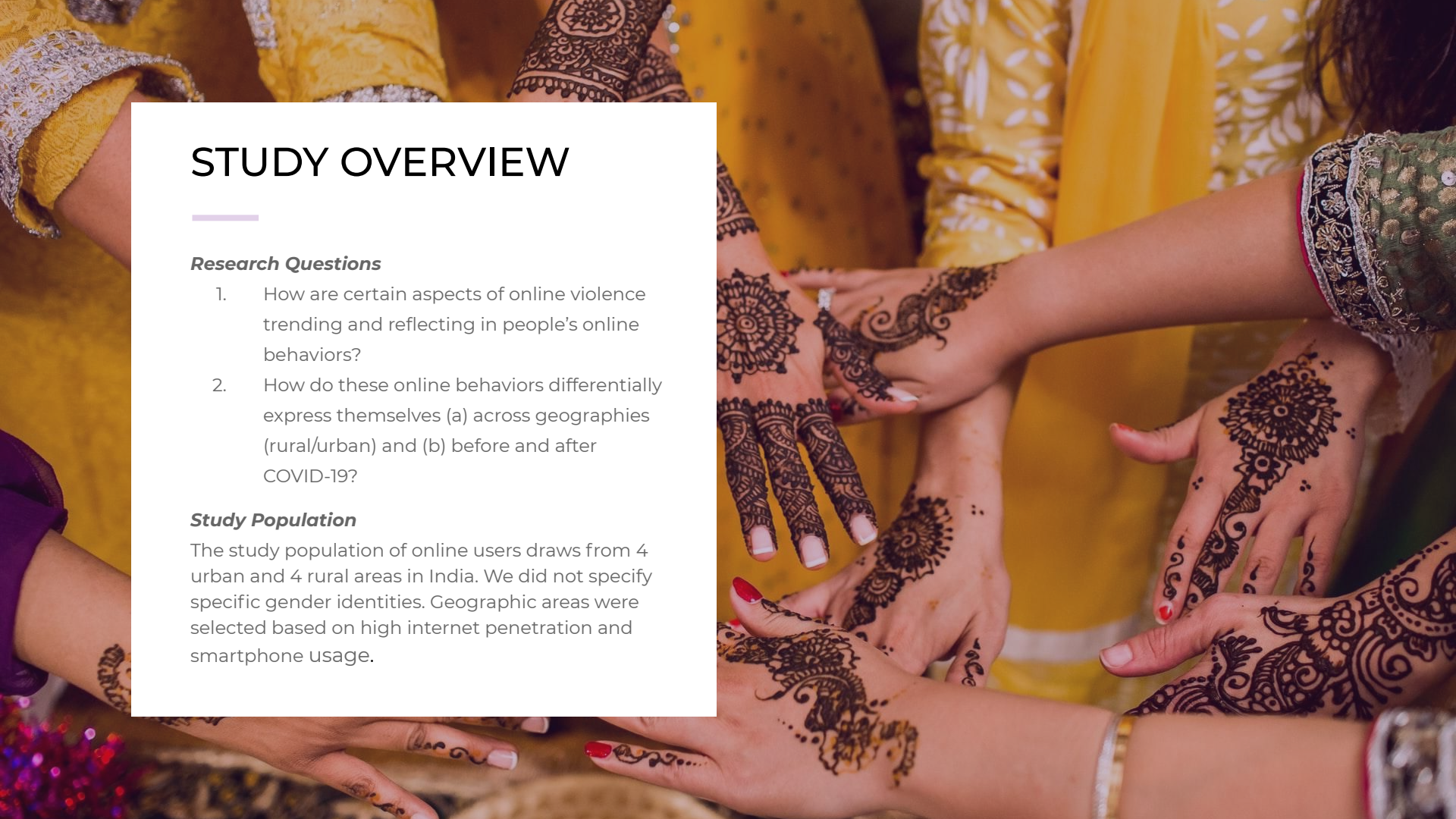
Methodology

METHODOLOGY

This study includes the following methodology steps:

1. Defining the scope and grounding it in a conceptual framework
2. Building the keyword list
3. Understanding the search journey
4. Understanding search behavior in urban versus rural areas
5. Conducting the platform analysis
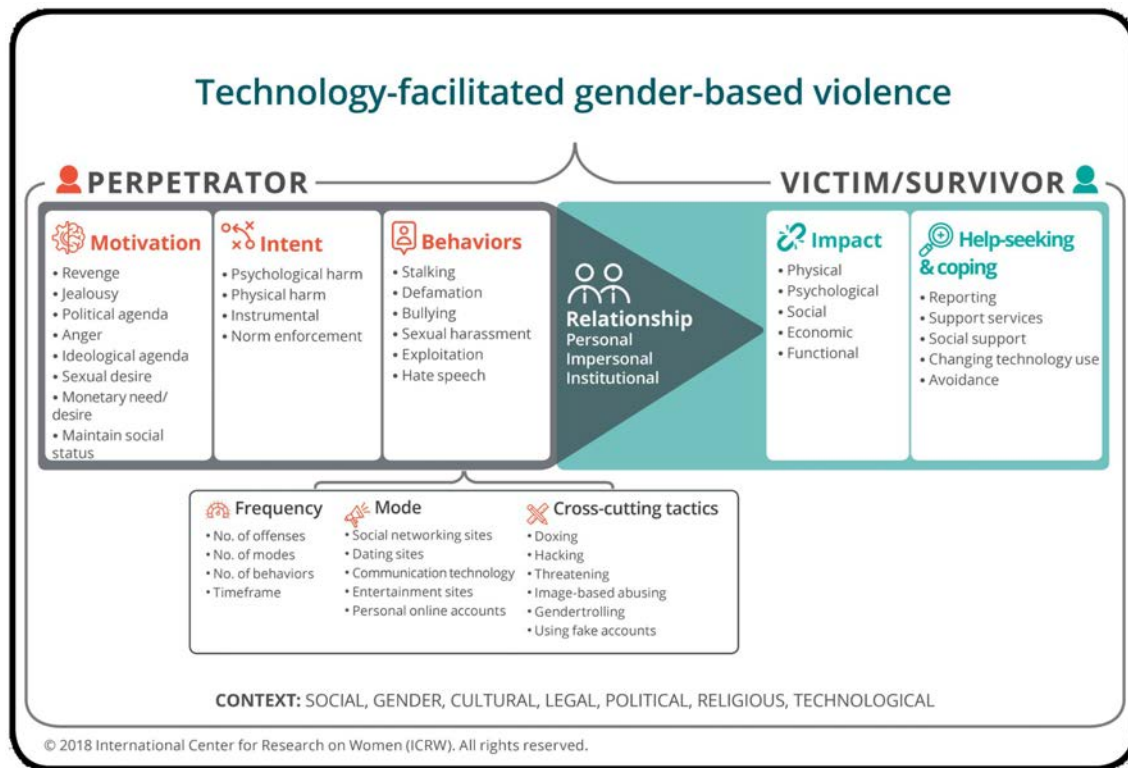6. Putting it all together - Discussion and recommendations

Each will be described in detail in the slides that follow.

1. SCOPE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to understand a person's experience with online violence - from how it starts in the online universe to how someone searches for help, ICRW and Quilt.AI rooted this research in an evidence-based conceptual framework on technology-facilitated GBV.

Applying this framework helped to narrow the scope and guide the research team in their analysis of the digital research.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence

PERPETRATOR — **VICTIM/SURVIVOR**

Motivation
- Revenge
- Jealousy
- Political agenda
- Anger
- Ideological agenda
- Sexual desire
- Monetary need/desire
- Maintain social status

Intent
- Psychological harm
- Physical harm
- Instrumental
- Norm enforcement

Behaviors
- Stalking
- Defamation
- Bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Exploitation
- Hate speech

Relationship
Personal
Impersonal
Institutional

Impact
- Physical
- Psychological
- Social
- Economic
- Functional

Help-seeking & coping
- Reporting
- Support services
- Social support
- Changing technology use
- Avoidance

Frequency
- No. of offenses
- No. of modes
- No. of behaviors
- Timeframe

Mode
- Social networking sites
- Dating sites
- Communication technology
- Entertainment sites
- Personal online accounts

Cross-cutting tactics
- Doxing
- Hacking
- Threatening
- Image-based abusing
- Gendertrolling
- Using fake accounts

CONTEXT: SOCIAL, GENDER, CULTURAL, LEGAL, POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, TECHNOLOGICAL
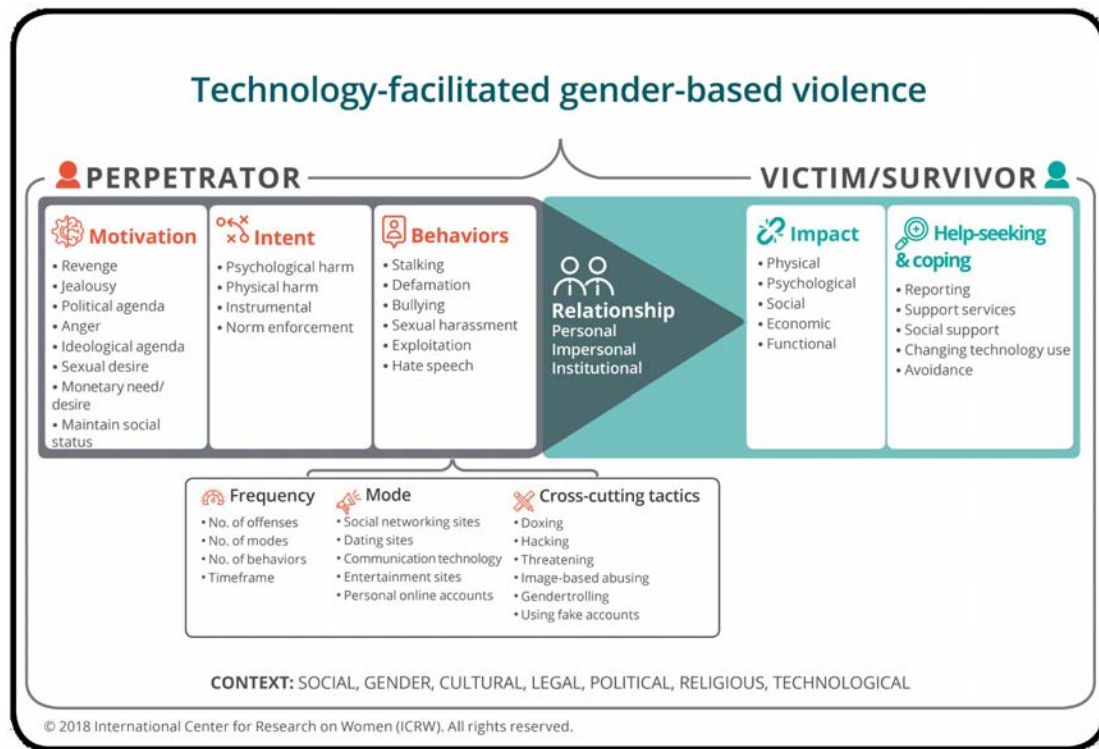
1. SCOPE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

ICRW and Quilt.AI selected parts of the conceptual framework that are digitally trackable and demonstrate stated and unstated behaviors through search or social data.

