

The Digital Toll

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) and the Silencing of Young Women's Political, Economic and Civic Participation in Zimbabwe



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ACRONYMS

ACHPR – African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

APC – Association for Progressive Communications

AU – African Union

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

GBV – Gender Based Violence

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

KII – Key Informant Interview

MISA – Media Institute of Southern Africa

POTRAZ – Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

TFGBV – Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence

UN – United Nations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UN Women – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

WALPE – Women’s Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence

ZGC – Zimbabwe Gender Commission

ZLHR – Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

ZWMB – Zimbabwe Women’s Microfinance Bank

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Algorithmic amplification - When social media systems push certain posts to more people based on likes, shares, and comments. This can sometimes spread harmful or abusive content faster.

Anticipatory fear - When someone expects online abuse and changes their behaviour before anything happens, such as avoiding posting or sharing opinions.

Body shaming - Insulting or humiliating someone because of their body or appearance, including skin tone, body size, facial features, or perceived attractiveness.

Chilling effect - When people stop speaking, posting, or participating online because they fear harassment, threats, or backlash.

Coordinated harassment - When many people or accounts attack one person online at the same time to intimidate or silence them.

Cyberstalking - Repeated unwanted monitoring, messages, or contact online that causes fear or distress.

Cyber misogyny - Online abuse that targets women because they are women. This often includes sexual insults, threats, or attempts to damage their reputation.

Decolonial feminist analysis - An approach that examines how colonial legacies, local power structures and lived realities shape patriarchy, inequality and exclusion.

Digital citizenship - The ability to safely and freely participate online, including sharing opinions, accessing information, and engaging in economic or civic activities.

Digital public sphere - Online spaces where people discuss public issues, politics, and social matters.

Digital security - Steps people take to protect themselves online, such as using strong passwords, privacy settings, and reporting abusive behaviour.

Doxing - Publishing someone's private information online without their permission to intimidate, shame, or expose them.

Economic precarity - A situation where someone's income, job, or business is unstable and easily affected by financial shocks.

Engagement-driven platforms - Social media platforms designed to maximise likes, shares, and comments, sometimes pushing controversial or harmful content because it attracts attention.

GBV - It refers to violence or harm directed at an individual based on their gender

Gendered disinformation – False or misleading information targeting women, often attacking their morality, sexuality, or personal life to damage credibility.

Intersectionality – The idea that people can face different forms of discrimination at the same time based on factors such as gender, age, religion, disability, or economic status.

Moral policing – Criticising or controlling women's behaviour based on expectations about how they should dress, speak, or behave.

Non-consensual image sharing – Sharing private or intimate images of someone without their permission, including altered or manipulated images.

Platform accountability – The responsibility of social media companies to prevent and respond to harmful content and protect users from abuse.

Platform capitalism – A business model where digital platforms make money from user activity, data, and advertising.

Respectability politics – Pressure on women or marginalised groups to behave in socially "acceptable" ways to avoid criticism or gain respect.

Self-censorship – When someone chooses not to express their views online because they fear harassment or backlash.

Structural democratic exclusion – When social or technological systems indirectly prevent some people from fully participating in public debate or decision-making.

Structural violence – Harm caused by systems or structures that create inequality and limit opportunities for certain groups.

Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) – Gender-based violence carried out or amplified through digital technologies, including harassment, threats, stalking, and reputational attacks.

Trauma informed approach – An approach that recognises the emotional impact of violence and prioritises safety, dignity, and support for survivors.

Visibility risk – The higher chance of harassment or attacks that people face when they speak publicly online or take visible roles in leadership, activism, or business.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

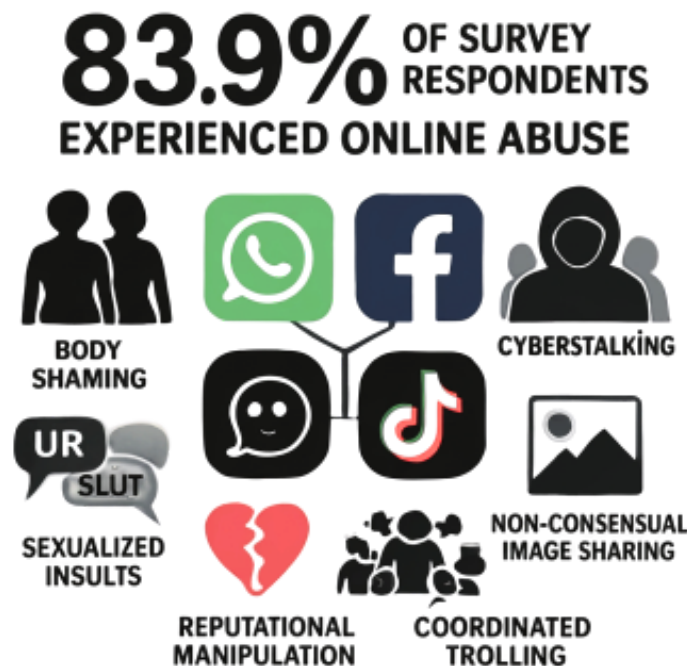
Digital platforms have become central arenas for political debate, economic activity, and civic engagement in Zimbabwe. For young women aged 18–30, platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, X, TikTok, and Instagram are widely used for entrepreneurship, networking, activism, and public dialogue. These platforms create new opportunities for visibility and participation. At the same time, they expose young women to growing forms of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), including harassment, reputational attacks, sexualised insults, threats, and coordinated trolling.

This report investigates how TFGBV shapes the voice, political agency, and economic participation of young women in Zimbabwe's digital public sphere. The study combines quantitative survey data with qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to document both the scale of digital abuse and the lived experiences behind the numbers.

The findings reveal that 83.9% of survey respondents reported experiencing some form of online abuse. Harassment was reported across multiple platforms, including WhatsApp groups, Facebook comment sections, X threads, and TikTok content spaces. Participants described abuse ranging from body shaming and sexualised insults to cyberstalking, non-consensual image sharing, reputational manipulation, and coordinated trolling.

Crucially, participants did not describe harassment as random or unexpected. Rather, it was experienced as predictable, particularly when women express political opinions, identify as feminists, challenge social norms, or pursue leadership roles. Public conversations frequently shifted away from ideas and toward personal attacks targeting women's bodies, morality, and perceived respectability.

These patterns reflect dynamics described in African feminist scholarship. Sylvia Tamale (2020) argues that controlling women's voices and public presence remains a central pillar of patriarchal power across many African societies. In digital spaces, similar dynamics appear through online harassment that attempts to discipline women's visibility and discourage public participation. The findings of this report suggest that digital violence operates not only as interpersonal hostility but also as a mechanism that regulates who feels safe to speak and participate in digital public life.



The consequences of TFGBV extend beyond immediate emotional harm. More than 60 % of respondents reported reducing or withdrawing from online engagement after experiencing harassment. Participants described avoiding political conversations, limiting public visibility, or creating anonymous accounts to protect themselves from attacks. While these strategies may offer short-term protection, they also restrict participation in public debate and civic organising.

African feminist scholarship helps explain these responses. Obioma Nnaemeka's concept of negofeminism, or the feminism of negotiation, highlights how women often develop survival strategies within unequal systems (Nnaemeka, 2004). In the digital context, practices such as self-censorship, selective posting, or reduced visibility can serve as tactical responses to unsafe environments rather than mere disengagement.

The research also reveals the economic consequences of digital violence. Many young women rely on digital platforms for entrepreneurship, networking, content creation, and employment opportunities. Participants reported losing clients, missing professional opportunities, and experiencing reputational damage following online harassment or the circulation of manipulated content. In digital economies where visibility is directly linked to opportunity, TFGBV functions as a barrier not only to expression but also to economic mobility.

These findings align with research on digital participation in African contexts. Bosch (2020) shows that social media platforms shape everyday political engagement while also reflecting broader social inequalities such as gender norms, economic precarity, and political polarisation. In Zimbabwe, these dynamics intersect with existing gender inequalities and social pressures that already limit women's access to leadership and public voice.

Taken together, the evidence presented in this report indicates that TFGBV functions as a structural barrier to equal participation in Zimbabwe's digital public sphere. Digital violence affects not only individual well-being but also the broader conditions under which young women engage in political discussion, civic organising, and economic activity.

Addressing TFGBV, therefore, requires responses that move beyond individual coping strategies toward structural change. The report proposes a set of coordinated actions across multiple actors.

- I. **Digital platforms** must strengthen moderation systems, particularly for local languages such as Shona and isiNdebele, improve transparency in addressing harassment complaints, and strengthen protections against coordinated abuse, doxing, and non-consensual image sharing.
- II. **Government and state institutions** should strengthen the implementation of the Cyber and Data Protection Act while ensuring that cyber legislation protects survivors without restricting legitimate freedom of expression. Survivor-centred reporting mechanisms and specialised digital harm response units are essential for improving accountability and protection.

- III. **Political institutions and youth organisations** should adopt clear codes of conduct addressing digital harassment within their networks and provide stronger support mechanisms for women participating in political life.
- IV. **Civil society and feminist movements** play a critical role in strengthening digital rights awareness, supporting survivors of online abuse, and building collective responses to misogynistic online campaigns.
- V. **Educational institutions and youth platforms** should integrate digital citizenship, online safety, and feminist digital literacy into leadership and youth programmes to better equip young people navigating online environments.

