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# Gendered Disinformation: Deepening Perspectives from South Asia

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**Authored by:** Sneha Alexander, Kat Lo, Shalini Joshi, Nat Gyenes

**Contributors:** Hyra Basit and Seerat Khan - Digital Rights Foundation

Abhilash Mallick and Aishwarya Varma - The Quint

Gargi Yadav and Suneeta Prajapati - Chambal Media

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Partners



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# Executive Summary

This project is a pilot study led by Meedan, a technology nonprofit, to understand how gendered disinformation manifests in South Asia, with India and Pakistan serving as the two primary countries of focus. This study was conducted between March 2023 and October 2024 with the support of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.

Collaborators for the project included Digital Rights Foundation, a digital rights non-profit and research organization in Pakistan; Chambal Media, a rural-feminist media network; and The Quint, a leading fact-checking group in India.

Drawing on 450 unique cases targeting women and LGBTQ+ people, we developed a methodology designed to expose the unique contours of online gendered disinformation in South Asia and inform contextually appropriate approaches to countering its proliferation.

## What is gendered disinformation?

Gendered disinformation<sup>1</sup> is a subset of gender-based violence<sup>2</sup> that is distinct in its purposeful use of false, gender-based, misogynistic, and sexualized narratives to malign and discredit women and LGBTQ+ people.

United Nations leaders,<sup>3</sup> the US State Department,<sup>4</sup> the National Democratic Institute,<sup>5</sup> and the Brookings Institution<sup>6</sup> have identified gendered disinformation as a significant threat to the rights of women and nonbinary people and to national security.

Irene Khan, the UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, has described gendered disinformation as “both a strategy to silence the free expression of women and gender nonconforming persons and a form of online gender-based violence in certain circumstances.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nina Jankowicz et al, “Malign Creativity: How Gender, Sex and Lies are Weaponized Against Women,” Wilson Centre, Jan 2021.

<sup>2</sup>UN Women, “Violence Against Women: A Brief Overview of the United Nations and Violence Against Women.”

<sup>3</sup>UN General Assembly, “Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression: Note by the Secretary-General,” Aug 2023.

<sup>4</sup>US Department of State, “Gendered Disinformation: Tactics, Themes, and Trends by Foreign Malign Actors,” Global Engagement Center, Mar 2023.

<sup>5</sup>National Democratic Institute, “Addressing Online Misogyny and Gendered Disinformation: A How-To Guide,” NDI, Sep 2021.

<sup>6</sup>Lucina Di Meco and Kristina Wilfore, “Gendered Disinformation is a National Security Problem,” Brookings, Mar 2021.

<sup>7</sup>Irene Khan, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, United Nations General Assembly, 2023.

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# Our purpose

Gendered disinformation can take many forms, including hate speech, intentionally misleading information, harmful rumors, attacks on a person's character and affiliations, and attacks on both their private and personal lives. Gendered disinformation reinforces stereotypes of vulnerability about women and nonbinary people. Targets of gendered disinformation have sometimes censored themselves or closed their social media accounts. These kinds of attacks have led to direct and indirect threats to life and have caused public figures to go into hiding.

Powerful institutions have underlined the prevalence of this problem at a global level. But studies of gendered disinformation remain largely confined to countries and communities in the Global North. Our initiative, led by partners and experts from India and Pakistan, explored what makes the situation in South Asia unique and to craft approaches to studying and refuting these dynamics in regionally specific ways.

# Our approach

Our team came together to develop a working definition of gendered disinformation based on our combined experience confronting gendered disinformation and to gather cases of gendered disinformation that we had encountered in online spaces. We wanted to annotate those cases to better understand and devise responses to the problem.

Based on available examples of gendered disinformation in India and Pakistan, and drawing on a gap assessment of existing definitions, we developed the following working definition to capture the varied manifestations of gendered disinformation in our countries of focus:

Gendered disinformation is a manifestation of online gender-based violence that can also include offline activities. It both relies on and promotes misogynistic, sexualized, false, and deceptive narratives influenced by a variety of intersectional social identities such as caste, religion, sect, and gender. Gendered disinformation targets individuals based on their gender and sexuality, especially women, gender-nonconforming people, and LGBTQ+ individuals who resist, or are perceived to resist, power structures and social norms. These online and offline attacks aim to discredit and disempower the targeted groups by spreading false narratives or encouraging self-censorship, resulting in the restriction of their participation in public spaces and their voices being drowned out.

The participating organizations manually gathered, annotated, and preserved 450 cases of online gendered disinformation targeting women and LGBTQ+ people.

**Cases under review fell into two camps:**

1. Clearly misogynistic or sexualized claims that are verifiably false or deceptive.
2. Gray area and borderline instances of gendered disinformation in which project collaborators disagreed or expressed uncertainty with regard to whether a post fulfilled the criteria.

We present examples from our dataset to illustrate the unique challenges we faced in identifying and responding to gendered disinformation in the South Asian context, and to highlight the various potential forms that gendered disinformation could take, including gendered misrepresentations, hyperlocal disinformation, rumors, and gossip.

Each participating organization also conducted a deep dive report on selected cases of gendered disinformation they observed. This was done to better understand lived experiences of gendered disinformation as well as to learn about regional and contextual nuances and the offline harms experienced by victims of gendered disinformation. Here are the deep dive reports from the partner organizations:

- **Chambal Media: “Disinformation and Disempowerment: The Gendered Experience in Rural India”**
- **The Quint: “Harassed, Yet Resilient: Muslim Women Journalists Fight Gendered Disinformation”**
- **Digital Rights Foundation: “Gendered Disinformation in South Asia case study – Pakistan”**

Our dataset is not meant to offer a representative sample or to reflect the overall prevalence of gendered disinformation in South Asia. Our intention, instead, is to identify the various dimensions of gendered disinformation in the region and to study how it is perpetuated and experienced in unique and hyperlocal contexts.

Our methodology is intended to provide a model for community-driven studies of gendered disinformation and other types of harmful content. It is our hope that the insights outlined in this report will help drive practical responses by technology platforms and inform further studies by researchers targeting the problem of gendered disinformation in our two countries of focus. We also hope to develop future studies with larger, more representative datasets that might enable us to prototype a classification model for this type of content.

# Recommendations for social media companies, research communities and community organizations

We recommend that social media companies must make their data more accessible for independent researchers in academic and community-driven settings. Through face-to-face consultations and long-term dialogue, social media companies should genuinely engage with community organizations as they define and classify gendered disinformation.

We welcome future opportunities to collaborate with academic research groups interested in genuine, equitable sharing and joint analysis of datasets like this one. For such collaborations to be effective, we recommend that academic and community-based researchers co-design methods by which to ethically collect, label, and preserve data that can help fuel academic research and grassroots advocacy work.

We urge other community organizations to draw on our methodology to replicate or iterate on our study. We also invite such groups to explore and invest in research and testing that leverages this knowledge to inform designs for community moderation and norms-setting tools.

# Introduction and Context

As access to the internet has increased over the years, online spaces have become extensions of, and amplifiers for, other forms of misogyny and gender-based violence<sup>8</sup> taking place in society, limiting the ability of diverse participants to voice their concerns in public spaces.<sup>9</sup>

While gender-based violence is defined as acts “likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life,”<sup>10</sup> gendered disinformation is a subset of this issue that is distinct in its purposeful use of false, gender-based, misogynistic, and sexualized narratives to malign and discredit women.<sup>11</sup> Women, trans people of all genders, and nonbinary individuals are regularly targeted by disinformation campaigns online.<sup>12</sup>

This disinformation is propagated in an attempt to silence already marginalized individuals and make it difficult for them to participate safely in public discourse.<sup>13 14</sup>

Systematic documentation of the issue of gendered disinformation is, however, limited, especially in the Larger World, including the South Asian context. To date, there are few country-specific examinations on the gendered dynamics of disinformation, including for India<sup>15</sup> and Pakistan,<sup>16</sup> our countries of focus. A lack of research on challenging issues such as this also mean a lack of tangible action.

With shared histories and cultural similarities,<sup>17</sup> both India and Pakistan display pervasive misogyny and a high prevalence of gender-based violence.<sup>18</sup> Forms of gender-based violence in these countries are also influenced by additional identity markers and contexts, such as caste, religion, variations in gender and sexual identity and location, but there is a dearth of research covering these intersectionalities.<sup>19</sup> Ongoing policy developments, social, political, and economic changes also contribute to how these intersecting concerns play out in the public domain.

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<sup>8</sup>UN Women, “FAQs: Trolling, Stalking, Doxing and Other Forms of Violence Against Women in the Digital Age,” Jun 2024.

<sup>9</sup>Muthoni Muriithi, “New Technology, same old Problem: Preventing Gender-Based Violence in the Digital Age,” The Accelerator, Mar 2023.

<sup>10</sup>United Nations, “Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing”, Sep 1995.

<sup>11</sup>Nina Jankowicz et al, “Malign Creativity: How Gender, Sex and Lies are Weaponized Against Women,” Wilson Centre, Jan 2021.

<sup>12</sup>Amnesty International, “Toxic Twitter: A Toxic Place for Women,” Mar 21, 2018.

<sup>13</sup>Irene Khan, “Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression,” United Nations General Assembly, Jul 2021.

<sup>14</sup>Ellen Judson et al, “Engendering Hate: The Contours of State-aligned Gendered Disinformation Online,” Oct 2020. General Assembly, 2023.

<sup>15</sup>She Persisted, “#MonetizingMisogyny Country Reports”, 2023.

<sup>16</sup>Digital Rights Foundation, “Threats and Harms of Gendered Disinformation Targeting Women in Public Life,” Digital 50.50 no. 2, 2022.

<sup>17</sup>Monica Gupta, “Women Rights as Human Rights: Comparative Study of India and Pakistan,” International Journal of Political Science and Governance 1, no. 3, 2021.

<sup>18</sup>Emmanuel Konde, “Unraveling the Web of Gendered Violence in South Asia; A Review Essay,” Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities 2, no. 7 (2021).

<sup>19</sup>Dhanaraj Thakur and DeVan Hankerson Madrigal, “Facts and Their Discontents: A Research Agenda for Online Disinformation, Race, and Gender,” Center for Democracy & Technology, Feb 2021.

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For instance, the transgender community has always been at the receiving end of hate speech in Pakistan. In 2022, there was an uptick of hate speech and gendered disinformation in online spaces which consequently had offline implications for the community.<sup>20</sup> This period also saw the Federal Shariat Court, the constitutional Islamic religious court in Pakistan, striking down certain sections of the Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Act of 2018, leading to challenges to legal protections for the transgender community.<sup>21</sup> The country experienced a virulent amplified online campaign against the transgender community led by several influential social media actors with the aim of delegitimizing transgender activists and their community, potentially putting their lives at risk.<sup>22</sup> The campaigns used disinformation tactics and misconceptions such as conflating transgender rights issues with homosexuality to drive a larger narrative that the trans community was a threat to women's rights and that trans people were opposed to the Islamic faith.<sup>23</sup>

The Pakistani women's movement and the Aurat March, an annual women's march that coincides with International Women's Day, saw similar attacks that labeled them as anti-Islamic and claimed they were funded by foreign entities in order to discredit and malign them.<sup>24</sup> It was not just journalists or activists who were targeted but also regular women who took to the streets to reclaim their rights in society. While individuals were targeted, the campaigns at large sought to malign and delegitimize the overarching rights-based movements that challenged society's patriarchal establishments and structures.<sup>25</sup>

In India, which has a nationalistic and majoritarian government at the helm, Muslims, and Muslim women in particular,<sup>26</sup> were targets of gendered disinformation.<sup>27</sup> Several online campaigns targeting Muslim women journalists, activists, and students were deployed on social media. When women from the Muslim community joined protests against national and state-level legislation, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 and a proposed ban on wearing the hijab in schools, they became targets of gendered disinformation and online violence.

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<sup>20</sup>Media Matters for Democracy, "Freedom of Expression and the Gender Dimensions of Disinformation: Civil Society Submission by Media Matters for Democracy, Pakistan: Submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the Gender Dimensions of Disinformation," 2023.

<sup>21</sup>Amnesty International, "Pakistan: Revocation of Rights of Transgender and Gender-Diverse People Must Be Stopped," May 2023.

