

## Effect of Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence on social media communication in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) has become a significant issue in the global context, including in Nigeria, where the rapid growth of social media use intersects with existing gender-based inequalities. In Nigeria, the effects of TFGBV on social media communication are both profound and wide-ranging, influencing individuals, communities, and even the broader societal discourse. Misogyny and tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) are escalating concerns in Nigeria, reflecting broader societal gender inequalities exacerbated by digital technologies. This paper explores the evolving trends, contexts, and impacts of TFGBV, including online harassment, cyberstalking, doxxing, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Social media and digital platforms have become both sites of empowerment and oppression, where misogynistic narratives thrive, often with limited legal and institutional accountability. Cultural norms, weak regulatory frameworks, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms further enable perpetrators while silencing victims. Through a critical analysis of case studies, policy responses, and advocacy efforts, this study highlights the urgent need for comprehensive legal reforms, digital literacy programs, and multi-stakeholder collaborations to combat TFGBV. Addressing these issues is essential for fostering a safer digital environment and advancing gender equality in Nigeria.*

### Keywords

Contexts, Gender-Based, Misogyny, Tech-Facilitated, Trends and Violence



## I. Introduction

In recent years, the increasing use of digital platforms and social media has radically transformed communication and interaction worldwide, offering new avenues for self-expression, social engagement, and activism. However, alongside these opportunities, the rise of Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) has become a growing concern, particularly in countries like Nigeria, where digital spaces are becoming central to public discourse.

While the proliferation of social media in Nigeria, particularly platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram, has empowered marginalised groups, especially women, to share their voices and engage in social and political discourse, this same digital environment has also fostered new spaces for misogynistic behaviour, resulting in a range of psychological, social, and political consequences for those targeted by online gender-based violence.

As a result of advancement in the use of technology and digital devices, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has transcended physical barriers, and is now manifesting on various technological platforms. As the digital spaces for communication expands across social media platforms, so has the infringement, repression and oppression of the communication rights of women and girls translated from the traditional forms of physical violence to digital

spaces as Online Gender Based Violence (OGBV), otherwise known as Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV). Consequently, perpetrators now use social media platforms like X, Facebook and Instagram, among others, as platforms to perpetuate forms of violence against women.

Misogyny is defined as the ingrained prejudice, dislike, or hatred of women and girls, manifesting in attitudes, behaviours, and practices that devalue or discriminate against them based on their gender. Misogyny can be seen in both overt forms, such as violence and harassment, and more subtle forms, such as stereotypes, societal expectations, and systemic inequalities that reinforce women's subordination. It operates at both an individual and institutional level, often perpetuating gender-based violence, inequality, and oppression.

According to Jagger, "Misogyny is the systemic oppression of women through cultural, social, and political means that restricts their opportunities, freedoms, and rights. It is reinforced through structures of power that perpetuate gender-based violence, inequality, and discrimination" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 67).

Within the context of social media communication, Henry & Powel noted that "Misogyny in digital spaces operates through a combination of hate speech, harassment, and the propagation of harmful stereotypes about women. This form of misogyny is often amplified in anonymous online environments, leading to widespread abuse of women and girls" (Henry & Powell, 2018, p. 151).

Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), on the other hand refers to the use of digital technologies, including social media platforms, to carry out acts of violence and discrimination based on gender. In Nigeria, a country characterised by entrenched gender inequalities and rapid digital growth, TFGBV manifests in various detrimental forms, such as online harassment, misogynistic attacks, cyberbullying, and the dissemination of harmful gender stereotypes (Adebayo, 2021; Henry & Powell, 2018; UN Women, 2020).

This paper examines the profound effects of TFGBV on social media communication in Nigeria, focusing on the ways it influences women's participation in public dialogue, exacerbates gender stereotypes, and impacts their emotional and mental well-being. It also explores how the Nigerian socio-political landscape, shaped by cultural norms and patriarchal structures, both informs and amplifies the violence women face online. Furthermore, the study considers the role of social media platforms, government policies, and civil society in combating TFGBV and promoting safer, more inclusive digital spaces for women. Understanding these dynamics is critical to addressing the challenges posed by TFGBV, ensuring that technology can be harnessed for empowerment rather than exploitation, and fostering a digital culture that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of gender.

The digital age has revolutionised communication, providing new avenues for social interaction, economic opportunities, and political engagement. However, alongside these advancements, technology has also facilitated new forms of gender-based violence, particularly against women and marginalised groups. Tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) encompasses various forms of online abuse, including cyberstalking, doxxing, non-consensual image distribution, and digital harassment (Gbadamosi, 2021). In Nigeria, the rise of social media and other digital platforms has intensified misogynistic discourse, further entrenching systemic gender inequalities and exposing women to new threats of violence and discrimination (Uduak & Onuoha, 2022).