These include **behaviors** related to online violence, **cross-cutting tactics**, and **help seeking and coping**.

Given the difficulty of attributing gender-based explanations for experiences through social and search data, we focused more broadly on "online violence" in our study.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence

PERPETRATOR — **VICTIM/SURVIVOR**

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- Hacking
- Threatening
- Image-based abusing
- Gendertrolling
- Using fake accounts

CONTEXT: SOCIAL, GENDER, CULTURAL, LEGAL, POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, TECHNOLOGICAL

2. BUILDING THE KEYWORD LIST

After narrowing the scope and adapting the conceptual framework, ICRW and Quilt.AI built a keyword list for the search analysis. This list emanated from the three digitally trackable parts of the conceptual framework: **behaviors** related to online violence, **cross-cutting tactics**, and **help seeking and coping**. The expansion of the keyword list was strengthened by our team's expertise and existing literature.

Building the keyword list included the following steps:

1. Including broad terms[1]
2. Expanding and finalizing each broad term with as many local and lay expressions of the terms as we were able to (e.g. "putting one's identifying information online without permission").
3. Ensuring the keyword list included both English and Hindi terms.

This keyword list was tested while identifying a user's search journey of understanding or seeking help for online violence.

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1. The broad terms we used include: online stalking, sexual harassment, exploitation, doxing, hacking, image based abuse, gender trolling, using fake accounts. See Annex 1 for definitions.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE SEARCH JOURNEY

After finalizing the keyword list, we aimed to understand what content and website online users see during their search journey related to online violence. The search journey gives important insights on:

- What people search for in relation to online violence
- How online search behavior changes as people move across a spectrum from being aware of the topic to searching for help on the issue
- The content people are exposed to when searching for online violence. We applied a method called **"Search Engine Results Page," or SERP**, developed by Quilt.AI, whereby the usage of specific search keywords leads the online user to the top ten web pages linked to the keyword. The specific search keywords were selected from the comprehensive keyword list and include the terms with the highest volume and rate of change.

The search journey was divided into three key segments:

EXPLORING TYPES OF ONLINE VIOLENCE	EXPERIENCING ONLINE VIOLENCE	SEEKING HELP FOR ONLINE VIOLENCE
What web pages and informational resources is a person directed to when they search for online violence?	Where are people directed to when they search for whether online violence is happening to them or someone they know?	Where are people directed when explicitly searching to get help?

4. UNDERSTANDING SEARCH BEHAVIOR IN URBAN V RURAL AREAS

After creating the keyword list, understanding the search journey and which web pages online users are directed to with top keywords, ICRW and Quilt.AI wanted to explore how the search journey differs in urban versus rural areas of India. The initial keyword list was expanded into 5,826 unique keywords. Information for these was extracted from 2019-2020, with over 17M searches across India. The urban and rural areas included in the analysis were:

URBAN: Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata

RURAL: Assagao, Kangra, Palakkad and Gaya

Lastly, we focused our search on the time period right before COVID-19 (January - March 2020), and during the pandemic (April - August 2020). In this way, we aimed to compare searching behaviors before and after the cut-off point to see how these behaviors may have shifted up or down.

5. CONDUCTING THE PLATFORM ANALYSIS

In the fourth phase we aimed to understand the online discourse about online violence across social media platforms. We collected the digital data of women and men and their community in the selected 8 cities, through location-specific identification (city / village level). This data included their searches on social media platforms, blog posts, social media uploads and content consumed.

We selected content (e.g. Twitter and Facebook posts) relevant to online violence via the use of topical keywords and phrases, hashtags, and location tags. Digital data extracted from the online population is denoised using Quilt.AI's machine learning algorithms to remove marketing and fake accounts. Based on the social and search data, we distilled insights on the online discourse.

Finally, we pulled together the insights from the search journey, the urban/rural exploration and the platform analysis to understand the larger take-home messages about how people are searching for and talking about online violence in our selected geographies in India.

RESULTS PART 1 - WHAT IS THE ONLINE VIOLENCE SEARCH JOURNEY?

WHAT DOES AN ONLINE USER SEE WHEN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND ONLINE VIOLENCE?

WHERE DOES AN ONLINE USER GET DIRECTED WHEN SEARCHING FOR HELP ONLINE?

SEARCH JOURNEY: TOWARDS HELP-SEEKING

EXPLORING TYPES OF ONLINE VIOLENCE

SEEKING HELP FOR ONLINE VIOLENCE

EXPERIENCING ONLINE VIOLENCE

For each part of the search journey, specific search queries were used to understand which top web pages online users are directed to. The following slides include the search queries for each stage, the website results and insights into these results.

EXPLORING TYPES OF ONLINE VIOLENCE

TOP KEYWORDS:

"Doxing meaning", "gender trolling", "image-based abuse", "cybercrime against women", "cyber harassment", "what is cyberstalking"

INSIGHTS:

Top searches are a mix of foreign and local sites with more of the former. **Sites vary in their type,** from international organisations to freedom-of-speech activist sites to typical knowledge portals like Wikipedia. The same is seen with local sites, which include a knowledge portal (Vikaspedia), a cyberbullying awareness organisation (CyberBAAP), an online publication (The Swaddle) and various news articles.

The top sites users are directed to are not based in India, but American or British websites explaining the concepts of key terms like doxing or trolling.
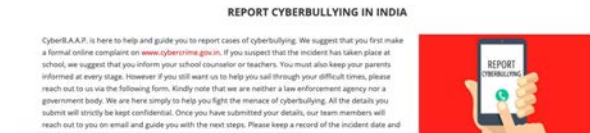
AM I EXPERIENCING ONLINE VIOLENCE

TOP KEYWORDS:

"how to check if i'm hacked", "am I being stalked online," "threatening text messages example"

INSIGHTS:

Sites are mainly online tech platforms (security platforms or help pages of social media platforms) or foreign online publications and blogs that provide advice. There are little to none local sources that explore whether one is experiencing online violence.
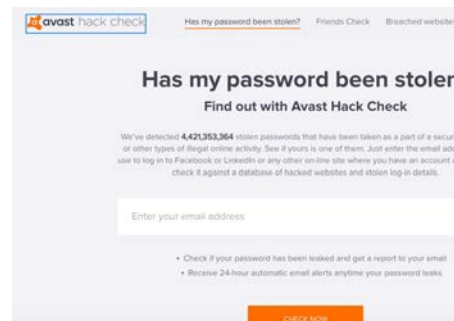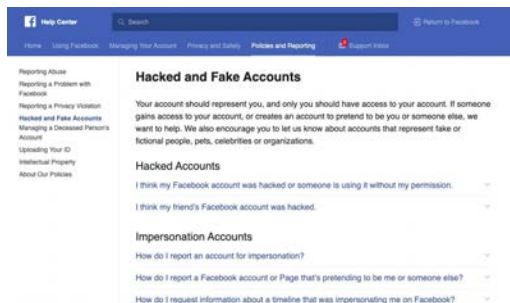
TOP KEYWORDS:

"Report cyberbullying", "electronic harassment law", "how to report cyber bullying", "text harassment laws", "cyberstalking laws"

INSIGHTS:

There is an equal mix of foreign and local websites. **Even when typing the keyword "law", many of the sites are foreign web articles** (Harvard Business Review, the Atlantic etc.) and occasionally police departments of Western cities.

Local sources primarily consist of **pro-bono law firms or organisations that aim to make the law accessible** (Nyaaya, Intelligent Legal Solutions, Legal Services India and more), local security companies (IFF Lab), or the Indian government's cybercrime website.
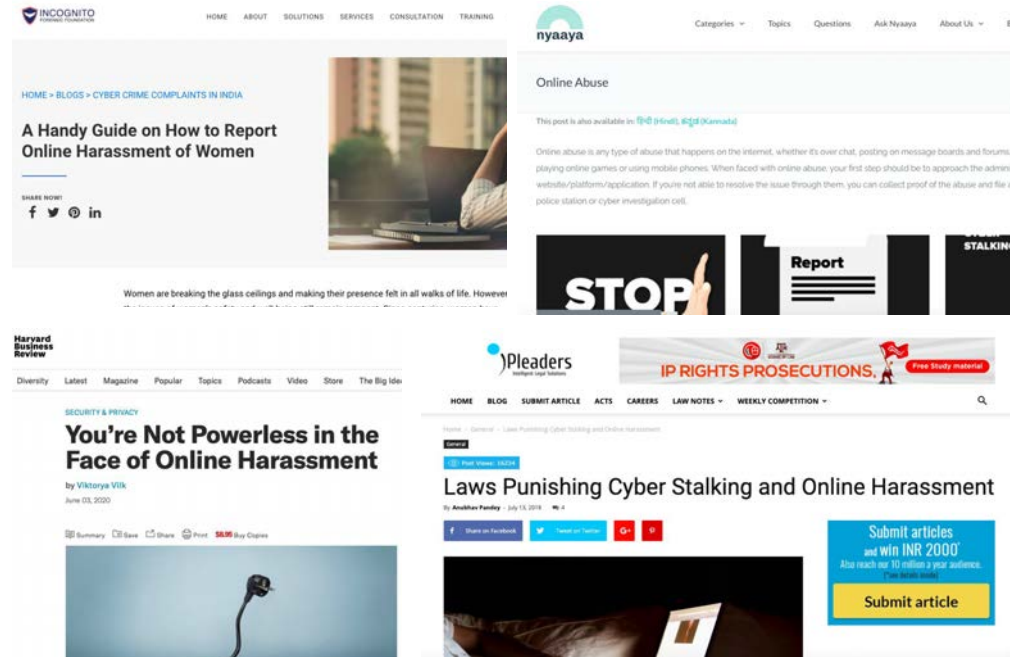
RESULTS PART 2 - WHAT IS THE SEARCH BEHAVIOR ON ONLINE VIOLENCE IN URBAN VERSUS RURAL AREAS?

DEEP DIVE: URBAN CITIES: WHAT ARE PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR ON ONLINE VIOLENCE IN URBAN CITIES?

DEEP DIVE: RURAL AREAS: WHAT ARE PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR ONLINE VIOLENCE IN RURAL AREAS?

A NOTE ON SEARCH BEHAVIOR

Sample search graph

Through Search[1], **unstated behavior** is expressed. Using search queries as a proxy for intent, we classified keywords into 9 different categories and analysed.

- **Search volume during COVID** (x-axis) - Indicates the total search for keywords between April and August, 2020. Keywords that are further away from the 0 point have higher search volume, indicating greater consumer interest.
- **Growth in interest** (y-axis) - Measures the change in interest between Jan - Mar '20 and Apr-Aug'20. Facets lying above the 0% mark on the rate of change axis are facets that have an increase in interest. A higher % indicates greater increase in interest.