Ensuring safer digital environments is therefore not only a matter of online behaviour or platform moderation. It is directly linked to democratic inclusion, economic opportunity, and gender justice. When young women must constantly assess personal risk before speaking, organising, or conducting business online, equal participation in digital public life remains constrained.

This report, therefore, calls for collective action to build digital environments in Zimbabwe where young women can participate fully, speak freely, and pursue economic and civic opportunities without fear of harassment or punishment.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Digital space has become a central arena for political participation, economic activity and civic engagement in Zimbabwe. For young women aged 18 to 30, platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, X, TikTok and Instagram are widely used for entrepreneurship, professional networking, political expression and community organising. These platforms expand opportunities for visibility and participation but also expose young women to new forms of gendered harm.

Zimbabwe has experienced rapid digital expansion in recent years. According to the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), internet penetration exceeded 60 per cent by 2024, with mobile connectivity serving as the primary access mode. Social media platforms increasingly function as spaces for political communication, youth mobilisation, informal commerce and public debate. As digital participation grows, online environments are becoming more central to how citizens engage in political, social and economic life.

In a context marked by economic insecurity, youth unemployment and political polarisation, digital platforms are not optional spaces. They are central to visibility, livelihood and participation. This makes digital harm especially consequential.

Globally, TFGBV is increasingly recognised as a barrier to women's participation in public life. Research shows that women who are politically visible or economically active online face higher levels of harassment, reputational attacks and coordinated intimidation (Henry & Powell, 2018; Pollicy, 2021). These forms of abuse are frequently gendered, targeting women through sexualised insults, moral policing or attempts to undermine credibility. As digital platforms become central to public debate and economic opportunity, such attacks can restrict women's ability to participate freely in political and economic life.

In Zimbabwe, these risks intersect with existing inequalities shaped by patriarchy, economic precarity and political polarisation. Social media platforms have become important channels for political communication, youth mobilisation and entrepreneurial activity. At the same time, public debate in digital spaces is often characterised by polarisation, personal attacks and coordinated online harassment. Within this environment, young women who speak publicly on political issues, feminist perspectives or social justice concerns frequently face heightened scrutiny and abuse.

As Tamale (2020) argues, control over women's voices and public presence remains a central pillar of patriarchal power. In digital spaces, that control is increasingly exercised through harassment, moral policing and reputational attack.

TFGBV includes online harassment, sexualised insults, threats, cyberstalking, doxing, non-consensual sharing of images and coordinated reputational attacks. Although these acts occur in digital environments, their consequences extend beyond the internet. Online harassment can affect mental well-being, leadership ambition, professional credibility and economic opportunities. As online and offline spaces increasingly overlap, harm experienced in digital environments can produce tangible social, psychological and economic consequences.

Zimbabwe's legal and policy framework recognises several rights relevant to safe and meaningful digital participation. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) provides important protections through Section 56 on equality and non-discrimination, Section 57 on privacy and Section 61 on freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Section 61 specifically guarantees every person the right to seek, receive and communicate ideas and information, including through digital platforms. These constitutional protections establish a normative foundation for participation in digital public spaces.

At the policy level, the National ICT Policy seeks to expand digital access, promote innovation and strengthen Zimbabwe's participation in the global information society. The policy recognises the growing importance of digital technologies for economic development, education, governance and social inclusion. However, the expansion of digital infrastructure has not always been accompanied by adequate safeguards against emerging forms of digital harm. Bosch (2020) also shows that digital platforms in African contexts are shaped by local realities such as inequality, political contestation and gendered power, rather than functioning as neutral public spaces.

At the statutory level, the Cyber and Data Protection Act (Chapter 12:07) establishes provisions addressing unlawful access to data, cyber harassment, violations of privacy and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. While the Act provides a legal basis for addressing certain forms of digital abuse, concerns remain about uneven enforcement and the potential misuse of cyber legislation to affect legitimate political expression.

Regionally, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa affirms that the same rights people enjoy offline must also be protected online (ACHPR, 2019). In addition, ACHPR Resolution 522 on the Protection of Women Against Digital Violence in Africa (2022) recognises technology-facilitated violence against women as a growing human rights concern and calls on African states to strengthen legal, policy and institutional responses to digital violence. Together, these frameworks emphasise that digital safety is integral to the protection of fundamental rights and to equitable participation in democratic life.

Despite these protections, legal and policy frameworks have not consistently translated into lived safety for young women online. Participants in this study described digital harassment as predictable and gendered, particularly when discussing politics, leadership or feminist perspectives. Rather than isolated incidents, harassment was frequently experienced as a patterned response to women's public visibility.

This study hypothesises that exposure to technology facilitated gender based violence increases with public visibility and contributes to withdrawal from political participation, leadership engagement and economic activity.

The report therefore examines how technology facilitated gender based violence shapes the voice, political agency and economic participation of young women aged 18 to 30 in Zimbabwe. The research addresses four central questions:

- How widespread is digital violence among young women?
- How does online harassment influence behaviour and expression?
- How does it affect leadership ambition and civic engagement?
- How does it reshape economic opportunity and professional credibility?

The findings suggest that digital violence generates anticipatory fear, encourages self-censorship and in many cases leads to withdrawal from online engagement. It can also produce reputational instability, affecting employment prospects and entrepreneurial activity. These patterns indicate that digital harm functions not only as interpersonal abuse but also as a structural barrier to equal participation in Zimbabwe's digital public sphere.

Digital platforms now shape access to political organising, economic mobility and public debate. When young women must assess personal safety before speaking or participating, participation becomes uneven in practice. Addressing technology facilitated gender based violence is therefore not only a matter of online conduct or individual resilience but also a matter of democratic inclusion and economic opportunity.

This study draws on survey data and focus group discussions to analyse the scale, forms and consequences of digital violence. By grounding structural analysis in lived experience, the report contributes evidence to inform policies and institutional responses that strengthen safe and equitable participation in Zimbabwe's digital environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (TFGBV) IN CONTEXT

TFGBV refers to gendered harm that is carried out or amplified through digital technologies. It includes behaviours such as online harassment, cyberstalking, doxing, impersonation, non-consensual image sharing and the spread of gendered disinformation (Henry & Powell, 2018). Although these forms of abuse occur online, the power dynamics behind them are not new. Digital violence often reflects the same gender inequalities that women experience offline (Citron, 2014).

What makes digital violence particularly harmful is its speed, scale and permanence. Abusive content can spread quickly across platforms, reach large audiences and remain accessible long after it is first posted. Screenshots, reposts, and viral sharing allow harmful material to circulate widely, often beyond the targeted person's control.

Research shows that online harassment disproportionately targets women who are visible in public conversations. Women who speak about politics, feminism or social issues are especially likely to face coordinated attacks and reputational harassment (Suzor et al., 2019). In such environments, withdrawing from public engagement can become a way of protecting oneself from further harm.

The design of digital platforms can also play a role. Social media platforms are built to maximise engagement through likes, shares and comments. Content that provokes outrage or controversy often spreads faster, which can unintentionally amplify abusive posts and harassment (Suzor et al., 2019; Feminist Internet, 2022).

Bosch (2020) helps situate digital participation in Africa within everyday political realities, showing that online spaces are shaped by local inequalities rather than detached from them. Tamale (2020) supports the argument that control over women's voice, sexuality and public presence remains central to patriarchal authority, including in digital spaces.

Regional research reflects similar trends. In Kenya, politically visible young women report coordinated harassment designed to undermine their credibility and discourage participation in public debate (Pollicy, 2021). In South Africa, women entrepreneurs and activists frequently experience online attacks that rely on sexualised stigma and moral shaming (Feminist Internet, 2022).

2.2 ZIMBABWE'S DIGITAL LANDSCAPE AND REPORTING GAPS

Zimbabwe has seen significant growth in internet access in recent years. According to the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ, 2024), internet penetration has surpassed 70%, with mobile phones the main means of connecting to the internet.

Digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook are widely used for communication and informal business. Meanwhile, platforms like X and TikTok are increasingly shaping political debate, activism, income generation, and online content creation.

For many young women aged 18 to 30, these platforms are more than social spaces. They are places where people build businesses, promote services, express opinions and engage in civic discussions.

However, increased connectivity has not always translated into safer digital spaces. CSOs in Zimbabwe have documented growing cases of online harassment targeting women journalists, activists and feminist organisers (MISA Zimbabwe, 2022; Katswe Sisterhood, 2022;).

Reporting digital abuse remains rare. MISA Zimbabwe (2022) found that fewer than 10 percent of survivors of online harassment report incidents to authorities. Survivors often fear retaliation, lack confidence in reporting systems or believe that digital abuse will not be taken seriously.

Zimbabwe does have laws that address aspects of digital harm. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) protects rights to equality, dignity, privacy and freedom of expression. The Cyber and Data Protection Act (Chapter 12:07) also establishes offences related to cyber harassment and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

Despite these protections, digital rights organisations report that enforcement remains inconsistent and reporting mechanisms are often inaccessible to survivors (ZLHR, 2022).

A 2025 report by [Gender & Media Connect](#) (GMC) and UNESCO revealed that 63% of women journalists in Zimbabwe have experienced technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), including hate speech, harassment, and image-based abuse. Key findings highlight that 52% of perpetrators are known, and 14% of cases link to physical violence.

2.3 ONLINE HARASSMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON PARTICIPATION

Research from around the world shows that online harassment can influence how people participate in public conversations. When individuals expect harassment, they often change their behaviour before abuse even occurs. This is sometimes described as a “chilling effect,” where fear of harassment discourages participation (Citron, 2014).