Despite increasing reports of TFGBV, there remains a significant gap in legal protections and institutional responses to address these violations. Many victims encounter barriers in seeking justice due to weak enforcement mechanisms, victim-blaming attitudes, and cultural norms that often trivialize online abuse (Eze & Oladipo, 2020). The normalisation of misogyny in both online and offline spaces exacerbates the challenge, making it difficult for women to freely express themselves without fear of reprisal. Moreover, inadequate digital literacy and awareness contribute to the persistence of these harmful practices, as many individuals remain unaware of their rights and the legal frameworks available for redress (Adeyemi, 2021).

This paper examines the evolving trends and contexts of TFGBV in Nigeria, analysing its impact on victims and society. By exploring existing legal frameworks, policy responses, and advocacy efforts, the study highlights the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that promote digital safety and gender equality. Through a multidisciplinary approach, it seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on combating misogyny and ensuring a safer online environment for all (Obasi & Msughter, 2023).

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Trends in the manifestation of Misogyny and Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria**

Misogyny and tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Nigeria have grown in complexity with increased digital penetration. The intersection of patriarchal structures and technology has resulted in new forms of gender-based violence (GBV) that disproportionately target women and girls (Airaoje et al., 2023). These forms include cyberstalking, doxxing, online harassment, non-consensual dissemination of intimate images, and gendered disinformation (Bamiro, 2022). The pervasive nature of these violations has been exacerbated by socio-cultural norms that often trivialise online abuse, creating an environment where perpetrators act with impunity (Eze, 2021).

A significant trend in TFGBV in Nigeria is the weaponisation of social media to silence and intimidate women, particularly those in politics, activism, and journalism. Studies indicate that women who voice opinions on social issues face heightened levels of online harassment, including threats of physical and sexual violence (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023). Another dimension of this trend is the use of technology to enforce gendered power dynamics in intimate relationships. Cases of digital surveillance, revenge porn, and sextortion are increasingly reported, particularly among young women in urban areas (Okonkwo, 2020).

The legal and institutional response to TFGBV in Nigeria has been inadequate, despite existing frameworks such as the Cybercrimes Act of 2015 and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015. Implementation gaps, coupled with low levels of digital literacy and law enforcement inefficiencies, hinder victims' access to justice (Adeyemi, 2021). Additionally, there is a lack of clear policies addressing the role of digital platforms in moderating harmful content and protecting users, which further enables misogynistic abuse online (Olufemi, 2022).

Efforts to counter TFGBV have emerged through grassroots activism, digital literacy campaigns, and advocacy for stronger policy interventions. Feminist groups and civil society organisations, such as Stand to End Rape (STER) and TechHer, play a crucial role in supporting survivors and raising awareness about digital safety (Adamu, 2022). Gender advocates and other organisations like the Women Development Advocate and Documentation Centre (WARDC) and Journalists for Christ (JFC) International Outreach

under its #EndmisogynyNG initiative have in recent times also undertaken extensive research into forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV), online/offline. However, these initiatives require greater stakeholders' collaboration, policy frameworks, institutional backing and policy direction with tech companies to ensure safer digital spaces for Nigerian women.

The prevalence of misogyny and TFGBV in Nigeria reflects broader societal attitudes toward gender and power. While digital spaces provide opportunities for empowerment, they also serve as battlegrounds for reinforcing gender inequalities. Addressing this issue requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving legal reforms, platform accountability, and cultural shifts toward recognizing online violence as a serious human rights violation.

## **2.2 Digital Misogyny and Patriarchy**

Digital misogyny and patriarchy are deeply interconnected, reflecting the ways in which gender-based discrimination is perpetuated in online spaces. The rise of digital platforms has provided new avenues for gendered oppression, reinforcing traditional patriarchal structures while also creating new challenges for women navigating these spaces (Banet-Weiser, 2018). The internet, while often perceived as a tool for empowerment and free expression, has also facilitated the spread of misogynistic narratives, leading to increased harassment, online abuse, and the silencing of women's voices in political, social, and professional spheres (Jane, 2017).

One of the defining features of digital misogyny is the normalisation of gendered hate speech and online harassment. Social media, forums, and messaging platforms have enabled individuals and groups to target women with threats of violence, cyberstalking, and public shaming. This is particularly pronounced for women in positions of influence, including politicians, journalists, and activists, who face coordinated attacks aimed at undermining their credibility and discouraging their participation in public discourse (Lewis et al., 2021). The persistence of digital misogyny is further reinforced by patriarchal ideologies that frame women's presence in digital spaces as secondary or subordinate to men's, thereby legitimizing their exclusion through targeted abuse (Nussbaum, 2010; Hile et al., 2023).