For these results, we identify keywords that fall in the **emerging** (high growth) and **dominant** (high volume, high growth) spaces.

DEEP DIVE: URBAN CITIES

HOW ARE PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR TFV IN URBAN CITIES?

URBAN AREA – SEARCH ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

We analysed search results in 4 urban areas : Bengaluru, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai

- Search volumes of keywords in the **Exploitation** category had the highest shares in all 4 cities, followed by the **Hacking** domain.
- In all urban areas, **doxing** is an emerging search trend with the highest increases in Delhi (214%) and Mumbai (211%) followed by Bengaluru (191%) and Kolkata (169%). **Image based abuse** and **Gendertrolling** are next in terms of increased interest.
- **Hacking** had high volume and high growth in all these cities, indicating it as an established, long-term problem for these geographical areas.
- In pre and during- COVID 19, Delhi had the highest growth in searches for **Doxing** and **Image based abuse** (214 % and 120% respectively) compared to other cities.

A SNAPSHOT OF SEARCH VOLUME & GROWTH: URBAN CITIES

Category	Bengaluru, Karnataka		Kolkata, West Bengal		Mumbai, Maharashtra		New Delhi, Delhi	
	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*
Doxing	10%	191%	6%	169%	9%	211%	8%	214%
Exploitation	34%	37%	37%	49%	34%	33%	36%	48%
Gendertrolling	4%	62%	3%	65%	3%	67%	3%	54%
Hacking	38%	70%	34%	65%	38%	61%	34%	66%
Image based abuse	0%	55%	1%	58%	0%	96%	0%	120%
Sexual harassment	1%	9%	1%	28%	1%	-8%	1%	13%
Stalking	6%	20%	9%	53%	9%	43%	7%	23%
Threatening	1%	39%	1%	57%	1%	3%	1%	57%
Using fake accounts	6%	15%	8%	-2%	6%	41%	9%	33%

*pre vs during COVID

BENGALURU

Prior to COVID-19, the four categories with the highest share of search volumes in Bengaluru were Exploitation (39%), Hacking (34%), Online stalking (8%) and Doxing (5%).

Emerging
Since COVID-19, Doxing has increased by 191%, overtaking Online stalking to become the third largest trend in terms of volume. Gendertrolling (62%) and Image based abuse (55%) are also trends to look out for, having increased significantly.

Dominant
There was an increase in Hacking by 70%, making it a pertinent issue in Bengaluru due to its high volume and high growth.

Search keywords that grew the most are doxxed meaning (290%), doxxing (201%), blackmail (120%), and hacked instagram (72%)
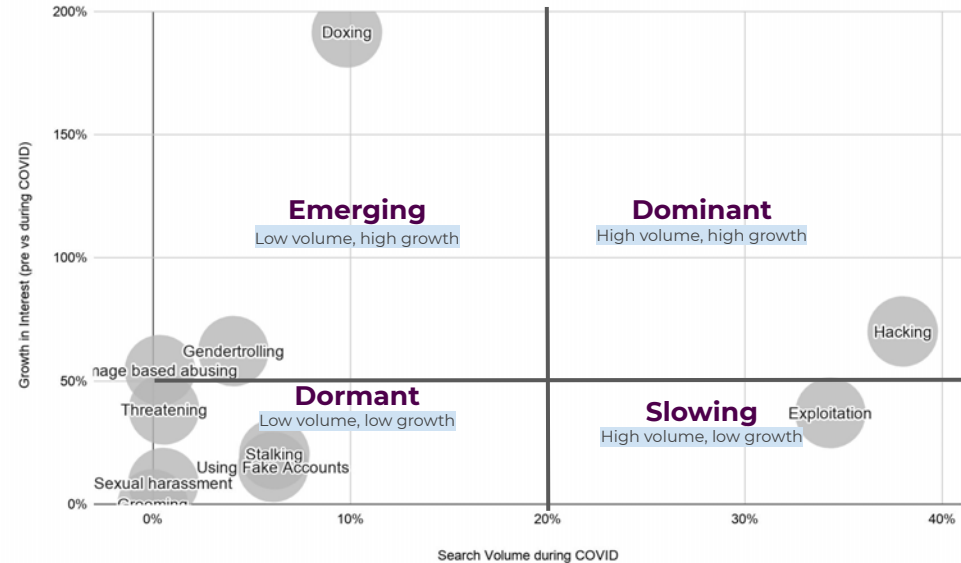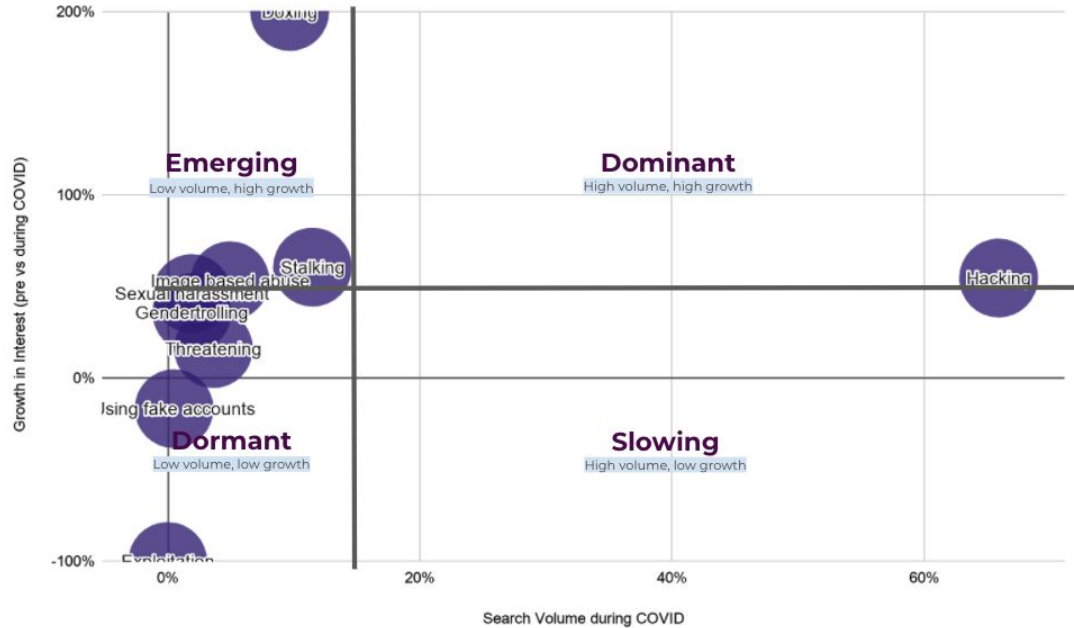
Emerging : Doxing, Online stalking, Image based abuse

Dominant : Hacking

Help-seeking searches increased by **59%**, due to an increase in interest in doxing.

Searches were **low intent** ("doxxed", "Facebook hacked", "how to report") and does not specifically look into resolving the problem.

DELHI

Prior to COVID-19, the four domains with the highest share of search volumes in Delhi were Exploitation (38%), Hacking (32%), Using fake accounts (11%) and Online stalking (9%).

Emerging
Since COVID-19, Doxing has became a serious problem in Delhi with an dramatic increase by 214% . The high growth search interest in Image based abusing (120%), Threatening (57%) and Gendertrolling (54%) showing them as rising issues.

Dominant
Hacking went up significantly by 66% and became second largest trend in terms of volume (34%), requiring people to be aware of its danger.

Search Keywords that grew the most are "doxxing meaning" (425%), "doxing" (229%), "blackmail" (120%), and "facebook hate speech" (900%)

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Emerging : Doxing, Gendertrolling, Online stalking, Image based abuse

Dominant : Hacking

Help-seeking searches increased by **33%**.

Delhi demonstrates a more mature understanding to the issues compared to other cities, as indicated by **information-seeking searches** ("is my email compromised", "who stalks my instagram", "laws against posting without permission").

People are also interested in **good cyber practices** and advice on **dealing** with the **'online trolls'**.

KOLKATA

Prior to COVID-19, the four domains with the highest share of search volumes in Kolkata were Exploitation (38%), Hacking (32%), Using fake accounts (12%) and Online stalking (9%).
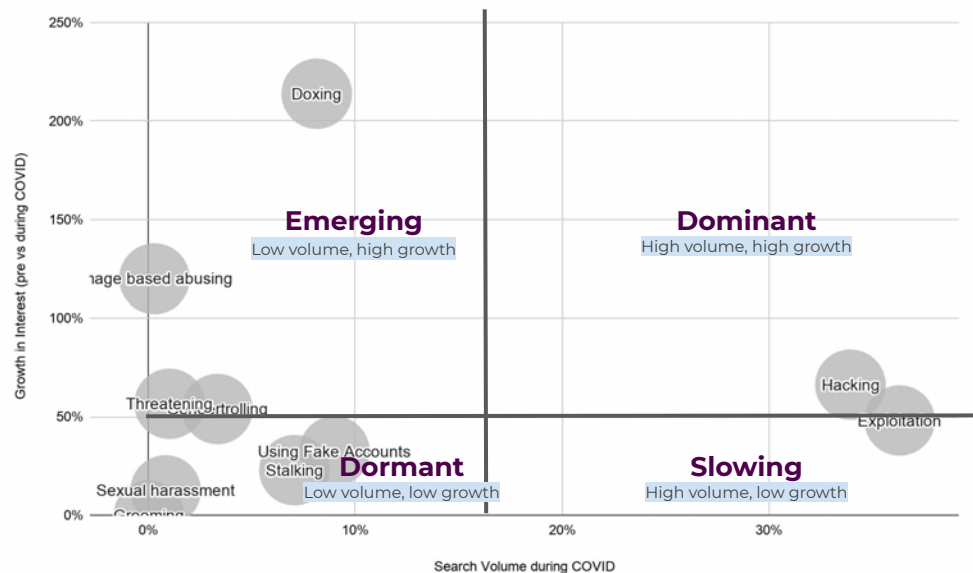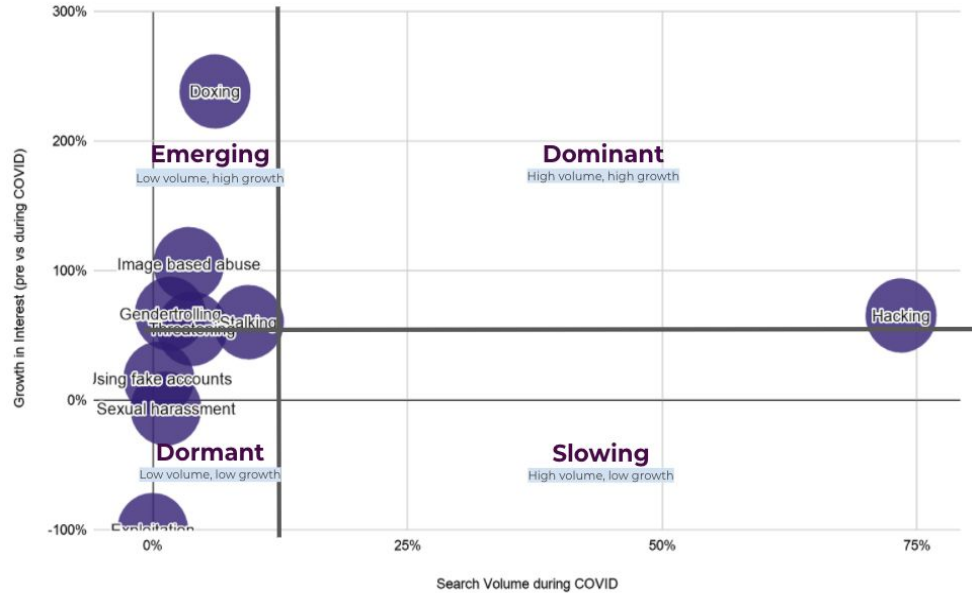
Emerging
Since COVID-19, Doxing has increased by 169%, posing it as a significant threat. Gendertrolling (65%), Image based abuse (58%) and Threatening (57%) are becoming emerging issues with a moderately rise in search interest.