Women frequently respond by limiting what they post online, avoiding controversial topics or withdrawing from platforms altogether. While these strategies may reduce exposure to abuse, they also reduce women’s visibility and influence in public discussions.

These patterns have important democratic implications. Participation in public debate is a key element of democratic life. When certain groups face higher risks for speaking publicly, participation becomes unequal.

2.4 DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Digital platforms are increasingly important for economic participation. In Zimbabwe’s challenging labour market, many young women rely on social media to run their businesses, promote services and connect with potential clients.

Online visibility often plays a key role in attracting customers and professional opportunities. However, online harassment can disrupt these opportunities. Research suggests that digital violence can damage professional reputations, discourage clients and reduce economic opportunities (UN Women, 2021).

2.5 REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Regional and international frameworks increasingly recognise digital violence as a human rights concern. The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa affirms that the same rights people enjoy offline must also be protected online (ACHPR, 2019). In addition, ACHPR Resolution 522 on the Protection of Women Against Digital Violence in Africa (2022) recognises technology-facilitated violence against women as a growing human rights concern and calls on African states to strengthen legal, policy and institutional

responses to digital violence. The Maputo Protocol requires African states to eliminate violence against women in all areas of life. The African Union Malabo Convention also provides standards for cybersecurity, data protection and digital governance.

At the global level, CEDAW General Recommendation 35 emphasises that states must prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including emerging forms enabled by digital technologies.

2.6 RESEARCH GAPS IN ZIMBABWE

Despite growing awareness of digital violence globally, important gaps remain in Zimbabwe's research and policy evidence.

There is limited research measuring the long-term economic impacts of technology-facilitated gender-based violence. The relationship between digital harassment and leadership ambitions among young women has also received little attention.

Intersectional vulnerabilities, particularly among rural young women and women with disabilities, remain underexplored.

This report responds to these gaps by centring the lived experiences of young women and examining how digital violence shapes not only online expression, but also leadership, economic mobility and democratic participation.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This report builds on the literature reviewed above to understand TFGBV not simply as individual online misconduct, but as a broader social and structural phenomenon. While digital harassment is often framed as an isolated conflict between individuals, this study approaches TFGBV as a mechanism that shapes who can safely participate in Zimbabwe's digital public sphere.

African feminist scholarship emphasises the importance of grounding analysis in lived experience and community knowledge (Tamale, 2020). Consistent with this approach, this report draws on the experiences shared by young women through surveys and focus group discussions to understand how digital violence affects participation in political, civic and economic life.

Three key theoretical perspectives guide the analysis in this report: structural violence, intersectionality, and participatory parity. These lenses help explain how patterns of digital harassment influence behaviour, opportunity and participation in digital spaces. They also guide the interpretation of the empirical findings presented in later sections, particularly the observed patterns of self-censorship, leadership withdrawal and reputational harm reported by participants.

First, the analysis draws on Johan Galtung's (1969) concept of structural violence, which refers to harm embedded within social systems that systematically disadvantage certain groups. Structural violence does not necessarily involve direct physical force. Instead, it operates through institutions, cultural norms and social arrangements that constrain opportunities and life chances.

In digital environments, TFGBV becomes structural when harassment is predictable, normalised and disproportionately directed at specific groups. The findings of this study show that many young women experience harassment when they express political views, identify as feminists, women's rights activists, or pursue leadership roles. When a large proportion of participants report experiencing online abuse, these incidents cannot be understood as isolated events. Instead, they reflect broader patterns shaped by platform environments, gender norms and institutional gaps in protection.

Second, the framework draws on intersectionality, a concept developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), which highlights how different forms of inequality intersect to shape lived experiences. Gender does not operate in isolation. Exposure to digital violence often increases where gender intersects with other factors such as political visibility, economic precarity, religion, disability, age or geographic location.

The experiences shared by participants reflect this layered vulnerability. Young women who are publicly feminist, politically outspoken, economically visible online or involved in leadership roles reported higher levels of harassment. Intersectionality, therefore, helps explain why certain groups face greater risks when participating in digital spaces.

Third, the framework draws on Nancy Fraser's (2008) concept of participatory parity, which argues that democracy requires more than formal rights. Individuals must also have equal access to public discourse. When structural conditions make participation riskier for some groups than others, democratic inclusion becomes uneven.

In digital environments, these unequal conditions arise when women must constantly assess personal safety before speaking, organising, or promoting their work online. Participants in this study described reducing online activity, moderating their language or withdrawing from leadership opportunities after experiencing harassment. These patterns suggest that digital violence can function as an informal form of gatekeeping that shapes who participates in public conversations and who remains silent.

African feminist political analysis provides additional contextual grounding for this framework. Scholars such as Tamale (2020) emphasise that struggles over women's bodies, sexuality and speech remain central to patriarchal authority across many African societies. Nnaemeka's (2004) idea of negotiation helps explain why self-censorship, moderation and selective visibility may function as strategic survival responses within unequal digital systems.

The findings of this study reflect these dynamics in digital form. Participants described moral policing, sexualised insults and reputational attacks aimed at disciplining women's public visibility. In this sense, digital platforms become contemporary arenas in which longstanding struggles over gender norms, authority, and autonomy are reproduced.

Finally, the framework recognises that digital platforms themselves shape the conditions under which harassment occurs. Social media platforms are not neutral communication tools. Their design prioritises engagement, visibility and interaction. Research on platform governance shows that individuals who are highly visible in public debate are more likely to become targets of online harassment (Suzor et al., 2019). At the same time, moderation systems often struggle to detect misogynistic content expressed in local languages or coded forms. Bosch (2020) also reminds us that digital participation in African contexts is shaped by local inequalities and political cultures, not just platform design.

When platform moderation fails to address such abuse, protection becomes uneven. Platform architecture, algorithmic amplification and moderation practices therefore form part of the broader environment in which TFGBV occurs.

Taken together, these perspectives position technology-facilitated gender-based violence as more than interpersonal online hostility. Instead, TFGBV can operate as a structural mechanism that regulates visibility, shapes participation and influences economic opportunity.

Understanding digital violence in this way shifts the focus from individual blame toward systemic accountability. The “digital toll” therefore extends beyond emotional harm. It also affects political participation, leadership opportunities and economic livelihoods by shaping who can safely participate in Zimbabwe’s digital public sphere and under what conditions.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative online survey data with qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). A mixed methods approach was selected to capture both the scale and the lived experience of TFGBV. Quantitative data allow the measurement of prevalence and behavioural patterns, while qualitative engagement provides deeper insight into the emotional, social and political consequences of digital violence (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research design was informed by a feminist methodological orientation that recognises participants as knowledge holders whose lived experiences shape analysis. Digital harassment is often normalised and underreported. For this reason, qualitative inquiry was essential for understanding anticipatory fear, behavioural withdrawal and leadership deterrence beyond numerical prevalence.

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the relatively small sample size, the findings should be interpreted as indicative patterns rather than nationally representative estimates. However, the consistency between survey responses and focus group discussions strengthens the interpretation that the patterns identified reflect broader dynamics affecting digitally engaged young women in Zimbabwe.

4.1 STUDY DETAILS

Data collection took place between February and March 2026.

The online survey was distributed through digital networks, social media platforms, and youth-focused organisations. A total of 31 respondents completed the survey.

Focus Group Discussions were conducted during the same period. A total of five FGDs were held, with 42 participants sharing their experiences.

Discussions were facilitated primarily in English, with occasional use of Shona and isiNdebele where participants preferred to express themselves in local languages.

Five FGDs with 42 participants were facilitated by trained moderators using a semi-structured discussion guide. With participants' consent, discussions were documented using detailed notes and, where appropriate, audio recordings. Audio recordings were transcribed for analysis.

4.2 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The study focused on young women aged 18–30 residing in Zimbabwe.

Participants included university students, student leaders, young professionals, entrepreneurs, job seekers, content creators and civic activists.

Survey respondents were recruited through digital networks, social media platforms, and youth-focused organisations. The sampling approach was purposive and network-based, designed to reach digitally active young women across different socioeconomic backgrounds.

While the survey does not claim national statistical representativeness, it captures patterns among digitally engaged young women, the population most directly exposed to online violence.

Network-based recruitment may also overrepresent politically active or digitally visible young women, who may be more likely to experience online harassment. As a result, the findings should be interpreted as indicative of patterns among digitally active populations rather than as a statistically representative national estimate.

Focus Group Discussion participants were drawn from the survey pool and additional youth networks. Efforts were made to include participants from urban, peri-urban, and selected rural contexts, as well as women from diverse religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The age group 18–30 was selected because it represents a transitional stage characterised by leadership formation, economic entry and high digital engagement. Regional research indicates that young women in public-facing roles experience disproportionate online targeting (Pollicy, 2021; Feminist Internet, 2022).

4.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Survey

A structured online survey collected quantitative data on types of digital violence experienced, platforms where abuse occurred, emotional and psychological impacts, behavioural changes following harassment, impacts on political participation, economic consequences and reporting patterns.

Survey items were adapted from existing research instruments on TFGBV and contextualised for the Zimbabwean environment.

The survey enabled measurement of prevalence and behavioural patterns. For example, 83.9% of respondents reported experiencing digital abuse, and 61.5 % reported reducing or stopping online engagement following harassment.