Another significant aspect of digital misogyny is its intersection with broader patriarchal systems that regulate women's autonomy, particularly in conservative societies. The use of technology to surveil, control, and manipulate women has become a growing concern, with cases of digital coercion, revenge pornography, and sextortion highlighting the ways in which patriarchal power extends into the digital realm (Henry & Powell, 2018). These forms of tech-facilitated gender-based violence not only violate women's rights but also reinforce existing gender inequalities by instilling fear and limiting their freedom to engage with digital platforms (Citron, 2014).

The role of digital platforms in either curbing or enabling misogyny has been a subject of debate. While tech companies have introduced policies to combat online abuse, enforcement remains inconsistent, allowing misogynistic content to proliferate (Ging & Siapera, 2018). Algorithmic biases in content moderation further exacerbate the problem, as abusive material often goes unchecked, while feminist and activist accounts are disproportionately flagged or removed due to coordinated reporting by online misogynist groups (Daniels, 2009). The lack of accountability among tech corporations reflects broader patriarchal structures that prioritize profit over the safety and dignity of women in digital spaces.

Efforts to challenge digital misogyny require a multi-faceted approach that includes legal reforms, platform accountability, and cultural shifts toward recognising online abuse as a serious social issue. Feminist movements and digital activists have been instrumental in raising awareness, advocating for stronger protections, and creating alternative online spaces

that empower women and marginalized communities (Baer, 2016). However, dismantling digital patriarchy necessitates a broader societal transformation in attitudes toward gender, technology, and power. The entrenchment of patriarchy in digital spaces highlights the urgent need for systemic change (Idris & Msughter, 2022). The internet has the potential to be a site of liberation, but only if structural inequalities are actively challenged. Addressing digital misogyny requires not only stronger legal protections and policy interventions but also a fundamental reimagining of digital culture, one that prioritizes inclusivity, safety, and gender justice.

### **2.3 Social Media as a Tool for Both Empowerment and Oppression**

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool that serves both as an instrument of empowerment and a mechanism for oppression. In the digital age, social media platforms provide individuals and communities with unprecedented opportunities to amplify their voices, engage in activism, and challenge dominant narratives. However, these same platforms have also facilitated new forms of surveillance, harassment, and misinformation that disproportionately affect marginalized groups, particularly women and minorities (Fuchs, 2021). The duality of social media as both liberating and oppressive underscores its role as a contested space shaped by broader social, political, and economic structures.

One of the most significant ways in which social media fosters empowerment is through its ability to democratize information and provide a platform for marginalized voices. Activist movements such as #MeToo, #EndSARS, and #BlackLivesMatter have demonstrated the power of digital mobilization, enabling individuals to expose injustices, demand accountability, and connect with global audiences (Tufekci, 2017; Maikaba & Msughter, 2019). Social media has also transformed the landscape of political participation, allowing citizens to engage in discussions, mobilize protests, and hold governments accountable in ways that were previously inaccessible (Kurfi et al., 2023). Additionally, it has played a crucial role in economic empowerment, particularly for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and content creators who leverage these platforms for financial opportunities (van Dijck, 2013).

Despite its potential for empowerment, social media has also become a tool for oppression, particularly through the spread of misinformation, cyber harassment, and digital surveillance (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). The rapid dissemination of false narratives and propaganda has been used to manipulate public opinion, undermine democratic processes, and reinforce harmful stereotypes (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Women, activists, and journalists frequently face targeted harassment campaigns designed to silence their voices, with tactics ranging from doxxing to coordinated abuse (Jane, 2017). Moreover, governments and corporations increasingly utilize social media for surveillance, monitoring dissent, and controlling the flow of information, thereby limiting freedom of expression (Zuboff, 2019). The algorithmic structures of these platforms further exacerbate inequalities by amplifying sensationalist and divisive content, often to the detriment of marginalized communities (Noble, 2018).

The contradictory nature of social media highlights the need for stronger regulatory frameworks, digital literacy initiatives, and platform accountability to mitigate its harms while maximizing its benefits. While social media continues to be a space for advocacy and social change, its potential for oppression must not be ignored. Addressing these challenges requires a collective effort from policymakers, technology companies, and civil society to create a digital environment that fosters inclusivity, security, and genuine empowerment.