Dominant
Hacking increased significantly by 69%, making it a serious problem that people in Kolkata are facing.

Search keywords that grew include "doxing" (222%), "doxxed" (266%), "what is cyberstalking" (137%), "stalk instagram" (95%), and "what is blackmail" (86%).
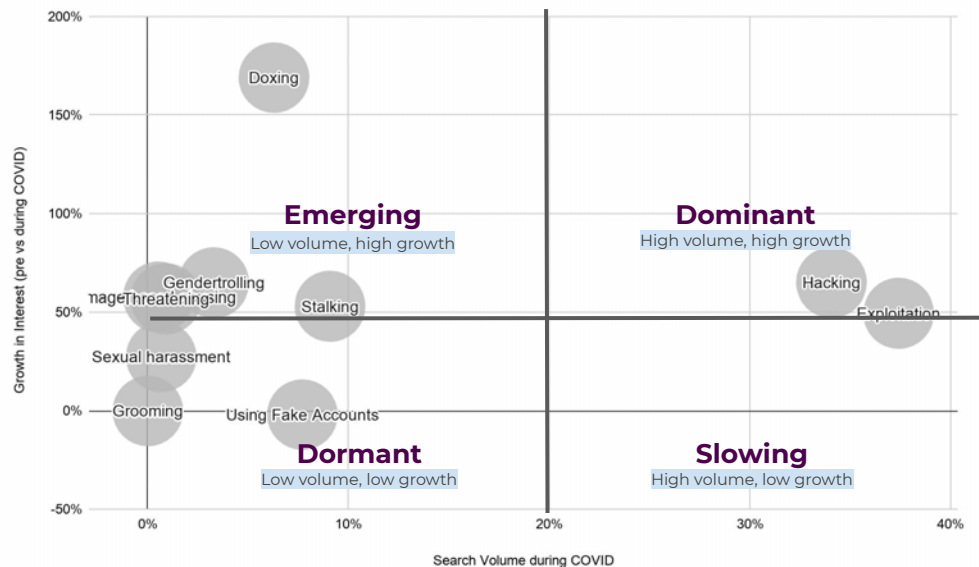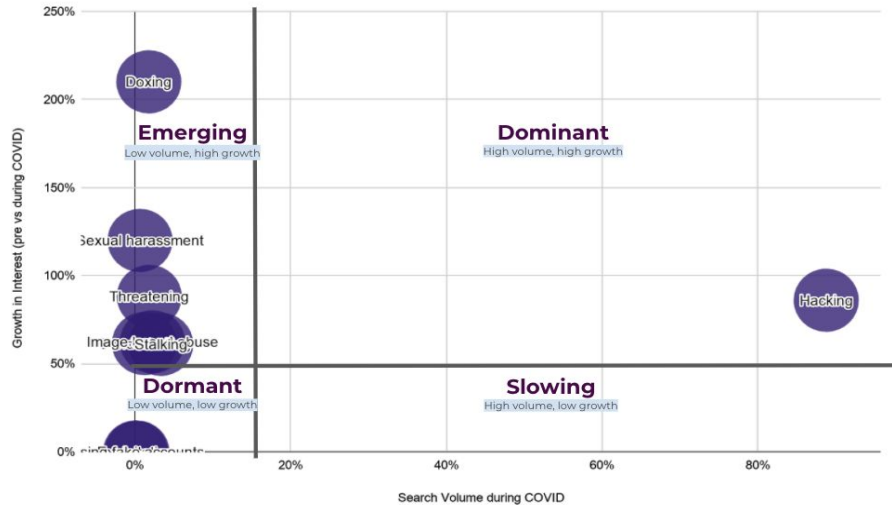
Emerging : Doxing, Sexual harassment, Threatening, Image based abuse, Gendertrolling, Online stalking

Dominant : Hacking

Help-seeking increased by **85%**. The biggest issues people in Kolkata seek help for is having photos being posted without permission and when their account has been compromised.

Search is higher-intent, as **problems explicitly defined** ("am I being groomed", "taken without consent", "password compromised", "threatening emails", "abusive text message law").

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MUMBAI

Prior to COVID-19, the four domains with the highest share of search volumes in Mumbai were Exploitation (39%), Hacking (36%), Online stalking (9%) and Using fake accounts (6%).

Emerging
Since COVID-19, Doxing became the largest trend in terms of search interest, with a sharp increase of 211%. Image based abuse came in the second place with a rise of 96%. With a growth of 67% , Gendertrolling is another issue worth to be noted.

Dominant
A considerable rise in Hacking of 61%, along with its highest search volume of 38%, indicating that hacking is one of the major issues in Mumbai.

Search keywords that grew the most are related to doxxing: "doxxed meaning" (425%), "doxing" (219%), "dox meaning" (168%). This is followed by "profile stalkers instagram" (201%) and "online cyber complaint" (268%)
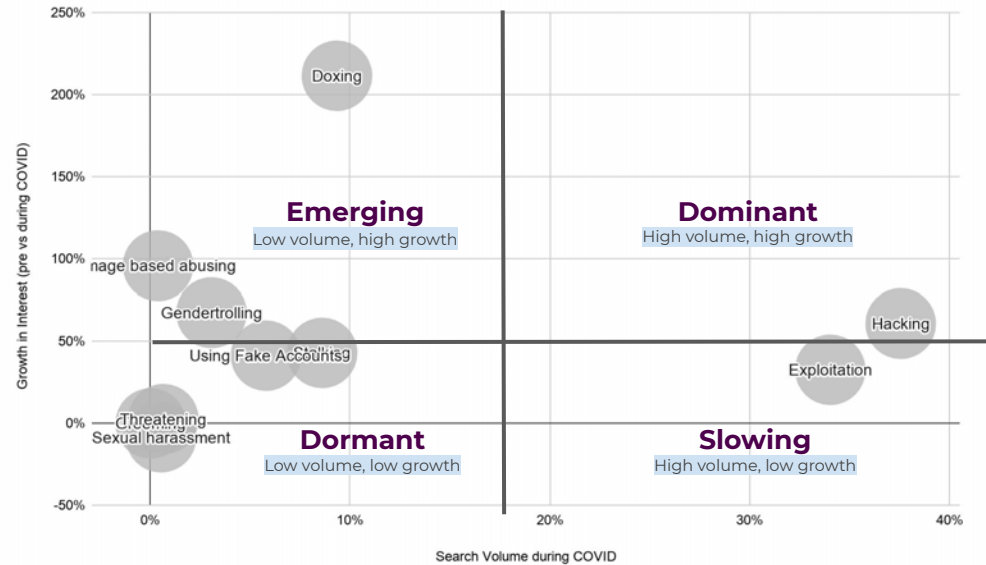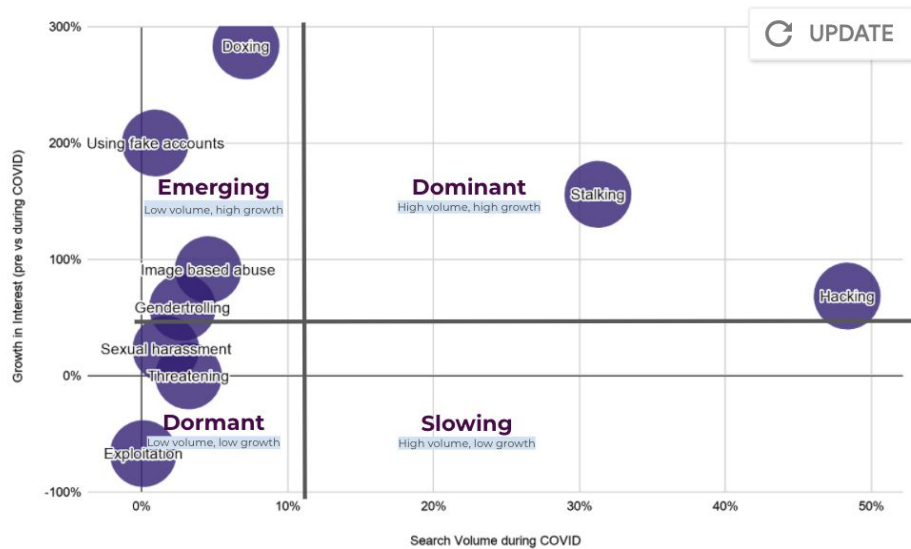
Emerging : Doxing, Using fake accounts, Gendertrolling, Image based abuse

Dominant : Online stalking, Hacking

Overall, help-seeking searches increased by **92%**.

Similar to Delhi, searches are **information-seeking** ("instagram report impersonation", "is doxing illegal").

Regarding stalking, people seek help in terms of **identifying** who their stalkers on social media are and also with filing online cyber **complaints**.

DEEP DIVE: RURAL CITIES

HOW ARE PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR ONLINE VIOLENCE IN RURAL CITIES?

RURAL AREA SEARCH ANALYSIS

For rural areas, we studied data from Assagao, Kangra, Palakkad, and Gaya.

- Search volumes of keywords in the **Hacking** and **Exploitation** category have generally already been established, while **Doxing** is growing in many cities.

- During COVID-19, help-seeking searches in Kangra grew the most at 174%, followed by Palakkad (129%) then Gaya (71%).

A SNAPSHOT OF SEARCH VOLUME & GROWTH: RURAL AREAS

Category	Assagao, Goa		Gaya, Bihar		Kangra, Himachal Pradesh		Palakkad, Kerala	
	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*	Search Volume during COVID	Growth in Interest*
Doxing	22%	600%	11%	267%	8%	132%	6%	150%
Exploitation	34%	-21%	28%	78%	22%	51%	23%	117%
Gendertrolling	6%	20%	6%	256%	6%	83%	8%	58%
Hacking	19%	-14%	29%	89%	42%	107%	47%	147%
Image based abuse	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	67%
Sexual harassment	3%	0%	3%	30%	2%	50%	1%	22%
Stalking	9%	-25%	15%	95%	14%	95%	10%	58%
Threatening	3%	10%	3%	0%	1%	-27%	1%	13%
Using fake accounts	3%	10%	5%	115%	5%	93%	4%	147%

*pre vs during COVID

ASSAGAO

Prior to COVID-19, the four domains with the highest share of search volumes in Assagao were Exploitation (54%), Hacking (27%), Online stalking (15%), and Doxing (4%).