<sup>22</sup>Fatima Zahid Ali, "Gender Discourse and Transphobia in Pakistan's Digital Sphere," LSE Blogs, Dec 2022.

<sup>23</sup>Digital Rights Foundation, "Gendered Disinformation in South Asia Case Study - Pakistan," 2024.

<sup>24</sup>Media Matters for Democracy, "Freedom of Expression and the Gender Dimensions of Disinformation: Civil Society Submission by Media Matters for Democracy, Pakistan: Submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the Gender Dimensions of Disinformation," 2023.

<sup>25</sup>Mariya Karimjee, "A Coordinated Online Attack Has Forced Some Organizers Behind Pakistan's Women's March Into Hiding," Rest of World, Mar 2022.

<sup>26</sup>Nikita Jain, "The Gradual Normalization of Violence Against Indian Muslim Women," Women's Media Center, Jul 2022.

<sup>27</sup>Paul M. Barrett and Justin Hendrix, "A Platform 'Weaponized': How YouTube Spreads Harmful Content – And What Can Be Done About It", NYU Stern, Jun 2022.

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False misogynistic narratives were used to malign and character- assassinate the character of women who took part in the protests and to damage their cause.<sup>28</sup> There were attempts to delegitimize the work of women journalists based on their gender identity using a blend of sexism and Islamophobia to potentially undermine individual and press freedoms.<sup>29</sup>

Beyond the national and subnational settings and narratives, a less visible and less frequently discussed manifestation of gendered disinformation can often occur in rural settings. These instances tend to take the form of a community-based targeting of individuals. In such cases, there is a larger message, not just for public figures but for all women who choose to buck conventional roles or decisions. This could include just ownership of a phone or spending time online, activities framed as a deviation from what it means to be a docile and well-mannered woman.<sup>30</sup> The pathway for the spread of such disinformation in rural settings is a mix of online and offline rumor-mongering. And the consequence of such campaigns is further censorship and self-censorship of women's voices and restrictions on their participation in community life.<sup>31</sup>

Regional and hyperlocal experiences of gendered disinformation are often hard to find, presenting a challenge for various stakeholders and researchers in their attempts to address gendered disinformation. Some reasons for this lack of visibility include the “malign creativity”, such as coded language and memes,<sup>32</sup> involved in such behavior and insufficient contextual knowledge.<sup>33</sup> If such deficiencies in knowledge are not remedied, there is a risk of neglecting a large proportion of the people who are targeted by gendered disinformation campaigns. It is necessary that we understand the various dimensions of it, how it is perpetuated and experienced, and how it is countered in different contexts and hyperlocal cultural environments.<sup>34</sup>

It is increasingly important to work directly with those who are on the ground and to tap into their community knowledge and experience to inform policies and strategies for countering gendered disinformation. This approach can lead to the development of new strategies that are contextual, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse contexts, languages, and lived realities of various communities.

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<sup>28</sup>Al Jazeera, “‘Auction’ of India’s Muslim Women Shows Tech Weaponised for Abuse,” Jan 10, 2022.

<sup>29</sup>Aishwarya Varma and Abhilash Mallick, “Harassed, Yet Resilient: Muslim Women Journalists Fight Gendered Disinformation,” The Quint, Nov 27, 2024.

<sup>30</sup>Internet Governance Forum, “Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights: Exploring the Concept of Gendered Disinformation,” 2021.

<sup>31</sup>Khabar Lahariya, “Disinformation and Disempowerment: The Gendered Experience in Rural India,” Oct 2024.

<sup>32</sup>Nina Jankowicz et al, “Malign Creativity: How Gender, Sex and Lies are Weaponized Against Women,” Wilson Centre, Jan 2021.

<sup>33</sup>Internet Governance Forum, “Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights: Exploring the Concept of Gendered Disinformation,” 2021.

<sup>34</sup>Maria Giovanna Sessa, “What is Gendered Disinformation?” Heinrich Böll Foundation, Jan 2022.

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# Literature Review

A significant hurdle to cross in addressing gendered disinformation is the challenge of defining this problem and associated conceptual issues.<sup>35 36</sup> Gendered disinformation often overlaps and coexists with online gendered abuse, gendered language, hate speech, and harassment in online spaces.<sup>37</sup>

According to the Association for Progressive Communications, technology-related violence against women encompasses “acts of gender-based violence that are committed, abetted or aggravated, in part or fully, by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as mobile phones, the internet, social media platforms, and email.”<sup>38</sup> Gendered disinformation is a form of online gender-based violence that uses a combination of false and misleading misogynistic content, along with sexualized narratives, to malign and defame people based on their gender, thereby affecting their public participation.<sup>39</sup>

Lucina Di Meco describes gendered disinformation as the “spread of deceptive or inaccurate information and images against women political leaders, journalists and female public figures.”

She points out how these narratives often draw on misogyny and gendered stereotypes to frame targets as “untrustworthy, unintelligent, emotional/angry/crazy, or sexual.”<sup>40</sup>

Nina Jankowicz and her co-authors identify three characteristics of such disinformation practices: falsity, malign intent; and coordination.<sup>41</sup>

Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis<sup>42</sup> state that that broader forms of disinformation are often motivated by “ideology, money, and/or status and attention,” whereas gendered disinformation campaigns, in particular, are carried out by a range of actors, both state and non-state, to make digital ecosystems unequal and threatening for those who are being targeted.<sup>43</sup> It was found that disinformation campaigns that targeted and opposed the expansion of LGBTQ+ rights in Europe contained, variously, narratives that portrayed community members as posing a threat to society, the safety of children, godliness, and the “natural family.” Some narratives portrayed the LGBTQ+ community as being part of a colonial campaign perpetrated by the “Liberal West” against the nations of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>EU Disinfo Lab, “Gender-Based Disinformation: Advancing Our Understanding and Response. Online,” Oct 2021.

<sup>36</sup>UN General Assembly, “Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression: Note by the Secretary-General,” Aug 2023.

<sup>37</sup>Internet Governance Forum, “Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights: Exploring the Concept of Gendered Disinformation,” 2021

<sup>38</sup>DAssociation for Progressive Communications, “Online Gender-Based Violence: A Submission from the Association for Progressive Communications to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences,” Nov 2017.

<sup>39</sup>Association for Progressive Communications, “Placing “Gender” in Disinformation,” 2024.

<sup>40</sup>Lucina Di Meco, “Online Threats to Women’s Political Participation and The Need for a Multi-Stakeholder, Cohesive Approach to Address Them, UN Women, 2020.

<sup>41</sup>Nina Jankowicz et al, “Malign Creativity: How Gender, Sex and Lies are Weaponized Against Women,” Wilson Centre, Jan 2021.

<sup>42</sup>Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis, “Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online,” Data and Society Research Institute.

<sup>43</sup>Shmyla Khan and Amna Khan, “Locating Gender in the Disinformation Landscape,” Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Apr 2022.

<sup>44</sup>Cecilia Strand and Jakob Svensson, “Disinformation Campaigns About LGBTI+ People in the EU and Foreign Influence,” European Parliament, INGE Committee, July 2021.

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The consequences of targeting and attacks by gendered disinformation on the private and personal lives of people include self-censorship and the decision to take down one's own social media accounts. Public figures may go into hiding. There could be direct and indirect threats to life, and the whole process may generally reinforce stereotypes of vulnerability.<sup>45</sup>

Gendered disinformation is also used to influence public opinion about feminist movements and policies that impact gender roles. For example, before the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, there was an increase in coordinated disinformation campaigns conducted by anti-choice groups, which spent thousands of dollars to spread misinformation on the safety of abortions.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, disinformation narratives were launched in opposition to same-sex marriage rights in India.<sup>47</sup>

While much of the research on gendered disinformation covers women in politics and cases in the public eye, gendered disinformation is an issue for wider publics as well, not just well-known figures and celebrities. Hija Kamran and Salwa Rana describe gendered disinformation as being multilayered. In one instance, women who used social media for communication and entertainment became targets of online gendered rumormongering and gossip in college and alumni Facebook groups. The authors point to the use of character assassination disinformation campaigns to discredit survivors' accounts of sexual violence.<sup>48</sup> Narrow definitions of gendered disinformation which include an exclusive focus on women public figures can result in sidelining girls, women, and people from gender minorities who are also affected by this problem but do not have a large public presence.<sup>49</sup> This limited approach can also wind up overlooking the larger impact of gendered disinformation on policies and movements.

In South Asia, women journalists,<sup>50</sup> activists, political leaders,<sup>51</sup> public figures, influencers, and those who speak up against power structures and institutions<sup>52</sup> have been targeted through the spread of disinformation and narratives that undermine their work. However, research on this topic that is specific to South Asia at large, and unique to our two countries of focus in particular, remains limited. Juliana Alcantra and Juliana Valentim's scoping review of academic literature on gender-based disinformation in the past decade indicated an overrepresentation of the Global North and limited research from the Larger World.<sup>53</sup> While there is a strong focus on women public figures in gendered disinformation research — as they represent highly impactful

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<sup>45</sup>EU Disinfo Lab, "Gender-Based Disinformation: Advancing Our Understanding and Response. Online," Oct 2021.

<sup>46</sup>Liv Kittel, "Strategies for Combatting Abortion Disinformation in the Post-Roe Era," Stanford Social Innovation Review, Jul 2022.

<sup>47</sup>PTI, "RSS Body Survey on Same-Sex marriage: Dangerous and Misleading, Say LGBTQ Activists," The Print, 2023.

<sup>48</sup>Hija Kamran and Salwa Rana, "Gossip and Rumor Mongering: Analyzing Casual Disinformation from Gendered Lens," Digital Rights Foundations, Dec 2021.

<sup>49</sup>Shmyla Khan and Amna Khan, "Locating Gender in the Disinformation Landscape," Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Apr 2022.

<sup>50</sup>International Federation of Journalists, "Intense, Discriminatory, Vile: Online Trolling of Women Journalists in South Asia," The IFJ, Jun 2023.

<sup>51</sup>Lucina Di Meco, "The Digital Mob and its Enablers: Gendered Disinformation and Online Abuse Against Women in Politics in India," She Persisted, Apr 2023.

<sup>52</sup>Maham Javaid, "Pakistan's Feminists Say Will Persevere Amid Increased Threats", Al Jazeera, Mar 2021.

<sup>53</sup>Juliana Alcantara and Juliana Valentim, "Gender-based Disinformation: A Scoping Review of the Literature, 2013-2023," 2024.

and visible cases<sup>54</sup> — literature on how gendered disinformation manifests along the intersections of other identity markers remains limited.<sup>55</sup> Ethnicity, caste, religion, sexual orientation, age, geographical location, and socioeconomic status play a role in how gendered disinformation is experienced.<sup>56</sup>

While gendered disinformation is a global concern, and necessary calls have been made for research of gendered disinformation in the US,<sup>57</sup> there is a deep need for better identification, documentation, and annotation of gendered disinformation that focuses on the Larger World with attention to local and hyperlocal contexts.

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<sup>54</sup>Association for Progressive Communications, “Placing “Gender” in Disinformation,” 2024,

<sup>55</sup>International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World), “Gender Disinformation in the Context of LGBTI Communities: Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression,” Jul 2023.

<sup>56</sup>Irene Khan, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, United Nations General Assembly, 2023.

<sup>57</sup>Dhanaraj Thakur and DeVan Hankerson Madrigal, “Facts and Their Discontents: A Research Agenda for Online Disinformation, Race, and Gender,” Center for Democracy & Technology, Feb 2021.

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# Project Overview

In this report, we present findings from our initiative, **Gendered Disinformation: Deepening Perspectives and Designing Responses**. Our project applied a community-codesign approach to examining the dynamics of gendered disinformation in South Asia.

Project goals were divided into short, medium, and long term objectives: bringing together diverse stakeholders to codesign the research methodology, building skills and capacity for documentation, archiving and annotation of local examples, and creating a database of examples that can be used for future research and policy efforts.

## Objectives

The goal was to bring together a diverse set of stakeholder groups in India and Pakistan to work collaboratively to define, identify, document and annotate a high quality dataset and case studies of gender based disinformation and hate in online spaces for a better understanding and countering of the issue. It is our hope that the insights outlined in this report will contribute towards practical responses by policy makers to the problem of gendered disinformation in our two countries of focus and beyond.