## 2.4 Legal and Policy Frameworks on TFGBV in Nigeria

The legal and policy frameworks addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Nigeria remain limited and largely underdeveloped despite the growing prevalence of digital abuse against women and marginalized groups. While Nigeria has enacted laws aimed at addressing cybercrimes and gender-based violence, there are significant gaps in implementation, enforcement, and awareness, which hinder their effectiveness in combating TFGBV (Adeyemi, 2021).

One of the primary legal instruments relevant to TFGBV in Nigeria is the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015. This law criminalises cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and identity theft, which are common forms of TFGBV. Section 24 of the Act specifically addresses cyber harassment and the transmission of offensive messages through communication services. However, the law has been criticized for its vague wording, which has led to its misuse in curbing freedom of expression rather than effectively prosecuting gendered digital violence (Olawale, 2022). Additionally, the Act does not adequately address newer forms of TFGBV such as non-consensual dissemination of intimate images, sextortion, or deepfake technology-based abuse.

The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015 is another significant piece of legislation that provides legal protection against various forms of gender-based violence, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Although the Act does not explicitly mention TFGBV, it offers legal recourse for victims of online abuse, particularly when digital violence translates into offline threats or harm (Eze, 2020). However, its applicability is limited because the law is only enforceable in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), leaving states to adopt and implement their versions at their discretion. Many states in Nigeria have yet to domesticate the VAPP Act, leading to inconsistencies in protection for victims across the country (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023).

Nigeria's Data Protection Act of 2023 also has implications for TFGBV, particularly in cases of digital privacy violations such as doxxing and the unauthorized sharing of personal data. This law establishes data protection rights and regulates how personal information is collected, stored, and used. However, enforcement mechanisms remain weak, and many victims of TFGBV are unaware of their rights under this framework (Okonkwo, 2023). Beyond legislative measures, there are policy initiatives aimed at addressing TFGBV. The National Gender Policy, developed by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, highlights the need for digital inclusion and the protection of women from online abuse. However, this policy remains largely advisory and lacks enforcement mechanisms, making its impact on TFGBV minimal (Adamu, 2022). Civil society organizations and feminist movements have played a crucial role in advocating for stronger protections and awareness campaigns, pushing for reforms that incorporate digital violence into existing gender-based violence laws.

Despite these legal and policy frameworks, challenges such as poor enforcement, low digital literacy, and societal attitudes that trivialize online abuse continue to hinder progress in addressing TFGBV in Nigeria. Strengthening these frameworks requires a multi-stakeholder approach that includes legal reforms, better law enforcement training, and greater accountability from technology platforms operating in Nigeria. Without these measures, digital spaces will remain hostile environments for women and marginalized communities.

### III. Research Method

#### 3.1 Role of Technology and Digital Platforms

Technology and digital platforms play a crucial role in shaping modern communication, economic activities, and social interactions, influencing various aspects of society. These platforms serve as powerful tools for connectivity, innovation, and information dissemination, providing opportunities for individuals and businesses to engage in activities that were previously limited by geographical and economic constraints. From social media networks to e-commerce sites and cloud-based services, digital platforms have transformed how people interact, work, and access services in unprecedented ways (van Dijck, 2013; Taiwo et al., 2024).

One of the most significant contributions of technology and digital platforms is in the democratization of information. Social media, blogs, and online news sources have allowed individuals to share their perspectives, breaking the monopoly of traditional media houses. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have become essential tools for activism, enabling social movements like #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #EndSARS to gain global attention and mobilize support (Tufekci, 2017). These platforms provide spaces where marginalized voices can be amplified, allowing for greater representation and participation in public discourse (Obada et al., 2024).

Technology has also revolutionized economic activities, particularly through the gig economy, remote work, and e-commerce. Platforms such as Uber, Fiverr, and Amazon have provided employment and business opportunities for millions of people worldwide, offering flexible work arrangements and access to global markets (Kenney & Zysman, 2016). The rise of fintech solutions has further facilitated financial inclusion, enabling digital transactions and banking services that reach underserved populations. Mobile payment systems and cryptocurrencies have contributed to greater financial accessibility, reducing reliance on traditional banking institutions and fostering economic growth (Arner, Barberis, & Buckley, 2015).

However, while digital platforms offer numerous benefits, they also present challenges, particularly in the areas of misinformation, surveillance, and online harassment. The rapid spread of fake news and propaganda has influenced political outcomes and social perceptions, often leading to division and public distrust (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Social media algorithms, designed to maximize engagement, tend to promote sensationalist and polarizing content, which exacerbates ideological conflicts and misinformation (Noble, 2018). Additionally, the widespread collection of user data by technology companies has raised concerns about privacy and surveillance, with governments and corporations exploiting digital platforms for monitoring and controlling individuals (Zuboff, 2019).