Economic impacts were self-reported and included lost clients, missed job opportunities, reputational damage, and withdrawal from monetised digital platforms.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions were conducted to explore the lived experiences of digital harassment in greater depth.

Discussions examined how digital violence manifests in everyday online interactions, emotional and psychological impacts, effects on leadership ambition and civic participation, cultural and religious dimensions of moral policing, and coping strategies and survival mechanisms.

Participant quotations are integrated throughout the findings to preserve voice and contextual nuance.

Qualitative data enabled analysis of anticipatory fear, self-censorship and structural silencing mechanisms that cannot be fully captured through survey data alone.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify prevalence patterns and behavioural trends. Data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel, with percentages calculated to determine exposure to digital violence and subsequent behavioural responses.

Missing responses were excluded listwise for each survey item.

Qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions were analysed using thematic analysis. Transcripts and discussion notes were coded to identify recurring patterns, including forms of violence, silencing mechanisms, leadership deterrence, economic impacts and coping strategies.

Findings were interpreted through the study's conceptual framework, particularly the lenses of structural violence, intersectionality and participatory parity.

The convergence between quantitative and qualitative findings strengthened the credibility of the analysis. For example, the survey finding that 61.5% of respondents reduced online engagement aligns with qualitative narratives describing self-censorship and anticipatory fear.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participation in the study was voluntary and based on informed consent. No identifying information is disclosed in this report. Pseudonyms and anonymised quotations are used to protect participant confidentiality.

Given the sensitive nature of digital harassment experiences, discussions were conducted using trauma-informed facilitation principles. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence.

Participants who reported distress were provided referrals to local gender based violence support services and mental health counselling resources.

Ethical approval was obtained through the implementing organisation's research ethics and safeguarding procedures, which prioritise participant dignity, safety and informed participation throughout the research process.

4.6 LIMITATIONS

The survey relied on digital distribution, which may have excluded young women with limited internet access. The findings, therefore, primarily reflect the experiences of digitally connected participants.

Economic losses and behavioural changes were self-reported and not independently verified.

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the relatively small sample size, the findings should be interpreted as indicative patterns rather than nationally representative estimates.

Network-based recruitment may have overrepresented digitally active or politically engaged participants, who may also be more exposed to online harassment.

Zimbabwe's politically sensitive environment may influence reporting behaviour, including cautious disclosure or underreporting.

4.7 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could strengthen the understanding of TFGBV in Zimbabwe by conducting longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of digital harassment on leadership ambition and career trajectories.

Further research is also needed on rural and peri-urban digital vulnerability, intersectional exposure among women with disabilities, platform governance and algorithmic amplification in local languages, the economic costs of TFGBV and the role of online masculinities and male perpetrator networks in digital harassment.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 PREVALENCE AND STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS OF TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Online survey findings indicate that 83.9% of respondents reported experiencing TFGBV. In this sample, 26 out of 31 young women disclosed direct exposure to online abuse.

This level of prevalence suggests that digital violence is not an isolated phenomenon. Instead, it appears widespread and patterned among digitally active young women in Zimbabwe.

Participants did not describe harassment as unexpected. Rather, abuse was framed as predictable, particularly when young women:

- expressed political opinions
- identified as feminists or women's rights activists
- pursued leadership roles
- challenged dominant gender norms

This predictability signals structural dynamics rather than isolated misconduct. When exposure becomes routine, digital violence shifts from interpersonal conflict to systemic patterns that regulate voice and visibility online.

Platforms where abuse occurs

Participants reported experiencing harassment across multiple digital platforms, suggesting that TFGBV operates across the entire digital ecosystem rather than a single platform.

Platform	Reported Dynamics
WhatsApp	Rapid spread of rumours, screenshots and reputational attacks within group chats
X (Twitter)	Quote tweet harassment, coordinated trolling and public shaming
Facebook	Comment section abuse and moral policing
TikTok	Viral ridicule, body-based commentary and meme-based humiliation

Forms of abuse

Participants described multiple forms of TFBGV

Form of Abuse	Examples
Body shaming	Attacks targeting appearance, dress or weight
Sexualised insults	Gendered slurs and accusations
Threats	Intimidation and hostile messaging
Cyberstalking	Persistent monitoring and unwanted contact
Non-consensual image sharing	Circulation of images without consent
Coordinated trolling	Group attacks across comment threads
Reputational manipulation	Rumours, screenshots and misleading narratives

Frequency of exposure

Participants described different levels of exposure to online harassment.

Exposure Level	Description
Occasional	Appears during specific online debates
Repeated	Occurs when discussing politics or feminism
Frequent	Happens across multiple platforms
Constant / Normalised	Seen as a routine part of social media use

The normalisation of harassment was frequently mentioned. Some participants described abuse as “just how social media is.” This perception reduces the likelihood of reporting and shifts the burden of adaptation onto survivors.

Identified perpetrators

Participants identified a range of actors responsible for online harassment. These included:



Anonymous Online Trolls

Hide behind fake profiles to target women with abuse



Partisan Online Networks

Politically aligned supporters coordinating attacks



Misogynistic Influencers

Content creators whose brand is built on targeting women



Male Peers & Strangers

Sending unsolicited messages and sexualised content



Women Enforcing Patriarchy

Reproducing norms through body shaming and moral policing

Some participants specifically referenced high-profile misogynistic influencers whose followers have built a brand on targeting women online.

Content creators were also described as using harassment as a strategy for visibility. Participants noted that some creators deliberately post humiliating or controversial content to generate engagement.

In this environment, abuse can become commodified, where humiliation generates views, comments and followers.

Importantly, some participants also reported harassment from other women. These attacks often involved body shaming, moral policing and accusations of disrespectability.

This demonstrates that TFGBV is socially reproduced across different actors, including individuals who may internalise and reinforce patriarchal norms.

Gendered political targeting

Participants consistently observed that when women speak about politics, the nature of public debate changes. Criticism frequently shifts away from policy or ideas toward personal attack.

One participant explained:



"Women leaders are targeted differently from men. Only the body of a woman is shamed. Marital status is questioned. Qualifications are challenged. With men, it is different."

This reflects a gendered double standard in which political visibility attracts scrutiny of character, appearance, and morality rather than competence.

Feminist identification as a trigger

Several participants described identifying as a feminist as a trigger for intensified harassment.

One participant stated:



"The moment you say you are a feminist, people start harassing you and calling you a bitter woman or a prostitute."

Here, ideological expression intersects with gendered stigma. Feminism becomes framed as deviance, and sexualised insults are used to silence dissent.

Reputational manipulation and platform incentives

Participants described reputational manipulation as a common tactic.

Examples included:

- screenshots of private conversations
- images taken out of context
- meme-based humiliation
- rumours circulated in group chats

One participant explained:



"Personal pictures can be taken out of context and used to shame you... to discourage young women from openly sharing their views."

Participants also highlighted the role of engagement-driven platform dynamics, where controversial or humiliating content spreads rapidly.

As one respondent noted:



"Content creators will harass and abuse you because of likes and engagement."

In such environments, harassment becomes performative and monetisable, amplifying the reach of abusive content.

Language moderation gaps

Participants reported that misogynistic content expressed in Shona and isiNdebele often goes undetected by platform moderation systems.

As a result, abusive content can circulate widely without removal.

This creates unequal protection across linguistic communities, particularly where moderation systems prioritise English-language content.

Psychological impact

Participants described significant emotional and psychological impacts, including feelings of:

- vulnerability
- humiliation
- powerlessness
- anxiety
- emotional exhaustion

One participant described the experience as:



*"It affects my mental health – kutopena chaiko."
(losing my mind, for real)*

These accounts highlight the psychological toll of repeated online harassment.

Structural implications

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that TFGBV operates as structural harm rather than isolated misconduct.

Harassment is:

- predictable
- gendered
- socially reproduced
- amplified by platform dynamics

The cumulative effect is the disciplining of visibility. Women learn that public expression carries risk, particularly when engaging in political debate or leadership roles.

Digital space, therefore, becomes stratified along gendered lines, where participation is formally open but practically unequal.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence thus functions as a structural barrier to equal digital citizenship in Zimbabwe.

Intersectional vulnerabilities

Participants also highlighted how vulnerability to online harassment intersects with other identities.

Young women who were:

- politically visible
- economically dependent on digital platforms
- publicly feminist
- Living with disabilities

reported heightened exposure to abuse.

Participants with disabilities described increased vulnerability to ridicule and exclusion online, reflecting broader research showing how ableism intersects with gendered digital violence.

These findings reinforce the importance of intersectional analysis when addressing TFGBV.

5.2 DIGITAL VIOLENCE PRODUCES SELF-CENSORSHIP AND STRUCTURAL SILENCE

The most consequential impact of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence is not always the immediate insult or threat. Its stronger effect lies in the behavioural shifts that follow. Digital violence alters participation patterns over time, transforming expression into risk calculation.

Among participants who experienced digital harassment, 61.5 per cent reported reducing or stopping their online engagement. More than half of survivors adjusted how they communicate, what they share or whether they participate at all. This behavioural withdrawal constitutes the digital toll.

Participants described deleting posts, softening language, avoiding political discussions, restricting visibility settings and, in some cases, abandoning platforms altogether. One participant explained:



"Before I post what is on my mind, I start to self-censor as a form of protection from those harsh comments."

Another described a different coping strategy:



"Using a ghost account is one strategy... with the fear of being judged for my opinions."