## Contributors

This project was led by Meedan, and brought together three community leaders and women-led organizations:

- **The Digital Rights Foundation** (DRF) is a women-led not-for-profit, non-governmental organization in Pakistan. Their focus is on providing safe online spaces through information and communication technologies to support women's rights, inclusiveness, democratic processes, and digital governance through services like cyber harassment helpline for online harassment cases to young women and girls, digital literacy campaigns, and capacity-building training.
- **The Quint** is a digital news organization in India with the leading fact-checking team of the country. Their news coverage includes in-depth fact-checks, visually powerful and community-driven stories, features, and interactive multimedia formats.
- **Chambal Media** is a digital media social enterprise in India with a diverse team of rural and urban media practitioners. Chambal runs India's singular grassroots journalism outfit comprising women reporters and editors from rural and marginalized communities.

- **Meedan**, a 2024 Skoll Awardee, works to create a more equitable internet. We do this by developing innovative, open-source collaboration technology and implementing creative, multi-stakeholder projects to network civil society actors, researchers, policy stakeholders, and technologists. We deploy these programs during critical civic and social moments, including elections, public health crises, and natural disasters, to ensure that communities can access and evaluate information needed to make informed decisions. Our team of 42 working across 14 time zones has led some of the largest collaborative journalism projects in the world. We currently work across 45 countries in 31 languages.

## Funding Support

This study was funded and supported by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.

# Developing a Methodology for Defining and Collecting Gendered Disinformation

Much of the work on gendered disinformation till date has focused on cases involving women in politics, or other figures prominent in the public eye, with a particular emphasis on countries of the Global North,<sup>58</sup> often employing narrow definitions of gendered disinformation; this has contributed to a significant gap in the literature.<sup>59 60</sup>

In response, we designed this research effort to both a) create a definition of gendered disinformation that was more equitably representative of the Larger World experience, with a specific focus on India and Pakistan, and b) operationalize that definition to enable archiving, annotation, and analysis of gendered disinformation that matched this new inclusion criteria.

## Why did we develop a new definition of gendered disinformation for this project?

There is no single definition of gendered disinformation. The adoption of a definition, while important, has been a challenge for experts, including intergovernmental organizations, social media platforms, and researchers in the field.<sup>61</sup>

Some of the complexities that have contributed to ambiguities in creating an operationalizable definition include:

- 1. Combining definitions of gender and disinformation:** The two main elements, “gendered” and “disinformation,” their definitions, and how they manifest together, pose a challenge in labeling content as gendered disinformation. There are times when the target of an attack is a woman, and there is disinformation, but the attack is not explicitly gendered. But a question arises about whether she is being disproportionately targeted because she is a woman and if a cis man would have been targeted in the same manner.

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<sup>58</sup>EU Disinfo Lab, “Gender-Based Disinformation: Advancing Our Understanding and Response. Online,” Oct 2021.

<sup>59</sup>Shmyla Khan and Amna Khan, “Locating Gender in the Disinformation Landscape,” Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Apr 2022.

<sup>60</sup>Hija Kamran and Salwa Rana, “Gossip and Rumor Mongering: Analyzing Casual Disinformation from Gendered Lens,” Digital Rights Foundations, Dec 2021.

<sup>61</sup>EU Disinfo Lab, “Gender-Based Disinformation: Advancing Our Understanding and Response. Online,” Oct 2021.

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## **2. The relationship between gendered disinformation and online gender-based violence:**

The ability to distinguish between online harassment and gendered disinformation is often a challenge. Online gendered disinformation is often a component of online harassment, hate speech, and gender-based violence (GBV).

**3. Intent vs inherent and collective biases:** Proving intent and the levels of intent can set an ambiguity in labeling content as gendered disinformation. For instance, the motive to defame, cause economic harm, or call for violence can be more “tangible” as compared with disinformation that stems from deep-seated and ingrained patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes for which the perpetrator or an individual alone cannot be held responsible. It is a “societal or collective intent” to maintain the status quo of patriarchy.

**4. Challenges in inclusion criteria:** gendered disinformation against who and what? There are discussions around whether gendered disinformation is specific to attacks against women and girls, or if diverse gender identities or LGBTQ+ communities can be included under its purview, and whether attacks on cis men with gendered and gender-based derogatory remarks can be categorized under gendered disinformation in the same way. Also, how do we categorize attacks that target a movement that promotes the rights of women and gender-nonconforming people? Inclusion criteria are an ongoing conversation in the field.

**5. Gendered disinformation:** At scale vs. in communities: Gendered disinformation targeting public figures has more visibility and receives more attention. It is also essential to examine community-based gendered disinformation and examples of instances where that affect non-public figures and regular people who are targeted as they go about their daily lives. Limiting the definition of gendered disinformation to public figures and the field of politics sidelines the experiences of those not in the public domain.

## **6. Regional and contextual differences in gendered disinformation, especially in the South**

**Asian context:** Context determines the regional nuances and dynamics of gendered disinformation – urban or rural, Global North or Larger World – differences between one country and another. There may be commonalities, but context complicates the task of identifying or creating one overarching set of inclusion or exclusion criteria.

A codesign methodology towards a hyperlocal definition of the term is important given the challenges that these complexities pose in adopting a definition from existing literature, and can help in capturing lived experiences from the region. While dissecting and segregating categories of gendered disinformation in all these ways may not be the solution, identifying the different ways in which it manifests and multiple lived experiences of gendered disinformation can open pathways for addressing the problem of effective identification.

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<sup>61</sup>EU Disinfo Lab, “Gender-Based Disinformation: Advancing Our Understanding and Response. Online,” Oct 2021.

Our goal was to create a definition that could be operationalized by those who want to gather examples and create annotated datasets, which can then be used for more effective monitoring and disinformation response efforts. Thus, we codesigned a project that relied on the expertise and community experience of the groups in pursuit of creating an effective definition. Each team had its own expertise and experience, including The Digital Rights Foundation's extensive work on gendered disinformation in Pakistan, The Quint's fact-checking efforts to counter gendered disinformation, Chambal Media's community-based understanding of gendered-based violence and gendered disinformation, and Meedan's expertise in facilitating collaborations and operationalizing definitions for the creation of datasets.<sup>62</sup>

## Codesign methodology

The research methodology and data collection had codesign at the heart of the project. The project had three codesign sessions, of which one was an in-person workshop.

The first workshop focused on:

- Perspective building and leveling around the concepts of gender, sexuality, disinformation, and violence
- Discussing partner experiences and understanding of gendered disinformation
- Conceptual understanding of gendered disinformation and related topics

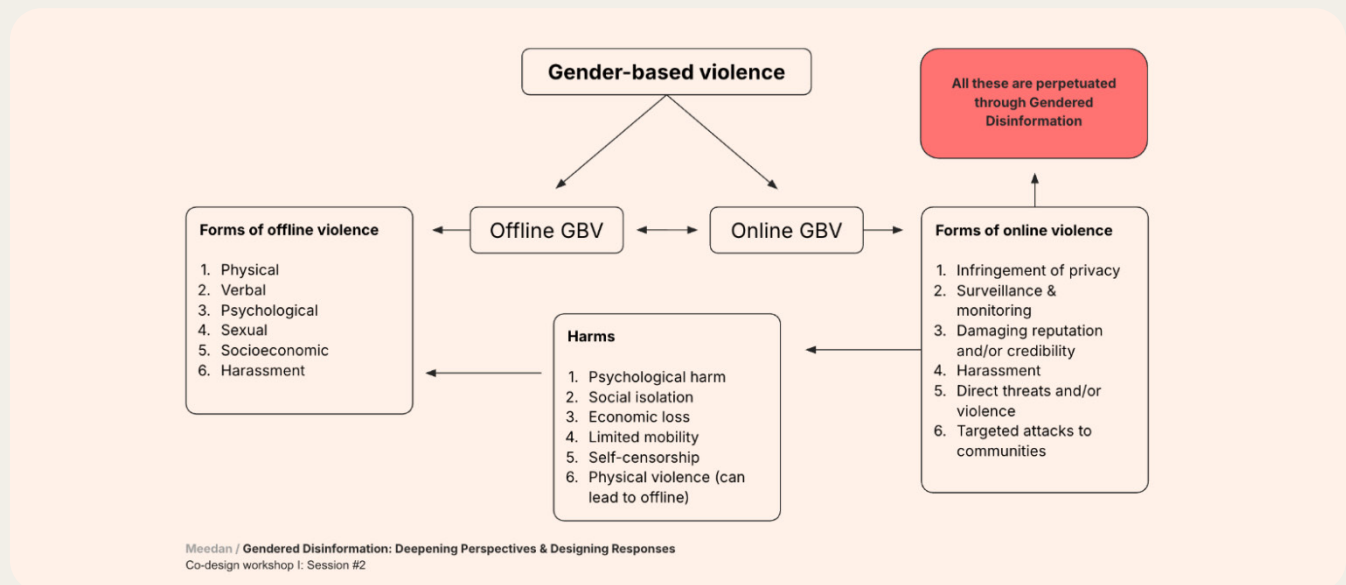
One theme that we discussed in detail was the relationships between gender-based violence, online gender-based violence, and gendered disinformation. This was based on the realization that conversations around gendered disinformation often deviated to problems of broader gender-based violence. Here is a diagram developed in the process to make sense of these interactions. **We concluded that gendered disinformation is a subset of online gender-based violence which has offline-online interactions and harms.**

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<sup>62</sup>Meedan, "We Codesign and Implement Programs that Connect Communities in Moments of Exception".

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**Figure 1:** Flow diagram of the relationship between gendered disinformation and online gender-based violence.<sup>63</sup>



## Defining gendered disinformation – developing a consensus

In this study, we grapple with the definition, characteristics, and challenges of gendered disinformation as it mobilized in South Asia.

It was important that we as a diverse group who have been addressing the issues of digital rights, misinformation, and gender-based violence in India and Pakistan, work collectively toward documenting gendered disinformation. It was also important for us to develop a shared understanding and design the research methodology based on community experiences of all partners. The contributing teams operating across different contexts within South Asia have varied levels of expertise and experiences on producing knowledge. The co-design workshops were meant to bring these varied perspectives and vantage points to the table and to reach a consensus on how we understood gendered disinformation collectively. We drew from and critically assessed some of the existing and global definitions of gendered disinformation for its applicability in the South Asian context.

We collectively examined the following definitions from studies and research that depicted work on gendered disinformation.

**Definition 1:** Gendered disinformation is the spread of deceptive or inaccurate information and images against women political leaders, journalists, and female public figures.

Following story lines that draw on misogyny, and gendered stereotypes, the goal of these attacks is to frame female politicians and government officials as inherently untrustworthy,

<sup>63</sup>Association for Progressive Communications, "Online Gender-Based Violence: A Submission from the Association for Progressive Communications to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences," Nov 2017.

unintelligent, unlikable, or uncontrollable – too emotional to hold office or participate in democratic politics. – *Lucina DiMeco, She Persisted*<sup>64</sup>

**Definition 2:** Gendered disinformation refers to information activities (creating, sharing, and disseminating content) that attacks or undermines people on the basis of their gender; weaponizes gendered narratives to promote political, social, or economic objectives. State-aligned gendered disinformation (SAGD) is when actors who are part of a state, or whose behavior or interests align with those of a state, engage in gendered disinformation to promote political outcomes. – *Ellen Judson and et.al, National Democratic Institute*<sup>65</sup>

**Definition 3:** Gendered and sexualized disinformation is a subset of online gendered abuse that uses false or misleading gender and sex-based narratives against women, often with some degree of coordination, aimed at deterring women from participating in the public sphere. It combines three defining characteristics of online disinformation: falsity, malign intent, and coordination. – *Nina Jankowicz and et.al, Wilson Center*<sup>66</sup>

The collaborators raised some gaps they saw in the existing definitions on gendered disinformation with respect to its applicability in South Asia:

- There is disproportionate focus on **women who are public figures as opposed to private individuals and local community leaders.**
- There is **insufficient focus on gender nonconfirming and LGBTQ+ people.**
- There is limited research on **the psychological harms and offline repercussions of online content.**
- There is **a focus on individual attacks and less on marginalized communities and progressive movements** (e.g., transgender or Muslim communities) which are targeted.
- Studies are based on **scale and volume**, and less focused on more private and smaller online spaces and exposure.
- There is less understanding of **how gendered disinformation intersects with religion, caste, ethnicity, and nationality.**
- There is not enough **research from on-the-ground, community-based practitioners** who encounter and mitigate gendered disinformation and online gender-based violence every day.