Another critical challenge posed by digital platforms is the rise of cyber harassment, gender-based violence, and digital discrimination. Women, journalists, and activists often face targeted attacks, including cyberstalking, doxxing, and threats of violence, designed to silence their voices and exclude them from online spaces (Ging & Siaper, 2018). Despite efforts by social media companies to introduce content moderation policies, enforcement remains inconsistent, allowing harmful content to persist while disproportionately censoring marginalized voices.

The role of technology and digital platforms is therefore a double-edged sword, offering immense opportunities for progress while also presenting new forms of oppression and exploitation. Addressing these challenges requires stronger regulatory frameworks, ethical technological innovations, and global digital literacy efforts. As digital platforms

continue to evolve, balancing their benefits and risks remains a critical task for policymakers, technology companies, and society as a whole.

### **3.2 Psychological and Social Impacts on Victims**

The psychological and social impacts on victims of violence, harassment, and discrimination, particularly in digital spaces, are profound and multifaceted. Victims often experience a range of emotional and mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and a diminished sense of self-worth. The persistent nature of online harassment, cyberstalking, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) exacerbates these psychological effects, as digital abuse is not confined to a specific location and can follow victims into their personal and professional lives (Citron, 2014). The anonymity of perpetrators and the widespread reach of digital platforms further intensify victims' feelings of helplessness and isolation, making recovery more difficult (Henry & Powell, 2018).

Victims of psychological and social abuse often experience self-doubt and fear, which can lead to social withdrawal and reluctance to engage in online or offline spaces. Many individuals who have suffered online harassment, including cyberbullying and doxxing, report a loss of confidence in expressing their opinions, particularly when the abuse is gendered or politically motivated (Jane, 2017). Women, journalists, and activists are disproportionately targeted in online spaces, leading to self-censorship and the erosion of their participation in digital discourse. This forced silence reinforces systemic inequalities, as it effectively excludes marginalized voices from political and social debates (Lewis et al., 2021).

The social impacts on victims extend beyond personal distress to affect their relationships and professional opportunities. Survivors of cyber harassment or online shaming often struggle with reputational damage that can have long-term consequences on their careers, educational prospects, and social standing. The public and permanent nature of digital content means that harmful material, even if false, can persist indefinitely, making it difficult for victims to rebuild their personal and professional lives (Duggan, 2017). Moreover, the social stigma attached to digital abuse often discourages victims from seeking help, as they may fear being blamed or dismissed for engaging in online spaces perceived as risky (Nussbaum, 2010).

The psychological burden of online abuse is compounded by the lack of effective legal and institutional support systems. Many victims report frustration with law enforcement agencies that fail to take digital threats seriously or lack the expertise to address TFGBV effectively (Ging & Siapera, 2018). Similarly, technology companies have been criticized for their inadequate response to online abuse, as weak content moderation policies and inconsistent enforcement allow perpetrators to continue their harmful behavior with little accountability (Daniels, 2009). The failure of these systems to protect victims further deepens their sense of vulnerability and reinforces the normalization of digital violence.

Addressing the psychological and social impacts on victims requires a comprehensive approach that includes stronger legal protections, greater accountability from digital platforms, and increased public awareness of the consequences of online abuse. Mental health support services tailored to victims of digital harassment are essential to helping them cope with the trauma and reclaim their agency. Additionally, fostering a culture of digital empathy and bystander intervention can help mitigate the harmful effects of online violence and create safer spaces for all individuals to engage in digital discourse without fear.

### 3.3 Advocacy and Resistance Against TFGBV

Advocacy and resistance against technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Nigeria and globally have gained momentum as civil society organizations, activists, and legal advocates push for stronger protections and systemic change. TFGBV, which includes cyberstalking, doxxing, revenge pornography, online harassment, and other forms of digital violence, disproportionately affects women and marginalized communities. Advocacy efforts seek to address these issues through legal reform, digital literacy initiatives, policy engagement, and community-driven activism (Henry & Powell, 2018).

One of the primary approaches to resisting TFGBV is legal advocacy, which involves lobbying for comprehensive legislation that explicitly criminalizes digital gender-based violence. In Nigeria, while laws such as the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015 and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015 provide some protection, they do not adequately cover emerging forms of digital abuse (Eze, 2020). Feminist organizations and human rights groups have been actively advocating for amendments to these laws to ensure that digital offenses, such as the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and online harassment, are explicitly recognized and punished under Nigerian law (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023). These advocacy efforts also extend to ensuring proper enforcement of existing laws, as many victims of TFGBV face challenges in seeking justice due to a lack of legal awareness or inadequate responses from law enforcement agencies.