Emerging
There has been enormous growth in Doxing (600%), overtaking Hacking and Online stalking in becoming the second largest trend in terms of volume. Gendertrolling and Sexual Harassment have also grown signifcantly as well (both at 100%).

Dominant
Although decreasing by 21% in search interest, Exploitation remains as a significant issue in Assagao.

Search keyword "doxing" and "doxxing" grew by 200%

Emerging : NA
Dominant : NA

There is a lack of searches around help-seeking, which indicates low awareness on the issue (only 10% increase in COVID).

KANGRA

In Kangra, the four domains with the highest share of search volumes prior to COVID-19 were Hacking (37%), Exploitation (27%), Online stalking (13%), and Doxing (6%).

Emerging
Technologically-facilitated gender based violence is growing, with many aspects of it seeing high growth. For instance, Doxing (132%), Hacking (107%), and Online stalking (95%) have all increased significantly.

Dominant
Hacking continues to remain the highest share in search volumes with high growth, making it an issue in Kangra to look out for.

Search keywords that grew include "doxxed" (300%), "facebook hacked" (194%), "blackmail" (92%), and "instagram hacked" (73%)
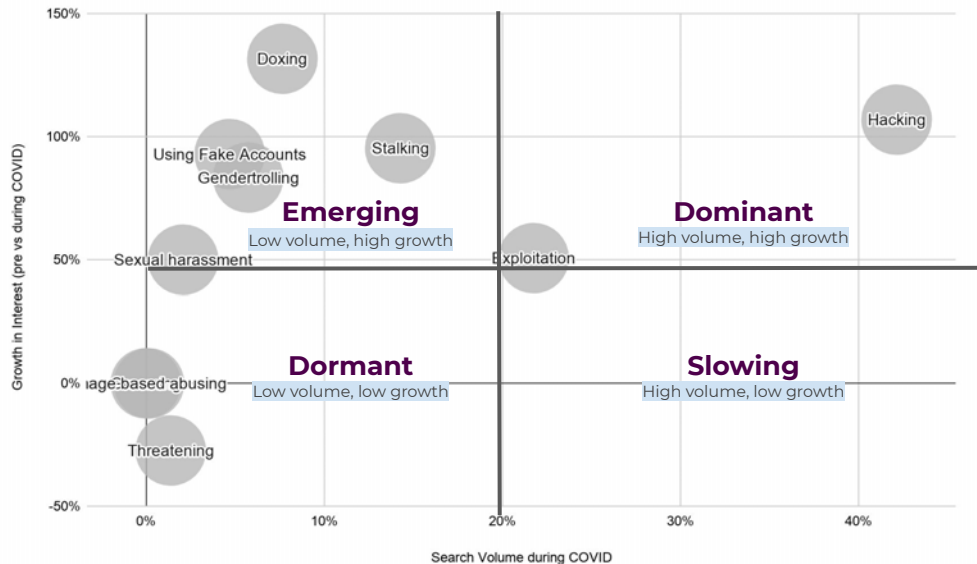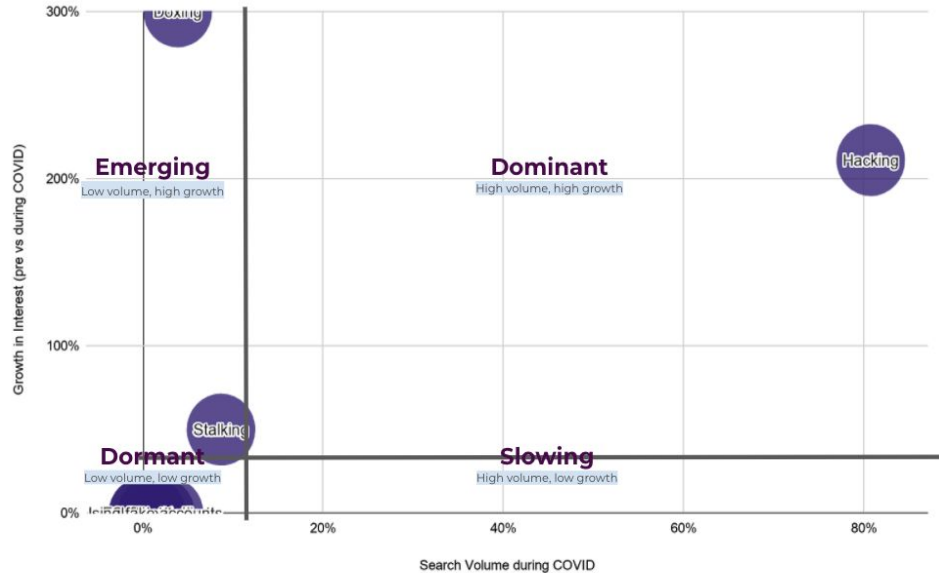
Emerging : Doxing, Online stalking

Dominant : Hacking

Help-seeking searches increased by **174%** during COVID, mostly driven by searches on **reporting** cases of doxing and hacking.

There is a **lack of information-seeking behavior** in instances of TFV.

PALAKKAD

Prior to COVID-19, the top four domains in regards to share in search volumes Palakkad were Hacking (41%), Exploitation (22%), Online stalking (13%), and Gendertrolling (11%).

Emerging
Since COVID-19, technology facilitated gender-based violence has continued to increase, with Doxing (150%) facing the highest change in growth.

Dominant
There was an increase in Hacking by 147%, making it a pertinent issue in Palakkad due to its high volume and high growth.

Search keywords that grew the most are "blackmail" (258%), "doxing" (200%), "downblousing" (164%), "facebook hacked" (150%), "instagram hacked" (149%)

400% — Doxing

300% — **Emerging** / Low volume, high growth — **Dominant** / High volume, high growth

200% — Gendertrolling

100% — Threatening / King / Image based abuse — Hacking

Dormant / Low volume, low growth — **Slowing** / High volume, low growth

0%

exual harassment

-100%

X-axis: Search Volume during COVID (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%)

Y-axis: Growth in Interest (pre vs during COVID)
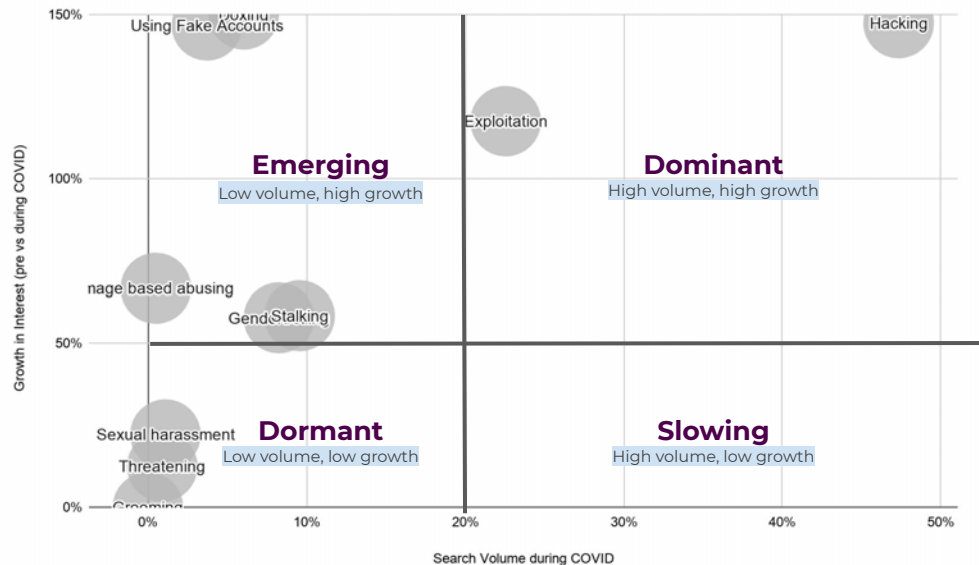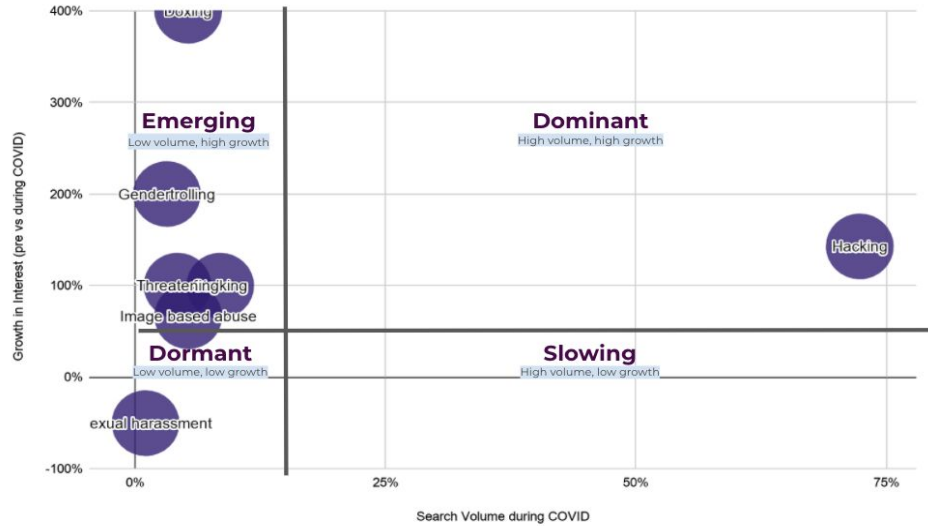
Emerging : Doxing, Gendertrolling, Online stalking, Threatening

Dominant : Hacking

Help-seeking searched increased by **129%** during COVID.

People also exhibited more **information-seeking searches** when looking for help ("is catfishing illegal", "is trolling illegal").

There were also **high-intent searches** ("hacking help", "how to find out if someone posted pictures of you online", "how to find facebook stalkers", "how to stop harassment").