During the second and third codesign workshops, we developed a working definition of gendered disinformation based on readily available examples from India and Pakistan and earlier assessment of existing definitions. The aim was to keep it broad, but focused enough to capture varied and possible manifestations. The definition was also translated to Hindi to

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<sup>64</sup>Lucina Di Meco, "Defining the problem: What is gendered disinformation", #ShePersisted/

<sup>65</sup>Ellen Judson et al, "Engendering Hate: The Contours of State-aligned Gendered Disinformation Online," Oct 2020.

<sup>66</sup>Nina Jankowicz et al, "Malign Creativity: How Gender, Sex and Lies are Weaponized Against Women," Wilson Centre, Jan 2021

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localize its use and aid team members whose first language is not English. Working definitions translated in Hindi are available in the Appendix.

**Figure 2:** Flow diagram of the relationship between gendered disinformation and online gender-based violence.

<b>Nature</b>	Gendered disinformation is a manifestation of online gender-based violence that can also include offline activities.
<b>Modus operandi</b>	It relies on and promotes misogynistic, sexualized, false, and deceptive narratives influenced by a variety of intersectional social identities such as caste, religion, sect, and gender.
<b>Target</b>	Gendered disinformation targets individuals based on their gender and sexuality, especially women, gender-nonconforming people, and LGBTQ+ individuals who resist, or are perceived to resist, power structures and social norms.
<b>Objective</b>	These online and offline attacks aim to discredit and disempower the targeted groups by spreading false narratives or encouraging self-censorship, resulting in the restriction of their participation in public spaces and their voices being drowned out.
<b>Harms</b>	Apart from these objectives, gendered disinformation can also cause or trigger psychological, physical and social harm and abuse for the targeted person and for other individuals who are associated with the targets.

## Codesigning data collection, methodology, and workflow

The first major timeline in the process of collecting instances of gendered disinformation was towards developing a definition. We needed a way to ascertain whether a piece of content is gendered disinformation or not given how it can be dubious and challenging to identify. It was important to standardize the process for a diverse team.

Our three contributing content partners – Chambal Media, Digital Rights Foundation and The Quint – collected posts sent in by community members, posts encountered during daily activities such as running tiplines and fact-checking reportage, and posts encountered organically in their own social media feeds. Each group also solicited content from their networks of reporters, from rural networks with access to grassroots communities, and activists working at the intersection of gender and technology. All three groups were women-led at the time of the project and self-identified as feminist groups but catered to different audiences and networks across India and Pakistan.

We then developed a process of annotation in which team members respond to a list of questions to ascertain whether a piece of content is gendered disinformation, examining the claim, target, harm, and source. The questionnaire was developed through a co-design process in an in-person meeting with all the teams. More information on our annotation workflow is found in the appendices.

Each partner organization had a ‘rater’ and ‘reviewer’. This process was to understand the degree of subjectivity in assessing whether a piece of content was gendered disinformation. It also allowed us to examine the factors that contributed to possible ambiguity in a social media post.

In addition to the internal review by teams, the authors of this paper acted as external reviewers to the process to document the level of agreement with the rating assigned by the rater to every item collected.

As part of this project, we used Meedan’s flagship tool Check to document and analyze instances of gendered disinformation in South Asia. Check provides a tool for customized and flexible annotation to assist teams to collectively gather information.

# A Catalog of Potential Categories of Gendered Disinformation

Here, we present a catalog of gendered disinformation instances in two parts: clear and actionable gendered disinformation, and gray area and borderline gendered disinformation. This catalog does not endeavor to provide exhaustive categories, but to highlight the varied manifestations in the context of South Asia.

The participating organizations collected and annotated a dataset of around 450 social media posts that they came across in personal and professional encounters on social media platforms. The key question in the annotation workflow was 'Is this gendered disinformation?' with a binary choice of 'Yes' and 'No' as answers. There are two central goals of this project that necessitate this simplified binary paradigm: 1) To create and annotate a dataset that could train a machine-learning model to identify more instances of gendered disinformation, and 2) To inform platform interventions and policies that can lead to meaningful actions at scale. Once the corpus of social media posts was collected, participants deliberated and reached a consensus within their organization about these key questions for each post:

1. Can this post be definitively categorized as gendered disinformation?
2. What format does this disinformation take?
3. Who is the target of disinformation?
4. What characteristics about their identity or sexuality are targeted?
5. What are the potential or intended harms of this post?

In asking these questions, we identified multiple trends in how gendered disinformation is perpetrated. We developed categories to demonstrate the variable ways it can manifest to contribute to a framework for more targeted interventions and systemization of data collection.

When there was straightforward consensus by participants on that the posts could be categorized as gendered disinformation or not, we describe them as “**clearly misogynistic or sexualized claims that are verifiably false or deceptive**”. We highlight four subcategories.

## **Categories of definitive gendered disinformation that are clearly misogynistic or sexualized claims that are verifiably false or deceptive**

1. An explicit text claim
2. Media that is manipulated to deceive
3. AI-generated media that is presented as or implied to be real
4. Unaltered media that is presented in a false or misleading way



We also found many instances of disagreement or uncertainty between project collaborators about whether a post fulfilled the criteria for gendered disinformation or could neatly fall into a category of demonstrable gendered disinformation. It was through these disagreements and open questions that we were able to identify categories that sit on the edge of gendered disinformation and require different approaches for identification, assessment of potential harms or different platform policies under which to evaluate them. These categories we label as “**gray area or borderline gendered disinformation**” and highlight five subcategories.

#### **Categories of gray area and borderline gendered disinformation**

1. Generalizations, stereotyping, and value-laden statements
2. Supporting a larger gendered disinformation campaign/narrative
3. Speculative or subjective interpretation
4. Hyperlocal gendered disinformation
5. Unclear, broad, or nontraditional targets

In the following sections, we present cases demonstrating these categories and sub-categories.

## **I. Definitive gendered disinformation: clearly misogynistic or sexualized claims that are verifiably false or deceptive**

In order to collect posts that exemplify clear cases, we operate with the working definition of gendered disinformation as “manifestation of online gender-based violence that can also include offline activities. It both relies on and promotes misogynistic, sexualized, false, and deceptive narratives influenced by a variety of intersectional social identities such as caste, religion, sect, and gender.”

Two criteria must be fulfilled for a post to be clearly identified as gendered disinformation:

1. There must be a clear, observable claim that can be disproven with available evidence.
2. The post must have a component that is misogynistic or sexist or that targets women, gender minorities, and LGBTQ+ identities or individuals.

Disinformation can take the form of text, image, audio, or video. This includes repurposed, manipulated, and AI-generated media used to spread false narratives and claims against individuals.

This section features clearer forms of gendered disinformation under these categories:

1. An explicit text claim that is verifiably false.
2. Media that is manipulated to deceive.
3. AI-generated media that is presented as, or implied to be, real.
4. Unaltered media that is presented in a false or misleading way.



**TRIGGER WARNING:** The following section contains slurs, hate speech and sexualized narratives and imagery which may be disturbing for some readers.



## 1. False claim using text to dismiss an individual or a group of people

**Claim:** Translated from Hindi this post reads, “*Karisma at Harvard- oh great! 8th Fail GIVING LECTURES AT A Uni.. this is age of darkness*”

**Why is the content gendered disinformation:** The actress Karishma Kapoor was invited to give a talk at Harvard University for the Harvard India Conference. The post is disinformation because the post claims that she has not passed eighth grade in school, which is false. This is to show that she is not clever enough or deserving to be speaking at Harvard. Her profession of acting is also looked down upon.

**Potential outcomes:** To portray women and actresses as dumb and not deserving of public roles.

**Country:** India



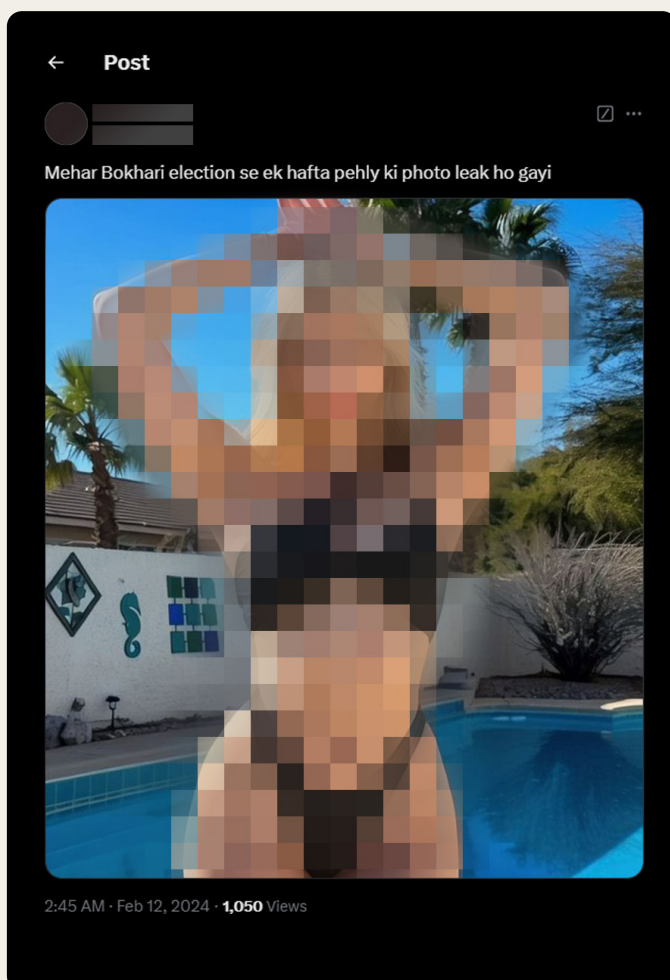
## 2. Manipulated image to tarnish the image of a woman political leader

**Claim:** “This is leader of Sonia Sena who can do any thing for money. Most corrupt party who is behind this.. #BlackDay4Press”

**Why is the content gendered disinformation:** This post is using an image of Indian political leader Sonia Gandhi sitting on the lap of the former Maldivian president with the claim that she will do anything for money. The image has been photoshopped to show Sonia Gandhi sitting on the lap of the president. In the original photo, they are sitting apart in two separate chairs.

**Potential outcomes:** To tarnish the image of a woman political leader and target the political party she belongs to.

**Country:** India



## 3. A character assassination of a journalist and her source of news with an AI-generated image

**Claim:** This post presents the photo of a women in a bikini with the claim that this is an authentic leaked image of Bokhari with the caption, “Mehtar Bokhari’s photo leaked a week before the elections”

**Why is the content gendered disinformation:** This is a photo shared ahead of the 2024 elections in Pakistan with the claim that it is a leaked image of Pakistani journalist Mehtar Bokhari. While the image is left for interpretation, the implication is that she is exchanging sexual favors for access to information for her news reporting.

**Potential outcomes:** To assassinate her character and discredit her integrity as a journalist ahead of the 2024 elections.

**Country:** Pakistan



#### 4. Misrepresenting a video with the claim that the person is a gay lawyer who was considered for the post of a judge

**Claim:** Photos and videos of a man dancing is shared as that of a supreme court advocate, who identifies as gay. Translated from Hindi, the post reads, “*This eunuch who is holidaying in Spain with his husband is Justice Saurabh Kripal, son of Justice VN Kripal, for whom the Collegium has recommended him twice to be made a judge of the Delhi High Court. And as per the rules, if the Central Government refuses to accept the Collegium’s recommendation twice, then the Collegium can appoint him as a judge with special powers. That is, this eunuch will soon become a judge of the Delhi High Court. Now you think what kind of justice will he provide.*”

**Why is the content gendered disinformation:** A supreme court advocate who identifies as gay was targeted using a video of a different person dancing in an effeminate way, claiming that he may be appointed as a supreme court judge by the collegium, despite the refusal of the central government.

**Potential outcomes:** Mocking an LGBTQ+ person for his sexual identity and questioning his bend of thought and capability to become a judge.