Beyond legal advocacy, digital literacy and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in equipping individuals, especially women and girls, with the skills to navigate online spaces safely. Organisations such as Stand to End Rape (STER) and TechHer Nigeria have launched initiatives aimed at educating people about digital rights, online safety strategies, and available legal remedies for victims of TFGBV (Adamu, 2022). These efforts are essential in bridging the knowledge gap that often leaves victims vulnerable and unaware of how to seek redress. Training programs, workshops, and social media campaigns have been instrumental in fostering a culture of digital resilience and self-protection among women and marginalized groups.

Grassroots and feminist movements have also been at the forefront of resistance against TFGBV, using social media platforms to challenge misogyny and call out perpetrators. Hashtag activism, such as the #MeToo and #EndSARS movements, has highlighted instances of gender-based violence and police brutality, bringing international attention to these issues (Tufekci, 2017). In Nigeria, online campaigns exposing digital abuse, victim-blaming, and institutional failures have forced authorities to take action and have increased public discourse on the need for safer online spaces. Activists use storytelling and survivor-centered approaches to humanize the impact of TFGBV, thereby encouraging solidarity and collective action against online violence.

Technology companies also face mounting pressure from advocacy groups to implement stronger policies against digital gender-based violence. Calls for platform accountability have led to demands for improved content moderation, better reporting mechanisms, and more transparent enforcement of policies against online abuse (Noble, 2018). While social media platforms have introduced measures such as reporting tools and AI-driven content moderation, advocacy groups argue that enforcement remains inconsistent, often leaving victims without adequate support (Ging & Siapera, 2018). Resistance efforts continue to push for more inclusive and survivor-centered approaches to digital platform governance, ensuring that technology companies take responsibility for the safety of their users.

Despite these advocacy and resistance efforts, challenges persist, including societal normalization of online abuse, weak legal implementation, and resistance from patriarchal structures that benefit from the silencing of women and marginalized groups. Moving forward, a multi-stakeholder approach is necessary to address TFGBV effectively. Collaboration between governments, civil society, technology companies, and international organizations is crucial in creating safer digital environments. Advocacy efforts must also continue to evolve in response to new technological developments that may introduce new forms of digital violence. By sustaining these resistance efforts, there is hope for a future where online spaces are equitable, safe, and inclusive for all users.

### **3.4 Comparative Analysis: Nigeria and Other Countries**

A comparative analysis of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Nigeria and other countries reveals both shared challenges and distinct legal, social, and technological approaches to addressing digital abuse. While TFGBV is a global issue affecting women and marginalized communities across different regions, responses vary based on legal frameworks, cultural attitudes, digital literacy levels, and the role of technology companies in regulation. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia have established more comprehensive legal mechanisms to tackle TFGBV, whereas Nigeria and many other developing nations continue to face challenges in enforcement, awareness, and policy implementation (Henry & Powell, 2018).

In Nigeria, existing legal frameworks such as the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015 and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015 provide limited protection against online harassment, cyberstalking, and digital abuse. However, these laws do not explicitly cover emerging forms of TFGBV, such as deepfake pornography, image-based abuse, or coordinated online attacks against women activists (Eze, 2020). Enforcement remains weak, with law enforcement agencies often lacking the technical expertise and gender-sensitive training required to handle cases effectively. Victims frequently encounter challenges in reporting online abuse, with many facing victim-blaming attitudes or a lack of institutional support, which discourages them from seeking legal redress (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023).

In contrast, countries such as Australia and Canada have adopted more explicit legal protections against TFGBV. Australia's Enhancing Online Safety Act of 2015 established the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, which provides victims with mechanisms to report and remove harmful online content, including cyber harassment and image-based abuse (Powell et al., 2020). Canada's Criminal Code includes specific provisions that criminalize non-consensual distribution of intimate images, cyberstalking, and online harassment, offering victims stronger legal recourse and clearer definitions of digital crimes (Bailey & Mathen, 2019). The United Kingdom's Online Safety Act, introduced to regulate harmful content on social media platforms, places greater accountability on technology companies to monitor and remove abusive content (Ging & Siapera, 2018).

Despite stronger legal protections in Western countries, enforcement challenges persist globally. In the United States, for example, laws addressing cyber harassment and non-consensual pornography vary by state, leading to inconsistencies in victim protection. Social media companies, while facing increased pressure to moderate harmful content, often struggle with enforcing policies consistently, resulting in the continued presence of misogynistic and violent digital abuse (Citron, 2014). Additionally, while the European Union has introduced regulatory measures such as the Digital Services Act to combat online harm, concerns remain about the effectiveness of self-regulation by technology platforms and

the potential for loopholes that allow digital abuse to persist (Suzor, 2019; Obada et al., 2021).