While these adaptations provide short-term protection, they carry significant consequences. They reduce visibility and narrow participation. When young women consistently moderate their expression to avoid backlash, digital space becomes unevenly accessible.

Withdrawal often occurs gradually. It begins with subtle adjustments in tone or topic, then evolves into silence. One participant reflected:



"Often resorted to minimum posting... I suppress the advocate in me."

Another captured the internal conflict involved:



"Silence is a loss of voice... You choose protection from the public, but there is an inner battle."

This internal negotiation represents a form of behavioural governance. Digital violence does not need to occur continuously to be effective. The memory of humiliation or reputational attack becomes sufficient to regulate future speech.

Anticipatory fear and the chilling effect

The withdrawal described by participants is not purely reactive; it is anticipatory. Even in the absence of immediate harassment, the expectation of attack shapes behaviour. Posting becomes strategic rather than expressive.

This dynamic aligns with what scholarship describes as the chilling effect, in which the threat of hostility constrains participation before harm materialises (Citron, 2014). In such contexts, formal censorship is unnecessary. Informal intimidation produces compliance.

Participants reported evaluating tone, audience, religious interpretation, political consequences and professional risk before speaking online. The calculation is multi-layered. Digital platforms collapse private, professional and political audiences into a single space, creating overlapping forms of surveillance.

Religious and cultural pressures intensify this dynamic. One participant noted:

*"Religion is one of the reasons social media is toxic...
the judgments force one to self-sensor."*

Another explained:

*"Especially posts on feminism, the church is very brutal...
they say you will not get married."*

Here, marriageability, morality and respectability become tools of social regulation. Expression is filtered through anticipated social penalties.

Family monitoring adds another layer. One participant described relatives acting like:

"law and intelligence officers judging me through my posts."

Digital visibility, therefore, carries risks that extend beyond the platform itself.

Anticipatory fear transforms digital violence into a mechanism of structural silence. When expression requires constant evaluation of personal safety and social consequences, participation is no longer equal.

Democratic implications of silence

Digital platforms now function as central arenas for political debate, professional networking and civic organising. When participation requires sustained self-protection, equality in digital citizenship becomes compromised.

Fraser's (2008) concept of participatory parity suggests that democratic inclusion requires equal conditions for the exercise of voice. When one group must calculate risk before speaking, while another does not, parity is disrupted; the public sphere may appear open, but access is differentiated.

The chilling effect compounds over time. Each episode of harassment reinforces caution. As more young women withdraw simultaneously, representation narrows, and debate becomes less reflective of diverse lived realities.

Silence in this context is not absence. It is produced. It reflects structural pressure rather than individual disengagement.

One participant stated:

"Self-censorship feels like survival rather than empowerment."

Survival strategies may reduce immediate harm, but they also signal systemic failure. When safety depends on shrinking visibility, the digital environment cannot be described as inclusive.

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence therefore governs behaviour not only through what is said, but also through what remains unsaid. The cumulative effect is structural silencing, a narrowing of who participates and how they participate in digital public life.

5.3 THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL VIOLENCE ON LEADERSHIP, ORGANISING AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

TFGBV not only suppresses expression. It deters ambition and reshapes who feels able to pursue leadership or participate in civic life.

Among participants who experienced digital violence, 42.3 % reported withdrawing from political, civic or leadership engagement. This figure signals more than reduced online posting. It reflects disengagement from public roles and decision-making spaces.

Participants consistently described political spaces online as gendered in hostile ways. One participant explained:

"You women leaders are targeted differently from men... only the body of a woman is shamed, marital status is brought up, qualifications are asked, but with men it is different."

Leadership visibility attracts scrutiny not of policy competence but of morality, appearance and personal life. Harassment shifts the terrain of political debate away from ideas and toward identity. Participants also described how harassment shapes decisions about whether to pursue leadership roles. One participant stated:

"Digital violence has stopped me from running for leadership, even in student politics. I did not even want to try."

This statement reveals deterrence at the point of entry. Leadership withdrawal often occurs before contestation even begins. The perceived risk attached to public visibility discourages participation in advance.

Participants active in student politics described online harassment escalating during election periods. Threats, humiliation and coordinated trolling intensified as visibility increased. One participant explained that participation requires "boldness and courage" due to both online and offline intimidation.

Across the focus group discussions, participants described several concrete ways in which digital harassment affected their participation in leadership. Reported withdrawal behaviours included:

- Deciding not to run for leadership positions in student councils or campus organisations
- Withdrawing from student election campaigns after experiencing online attacks
- Stepping down from roles as administrators of civic or activist WhatsApp groups
- Reducing visibility in advocacy campaigns or political organising online
- Avoiding speaking roles in public forums, Twitter/X spaces or panel discussions
- Deleting or limiting political posts to avoid becoming a target of harassment

These behaviours illustrate how digital violence operates as a form of informal political gatekeeping. Formal barriers may not exist, but harassment raises the cost of participation for young women. Ambition becomes gender-risked.

Several participants described harassment as a deliberate strategy of containment. One participant stated:

"Men target young women... because they feel entitled to power and positions."

Another reflected:

"It feels deliberately used to intimidate women and push us out of public and political spaces."

Whether or not harassment is centrally coordinated, its effect is consistent: it helps protect male-dominated spaces by discouraging female entrants.

Institutional responses were widely described as inadequate. Participants noted that political parties rarely enforce digital codes of conduct or publicly condemn sexualised attacks. One participant observed:

"Political parties... they just post, ask for donations and retweet. That is it."

Without consistent institutional condemnation, harassment becomes normalised within political culture. Silence from leadership signals tolerance and sometimes approval. Digital platforms are now central to political organising, campaigning and public engagement. When harassment shapes who can safely occupy these spaces, democratic participation becomes stratified. Leadership remains formally open but practically constrained.

Importantly, deterrence extends beyond formal politics. Participants involved in human rights documentation, feminist organising and civic advocacy described experiencing targeted backlash. One participant reported being told:

"You cannot change Zimbabwe."

Such messaging communicates futility and discourages continued engagement.

The cumulative effect is the narrowing of representation. When emerging leaders withdraw or avoid contestation, political diversity declines. Democratic vitality depends not only on legal access but also on psychological and reputational safety.

Digital harassment, therefore, operates as a regulatory mechanism within the political sphere. It disciplines visibility, discourages ambition and preserves hierarchy without requiring formal exclusion.

Equal citizenship requires more than the right to run for office. It requires conditions under which running is viable without disproportionate risk. When leadership invites sustained sexualised humiliation and reputational attack, participation becomes unequal in practice. TFGBV therefore undermines democratic inclusion not abstractly but concretely. It shapes who contests, who organises and who ultimately steps back.

5.4 DIGITAL VIOLENCE UNDERMINES ECONOMIC SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

TFGBV not only suppresses voices or deters leadership. It also attaches financial consequences to digital visibility. In digital economies where reputation, reach and network access shape opportunity, harassment becomes economically consequential.

Among respondents who experienced digital violence, 50% reported experiencing economic loss. In this study, economic loss refers to self-reported experiences associated with online harassment, including lost clients, missed job opportunities, reputational damage, withdrawal from monetised platforms and reduced business visibility.

For many young women aged 18–30, digital platforms are not peripheral spaces. They function as economic infrastructure. Participants described using WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to run small businesses, promote services, network professionally and apply for employment opportunities. In Zimbabwe's constrained labour market, digital entrepreneurship provides important entry points into income generation.

When digital spaces become hostile, economic pathways become unstable.

Participants described both direct and indirect economic consequences of online harassment. One participant explained:



"Today I might post opposing the government... tomorrow, when I apply for a position... my chances of getting the job will be limited."

This statement reflects genuine employability anxiety. Social media histories become searchable archives. Political expression, feminist advocacy or public controversy can be interpreted as professional liability. Speech is therefore disciplined through the anticipation of economic penalty.

Another participant described the reputational dimension of digital violence:



"When my online space is infringed upon through harassment or misrepresentation, it does not just feel personal; it affects my professional identity and credibility."

In digital markets, credibility functions as currency. Trust determines access to clients, collaborations and employment opportunities. Coordinated trolling, meme-based humiliation or the circulation of false narratives can destabilise that trust. Reputational attacks, therefore, function as a form of economic sabotage.

Participants also described how monetised content cultures can incentivise harassment. One participant noted:



"Content creators harass and abuse you because of likes and engagements."

In engagement-driven platform environments, controversy attracts visibility and visibility generates revenue. Women's humiliation can therefore circulate as monetisable spectacle, turning harassment into profitable content.

This dynamic reflects broader patterns of platform capitalism, where user interactions are converted into data and economic value. When outrage drives engagement, outrage becomes structurally rewarded. In such systems, harassment is not only expressive; it becomes economically performative.

Economic impacts also occur through reduced visibility. Participants reported limiting posts, avoiding controversial topics, or withdrawing from platforms altogether to avoid backlash. While these strategies may increase personal safety, they also reduce market reach. In digital economies, visibility often determines opportunity.