**Country:** India

## II. Gray area and borderline gendered disinformation:

Posts that are difficult to categorize explicitly as gendered disinformation

There are many cases where it is difficult to assess if content can be classified as gendered disinformation under the definition and criteria we developed. Posts with these attributes are not necessarily gendered disinformation and deciding on the inclusion criteria for gray-area and borderline disinformation can be contingent on the types of interventions available, the goals of the research, prioritized harms, and the contextual understanding of its implications.



While posts with these attributes may not be clearly identifiable, they typically straightforwardly fall within the category of online gender-based violence.

We offer five categories of gray area and borderline gendered disinformation and examples from our dataset that illustrate the unique challenges in identifying and responding to gendered disinformation in the South Asian context.

## 1. Generalizations, stereotyping, and value-laden statements

While collecting social media instances, we saw the repeated and deliberate spread of generalized value-laden statements and misogynistic misrepresentations as a pathway to reinforce patriarchy and maintain the status quo. This aims to discredit and discourage people from breaking the norm. These instances also point to the collective and inherent intent to maintain the status quo of patriarchy. The way these statements are framed can be malicious, misrepresentative, generalized, and difficult to counter with reasoning or facts. This raises ambiguity in comparison to rigid definitions.

This category includes:

- a. Gendered misrepresentations
- b. Misogynistic and transphobic opinions presented as facts.



### 1a. Gendered misrepresentations

**Claim:** This post compares stereotypical attributes of Muslim and Hindu women and claims that Hindu women are “witches, who in the name of reels have spoiled Sanata Dharma (Hindu Dharma).” The image relies on stereotypes to denigrate Hindu women’s marriages, family relationships, and perceived “modesty” in comparison to Muslim women.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** This is a gendered misrepresentation of Muslim and Hindu women. In the context of India, the post is a deliberate attempt to send a strong message to women about how they ought to behave in public spaces. It also surfaces the misplaced and misogynistic view that the preservation of religious beliefs is somehow dependent on antiquated notions of female modesty and purity.

### Why it is difficult to identify as gendered

**disinformation:** This is a misrepresentation based on generalization with the intent to dictate the choices of women and draw the boundaries for women.

**Potential outcomes:** Labeling progressive women as those destroying religious beliefs.

**Country:** India

## 1b. Misogynistic and transphobic opinions presented as facts

**Claim:** This post includes claims such as sex is not binary, transgender persons are getting into women's spaces and raping them and transgender persons are creepy.

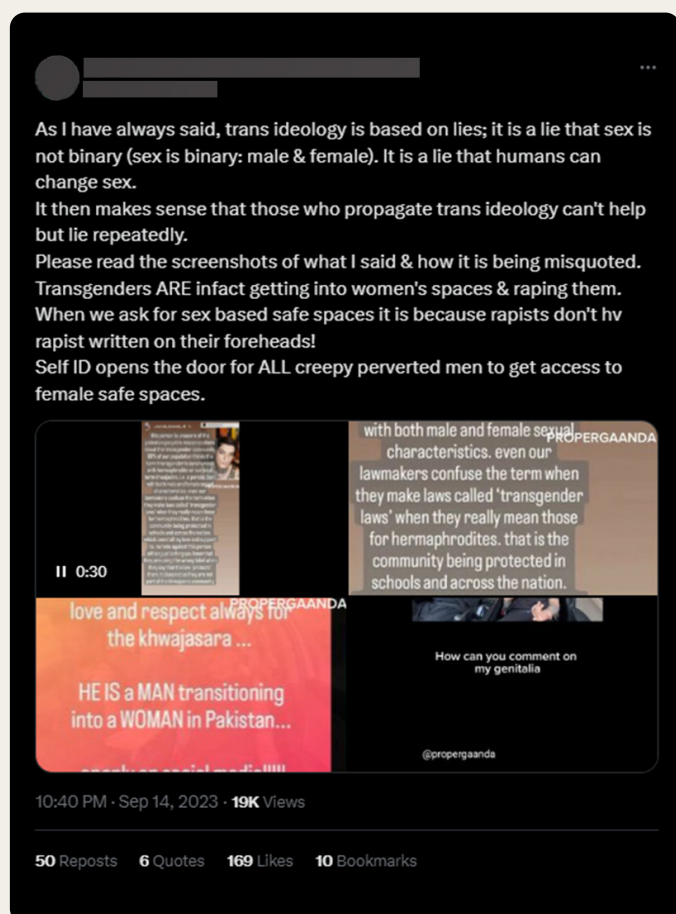
**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** These are deliberately false claims about sexual violence targeting a transgender activist Mehrub and the trans community at large. This statement is part of a hate campaign against the community. Moreover, the statement is made with certainty along with presenting transphobic opinions as facts, and it comes from Maria B, a well-known anti-transgender influencer.

### Why it is difficult to identify as gendered

**disinformation:** The claims consist of denial of trans ideology, hate, and fearmongering, a conventional belief that sex is binary or statements such as transgender persons are men who have attempted 'sex change' which cannot be countered with reasoning or facts.

**Potential outcomes:** This campaign by an account with considerable reach in the community is spewing hatred and calling with rejection of the transgender community and policies supporting them.

**Country:** Pakistan

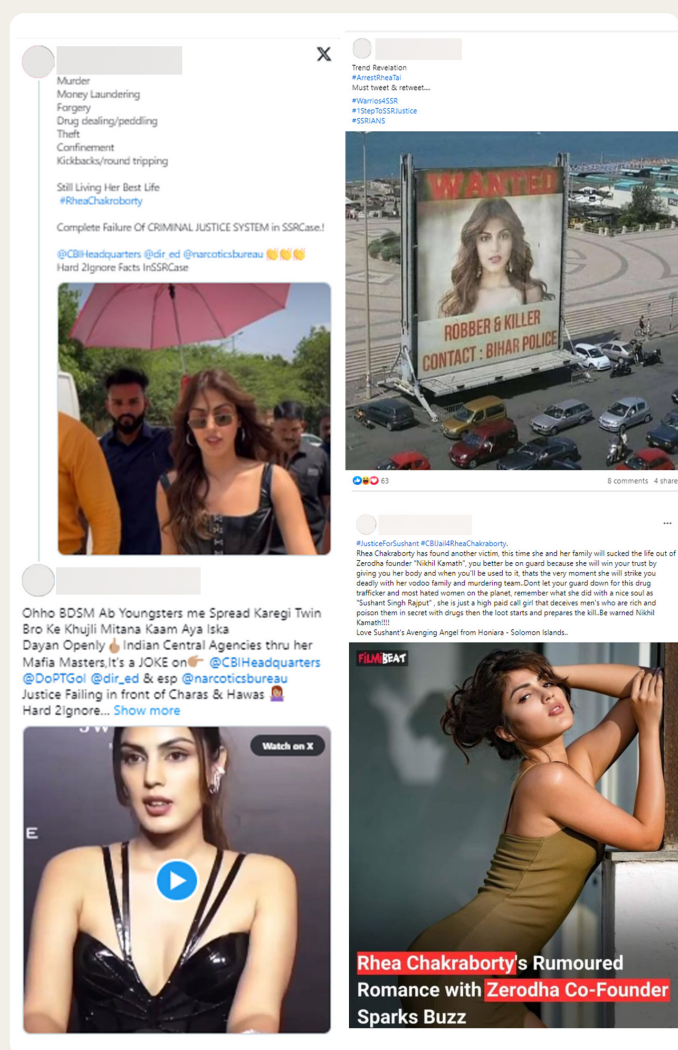


## 2. Posts that support a larger gendered disinformation campaign or narrative

In some cases, an individual post may not appear to have a clearly false or gendered claim, but in combination with other posts or comments, it contributes to a narrative targeting an entity (e.g., a person or organization) for character assassination, thereby inciting witch-hunts and silencing targets. Despite there being nothing explicitly false or gendered in a post, it can still amplify and validate related disinformation.

Two forms of posts supporting larger gendered disinformation campaigns or narratives are:

- Disinformation in multiple posts or posts that become gendered when they appear together.
- A post inciting gendered disinformation in the comments.



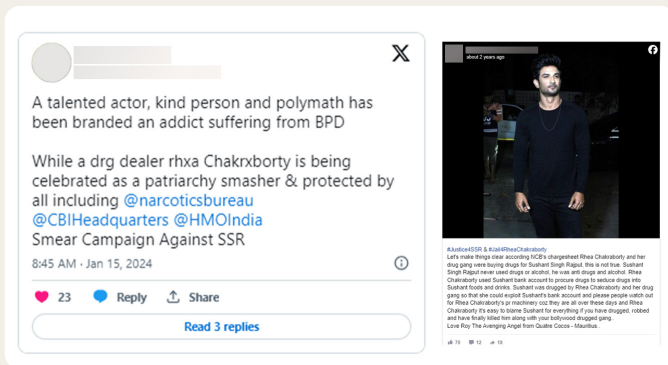
### 2a. Disinformation in multiple posts or posts that become gendered when they appear together

**Claim:** Multiple posts claim Rhea Chakravarty is a drug dealer, a drug addict, a robber, and a murderer. They claim she befriended her boyfriend with the purpose of robbing him of his money. Other posts claim that she indulges in BDSM and incest and that she entrapped another man to rob him of his money.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** This is the case of a witch-hunt on a woman who was the girlfriend of an Indian movie actor named Sushant Singh Rajput. There was a huge uproar when Rajput died by suicide, and the case got muddled with allegations of drug abuse. When viewed from the point of view of a narrative to vilify and defame her, the non-gendered posts contributed to the witchhunt and also made the gendered disinformation about her more convincing.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** Disinformation content which is not misogynistic or sexualized when viewed on its own may seem like broader disinformation. However, when the whole campaign or the narrative against a woman is put together, we see a deliberate attempt of character





assassination and how the non-gendered posts also contributes to furthering the gendered disinformation.

**Potential outcomes:** To character-assassinate the woman, spoil her reputation, and further police her for her choices. This amounts to mental harassment.

**Country:** India



## 2b. A post inciting gendered disinformation in comments

**Claim:** The post shares an image of a couple who seem to be married and an affidavit along with a claims in Hindi that translates to, “Mukhtiyar Khan has stated in his affidavit that Satyanarayan Dudi’s daughter Manisha Dudi’s age is 18. Whether Manisha Dudi is really an adult or she was declared 18 just to get married, this must be proved first.”

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** By posing a leading question about the age of the woman and promoting the misogynistic and narrative of love jihad (the claim that Muslim men entrap Hindu women into marriage for the purpose of religious conversion), the post has incited conspiracy theories and gendered disinformation in the comments.

The author of the post also goes on to comment that, “Often, the age of a minor girl is exaggerated for her marriage,” and “The mother of this girl Manisha is also in a relationship with the father of this boy Mukhtiyar Khan. If this is true then these two are like brother and sister, in this way the daughter will be her mother’s daughter-in-law.” Another user also claims that “Whores like this will only learn until they are dumped in a box?”

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** The post could be easily identified as inciting religious enmity and it is posing a question based on an event that may have happened. But the

inherent gendered bias, the narrative of “Love Jihad,” and the speculations in the post and in the comments are fueling and building a false narrative around this incident. People are abusing the girl and the mother. It is also implying, without proof, that in most cases, the girl is underage, and women are naive in their marriage choices.

**Potential outcomes:** Physical harm to the couple, restricting the agency of women in marriages, and fueling a gender-biased narrative around the religious marriage choices of women.

**Country:** India

### 3. Speculative or subjective interpretation

The details of personal lives and religious texts are often fodder for sensational posts and subjective interpretation. It is challenging to verify claims around these and determine the facts in the case. The latter is particularly subject to personal interpretation, which may change based on people’s worldview and belief systems. Any gender-based disinformation with these two as its basis are a gray area to identify, but potent enough to spread damaging assumptions, speculation, or defamatory statements against a person or a community.

Two types of posts that spread unverifiable but strategically damaging claims are:

- a. Unverifiable and speculative personal details to cast an individual or people associated with them in a poor light.
- b. Misrepresentations of religious text to justify gender-based violence and attacks on the LG-BTQ+ community.