One of the key differences between Nigeria and more developed nations is the role of digital literacy and advocacy in combating TFGBV. In countries with higher digital literacy rates, awareness campaigns and educational programs play a significant role in preventing online abuse and equipping individuals with the skills to navigate digital spaces safely (Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Oreoluwa et al., 2021). In Nigeria, grassroots organizations and feminist activists have been instrumental in raising awareness about TFGBV, but challenges such as limited internet access in rural areas, lack of policy implementation, and cultural stigmas surrounding gender-based violence hinder widespread impact (Adamu, 2022).

Addressing TFGBV requires a combination of legal reform, technological accountability, and cultural change. While Nigeria and other developing countries continue to struggle with gaps in law enforcement and public awareness, global best practices suggest that a multi-stakeholder approach, including government intervention, private sector regulation, and civil society engagement, is crucial in ensuring safer digital spaces for all. Strengthening victim support mechanisms, promoting digital literacy, and holding technology companies accountable for the content on their platforms are necessary steps in reducing the prevalence of online violence against women and marginalized groups worldwide.

### **3.5 Misogyny, TFGBV and social media communication in Nigeria**

The effects of misogyny and Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) on social media communication in Nigeria are far-reaching, impacting individual users, communities, and broader social dynamics. As the digital landscape rapidly evolves, social media has become a critical platform for both empowerment and abuse.

Below are the key effects of misogyny and TFGBV on social media communication in Nigeria.

#### **a. Silencing and Censorship of Women's Voices**

Misogyny and TFGBV on social media often lead to self-censorship, where women and marginalised groups are silenced due to fear of online harassment. In Nigeria, women who express opinions, particularly those advocating for gender equality or social change, frequently face severe backlash, which can deter further participation in public discourse.

Adebayo (2021) explains that the prevalent misogynistic attitudes and online harassment in Nigeria contribute to women's reluctance to engage in digital spaces, particularly on issues of gender rights. The harassment often silences critical voices, diminishing women's participation in online public debates.

#### **b. Perpetuation of Gender Stereotypes**

The prevalence of misogynistic content on social media reinforces harmful gender stereotypes, portraying women as inferior or subservient to men. This process normalises discriminatory views and contributes to the wider cultural reinforcement of gender inequality in Nigeria.

According to Powell and Henry (2017), the spread of misogynistic content on social media plays a significant role in perpetuating negative stereotypes about women, particularly in patriarchal societies such as Nigeria, where gender norms are deeply entrenched.

#### **c. Psychological and Emotional Impact**

TFGBV, particularly online harassment, has significant psychological and emotional impacts on women in Nigeria. Victims of online abuse often experience anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem. These emotional consequences can result in withdrawal from social media and broader social engagement.

Henry and Powell (2018) note that online harassment not only affects the immediate emotional well-being of victims but also has long-lasting psychological effects, with those targeted by misogynistic online abuse often retreating from digital spaces to protect their mental health.

#### d. Reinforcement of Patriarchy

Misogyny and TFGBV on social media contribute to the reinforcement of patriarchal norms, where the expression of women's opinions, especially in relation to politics and social issues, is often met with hostility. In Nigeria, these behaviours perpetuate male dominance in both offline and online spaces.

Adebayo (2021) argues that the widespread nature of online misogyny exacerbates Nigeria's patriarchal social structures, with women's voices marginalized in favor of entrenched male-dominated narratives, thus reinforcing systemic gender inequality.

#### e. Escalation to Physical Violence

The dynamics of TFGBV often translate into real-life violence. Women who experience online harassment in Nigeria may find themselves at increased risk of physical assault, as the anonymity and immediacy of the online environment embolden perpetrators.

According to the United Nations (2020), technology-facilitated gender-based violence has been shown to escalate into offline violence, with perpetrators sometimes using online spaces to harass, stalk, and threaten victims, leading to heightened risks for women in both digital and physical spaces.

#### f. Undermining Women's Leadership and Political Engagement

Women in Nigeria who engage in political or social advocacy are often subjected to online misogyny and harassment, undermining their leadership potential and reducing their visibility in public spaces. These digital attacks frequently aim to discredit women and detract from their political efforts.

The prevalence of digital harassment is a significant barrier to women's participation in leadership roles, as discussed by Henry and Powell (2018), where they explain that misogynistic online violence targets female political figures and activists, hindering the advancement of women in positions of power.

### **3.6 Inferences on the effects of misogyny and TFGBV**

According to a report by JFC Nigeria from online/social media monitoring of the trends of Misogyny and Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) in Nigeria, and series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), there exists a substantial body of evidences that substantiate the existence and manifestations of Misogyny and TFGBV across social media/digital platforms in Nigeria. The patriarchal nature of the society, including inherent tradition and religious beliefs encourage Misogyny and TFGBV.