Even relatively minor hostility was described as altering business behaviour. One participant stated:

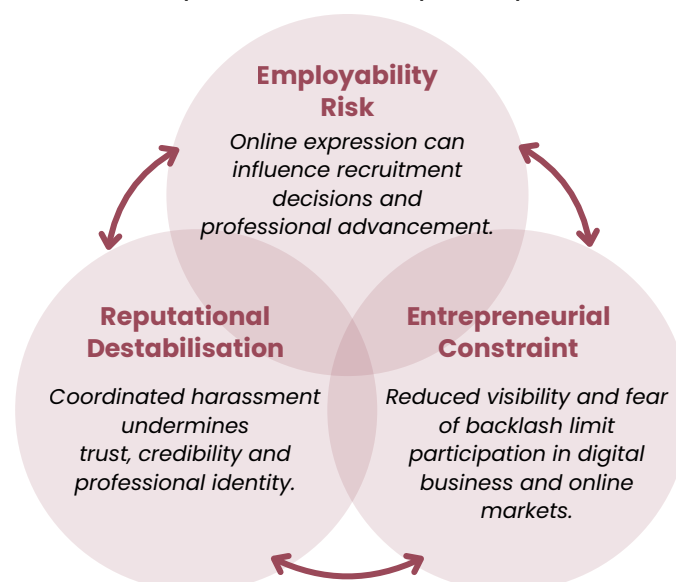
"Even minor hostility makes me more cautious about what I share, limiting my visibility and opportunities."

Here, self-censorship intersects directly with economic survival. The safer option becomes silence, yet silence reduces reach, and reduced reach can translate into lost income or professional opportunity.

Participants also described inconsistent institutional responses to online harassment. Some noted that employers and organisations may prioritise protecting their institutional reputation over supporting survivors.

Economic precarity further amplifies vulnerability. Young women without financial buffers experience stronger pressure to moderate speech or avoid controversy. In contexts where employment opportunities are limited, reputational risk carries heightened consequences.

Digital violence, therefore, shapes economic participation in three interconnected ways:



In Zimbabwe's current economic context, where many young women rely on digitally mediated income streams, these constraints are significant. When speech carries financial penalties, economic inequality deepens.

The fear expressed by participants was practical rather than abstract. Visibility can cost income, and authenticity can reduce opportunities. Silence may appear economically safer.

TFGBV therefore operates not only as a form of social or political exclusion but also as economic regulation. It disciplines which women can safely participate in digital marketplaces and on what terms.

Economic justice and digital safety are therefore inseparable. When livelihoods depend on online presence, unsafe digital environments become structural barriers to financial autonomy.

5.5 THE NORMALISATION OF GENDERED DIGITAL HARM

A recurring theme in the FGDs was the normalisation of abuse. Participants frequently described harassment as "just social media" or something that "always happens." This framing trivialises harm and masks its structural character. When violence is dismissed as ordinary online behaviour, accountability weakens, and adaptation becomes the expected response.

Normalisation is reinforced through religious and moral discourse. Participants described how religious language is used to discipline and gaslight outspoken women, linking political visibility or feminist advocacy to immorality or diminished marriageability and childlessness. Moral policing becomes a mechanism of containment. Digital space reproduces familiar cultural expectations that women must be modest, compliant and non-confrontational. Public speech is reinterpreted as a moral failure.

Respectability politics intensifies this dynamic. Young women reported pressure to present a "safe" and acceptable online persona. Political expression, assertiveness or bodily autonomy can be framed as deviant or inappropriate. In such contexts, harassment is legitimised as a form of correction rather than recognised as violence. Cultural narratives thus provide social permission for abuse.

The dismissal of harm as entertainment or normal behaviour obscures its cumulative impact. When harassment is trivialised, emotional distress is minimised

minimised, and withdrawal is framed as an overreaction. This cultural legitimisation reinforces structural violence. It ensures that abuse persists not only because platforms amplify it, but because society rationalises it.

Digital violence, therefore, operates at both technological and socio-cultural levels. It is enabled by design and legitimised by norms. Addressing it requires transformation in both spheres.

5.6 DIGITAL HARM IS INTERSECTIONAL & UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED

TFGBV does not affect all young women equally. The findings demonstrate that digital harm is unevenly distributed, becoming more intense where visibility intersects with existing inequalities.

Exposure increased significantly among participants who were politically vocal, openly feminist, economically active online or pursuing leadership roles. Vulnerability was therefore shaped not by gender alone, but by the intersection of gender with visibility, ambition, economic precarity, religion and social position. Digital violence in this context functions less as random hostility and more as targeted containment.

Feminist and politically vocal women

Participants consistently identified feminist identification as a trigger for harassment. Publicly claiming feminist identity or speaking about gender equality frequently attracted immediate backlash.

One participant explained:

"To say I am a feminist... automatically people start harassing you, labelling you as 'bitter' or 'prostitute'."

Here, ideological expression becomes grounds for moral policing. The attack is directed not only at the opinion expressed but at the identity of the speaker.

Politically outspoken participants similarly reported intensified harassment during periods of heightened political debate. Increased visibility often triggered coordinated scrutiny. Engagement, therefore, became a risk factor.

This pattern reflects a containment dynamic: harassment escalates when young women challenge dominant narratives or power structures.

Student leaders and emerging public figures

Young women involved in student politics described university environments as mirroring broader national political culture. Online harassment intensified during election periods, particularly when young women contested male candidates.

One participant stated:



"Digital violence has stopped me from running for leadership."

Leadership deterrence was therefore not abstract. It occurred at the point of entry into public life, where potential candidates withdrew before contestation began.

Youth intersects with gender in this dynamic. Young women leaders are often dismissed as inexperienced while simultaneously subjected to sexualised scrutiny. Visibility becomes doubly risky, combining age-based dismissal with gendered attack.

Religion and moral policing

Religion emerged as a significant amplifier of vulnerability. Participants described religious discourse being used to discipline outspoken women.

One participant noted:



"They say you will not get married because of your opinions."

Marriageability becomes a mechanism of social regulation. Political or feminist visibility is reframed as moral deviance, reinforcing expectations of modesty, obedience and conformity.

Digital platforms collapse social spheres into a single space. Church communities, family members, employers and strangers occupy the same online environment. Expression, therefore, becomes subject to layered surveillance.

Respectability politics intensifies exposure. Women perceived as deviating from expected norms of modesty or behaviour reported heightened scrutiny and harassment.

Women with disabilities and geographic marginalisation

Participants emphasised the compounded vulnerability faced by women with disabilities, where disability stigma intersects with gendered harassment and access to reporting mechanisms, support services and legal recourse may be limited. Participants with disabilities reported heightened vulnerability to online ridicule and exclusion, reflecting broader findings from disability rights research on the intersection between ableism and gendered digital violence.

Geographic location further shapes risk, as participants from peri-urban and rural areas described weaker access to digital literacy training, peer support networks and rapid-response mechanisms. In these contexts, isolation reduces recovery options and amplifies the impact of abuse. These findings illustrate how digital inequality intersects with gender and disability, leaving protection and support systems unevenly distributed.

Economic precarity and political sensitivity

Participants seeking employment or reliant on digital income streams described heightened anxiety about reputational backlash linked to online harassment. Economic precarity increased the pressure to regulate speech and behaviour online, particularly among those without financial buffers, who reported stronger incentives to avoid controversy or public engagement. In politically sensitive contexts, digital expression was perceived to carry additional risk, as reputational attacks could affect employability or professional opportunities.

Where economic vulnerability and political sensitivity intersect, exposure to digital violence becomes particularly acute. Similar patterns have been documented in studies from Kenya and Nigeria, where women entrepreneurs reported reputational and financial harm following online harassment (Pollicy, 2021).

Structural concentration of harm

The uneven distribution of harm demonstrates that TFGBV functions as a regulatory mechanism within digital spaces. Harassment disproportionately targets those who disrupt existing hierarchies — including young feminists, emerging leaders, economically visible women and politically engaged actors.

Digital violence, therefore, operates not as random disagreement but as strategically concentrated pressure applied where power feels challenged.

When harm follows lines of visibility, ambition and marginalisation, it reinforces existing inequalities. Those already navigating structural barriers encounter amplified digital risk.

Effective responses must therefore be intersectional. Uniform policy interventions cannot adequately address layered vulnerability. Protection strategies must recognise how gender interacts with religion, disability, geography, economic precarity and political identity.

Without intersectional design, those most exposed to digital violence remain the least protected. TFGBV does not merely silence individuals. It selectively narrows the boundaries of participation for those already positioned at the margins.

5.7 SURVIVAL STRATEGIES SHOW RESILIENCE BUT REVEAL STRUCTURAL FAILURE

Despite the prevalence of TFGBV, young women are not passive recipients of harm. Participants described a range of protective strategies designed to reduce exposure and manage risk. These strategies demonstrate awareness, adaptability and resilience. At the same time, they reveal that responsibility for safety remains disproportionately individualised.

The most common defensive actions included blocking perpetrators, reporting abusive accounts, restricting comment access, adjusting privacy settings and limiting tagging permissions. Blocking was frequently described as an immediate protective tool. One participant noted:



"Blocking and reporting people harassing you in your inbox always works."

While blocking may reduce direct interaction, it does little to address coordinated harassment, viral humiliation or reputational damage that circulates beyond individual accounts. The protective measure is therefore reactive rather than preventive.

Digital boundary-setting has consequently become routine labour. Participants described continuously monitoring comments, managing followers, screening messages and filtering content. Safety requires constant vigilance.

Some participants adopted more drastic protective strategies. Ghost accounts were used to separate personal identity from political expression.

One participant explained:

"For survival, I usually use ghost accounts."

Others described partially or completely withdrawing from platforms, choosing to observe rather than participate. As one participant explained, she now prefers to "scroll, watch and pass."