### 3a. Speculations about personal life to depict someone in poor light

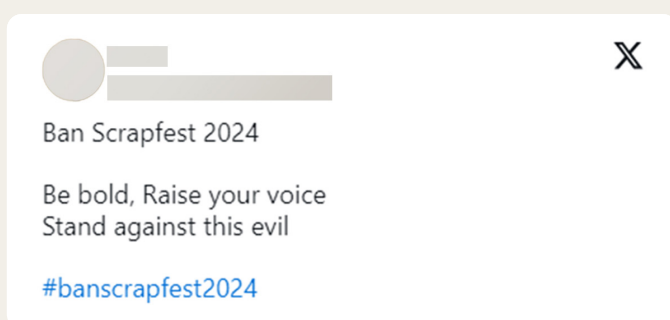
**Claim:** The post claims that Maryam Nawaz's daughter is from relations with a Qatari person, not with her husband.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** It is insinuating promiscuity in a female politician with the aid of a misleading pictorial representation. These claims are about a woman politician's personal sexual life and making her out to be a 'loose character.' This is to attack her credibility, but also as a response to a journalist's interview which the political party loyalists believed to be disrespectful of an opposing politician's wife.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** This is speculative unverifiable personal information.

**Potential outcomes:** Some claims related to personal life which are not verifiable are spread with the intention to malign.

**Country:** Pakistan



### 3b. Misrepresentations of a religious text

**Claim:** The post calls for banning Scrapfest by claiming homosexuality is a sin. It says, "Say no to LGBTQ+ homosexuality vulgarity! God damn LGBTQ+ folks and it's a sin. Be bold, Raise your voice. Stand against this evil. #banscrapfest2024".

The text in Urdu translates to, "It is a sin: Narrated by Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "May Allah curse the one who does the act



of the people of Lot, may Allah curse the one who does the act of the people of Lot, may Allah curse the one who does the act of the people of Lot.” (Al-Sunan al-Kubra by Al-Nasa’i 6/385, Al-Mundhiri said in Al-Targhib 3/196: It was narrated by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih and Al-Bayhaqi)

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** The post cites a Hadith (saying of Prophet Muhammed) in Urdu to claim that homosexuality is vulgar and a sin, to support one’s world view. It also asks to ban the Scrapfest 2024 which has increasingly become an event to expression of LGBTQ talent.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** The post quotes a hadith which cannot be verified and the belief in it is subjective.

**Potential outcomes:** Campaign against the Scrapfest 2024 and delegitimizing it based on religious beliefs.

**Country:** Pakistan

#### 4. Hyperlocal gendered disinformation

Data collection by Chambal Media surfaced social media posts that involved local social networks within rural communities. This type of hyperlocal information may require direct knowledge of individuals involved, and while the posts may not clearly be gendered disinformation, it can contribute to offline gossip or violence about the individuals or groups featured in these posts.

1. Rumors and gossip.
2. Clickbait and sensationalized content.





## 4a. Rumors and gossip

**Claim:** Translated from Hindi, this post reads, *“These people are taking full advantage of the fog; love is competing with their dedication to their studies.”*

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** This video was shared on social media to defame the young woman seen here. It may seem innocuous and impossible to identify the people in the video. But it constitutes a harmful, misogynistic rumor in a close-knit rural Indian community where everyone knows each other, and where it is considered improper for young women to socialize in this manner.

One of the comments in the post reads: *How will the girl escape from this scam? Her parents have provided her with everything, yet here she is taking advantage of the dense fog to be with her boyfriend.*

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** In this case there is no reference to a specific person, it is just a post which looks banal.

**Potential outcomes:** Inciting rumors from the offline space to online about women, maybe with reference to a particular incident.

**Country:** India

12 December 2021 · ...

हनीमून पर गोवा की जगह पति पत्नी को हरिद्वार क्या ले गया पश्चिमी सभ्यता के पीछे भागने वाली पत्नी ने तलाक की लगाई अर्जी।

See translation

## हनीमून पर गोवा की जगह हरिद्वार ले गया पति, महिला ने तलाक की लगा दी अर्जी

■ संतराज ठाकुर, गाजियाबाद

मनचाही जगह पर हनीमून के लिए नहीं ले जाने पर तलाक का मामला सामने आया है। मामले में महिला ने कोर्ट में अर्जी देकर तलाक की मांग की है। बताया गया कि हनीमून के बाद से दोनों में झगड़ा हो रहा था। इसके कारण दोनों तनाव में थे।

महिला का कहना है कि पति उसकी कोई बात नहीं मानता, इसलिए तलाक ही रास्ता बचा है। अधिवक्ता मनोज नागवंशी ने बताया कि कविनगर में रहने वाली एक युवती की शादी 12 जून 2019 को मेरठ निवासी इंजीनियर युवक से हुई थी। उसने शादी के बाद हनीमून के लिए गोवा जाने का प्लान तैयार किया था। इंजीनियर उसे गोवा के स्थान पर हरिद्वार ले गया। इसके बाद से दोनों के बीच तनाव की स्थिति पैदा हो गई। तनाव की वजह से युवती कुछ दिन बाद ही अपने मायके आ गई और फिर वापस नहीं गई। महिला ने पहले पति पर दहेज उल्पीड़न का आरोप लगाकर भरण पोषण की मांग की। अधिवक्ता के मुताबिक,



**'पति कोई बात नहीं सुनता'**

महिला का कहना है कि उसने शादी से पहले ही हनीमून गोवा में मनाने का प्लान बनाया था, जब उसकी शादी हुई थी, उस दौरान उसकी एक सहेली का भी विवाह हुआ था, वह भी अपने पति के साथ गोवा गई थी, लेकिन मुझे हरिद्वार ले जाया गया। महिला का आरोप है कि उसका पति मां के कहने पर चलता है। पति उसकी बात नहीं मानता तो ऐसे में साथ रहने का कोई फायदा नहीं, इसलिए तलाक चाहिए।

“ इस मामले में कुछ कहा नहीं जा सकता, पर आजकल महिलाएं अपने अधिकारों की प्रति सचेत हो गई हैं। मनमाने ढंग से गृहस्थी नहीं चल रही है, सभी के अधिकारों

Like Comment Send Share

4b. Click bait: Sensationalizing events without evidence to destroy the reputation of the target

**Claim:** The post presents a newspaper clip which says that a wife wants divorce from husband because he took her to Haridwar (religious place) instead of Goa for their honeymoon.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** The finer details are left out, portraying the woman as demanding and asking for a divorce for a silly reason. Another report however shows that she sought divorce because her husband prioritizes his parent's needs over hers. This incident is partly true, but reported in a way that is clickbait, sensationalized and biased against the woman. It is played up by misogyny and stereotyping to further tarnish the reputation of the woman.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** These are partly true incidents but shared with an agenda to malign the targets in a sexist manner.

**Potential outcomes:** Tarnishing the image of the woman along misogynistic lines to depict events in favor of the man.

**Country:** India

## 5. Unclear, Broad, or Nontraditional Targets

In this category, the gendered disinformation is vague, or the targets of gendered disinformation are broad or non-traditional. These are cases where disinformation is:

- a. Against individuals who are women and gender minorities, but where the criticism is not visibly gendered.
- b. Against broad feminist, LGBTQ+, transgender movements rather than specific identifiable groups or individuals (or against allies to women and gender minorities).
- c. Against straight cis men to devalue their status or legitimacy by questioning their masculinity through derogatory and harmful gendered rhetoric.
- d. Against individuals close to the main target or secondary targets, as a tool to target prominent people.
- e. As a tool to oppress other marginalized racial, ethnic and religious communities.

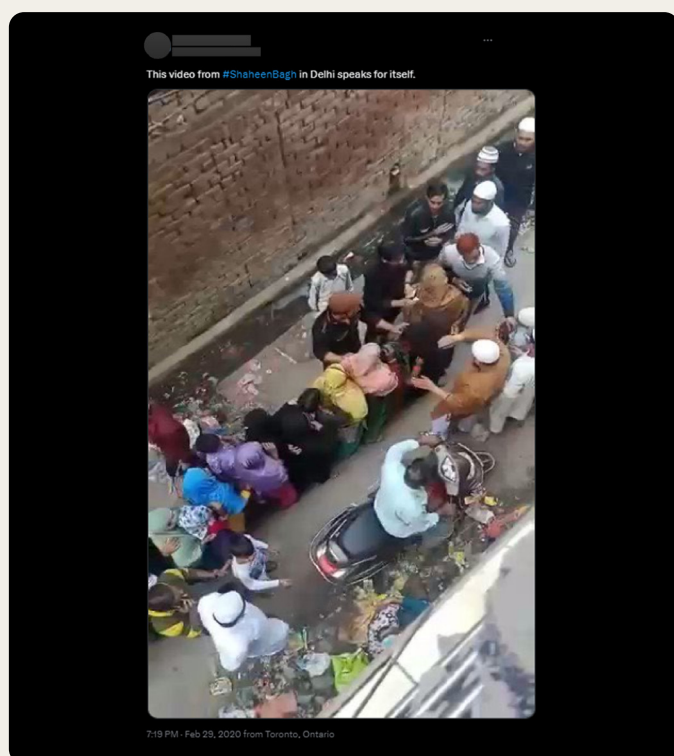


### 5a. Disinformation against women and gender minorities (without clear misogynistic language)

**Claim:** The first post includes photos of an old woman with the claim that the same woman was hired on a per day basis to protest at Shaheen Bagh and as a farmer. The second post claims that the video from #ShaheenBagh in Delhi speaks for itself. The video shows Muslim women queuing up at Shaheen Bagh, which saw a massive protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (CAA 2019).

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** These posts target the women protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 in India. Known as the Shaheen Bagh protests for the location, this was led by mainly Muslim women, who later garnered larger support against the Indian government's passing of the CAA 2019.





The claim made by these posts was that these women were paid to be part of the protests. This can be seen as an attack against women who speak up against the establishment and the state. They are discredited and their reputation maligned.

### Why it is difficult to identify as gendered

**disinformation:** Both the examples above are not gendered, but the question is whether there is some evidence or statistics to show that the women are disproportionately targeted.

**Potential outcomes:** To discredit them and to delegitimize the cause for anti-state protests.

**Country:** India



## 5b. Gendered disinformation against movements

### Against Aurat March

**Claim:** American funded #Auratmarch traitors are being used against the sovereignty of Pakistan.

### Why this could be gendered disinformation:

In what is known as the Aurat march (women's march), thousands of women march on the streets of Pakistan on International Women's day, claiming their rights and challenging patriarchy. This started in 2018 and has continued so far. The post claims that the Aurat march has 'foreign funding' and is driven by a Western agenda that goes against the sovereignty of Pakistan.

### Why it is difficult to identify as gendered

**disinformation:** This is not targeting a particular individual, but a movement that is calling for gender equality. It does not target a single person but is a blanket attack against the larger movement with varied people in it.

**Potential outcomes:** Discrediting the Aurat March and delegitimizing it in the name of 'Western Agenda.'

**Country:** Pakistan

### Against transgender rights

**Claim:** This post claims that the Moorat March promotes and celebrates homosexuality, which the author claims is part of an un-Islamic Western agenda. The post also conflates trans activism with homosexuality.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** These claims are part of a targeted campaign against transgender community and the policy to ensure their rights. Transgender communities in Pakistan participate in the Moorat March to demand respect for their rights and identities. The claims in this post came from a prominent social media figure and represent part of a targeted campaign against the transgender community. They surfaced amid a court battle over a federal law that was written to protect transgender people's rights.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** This is not targeting a particular individual, but a movement that is calling for legal and societal acceptance of the transgender identity.

**Potential outcomes:** Discrediting the transgender movement by citing disprovable statements and hindering any movement that aims for rights of transgender community.

**Country:** Pakistan





5c. Gendered disinformation against cis men which are derogatory and harmful for marginalized genders

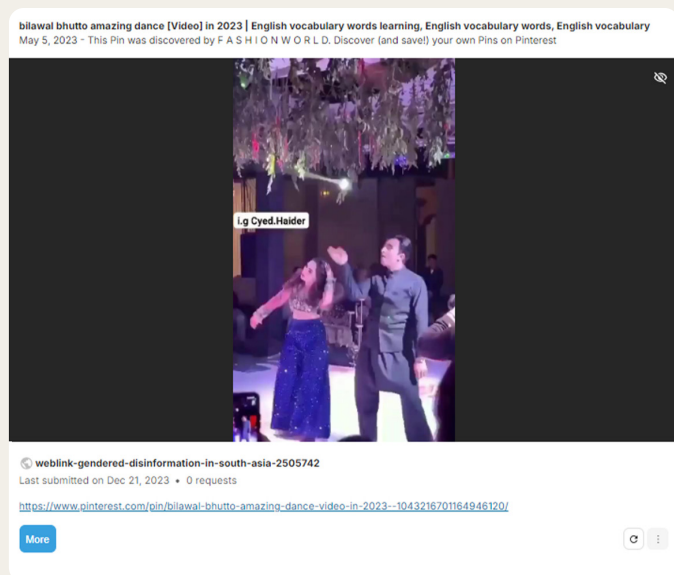
#### Example 1:

**Claim:** This post depicts Shahzeb Khanzada, a Pakistani journalist, as a courtesan and calls him shameless.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** By equating a male journalist to a courtesan, who sells one's body for money, the post aims to degrade the journalist and target his credibility. The assumption here is that courtesans have no dignity.