The finding from the JFC report established the following:

- a. WhatsApp groups have been used as a platform for shaming women, with men posting sexually explicit pictures of women, another revealed that there are tweets generated to warn women not to raise their voices against their cheating husbands, indicating that if they do, their marriage will crash and they will remain single for life.
- b. Female students face stigmatisation and ridicule for daring to contest against a male candidate in the Students Union election.
- c. While men are often the perpetrators of misogynistic behaviours and foster TFGBV tendencies, women are also secondary perpetrators and are involved in unleashing hatred on fellow women.
- d. Women with disability are targets and are often taken advantage of as victims through the sending of unsolicited sexual images for emotional relationship.

- e. Women with albinism are also target of misogynistic statements.
- f. Women face workplace Misogyny and TFGBV attack, especially as relating to the pursuit of certain career and vocational aspirations.
- g. The manifestation of Misogyny and TFGBV in Nigeria, is hinged on both social cultural and family context, as passed from generation to generation.
- h. Misogynistic behaviours and the manifestation of TFGBV in the society stem from transferred practices, attitudes and bad behavior from one or both parents to children.
- i. Though men are often the perpetrators of Misogyny and TFGBV, men are also very strategic and important in playing key roles in efforts to curb Misogyny and TFGBV

### **3.7 Effects of Misogyny and online violence on women**

- a. It tends to force girls/women to conform to societal pressures, often against their will.
- b. It breaks the willpower of women and aims to reduce women's participation and contribution in society.
- c. It causes psychological harm, leading to a defeatist attitude and stalled ambitions.
- d. It limits the potential of women and can destroy ambition, confining women to societal stereotypes.
- e. It leads to depression, suicidal thoughts, and stigmatisation.

### **3.8 How to respond to the challenge of Misogyny and TFGBV**

- a. Create awareness, educate people and engage in online support networks.
- b. Support victims and confront misogyny when witnessed.
- c. Involve men who understand the issue and sensitise boys to be responsible to value and treat girls and women with respect.
- d. Involve religious leaders and community organisations.
- e. Reorient family units and challenge the misinterpretation of religious texts.
- f. Produce counter-narratives and promote women's solidarity and mutual support.
- g. Advocate and enforce laws against online gender-based violence.
- h. Implement multi-layered advocacy and increase online awareness of the harm of misogyny.
- i. Encourage responsible social media practices and collaborate with institutions to create awareness to stop misogyny.
- j. Promote inclusive and respectful language and challenge sexist attitudes and behavior.
- k. Educate children from a young age about gender equality.
- l. Increase media reporting on the issues and encourage storytelling to educate others.
- m. Build networks and involve other stakeholders for concerted efforts on the issues.

## **IV. Conclusion**

The trends and contexts of misogyny and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Nigeria highlight a deeply entrenched issue that reflects broader patterns of gender inequality, digital harm, and systemic barriers to justice. The rise of digital technologies has amplified existing misogynistic norms, enabling new forms of abuse such as cyberstalking, online harassment, image-based sexual abuse, and coordinated digital attacks against women. The pervasiveness of these forms of violence is exacerbated by a lack of comprehensive legal protections, weak enforcement mechanisms, and societal attitudes that often dismiss or trivialize digital abuse. Despite the existence of laws such as the

Cybercrimes Act of 2015 and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, gaps in implementation and awareness continue to leave many victims without adequate recourse.

However, advocacy efforts, feminist movements, and digital literacy initiatives are gradually shifting the landscape, challenging patriarchal norms and pushing for stronger protections against TFGBV. Organizations and activists in Nigeria have played a crucial role in raising awareness, supporting victims, and pressuring policymakers to address the legal and institutional shortcomings that enable digital violence to thrive. Additionally, global conversations on online misogyny and digital abuse have influenced local discourse, creating opportunities for collaborative solutions between government agencies, civil society, and technology platforms.

Moving forward, addressing TFGBV in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that combines legal reform, digital platform accountability, and widespread education on digital rights and safety. Law enforcement must be equipped with the necessary training and resources to handle cases effectively, while tech companies must be held responsible for ensuring safer online spaces. Most importantly, shifting societal attitudes through advocacy and education is essential in dismantling the normalization of online misogyny. Without these collective efforts, digital spaces will continue to serve as arenas for gendered violence, further silencing and marginalizing women in Nigeria. The fight against TFGBV is not just about protecting individuals from harm but about upholding human rights, ensuring equal participation in digital spaces, and fostering a more inclusive and just society.

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