While these strategies reduce immediate exposure to harm, they also narrow participation. Visibility decreases, reach contracts and opportunities for leadership, advocacy and entrepreneurship diminish.

Emotional self-regulation also emerged as a coping strategy. One participant reflected:

*"I make sure that whatever backlash I get,
I do not take it to heart."*

Managing emotional responses becomes part of survival. Endurance and detachment are normalised as necessary adaptations in hostile digital environments.

Importantly, participants clearly distinguished between resilience and safety. Self-censorship was often described as protective but costly. As one participant stated:

*"Self-censorship feels like survival
rather than empowerment."*

These survival strategies mitigate harm, but they do not transform the structural conditions that produce it.

Participants also articulated strong calls for collective defence mechanisms. Several suggested creating rapid-response solidarity networks to support women experiencing digital attacks. One participant stated:

"When one of us is attacked, let us all act."

Others proposed building feminist-controlled digital platforms and media spaces to reclaim narrative power. One participant suggested:

*"As a movement, let us have our own podcast and send
the right information to the world."*

These proposals signal a shift from individual coping toward collective agency. They reflect growing recognition that structural harm requires structural responses. However, most existing strategies remain reactive. Platform moderation was widely described as inconsistent, institutional enforcement uneven and political actors reluctant to sanction gendered digital attacks. The burden of protection, therefore, falls primarily on those experiencing abuse.

When safety depends on blocking, ghosting, silence or withdrawal, the system itself is failing.

Resilience should not be misinterpreted as evidence that digital environments are manageable. Rather, the need for constant adaptation signals structural inadequacy. Meaningful empowerment would mean being able to participate online without continuously calculating risk. Protective strategies would become supplementary safeguards rather than primary survival tools. TFGBV persists not because young women lack awareness or capacity, but because structural accountability remains insufficient.

5.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC INCLUSION IN ZIMBABWE

The findings of this study indicate a reinforcing pattern in which digital harassment affects participation in public life. Online visibility can trigger harassment. Harassment generates fear and reputational concern. Fear contributes to self-censorship, which may lead to reduced participation or withdrawal from digital spaces. Over time, these patterns limit representation and reinforce existing inequalities.

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, therefore, operates not at the margins of digital life, but within the infrastructure through which participation increasingly occurs.

Digital platforms now mediate access to political organising, public debate, entrepreneurship and professional networking. When participation in these spaces carries disproportionate risk for young women, democratic inclusion becomes uneven rather than equal.

The implications are multi-dimensional.

First, political inclusion is weakened. Several participants reported reduced visibility, avoidance of political debate, or abandonment of leadership aspirations due to harassment. When emerging candidates withdraw or civic organisers limit their engagement, the diversity of voices within public debate declines. In such circumstances, political equality may remain formally protected but becomes limited in practice.

Second, economic participation can be affected. Participants reported reputational attacks, concerns about employability and reduced visibility of business activities following harassment. For young women who rely on digital platforms to promote

services, network professionally or secure employment opportunities, unsafe digital environments can create additional barriers to economic mobility.

Third, psychological strain influences participation. Participants described anticipatory fear, reputational anxiety and emotional stress associated with online harassment. These experiences can shape behaviour even in the absence of a direct attack, leading individuals to moderate their speech, limit engagement, or withdraw from digital spaces.

Taken together, these findings suggest that TFGBV should not be understood solely in terms of online conduct. It has broader governance implications because it shapes who participates in Zimbabwe's digital public sphere and under what conditions.

Importantly, the exclusion observed in this study is largely informal. No explicit legal prohibitions are preventing young women from participating in leadership roles or engaging in digital entrepreneurship. However, cumulative harassment and reputational risk can discourage participation in practice. Formal access, therefore, coexists with practical deterrence.

This distinction is important. Democratic participation can be constrained not only by formal legal restrictions but also by structural conditions that make participation disproportionately costly for certain groups.

The concentration of harm among politically vocal, economically visible and openly feminist young women suggests that digital violence may function as a form of containment. Harassment often intensifies when individuals challenge existing hierarchies or dominant narratives.

If digital environments remain unsafe, adaptive responses such as self-censorship, reduced engagement or withdrawal are likely to continue. Over time, this may shape the composition of the digital public sphere, privileging those who can absorb reputational or economic risk while discouraging others from participation.

Ensuring digital safety is therefore closely linked to democratic inclusion. The ability to participate in public debate, economic activity and civic engagement without disproportionate risk is a key component of equitable citizenship.

Addressing TGBV requires coordinated action across multiple domains, including:

- Platform governance and content moderation
- Institutional enforcement and accountability mechanisms
- Socio-cultural norms that shape online behaviour and gender relations

Without reform across these interconnected systems, digital environments may continue to reproduce existing inequalities rather than expand opportunities for participation.

The central implication of this research is that digital harm influences the conditions under which citizenship is exercised. When participation requires individuals to limit their voices to avoid harm, equality in civic and economic life remains incomplete.

A regional (SADC) analysis by country on the state of TFGBV

Country	Prevalent Forms of TFGBV	Legal Framework	Key Trends & Data	Notable Case Studies/Reports
 South Africa	Non-consensual image sharing ("revenge porn") Cyberstalking Online hate speech/doxxing Sexual extortion	Strongest in SADC: <i>Cybercrimes Act (2020)</i> criminalizes revenge porn, cyberstalking, threats. <i>Protection from Harassment Act</i> covers digital harassment.	1 in 5 women experience online harassment (Stats SA, 2022). Young women activists/journalists targeted (e.g., #AmINext campaigners). High reporting but low prosecution rates.	#AmINext Movement (2019): Female activists faced doxxing & death threats after protesting femicide. <i>Pollicy Report (2022):</i> 62% of young women self-censor online due to harassment.
 Namibia	Online impersonation Cyber-harassment Non-consensual image sharing	<i>Combating of Rape Act (2000)</i> includes digital sexual violence. <i>Draft Cybercrime Bill</i> pending (2023).	30% of women aged 18–35 report online harassment (Gender Links, 2023). Rising cases linked to dating apps.	2022 Case: University student sued for distributing intimate images of ex-girlfriend; case set precedent under existing laws.
 Botswana	Revenge porn Online blackmail Social media harassment	Weak: Relies on archaic <i>Penal Code</i> . No specific TFGBV laws; draft <i>Cybercrime Bill</i> stalled.	67% of young women report online harassment (Botswana Gender-Based Violence Indicators Study, 2021). Low reporting due to stigma/police inaction.	<i>Ditshwanelo Report (2022):</i> Documented cases of schoolgirls blackmailed with intimate photos.

Country	Prevalent Forms of TFGBV	Legal Framework	Key Trends & Data	Notable Case Studies/Reports
 Zimbabwe	Doxxing of activists Revenge porn Politically motivated online smear campaigns	<i>Cyber and Data Protection Act (2021)</i> : Criticized for focusing on state security, not victim protection. Weak enforcement.	42% of young women online experience harassment (Digital Society of Zimbabwe, 2022). Female opposition activists/journalists heavily targeted.	#SheVotes2023 : Female candidates faced coordinated doxxing & death threats (WALPE, 2023). <i>Musasa Project</i> : 58% of GBV survivors report digital abuse.
 Zambia	Revenge porn Online stalking Social media "slut-shaming"	No specific laws. Relies on <i>Anti-GBV Act (2011)</i> , which lacks digital provisions.	1 in 3 young women experience online harassment (Zambia National GBV Survey, 2020). Rising cases via WhatsApp/Facebook.	2021 Case : University student suicide linked to viral non-consensual image sharing.
 Malawi	Revenge porn Online blackmail Harassment of female politicians	<i>Electronic Transactions Act (2016)</i> inadequate for TFGBV. <i>GBV Management Act</i> under review (2023).	75% of young women avoid political discourse online due to harassment (Oxfam Malawi, 2022). High rural-urban disparity in access to justice.	#EndCyberHarassment Campaign (2022) : Launched after teen girls were blackmailed for nude photos.
 Mozambique	Online extortion Social media harassment Non-consensual image sharing	Limited : <i>Cybercrime Law (2009)</i> outdated. No TFGBV-specific provisions.	Data scarce; NGOs report surge in cases since COVID-19. Young women in urban areas are at highest risk.	<i>WLSA Mozambique (2021)</i> : 40% of female university students experienced online stalking.
 Angola	Online impersonation Revenge porn Harassment via dating apps	Weak : No cyber laws to address gender-based violence.	Minimal official data; NGOs note increased reporting since 2020. Low awareness of digital rights.	<i>OMUNGA Report (2022)</i> : Documented cases of intimate images used to extort young women in Luanda.
 Eswatini	Online threats against activists Revenge porn	No TFGBV laws. Sexual Offences Act (2018) ignores digital dimensions.	Young pro-democracy activists targeted (CIVICUS, 2023). Cultural stigma prevents reporting.	2020 Case : Women's rights activists doxxed and threatened after criticizing monarchy.

This analysis confirms TFGBV as a transnational crisis silencing young women's voices. Without coordinated action, digital spaces will remain hostile to SADC's next generation of leaders.

Only South Africa and Namibia have functional TFGBV laws while other SADC countries rely on outdated GBV laws lacking digital provisions. It is interesting to note that there is no regional legal framework to deal with cross-border TFGBV perpetrators in one country targeting victims in another country in the SADC region.