GAYA

Prior to COVID-19, the four domains with the highest share of search volumes in Gaya were Exploitation (31%), Hacking (31%), Online stalking (15%), and Doxing (6%).
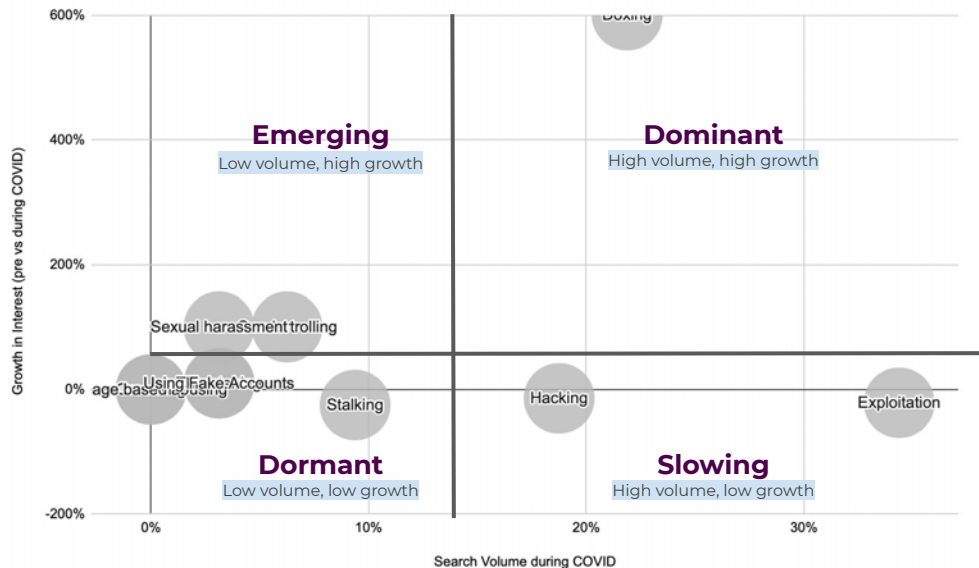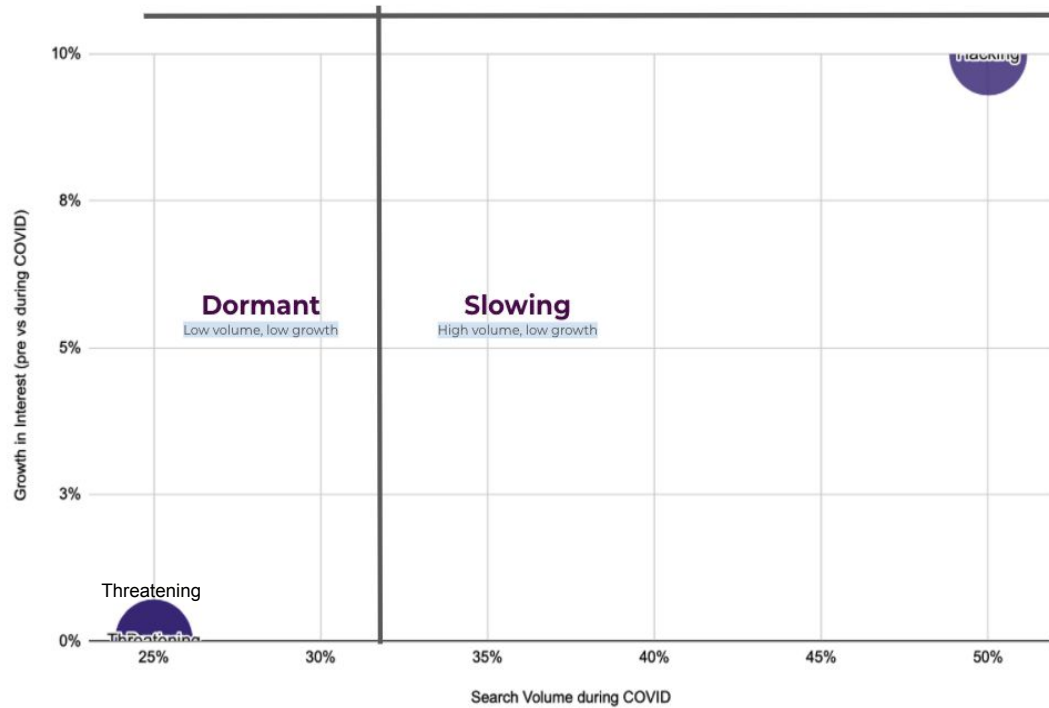
Emerging

Since COVID-19, Doxing and Gendertrolling are key emerging issues in Gaya, as they have both skyrocketed in terms of growth (267% and 256%, respectively).

Dominant

There was an increase in Hacking by 89%, making it a pertinent issue in Gaya due to its high volume and high growth.

Search keywords that grew the most are "hacked instagram" (150%), "exploitation" (75%), and "doxxed" (50%)
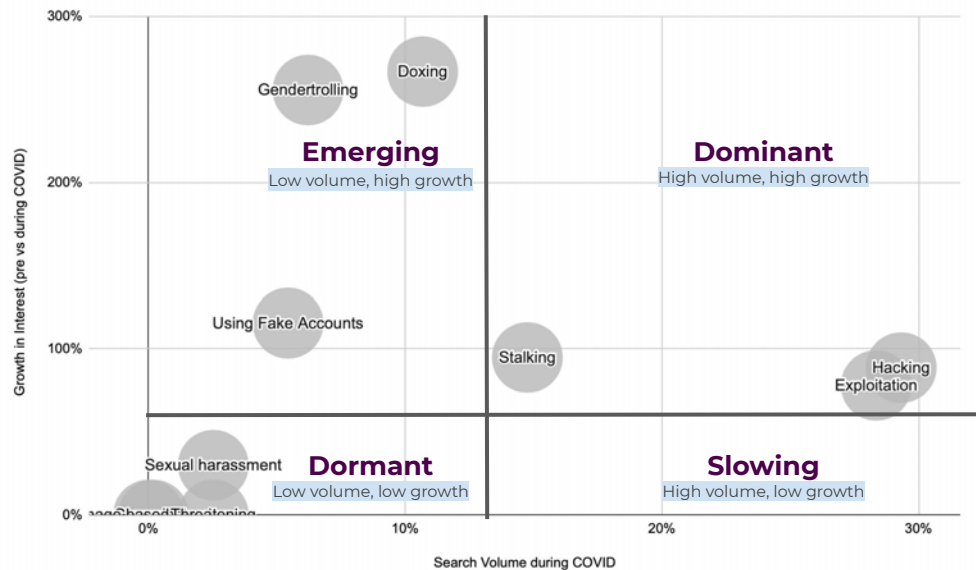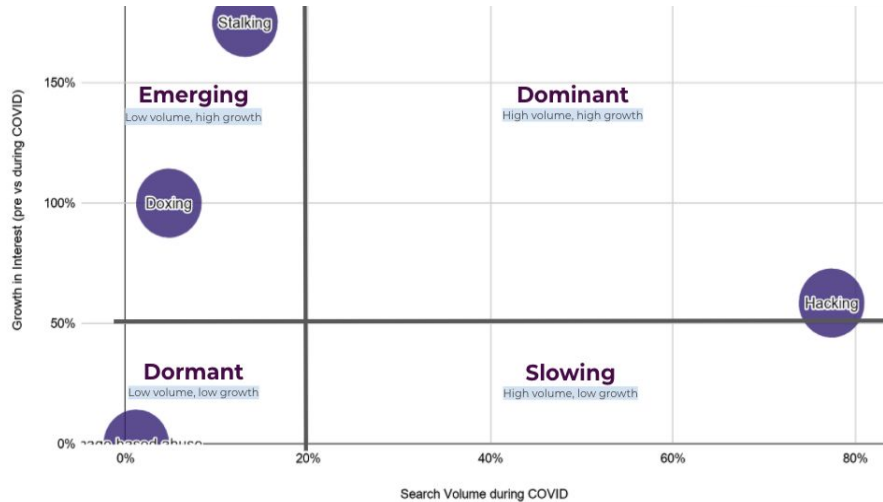
Emerging : Threatening, Online stalking, Doxing

Dominant : Hacking

Help-seeking searches increased by **71%** during the COVID period.

Searches were **low-intent** and mainly revolved around accounts being **hacked** and/or **compromised**. Consequently, there was some interest in reporting these crimes.

PLATFORM ANALYSIS

WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ABOUT ONLINE VIOLENCE?

HOW DO PEOPLE USE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR ONLINE VIOLENCE?

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BE LEVERAGED TO ADDRESS ONLINE VIOLENCE?

SIZE OF CONVERSATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to analyze the size of conversations around online violence, posts relating to the topic were selected. From these posts, 8,239 posts from the pre-and during COVID-19 timeframe were randomly selected. The following table breaks down the size of conversation across each category during-COVID. Excluded categories had much lower volumes of posts. Social media platforms include Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Total number of social media posts analysed*	**8239**
Size of conversation on Twitter pre-Covid	26% (2,142)
Size of conversation on Twitter during Covid	74% (6,097)
Size of Doxing conversation**	4% (244)
Size of Gendertrolling conversation**	47% (2,866)
Size of Sexual Harassment conversation**	35% (2,134)
Size of Hacking & Online stalking conversation**	6% (366)
Size of Image-based abuse conversation**	8% (487)

Key Takeaways:
- The size of the conversation around online violence in Twitter nearly tripled from pre- to during COVID
- Conversations around gendertrolling and sexual harassment remained the largest at 47% and 35%, respectively
- Fake accounts were taken out of the size estimation as it was large enough to skew the above results. Instead, we studied these groups, accounts, and pages separately. From Instagram alone, there were more than 370,000 such posts.

* Excluding fake posts | **Estimated calculations

DOXING IS A COMMONPLACE TOPIC ONLINE

We found that people use social media to search for information or discuss if doxing is right or wrong.

Our analysis found that women share their fear and experience of being doxed, however, they face backlash. In several posts, women speaking against doxing were accused of seeking personal revenge against those doxing them.

How is "nice dp" a nasty text?

Makes me wonder if the issue is a lower income man doing it, which is unacceptable for upper class women.

Like, how dare he even dream of talking to me as an equal.

I make it a point to block all the contacts of handymen,delivery boys etc on WhatsApp the moment I save it..Else nasty texts in middle of the night or even calling is too scary.More than anything it makes me feel sick as if I am the one who's guilty n inviting it..

Tamasha?! Really?
This man has her phone number, knows her address, and has behaved inappropriately. The number of alarms that go off in a woman's head at something like this is unimaginable for you, because women spend a chunk of our life trying not to be raped and murdered!

6:18 PM · Oct 23, 2020 · Twitter for Android

You don't understand the terror we feel owing to the privilege your gender affords you. Please don't try to minimise a very serious issue by trying to paint it as "attention seeking". That's utterly irresponsible behaviour.

It doesnt make it right whether he blurred the photo or not.
He doxxed the minor girl and people started giving rape threats to that minor
If that man abused zubair instead of **doxxing** minor he should have file complaint about it

Why are you asking? I have already been threatened of **doxxing**. Nonetheless, a huge chunk of South **Delhi** falls in New **Delhi** for Lok Sabha which is Bizarre. It doesn't make any sense to me or my friends.

Examples of how people are speaking against doxing but face backlash

A group of south delhi boys in the age group of 17-18 have ig gc named "bois locker room" where they were doing shitty things , objectify and morph pictures of girls of the same age group . These people are still not stoping and threatening people . Like really ?
#boyslockerroom

ABOUT "BOIS LOCKER ROOM" INSTAGRAM GROUP

some screenshots

6:03 AM · May 4, 2020 · Twitter for Android

1.2K Retweets   356 Quote Tweets   2.6K Likes

This was especially prominent in the #boyslockerroom case, where online vigilantes took it upon themselves to identify the culprits

45

GENDER-BASED JOKES AS ENTERTAINMENT

Across social media platforms, we found 'entertainment' content (e.g. images, videos, memes) that perpetuates GBV. These posts are largely uploaded and shared by males - also making up a large part of the content consumed.