**Potential outcomes:** The post degrades a journalist and passes a value judgement on courtesans.

**Country:** Pakistan



#### Example 2:

**Claim:** This post claims that Bilwawal Bhutto, a Pakistani politician, is dancing at a wedding.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** Bliawal Bhutto, a leader in Pakistan, is often targeted for being feminine, for dancing and referred to as 'Bilo Rani' (transgender) as an attempt to question his manhood and capability as a leader. These gendered attacks on cis men are demeaning for women and gender diverse people as it also sends a message that women or feminine traits are not ideal for a leader.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** The target is not a woman or from the LGBTQ community.

**Potential outcomes:** Insults the person and spreads the harmful narratives that femininity and women are not good leaders.

**Country:** Pakistan

## 5d. Attacking individuals close to prominent individuals

### Example 1:

**Claim:** The post with an image of Rahul Gandhi walking alongside a lady is shared with the caption, *BJ with Rahul Gandhi, at the BJ Yatra.*

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** The post focuses on Rahul Gandhi's interactions with a woman. It says this is Rahul Gandhi's 'BJ Yatra,' to mean 'blowjob yatra' instead of the original event, Bharat Jodo Yatra. While targeting Rahul Gandhi, the post maligns the lady.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** The primary target is the politician while the lady is the secondary target.

**Potential outcomes:** Defame the target by using a different person as a body of insult.

**Country:** India







## Example 2:

**Claim:** The post claims that Shahzeb Khanzada, a Pakistani journalist won a bet to pursue the woman who would be his wife, but the man who lost still visits the wife.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** The false claims are being used against the wife in order to target the male journalist who is her husband, raising questions on her sexual and private conduct.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** The primary target is the journalist.

**Potential outcomes:** Defame the target by using a different person as a subject of the insult.

**Country:** Pakistan



5e. Mobilizing gendered disinformation as a tool to oppress other marginalized racial, ethnic and religious communities.

## Narratives to target the Muslim community

### Example 1:

**Claim:** This post promotes the so-called love jihad narrative and contends that it is responsible for the deaths of Hindu girls.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** The woman in this photo was misidentified and presented as a victim of love jihad, a misogynistic and Islamophobic narrative that alleges Muslim men in India are actively luring Hindu women into marriage with the aim of converting them to Islam. The lower right photo suggests that the woman was killed.

**Country:** India



## Example 2:

**Claim:** The post shares a video of women who have covered their heads with the caption that one of them is Razzia Bano who had 18 children and asking to take a guess on how many children her children may have.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** This misidentifies the woman in the video as a Muslim woman who had 18 children, while the woman in the post is a Hindu woman. This is based on a narrative that Muslim women give birth to more children and are “more fertile” than their Hindu counterparts. This is said in a derogatory manner. The narrative is that Muslims have more children and are claiming more resources of the society. Discussions on ‘fertility’, a woman’s body and choices becomes the tool for communal agenda. The agency of the woman is diminished and is a case of intersection of religion and gender.

**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered disinformation:** These are examples of posts propagating the narratives that defame and vilify the Muslim community and interreligious marriage. On the surface it is not explicitly gendered. But the gendered narrative is subtle and a tool for the larger communal agenda.

**Potential outcomes:** These are harmful and dubious narratives working against the rights and agency of women in marriage, birth and other choices.

**Country:** India



पाकिस्तानी लड़की ने अपने पिता से ही रचा ली शादी, बन गई चौथी बीवी, लोग बोले- तभी इन्हें पढ़ने नहीं देते  
[m.punjabkesari.in/international/...](https://m.punjabkesari.in/international/)

#Pakistan #ViralVideo #PakistanGirl  
 #Girlmarriedherfather



6:33 PM · Jul 9, 2023



3 3 Reply Share this post

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If you want to stop gangrapes in jungles in India, indulge in full scale victim blaming.

This is the only way to counter the feminist narrative that women have a right to openly roam in the riskiest places in India. The feminists and media put the women at risk.

Women have to make decisions on their safety. They must stop depending on the police to protect them. Police has only one job in India. That is to dance to the tunes of politicians for filing fake cases on political opponents. They have no time or will to do pro-active policies.

- 1) Do full scale victim blaming.
- 2) It's as if some foreign women are traveling to India to fulfill their fetish of getting raped in India. [x.com/realsiff/statu...](https://x.com/realsiff/statu...)

This post is unavailable.

8:14 PM · Mar 3, 2024 · 20.2K Views

59 Reposts 35 Quotes 132 Likes 19 Bookmarks



## Cross-country narratives to depict women from hostile countries as 'characterless.'

### Example 1:

**Claim:** This post claims that a Pakistani woman, shown in the picture, married her father, becoming his fourth wife.

### Why this could be gendered disinformation:

Without any proof, this post claims that a Pakistani woman married her father to become his fourth wife. However, several fact check reports show that they are not father and daughter. This is an attempt to show Muslims as well as women of Pakistan in a demeaning manner by implying incestuous relationships. The framing of the sentence shows the bias against the woman.

**Country:** India

### Example 2:

**Claim:** The post claims that foreign women have a fantasy of being raped in India.

**Why this could be gendered disinformation:** This was a post in the aftermath of a Spanish woman being raped in India in early 2024. It is blaming the victim, saying that foreign women may have a fantasy of getting raped in India. Overall, the attempt is to discredit the survivor and oppose those who supports her and to create a sense of fear. This post was from an account named Save India Family Foundation which has over 21k followers on Twitter/X. It claims to be "Largest Pan-India Men's Rights NGO" on its website and that its mission is "to expose and create awareness about large scale violations of Civil Liberties and Human Rights in the name of women's empowerment in India."



**Why it is difficult to identify as gendered**

**disinformation:** These are not easily verifiable and may be broad disinformation against hostile countries like Pakistan and foreign nationals. The tool here is gendered and sexist narratives.

**Potential outcomes:** Demeaning portrayal of women of other nationalities, especially countries considered hostile.

**Country:** India

# Desired Impact and Future Studies

Our dataset is not meant to offer a representative sample, nor reflect the prevalence of gendered disinformation in South Asia. Our intention is to identify the various dimensions of gendered disinformation in the region and to study how it is perpetuated and experienced in unique and hyperlocal contexts.

Our methodology provides a model for community-driven studies of gendered disinformation and other types of harmful content. It is our hope that the insights outlined in this report will help drive practical responses by technology platforms and further studies by researchers towards the problem of gendered disinformation in our two countries of focus and beyond. We hope to develop future studies with much larger, more representative datasets that will enable us to prototype a classification model for this type of content.

## Recommendations for Social Media Companies

Social media companies must make their data more accessible for independent researchers in academic and community-driven settings alike. Our study was limited by the fact that we could not undertake systematic data collection due to a combination of technical and financial barriers. We are deeply concerned that major tech companies have walled off sources of social media data – such as the Twitter/X API and CrowdTangle – that once helped fuel vital socio-technical research on online harms. We join calls to make this data truly accessible for public interest research purposes.

For researchers and civil society groups, reduced access to platform data has been compounded by the withdrawal of companies like Meta and Google from close dialogue with key civil society groups tracking harmful online speech in recent years. We hope to see this trend reverse.

Social media companies need to engage genuinely with community organizations that are defining and classifying gendered disinformation through face-to-face consultation and long term dialogue on these issues.

This engagement can help companies:

- **Improve approaches to monitoring harmful speech and moderating violative content in complex sociopolitical contexts:** Our methodology can help to inform a more holistic, network-based approach to monitoring and content moderation that will prepare companies to respond to situations in which offensive; this content opens the flood gates to content that unequivocally stands in clear violation of company policies and can cause real-life harms.

- **Uphold company commitments to the UN Guiding Principles On Business and Human**

**Rights:** Meta and Google (the owner of YouTube) and TikTok have made public

commitments to adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Meta has also committed to upholding the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, key aspects of which intersect with the UNGPs. Shifting their content moderation practices to place greater focus on these network dynamics would help them to live up to these commitments and stem violative content that disproportionately harms women and LGBTQ+ people.

## Future Engagement for Research Communities

We hope that our methodology inspires further research on gendered disinformation online, both by community groups, and by academic researchers.

### **Sociotechnical researchers:**

We would welcome future opportunities to collaborate with academic research groups that are interested in genuine, equitable sharing and joint analyses of datasets like this one. For such collaborations to be effective, we recommend that academic and community-based researchers codesign methods by which to ethically collect, label and preserve data that can help fuel academic research and grassroots advocacy work alike.

### **Community organizations:**

We urge other community organizations undertaking related research projects to draw on our methodology to replicate or iterate on our study. We hope that other community organizations will explore and invest in research and testing that can use this kind of knowledge to inform the design of community moderation and norms-setting tools.

# Appendix

## 1. Working definition of gendered disinformation translated in Hindi

प्रकृति	जेण्डरड डिसइंफॉर्मेशन ऑनलाइन जेंडर आधारित हिंसा का रूप है जिसका जुड़ाव ऑनलाइन जेंडर आधारित हिंसा से भी है और ऑफलाइन भी
काम करने का ढंग	जेण्डरड डिसइंफॉर्मेशन स्त्री-द्वेष और यौनिकता से जुड़ी गलत कहानियों को को बढ़ावा देने के लिए जाति, धर्म, संप्रदाय और लिंग जैसी विभिन्न अंतर्विरोधी सामाजिक पहचानों के आधार पर गलत और भ्रामक जानकारी का इस्तेमाल करता है
लक्ष्य	जेण्डरड डिसइंफॉर्मेशन लोगों को उनके जेंडर के आधार पर टारगेट करता है, खासतौर पर महिलाओं को और उन लोगों को जो अपने जेंडर या यौनिकता के आधार पर हाशिये पर हैं, जो सत्ता संरचनाओं या सामाजिक मानदंडों को चुनौती देते हैं, और माना जाता है कि वे उनका विरोध करते हैं।
उद्देश्य	इन ऑनलाइन और ऑफलाइन हमलों का उद्देश्य गलत कहानियों के माध्यम से या स्व-संसरशिप के माध्यम से इन समूहों को बदनाम करना और खत्म करना है, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर उनकी भागीदारी पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया जाता है और भूमिकाएँ कम हो जाती हैं।
नुकसान	इन उद्देश्यों के अलावा, जेण्डरड डिसइंफॉर्मेशन व्यक्तियों/समुदायों और/या उस पहचान से जुड़े अन्य व्यक्तियों को मानसिक, शारीरिक, सामाजिक और ऐतिहासिक नुकसान नुकसान और हिंसा का कारण या ट्रिगर भी हो सकता है।

## 2. Data annotation model

Data annotation is the process of automatically or manually labeling or tagging relevant information or metadata to let researchers and/or machines understand what they are.

An annotation is extra information associated with a particular piece of information.

It can be a simple description and assigned categories. It is important to standardize an approach for how this data will be managed.

The purpose of this annotation exercise is to ascertain whether a piece of content is gendered disinformation by examining the claim, target, harm and source. Annotation also involves archiving and gathering keywords. We apply a mechanism of interrater to address subjectivity.

As part of this project, we will use Check to document instances of gendered disinformation in South Asia, where the goal is to analyze that data.