There are also deficits in systemic, age and gender disaggregated data outside of South Africa and Namibia and National surveys rarely specifically capture TFGBV. The targeting of young female activists in politics, journalism and feminism face weaponised TFGBV in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Eswatini and Malawi alike while TFGBV in Zambia, Botswana and Angola is mostly linked to financial extortion where young women are blackmailed for money or sex.

The SADC region exhibits fairly similar systems failures, mostly policing institutions lacking training on handling digital violence. There is also victim blaming and stigma which deter reporting, particularly in conservative and rural communities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: RECLAIMING DIGITAL SPACE AS A FEMINIST DEMOCRATIC PROJECT

Research participants emphasised that individual coping strategies are insufficient to address TFGBV. Measures such as blocking perpetrators, using ghost accounts, restricting visibility or withdrawing from platforms may reduce immediate exposure to harm. Still, they do not address the structural conditions that enable digital violence. Individual coping mechanisms, therefore, cannot substitute for systemic reform.

The findings of this study indicate that TFGBV affects political participation, economic opportunity and psychological well-being. It shapes how young women engage with digital spaces, influencing their willingness to speak up, organise, pursue leadership roles, or maintain professional visibility.

Addressing these harms requires coordinated action across multiple institutional domains, including platform governance, state responsibility, political institutions and feminist collective action.

I. DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Digital platforms influence the visibility and circulation of online content. Participants identified significant weaknesses in current moderation systems, particularly regarding abusive content expressed in local languages such as Shona and other indigenous languages.

Automated moderation systems frequently fail to detect misogynistic or gendered abuse expressed in local linguistic contexts. As a result, harmful content may circulate without intervention, leaving survivors with limited recourse.

Platform reforms should prioritise:

- Social media companies should establish moderation teams trained in Shona and isiNdebele to identify gendered harassment and coded misogyny.
- Faster and more transparent responses to user reports of harassment
- Clear communication regarding enforcement outcomes
- Stronger safeguards against coordinated harassment and mass trolling
- Review of algorithmic amplification systems that prioritise outrage-driven engagement
- Moderation systems must be locally informed, culturally responsive and capable of recognising gendered patterns of abuse.

II. GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AND STATE INSTITUTIONS

Online violence is increasingly recognised internationally as a barrier to women's political participation and digital rights. Governments, therefore, have a responsibility to protect citizens from digital harm while also safeguarding freedom of expression.

Participants expressed concern about inconsistent enforcement of digital protection mechanisms and the potential misuse of cyber laws to restrict political speech. Effective state responses must therefore balance protection from abuse with the preservation of legitimate civic expression.

State actions should include:

- Consistent and survivor-centred enforcement of laws addressing digital harassment
- Accessible reporting mechanisms that are transparent and trauma-informed
- Integration of psychosocial support and counselling services into digital harm response systems
- Safeguards preventing cyber legislation from being used to suppress lawful political expression.
- Public awareness campaigns recognising digital violence as a form of gender-based violence and a barrier to participation
- Governments should mandate age-disaggregated TFGBV reporting in national GBV surveys.

Legal frameworks addressing digital harm already exist in many contexts. Greater emphasis is needed on consistent, rights-based implementation.

III. POLITICAL PARTIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Participants reported that gendered digital harassment within political spaces is frequently dismissed as an unavoidable aspect of political contestation. This normalisation contributes to the exclusion of women from leadership and public debate.

Political parties and public institutions should therefore:

- Adopt and enforce internal digital conduct policies addressing harassment and abuse
- Publicly condemn sexualised or gendered attacks targeting women in politics
- Sanction and appropriately punish the perpetrators

- Provide digital safety training and support for women candidates and emerging leaders
- Establish response mechanisms for coordinated online harassment during election periods

Political participation cannot be meaningfully inclusive if digital intimidation is treated as routine.

IV. FEMINIST MOVEMENTS, CSOs AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Participants emphasised the importance of solidarity as a response to digital violence. Individual coping strategies often isolate survivors and shift responsibility onto those experiencing harm.

Feminist movements and civil society organisations can strengthen collective responses through:

- Establishing rapid-response solidarity networks for women experiencing online harassment.
- Developing feminist-controlled digital media platforms and narrative spaces.
- Expanding digital literacy and safety training, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities.
- Ensuring inclusion of women with disabilities in digital safety initiatives.
- Coordinated amplification of voices targeted by harassment
- Because digital harassment can affect employability, professional reputation and access to clients, economic safeguards must form part of digital governance strategies. Policy responses should include:
 - Legal clarity regarding digital defamation and reputational harm.
 - Safeguards against discriminatory employment practices linked to lawful political expression.
 - Support mechanisms for entrepreneurs targeted by coordinated online smear campaigns
 - Integration of digital safety considerations into youth employment and entrepreneurship programmes

V. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND YOUTH PLATFORMS

- Integrate digital citizenship and online safety education into secondary school and university curricula.
- Universities and youth platforms should introduce campus digital safety policies, punish offenders, provide support services for students experiencing online harassment, promote respectful online engagement through training and awareness programmes, and encourage inclusive leadership opportunities for young women.

7. CONCLUSION: FROM INDIVIDUAL COPING TO STRUCTURAL REFORM

As digital platforms increasingly shape political debate, economic opportunity and civic engagement in Zimbabwe, ensuring that these spaces are safe and inclusive is essential for meaningful democratic participation. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), therefore, cannot be treated simply as a matter of online behaviour or individual conduct. It is fundamentally a question of gender justice, democratic inclusion and economic equality.

Participants consistently emphasised that the strategies they currently rely on to navigate digital harassment offer only partial protection. Many described blocking accounts, limiting their online presence or avoiding certain topics as necessary survival tactics rather than empowering solutions. As one participant explained, *“Self-censorship feels like survival rather than empowerment.”* These responses illustrate how the burden of safety is often placed on individuals rather than on institutions responsible for governing digital spaces.

Participation in digital environments should not require individuals to constantly assess personal risk before engaging in political debate, professional activity or civic organising. When participation is conditioned by fear of harassment, equal access to digital spaces is undermined.

Addressing TFGBV, therefore, requires coordinated action across multiple actors, including digital platforms, state institutions, political organisations and civil society. Protective mechanisms must shift from individual coping strategies toward stronger institutional accountability and structural reform. Creating safer digital environments is not only a matter of online etiquette; it is central to ensuring equitable participation in Zimbabwe’s political, economic and civic life.

The question is no longer whether TFGBV is harmful. The evidence in this report shows that it is. The urgent task now is to build digital environments in Zimbabwe where young women can participate without fear, without punishment, and without having to trade visibility for safety. As Tamale (2020) reminds us, struggles over women’s voice and public presence are inseparable from struggles over power itself. In Zimbabwe’s digital spaces, that struggle is now unfolding both online and offline.

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DATA COLLECTIONS TOOLS

TOOL 1: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose: To document the prevalence, forms and impacts of Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence on young women aged 18 to 30 in Zimbabwe.

- Age range (18–24, 25–30)
- Location (urban, peri-urban, rural)
- Primary online platforms used (multiple choice)
- Have you experienced online harassment, threats, doxing, impersonation or image-based abuse? (Yes/No)
- Which forms of online abuse have you experienced? (tick all that apply)
- How frequently do these incidents occur?
- Have these experiences caused you to reduce or stop online activity? (Yes/No)
- Have you withdrawn from political, civic or leadership spaces due to online abuse? (Yes/No)
- Have you lost income, clients or opportunities due to online abuse? (Yes/No)
- What coping or resistance strategies have you used? (short response)
- What support do you believe is necessary to address digital violence? (short response)

TOOL 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Purpose: To collectively analyse how Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence operates as a tool of silencing, political exclusion and economic control.

1. What does digital violence look like in your daily online life?
2. How does online abuse affect what you say or do not say online?
3. In what ways has digital violence affected your political participation or leadership?
4. How has online abuse affected your work, income or economic survival?
5. What strategies do young women use to protect themselves online?
6. What collective responses or solutions do you believe are necessary?

TOOL 3: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Purpose: To gather expert and systems-level insight on policy gaps, platform accountability and institutional responses to digital gender based violence.

- How do you assess the scale and nature of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Zimbabwe?
- What gaps exist in law, policy or platform regulation?
- How does digital violence intersect with political repression and economic exclusion?
- What responsibilities should be placed on digital platforms?
- What feminist strategies are most effective in confronting digital violence?

ABOUT PADA PLATFORM

The Pada Platform is a Zimbabwean feminist organisation dedicated to advancing women's rights through digital and media engagement. The organisation primarily focuses on digital inclusion, feminist movement building, and advocating for safe virtual and offline spaces for women.

The organisational mission is ***“To create safe physical and virtual spaces for young women, addressing their limited access to information and opportunities through advocacy, development of tech and digital platforms, content creation, training and feminist movement building.”***

KEY OBJECTIVES

The Pada Platform works to achieve its mission through several key objectives:

- Addressing Information Gaps: They aim to close the gaps in access to information that restrict women's participation in the public sphere.
- Promoting Media Literacy: The organization enhances women's capacity to critically evaluate digital content, fostering media literacy.
- Advocating for Safe Spaces: They are committed to promoting and creating safe environments for women and girls, both online and offline.
- Bridging the Gender Digital Divide: Through training and advocacy, the Pada Platform strives to reduce the disparities in digital access and skills between genders.

FEMINIST TECH FOCUS

With a strong investment in feminist tech, the Pada Platform actively addresses imbalances created by emerging technologies. They also leverage technology to combat violence against women and amplify the voices of young women.



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