This dominance potentially makes it harder for women to push back on such content. The posts include crude remarks and bad jokes that belittle women.

Popular Youtube videos portraying females as seducers

Women are objectified and degraded in bad jokes, and the lockdown has only seen an increase in them

ACCOUNTANCY FACT:
Question: What is the difference between Liability & Asset?

Answer: A drunken friend is liability. But, A drunken **Girlfriend** is an Asset.

#EXO #win #Kolkata
#jokes #Fasak
#FunniestTweets #MeToo 🙄 #Wine
#PetrolPriceHike
#Video #BiggBoss
#TooIntelligent
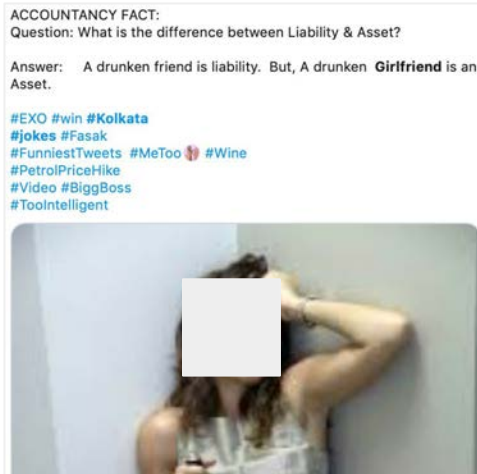
The lockdown has seen increase in child abuse, domestic abuse, baking videos, webinars, lives and also disgusting mean jokes equating wives with coronavirus. Milta kya hai logon ko!
#lockdownconversations

1:33 AM · May 27, 2020 from Mumbai, India · Twitter for iPhone

But why have you put vulture before your name. Getting trolled these days is no more the exclusive right of women. I get roasted by both the ruling and opposition party supporters every day. There is no room for neutral opinion in these times. But never mind we will do our job

1:26 AM · May 30, 2020 from Panaji, India · Twitter for Android

Examples of discourse on how gender-based jokes are belittled

Bro, you run after all **girls** whether **ugly** or beautiful. Why?

Because it's the showroom that differs down below the godown is same in all !!
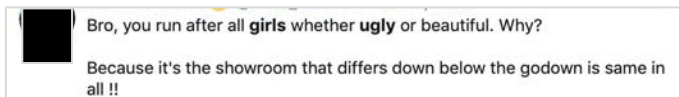
Examples of gender-based jokes

NO ISSUES ARE LEGITIMITATE IN THE FACE OF TROLLS

Across several posts on Twitter, we found that a person who brings a counter-opinion risks being trolled.

The volume of trolling was more common when gender issues are raised. People who spoke up were immediately labelled as 'the feminist type', which holds negative connoctations (evil, immoral, Westernized and anti-nationalist).

We found that a common negative response to women voicing their thoughts was disregarding their message. Instead, they made discounting remarks on the person's qualifications and/or appearance.

We respect our real Women (Mom, Sisters, Aunts, Wife, Girlfriend etc.,) and protect them till our last breath. But we don't support these stupid Feminists who talk rubbish without any logic.
#WeSupportSandeepReddyVanga

1:28 AM · Jul 8, 2019 from Navi Mumbai, India · Twitter for Android

1 Retweet   4 Likes

Among all the patriarchal monotheistic Sky Daddy religions, it's Sanatana Dharma that reveres and worships the Mother Goddess in her various forms.
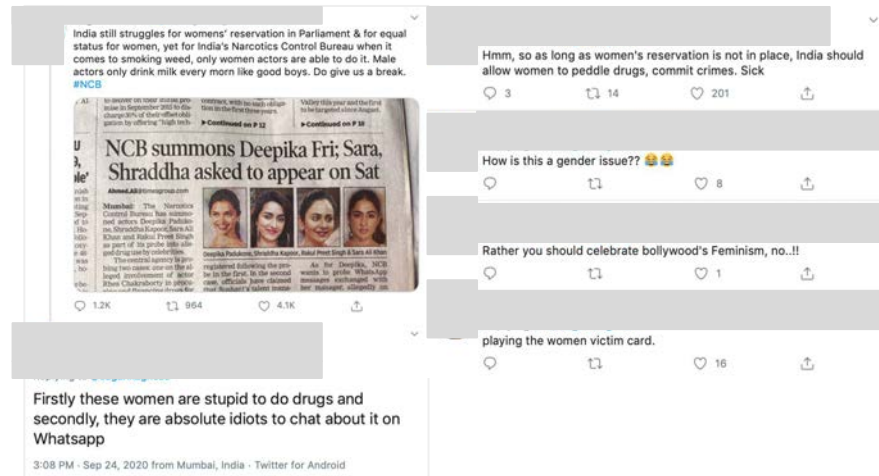
And such ignorant self.certified feminists spout crap!

We don't need this stupid GYAN for our cultural & spiritual values!

1:15 PM · Oct 20, 2020 · Twitter for Android

1 Retweet   1 Like

Please take strict action and issue notice, it's your duty so that any women would not use bad behavior
@MinistryWCD
#FeminismIsCoronaVirus
#FeminismIsCancer
#feminist

11:10 PM · Apr 6, 2020 · Twitter for Android

34 Retweets   9 Likes

Though off topic...you look beautiful in both the dp and this picture....dark colours suited you even better...may i know the fabric of the blue saree in the pic?

2:59 AM · May 30, 2020 · Twitter Web App

1 Like

U r looking gorgeous, will u marry me?.

1:24 AM · May 30, 2020 · Twitter Web App

1 Like

Your contribution to GENDER POLITICS is equivalent to putting a video on tik tok to make a time pass statement or impression.

Picking a bachelor Prime Minister works and good for Politics for NA KHAUNGA NA KHANE DOONGA has no selfishness but is BLANK on WOMEN POLITICS.

3:51 AM · May 30, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Anyone identifying as a 'feminist' risks hateful comments

India still struggles for womens' reservation in Parliament & for equal status for women, yet for India's Narcotics Control Bureau when it comes to smoking weed, only women actors are able to do it. Male actors only drink milk every morn like good boys. Do give us a break.
#NCB

NCB summons Deepika Fri; Sara, Shraddha asked to appear on Sat

♡ 1.2K   ⟲ 964   ♡ 4.1K

Firstly these women are stupid to do drugs and secondly, they are absolute idiots to chat about it on Whatsapp

3:08 PM · Sep 24, 2020 from Mumbai, India · Twitter for Android

Hmm, so as long as women's reservation is not in place, India should allow women to peddle drugs, commit crimes. Sick

♡ 3   ⟲ 14   ♡ 201   ⬆

How is this a gender issue?? 😂😂

♡   ⟲   ♡ 8   ⬆

Rather you should celebrate bollywood's Feminism, no..!!

♡   ⟲   ♡ 1   ⬆

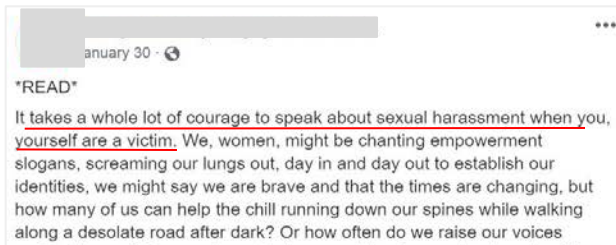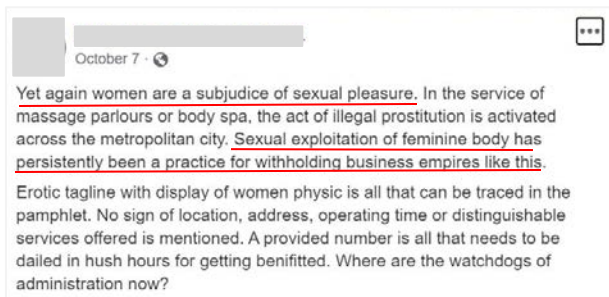playing the women victim card.

♡   ⟲   ♡ 16   ⬆

Negative remarks are directed to women as a collective

USE PERSONAL STORIES TO EVOKE EMOTION AND A CALL TO ACTION

Sexual harassment in the form of receiving unwanted attention is aplenty online - men leave unsolicited comments on the girls' posts, sometimes even sending crude photos and sharing the account handles of these girls without their permission.

Besides their experience of sexual harassment online, women also share personal experience of harassment offline. The tonality of their posts are raw and emotional, all to evoke a sense of urgency and a call to action.

October 7 ·

Yet again women are a subjudice of sexual pleasure. In the service of massage parlours or body spa, the act of illegal prostitution is activated across the metropolitan city. Sexual exploitation of feminine body has persistently been a practice for withholding business empires like this.

Erotic tagline with display of women physic is all that can be traced in the pamphlet. No sign of location, address, operating time or distinguishable services offered is mentioned. A provided number is all that needs to be dailed in hush hours for getting benifitted. Where are the watchdogs of administration now?

anuary 30 ·

READ

It takes a whole lot of courage to speak about sexual harassment when you, yourself are a victim. We, women, might be chanting empowerment slogans, screaming our lungs out, day in and day out to establish our identities, we might say we are brave and that the times are changing, but how many of us can help the chill running down our spines while walking along a desolate road after dark? Or how often do we raise our voices

eptember 21 ·

Now #kanganaranaut said- Payal Ghosh is right and I was also harassed by so many actors and directors in parties and their homes.

But I will take it's revenge in my own way

Longer posts calling out the injustice see authors penning their stance on the matter

An editor as old as my father, it could only be fatherly attention, I consoled myself. #MeToo #MJAkbar 6/n

1   56   89

His visits to **Kolkata** increased soon after. #MJAkbar insisted on meeting at ITC Sonar where he would stay. I was asked to come around 8 pm. In the exclusive members' only lounge, his personal waiter brought him glasses of whiskey and muri (puffed rice). #MeToo 7/n

1   60   94

As I tried to dash out the door, #MJAkbar gave me a hard hug, I ducked whatever else could have followed and fled. He seemed amused at my ducking. #MeToo 19/n

1   49   77

Sharing testimonies of being sexually harassed

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- From our **search journey,** we learned that people are searching about online violence but not directed to localized content. The information available to them is often from international organizations and technology platforms in English.
- In **urban areas,** there were many emerging trends during the pandemic, including exploitation, hacking, doxing and image-based abuse. There was also a growth in help-seeking searches.
- The trends were similar in **rural areas**, although there were fewer searches for online violence. Furthermore, searches were typically information-seeking.
- In the **platform analysis**, we found that the size of the conversation around online violence increased on social media platforms, including nearly tripling on Twitter. Conversations around gendertrolling and sexual harassment remain the largerst.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Policymakers** in India and globally can use this growing evidence base to work on legislation that protects women and children from violence online. In some countries like India and Australia, policies criminalize child sexual abuse material or hate speech. However, it is integral that policies begin to target online violence that target women.