डेटा एनोटेशन प्रासंगिक जानकारी/मेटाडेटा को स्वचालित रूप से या मैनुअल रूप से लेबल करने या टैग करने की प्रक्रिया है ताकि शोधकर्ताओं और/या मशीनों को समझ आ सके कि वे क्या हैं। एनोटेशन किसी विशेष जानकारी से जुड़ी अतिरिक्त जानकारी है। यह एक सरल विवरण, निर्दिष्ट श्रेणियां आदि हो सकता है। इस डेटा को कैसे प्रबंधित किया जाएगा, इसके लिए एक दृष्टिकोण को मानकीकृत करना महत्वपूर्ण है।

इस एनोटेशन अभ्यास का उद्देश्य दावे, लक्ष्य, हानि और स्रोत की जांच करके यह पता लगाना है कि क्या सामग्री का एक टुकड़ा लिंग आधारित दुष्प्रचार है। एनोटेशन में संग्रह करना, कीवर्ड एकत्र करना भी शामिल है। हम व्यक्तिपरकता को संबोधित करने के लिए अंतर-रेटिंग का एक तंत्र भी लागू करेंगे।

इस परियोजना के हिस्से के रूप में, हम दक्षिण एशिया में लिंग आधारित दुष्प्रचार के उदाहरणों का दस्तावेजीकरण करने के लिए चेक का उपयोग करेंगे, जहां लक्ष्य उस डेटा का विश्लेषण करना है।

### 3. Annotation form

<b>Claim and format</b>	1.	What is the claim? *Describe the claim in not more than 2 lines	दावा क्या है? * दावे का वर्णन अधिकतम 2 पंक्तियों में करें
	2.	What type of content is it? *Select all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>False</li> <li>Partly false</li> <li>Manipulated/alterd (fabricated)</li> <li>Misleading/missing context</li> <li>Not verifiable (because it is an opinion, developing story)</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	यह किस प्रकार की सामग्री है? * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>असत्य</li> <li>आंशिक रूप से झूठ</li> <li>हेर-फेर/बदला हुआ (मनगढ़त)</li> <li>भ्रामक/अनुपलब्ध संदर्भ</li> <li>सत्यापन योग्य नहीं (क्योंकि यह एक राय है, विकासशील कहानी है)</li> <li>अन्य</li> </ul>
	3.	Format of content *Select all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article on a website</li> <li>Social media post</li> <li>Meme</li> <li>Image</li> <li>Audio</li> <li>Video</li> <li>Hashtag</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	सामग्री का प्रारूप (जो लागू हो उसे चुनें) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>एक वेबसाइट पर लेख</li> <li>सोशल मीडिया पोस्ट</li> <li>MEME</li> <li>छवि</li> <li>ऑडियो</li> <li>वीडियो</li> <li>हैशटैग</li> <li>अन्य</li> </ul>
<b>Target</b>	4.	The primary target is **Select all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An individual</li> <li>A community</li> <li>A group of individuals</li> </ul>	प्राथमिक लक्ष्य है* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>एक व्यक्ति</li> <li>समुदाय</li> <li>व्यक्तियों का एक समूह</li> </ul>
	5.	Gender identity of the primary target *Select all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presumed cis woman/women</li> <li>Presumed cis man/men</li> <li>Transpeople</li> <li>Lesbian</li> <li>Gay</li> <li>Bisexual</li> <li>Intersex</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	प्राथमिक लक्ष्य की लिंग पहचान* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>सीआईएस-महिला/स्त्री</li> <li>सीआईएस-पुरुष / लेकिन</li> <li>ट्रांसलोग</li> <li>समलैंगिक</li> <li>समलैंगिक</li> <li>उभयलिंगी</li> <li>इंटरसेक्स</li> <li>एलजीबीटीक्यूआई+</li> <li>अन्य</li> </ul>

	6.	<p>Social identity of the primary target</p> <p>*Select all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political leader</li> <li>• Journalist</li> <li>• Activist (on various issues)</li> <li>• Lawyer</li> <li>• Artist (actor, singer, etc)</li> <li>• Social media influencer</li> <li>• Public figure</li> <li>• Community leader</li> <li>• Lay person</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>प्राथमिक लक्ष्य की सामाजिक पहचान *</p> <p>(जो लागू हो उसे चुनें)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• राजनीतिक नेता</li> <li>• पत्रकार</li> <li>• कार्यकर्ता (विभिन्न मुद्दों पर)</li> <li>• वकील</li> <li>• कलाकार (अभिनेता, गायक...)</li> <li>• सोशल मीडिया इन्फ्लुएंसर</li> <li>• समुदायिक नेता</li> <li>• साधारण व्यक्ति</li> <li>• अन्य</li> </ul>
	7.	<p>Secondary Target (e.g., Muslim man, Muslim community)</p>	<p>द्वितीयक लक्ष्य (जैसे, मुस्लिम व्यक्ति, मुस्लिम समुदाय)</p>
<b>Harms</b>	8.	<p>What are the potential harms of the post to the primary target? *Select all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discredit the target</li> <li>• Threaten the target</li> <li>• Cause economic harm or losses to the target</li> <li>• Cause physical harm to the target</li> <li>• Psychological harm</li> <li>• Unknown harm</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>प्राथमिक लक्ष्य को पोस्ट से संभावित नुकसान क्या हैं?</p> <p>*लागू होने वाले सभी का चयन करें</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• लक्ष्य को बदनाम करो</li> <li>• लक्ष्य को धमकाना</li> <li>• लक्ष्य को आर्थिक क्षति या हानि पहुँचाना</li> <li>• लक्ष्य को शारीरिक क्षति पहुँचाना</li> <li>• मनोवैज्ञानिक हानि</li> <li>• अज्ञात हानि</li> <li>• अन्य</li> </ul>
	9.	<p>Is there a potential immediate threat of physical violence to primary/secondary targets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not sure</li> </ul>	<p>क्या प्राथमिक/द्वितीयक लक्ष्यों पर शारीरिक हिंसा का कोई संभावित तात्कालिक खतरा है?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• हाँ</li> <li>• नहीं</li> <li>• निश्चित नहीं</li> </ul>
<b>Classification of content</b>	10.	<p>Is this gendered disinformation? *Select all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>क्या यह लिंग आधारित दुष्प्रचार है?*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• हाँ</li> <li>• नहीं</li> </ul>
	11.	<p>Justification in 2-3 lines why is it or not gendered disinformation. *</p>	<p>2-3 पंक्तियों में स्पष्टीकरण कि यह लिंग आधारित दुष्प्रचार क्यों है या नहीं।*</p>

	12.	Evidence and reference (explanation, or fact-check articles, reports)	साक्ष्य एवं सन्दर्भ (स्पष्टीकरण, या तथ्य-जांच लेख, रिपोर्ट)
	13.	The post also contains *Select all options that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gendered misinformation</li> <li>Gendered malinformation</li> <li>Gendered language</li> <li>Gendered online harassment</li> <li>Online threat/abuse</li> <li>Gendered hate speech</li> <li>Broader disinformation</li> </ul>	पोस्ट में यह भी शामिल है *लागू होने वाले सभी विकल्प चुनें <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>लिंग आधारित गलत सूचना</li> <li>लिंग संबंधी गलत जानकारी</li> <li>लिंग आधारित भाषा</li> <li>लैंगिक आधार पर ऑनलाइन उत्पीड़न</li> <li>ऑनलाइन धमकी/दुर्व्यवहार</li> <li>लिंग आधारित घृणास्पद भाषण</li> <li>व्यापक दुष्प्रचार</li> </ul>
Source	14.	Where did this content first originate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online</li> <li>Offline speech/conversation</li> </ul>	यह सामग्री सबसे पहले कहाँ से उत्पन्न हुई? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ऑनलाइन</li> <li>ऑफ़लाइन भाषण/बातचीत</li> </ul>
	15.	Name the platform where you found this content.	उस प्लेटफ़ॉर्म का नाम बताएं जहाँ आपको यह सामग्री मिली।
	16.	Which other platforms is this available? *Select all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook</li> <li>Twitter</li> <li>Instagram</li> <li>Tik Tok</li> <li>YouTube</li> <li>Telegram</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	यह अन्य कौन सा प्लेटफ़ॉर्म उपलब्ध है? (लागू होने वाले सभी विकल्पों का चयन करें) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>फेसबुक</li> <li>ट्विटर</li> <li>Instagram</li> <li>Tik Tok</li> <li>यूट्यूब</li> <li>तार</li> <li>अन्य</li> </ul>
Metadata	17.	Country which this post is primarily relevant to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India</li> <li>Pakistan</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	वह देश जिसके लिए यह पोस्ट मुख्य रूप से प्रासंगिक है <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>भारत</li> <li>पाकिस्तान</li> <li>अन्य</li> </ul>
	18.	List two keywords from the post* * Keywords that are representative of the post. Please pick keywords in the post and words that may be used in the same context.	पोस्ट से दो कीवर्ड सूचीबद्ध करें* * ऐसे कीवर्ड जो पोस्ट के प्रतिनिधि हों। कृपया पोस्ट में कीवर्ड और ऐसे शब्द चुनें जिनका उपयोग उसी संदर्भ में किया जा सके। यह लिंग आधारित दुष्प्रचार में कीवर्ड की पहचान करने के लिए है



	19.	Archived link	संग्रहीत लिंक
	20.	Screenshot (If content is on Facebook or Instagram) *	स्क्रीनशॉट (यदि सामग्री फेसबुक या इंस्टाग्राम पर है)*
	21.	Interaction (number of likes, shares, comment in each post)	इंटरैक्शन (लाइक, शेयर, कमेंट की संख्या प्रत्येक पोस्ट में)
<b>Rater</b>	22.	From a layperson's perspective, rate this content for the distress it may cause to the person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very distressing</li> <li>• Moderately distressing</li> <li>• Not distressing</li> </ul>	एक सामान्य व्यक्ति के दृष्टिकोण से, आरइस कष्ट के लिए इस सामग्री को खायाव्यक्ति के लिए कारण हो सकता है (रेटर) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• बहुत कष्टकारी</li> <li>• मध्यम कष्टकारी</li> <li>• परेशान करने वाला नहीं</li> </ul>
	23.	If you are creator/rater of this content, change rating to 'ready for review' and sign off with your name.	यदि आप इस सामग्री के निर्माता/रेटर हैं, तो रेटिंग को समीक्षा के लिए तैयार में बदलें और अपने नाम के साथ हस्ताक्षर करें।
<b>Review</b>	24.	As a reviewer of this post, do you agree with the rater's decisions on whether the content is gendered disinformation or not? Rate on a scale of 1-5.  *1 (Not sure at all) and 5 (Very sure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> </ul>	अगर आप इस पोस्ट के Reviewer हैं. 1-5 के पैमाने पर, क्या आप रेटर के निर्णयों से सहमत हैं कि सामग्री जीडी है या नहीं?  *1 (बिल्कुल निश्चित नहीं) और 5 (बहुत निश्चित) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> </ul>
	25.	From a layperson's perspective, rate this content for the distress it may cause to the person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very distressing</li> <li>• Moderately distressing</li> <li>• Not distressing</li> </ul>	एक सामान्य व्यक्ति के दृष्टिकोण से, आरइस कष्ट के लिए इस सामग्री को खायाव्यक्ति को नुकसान हो सकता है (समीक्षक) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• बहुत कष्टकारी</li> <li>• मध्यम कष्टकारी</li> <li>• परेशान करने वाला नहीं</li> </ul>
	26.	Change status to review complete if your rating is above 4 or need consultation if your rating is below 4. Sign off with your name.	आलोचक  यदि आपकी रेटिंग 4 से ऊपर है तो स्थिति को समीक्षा पूर्ण में बदलें या यदि आपकी रेटिंग 4 से नीचे है तो परामर्श की आवश्यकता है और अपने नाम के साथ हस्ताक्षर करें

<b>External review</b>	27.	<p>As an external reviewer, do you agree with the rater's decisions on whether the content is gendered disinformation or not? Rate on a scale of 1-5.</p> <p>*1 (Not sure at all) and 5 (Very sure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> </ul>	<p>बाहरी समीक्षक</p> <p>यदि आप बाहरी समीक्षक हैं, 1-5 के पैमाने पर, क्या आप रेटर के निर्णयों से सहमत हैं कि सामग्री जीडी है या नहीं?</p> <p>1 (बिल्कुल निश्चित नहीं) और 5 (बहुत निश्चित)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> </ul>
	28.	<p>Change status to review complete and sign off with your name.</p>	<p>बाहरी समीक्षक</p> <p>समीक्षा पूर्ण करने के लिए स्थिति बदलें और अपने नाम के साथ हस्ताक्षर करें</p>

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