- **Technology firms** are also accountable to online violence that amplified through their platforms. People have experienced reporting mechanisms only being available in English, a lack of reporting multi-platform violence, and not having transparent guidelines [1]. Tech firms should ensure transparent reporting mechanisms that are accessible to everyone. Furthermore, they should build stronger networks with policymakers and NGOs to make sure victims receive counseling or other support and perpetrators are identified.

- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** that are working to tackle online violence can use this evidence when advocating with policymakers especially on laws protecting women and children online. They can also develop locally relevant content about online violence and leverage different online platforms for awareness and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Our research also demonstrates there is a lack of information online violence. **Research institutes like ICRW and Web Foundation** can bridge this gap by strengthening the evidence on it.

- **Policymakers, technology firms, CSOs and educators** can collaborate to ensure girls are able to protect themselves by making information and resources readily available online, in schools or community centers.

- As various forms of online violence have almost tripled during COVID-19, **it is vital that stakeholders listed above** are prepared for future times of crisis by setting up prevention response mechanisms

- **Service providers for women and girls facing violence** - offline and online - should ensure that their services are upfront on their social media and their websites.

KEY INSIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

URBAN AREAS

GROWTH IN HELP-SEEKING DURING LOCKDOWN

As there is growth in help-seeking searches, there is an opportunity for response organizations to more actively place content across social media platforms which gives information on types of online violence, how to address it and where to go for help. The content should range from awareness around types of online violence (e.g. how to identify it) to stopping online violence and accessing resources or support.

GREATER INCREASE IN CERTAINS FORMS OF ONLINE VIOLENCE

Top domains in this period are doxing, online stalking, and hacking. However, this results in people disregarding the effects of such practices, even ignoring the existence of it. As awareness grows (with more help-seeking searches), it is necessary to capitalise on the present traction and educate people that even such forms of online violence should be taken seriously. This extends to other stakeholders as well. Evidence shows that providing gender sensitive training on online violence to police and policymakers can build advocacy and additional resources for people seeking help [1].

KEY INSIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

URBAN AREAS

GENERAL LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

There are fewer searches for online violence, as compared to urban cities. Furthermore, searches are typically information-seeking. This indicates a poor level of awareness and knowledge on the issue. It is vital to educate people on recognising online violence so that incidents can be tracked and reported. Education is a major enabler of digital empowerment among women and girls, suggesting opportunities to invest in digital literacy skills programs in schools that incorporate awareness on online violence [2][3].

ONLINE VIOLENCE CONVERSATIONS ARE LIMITED TO SELECTED FEW

Similar to in urban areas, most of the online violence conversations revolve around doxing, hacking, using fake accounts. There is an explicit lack of searches around sexual harassment, exploitation and image base abuse. It is important to address informational content around online violence holistically, providing educational and service oriented resources at the beginning of the search journey, to types of online violence and information of where to report such incidents or seek help.

PLATFORMS DEEP DIVE

CSOs and advocates who work to prevent or address online violence can leverage the various social media platforms and scale up their interventions and campaigns. Overall, there is a skew towards younger males (18-34 years old), who are more inclined to online violence acts on social media platform. Given that they are also the predominant demographics online, they should be considered a priority audience to target.

Platform	Relevant Issues	How to leverage the platform?
Facebook	Gendertrolling, Sexual harassment, Using fake accounts, Image base abuse, Online stalking / Hacking	Users of all age group can be targeted. Create pages that share educational content on GBV can be shared. Photo contests / giveaways can be employed to increase engagement on these posts. Perpetrators (groups / pages) to be named and shamed in community groups, or employ fear tactics to discourage demand and acts of GBV.
Instagram	Sexual harassment, Using fake accounts, Image base abuse, Online stalking / Hacking	Advocates raising awareness of online violence can share personal stories of online violence to make conversations mainstream (IG Stories
Twitter	Doxing, Gendertrolling, Sexual harassment, Using fake accounts, Image base abuse, Online stalking / Hacking	Build retweetable content, with an emphasis of stories and experiences, to evoke empathy among general audience for victims. Make use of hashtags to galvanise for change. Hashtags with global footprint are especially successful.
YouTube	Gender trolling, Image base abuse	Longform journalistic content on GBV - with a call to action.

Platform Insights (I)

Categories of online violence	Insights	Relevant Platforms
Doxing **Male skew, 25-34 yo**	**General education on the issue** - People are still learning about the issue - Take to social media to have discussions - Lack of a firm stance - Normalised by existing internet mob culture **Privacy is still up for debate** - Lack of awareness on disclosing private information - Urban : Mostly people seeking help on generic matters, which leads them to sharing phone numbers. - Rural : More cases of men leaving their phone number for women to call them.	Twitter, YouTube
Gendertrolling **Male skew, 18-34 yo**	**Gender-based jokes as entertainment** - Pressure to be 'cool' leads to culture of accepting crude and derogatory remarks against women - Creators take pride in coming up with such content - Content is popular due to the 'entertainment' factor - Urban : One of the top narrative is that women are presented as sex objects to bring pleasure to men, and an increasing prepositioning to women on Twitter. - Rural : Often demonstrated through suggestive / derogatory comments. **No issues are legitimate in the face of trolls** - Not acceptive of counter-opinions - Identifying as feminists / allies is discouraged	Twitter, Facebook, YouTube
Sexual harassment **Heavy male skew, 18-34 yo**	**Use stories to evoke emotions and a call to action** - Unwanted attention aplenty - Brings issues to light **Movements give women a voice** - Traction from movements helps to strengthen individual voice - Support from verified accounts legitimises the movements - Urban : This is more prominent among urban cities, especially in Delhi in Mumbai, where there are more influencers and activists speaking out on sexual harassment. - Rural : There is an ongoing narrative that sexual harassment is not as important as other social issues, causing attention on TFGBV to be redirected.	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

Platform Insights (II)

Categories of online violence	Insights	Relevant Platforms
Using fake accounts **Heavy male skew, 18-34 yo**	**Men trade photos like tokens** - Groups and pages are easy to find - Photos are cross-shared (even though the photos are not owned by them) - Uncontrollable spread lead to inaction - Urban : Usually stolen photos. - Rural : Accounts offering shout-outs and promotions are aplenty. These accounts are typically linked to a main influencer account. **Women's profile is not their own** - Fuelled by the problem of hacking - Unwanted attention is seen as compliments	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
Online stalking / Hacking **Heavy male skew, 18-24 yo**	**Active reporting to the authorities** - Women take to social media to report incidents of stalking /hacking - Urban : Active searches on "how to report" - Rural : Lack of awareness on the issue. Women are also too embarrassed to ask for help.	Twitter, Facebook (Messenger), Instagram
Image based abuse **Heavy male skew, 18-34 yo**	**Sharing without permission** - Lack of policing means that people are free to share unwanted images - Difficult to track non-consensual photos and limit their posting - Urban : Accounts and hashtags sharing images of women are abundant. However, these photos are not linked to specific accounts, suggesting that they are stolen. There is also an increase in instances of cyberflashing, where men share photos of their genitals when responding to tweets and Facebook posts. - Rural : There is a lack of social unawareness on the consequence of their action. For example, men post videos taken of female tourists in revealing outfits without knowledge. In the comment section, other men commend the original uploader.	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube

HOW TO LEVERAGE

Platform	Common Trends	Relevant Issues	How to leverage?
Facebook	News Community support NGO-led causes	Gendertrolling, Sexual harassment, Using fake accounts, Image base abuse, Online stalking / Hacking	Users of all age group can be targeted. Create pages that share educational content on GBV can be shared. Photo contests and giveaways can be employed to increase engagement on these posts. Perpetrators (groups / pages) to be named and shamed in community groups, or employ fear tactics to discourage demand and acts of GBV.
Instagram	Lifestyle-oriented content	Sexual harassment, Using fake accounts, Image base abuse, Online stalking / Hacking	Advocates raising awareness of online violence can share personal stories of online violence to make conversations mainstream (IG Stories)
Twitter	Political and controversial topics	Doxing, Gendertrolling, Sexual harassment, Using fake accounts, Image base abuse, Online stalking / Hacking	Build retweetable content, with an emphasis of stories and experiences, to evoke empathy among general audience for victims. Make use of hashtags to galvanise for change. Hashtags with global footprint are especially successful.
YouTube	Entertainment Discussions on social issues	Gender trolling, Image base abuse	Longform journalistic content on GBV - with a call to action.

CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the study, we conducted in-depth planning around search terms and social media data pulls. However, the research has several limitations:

- Our findings are generalizable only to the geographies where we searched, to English and Hindi-literate populations and to people who use the internet regularly to search about online violence. It does not reflect the prevalence nor magnitude of the issue - in fact, it may be those experiencing it are least likely to seek support online.

- We were unable to capture gender-based violence as was defined by the conceptual framework.

- Many search keywords were generic and thus we were unlikely to have found the local expressions in our searches. As people tend to use less formal ways of talking about their experiences, and as there are context-specific expressions, we likely missed certain searches or social media posts that would have been relevant to our inquiry.

- We were unable to tease out whether the people searching for or posting about online violence actually experienced it themselves, were interested in perpetrating it, or were merely curious about the issue. In this way, our findings cannot be used to reflect prevalence of the issue.

ANNEX 1. DEFINITIONS OF DOMAINS

ICRW and Quilt.AI used the TFGBV framework to categorize online behaviors into various domains. Digital insights were analyzed on the following components of the framework: behavior, mode (online platforms), help-seeking and cross-cutting tactics.

Within behaviors we focused on stalking, sexual harassment and exploitation.

Behaviors

- **Online stalking:** *repeat* pursuit behavior of an individual using communication technology that would cause a reasonable person to experience a substantial emotional response or feel fear for their safety or the safety of someone close to them"; must be repeated two or more times, may be the same behavior twice or two different behaviors once

- **Sexual harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

- **Exploitation:** Benefitting or gaining, without consent and potentially without knowledge, from images or film of another individual or from the details of their personal identity (via extortion). Includes sex trafficking.

Mode: Facebook, Reddit, Sharechat, Instagram

ANNEX 1. DEFINITIONS OF DOMAINS

Cross Cutting Tactics

- **Doxing:** Revealing identifying information about an anonymous or semi-anonymous individual on the Internet
- **Hacking**: Access others' online accounts without permission including monitoring someone's behavior
- **Image based abuse**: Creating, altering, obtaining, using, distributing, or threatening to distribute non-consensual, intimate sexual or personal images.
- **Gender trolling:** Mobilizing a group of others across media platforms to target women who express opinions online
- **Using fake accounts:** Creating fake accounts within online communities for trolling, obtaining information, exploitation or arrest.

Help Seeking and Coping

- **Reporting:** to police, via site, to third party
- **Support Services** Health/legal, professional counseling, informal
- **Changing technology use:** blocking, deleting or changing online accounts or posting profile/blog, created fake profile/online name, changing online identity