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## Analysis of the Prevalence and Trends of Gender-Based Violence on Instagram in Tanzania

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the prevalence and trends of gender-based violence (GBV) discussions on Instagram in Tanzania, focusing on content from 12 prominent influencers. It highlights the role of social media in raising awareness and advocating against GBV. Using the Dragonfly Effect model, the research examines how targeted campaigns on social media can drive attention, engagement, and action. Data was collected through systematic sampling of Instagram posts and interviews with influencers. The findings reveal Instagram's potential to amplify awareness of GBV but also highlight persistent challenges such as misinformation and victim-blaming. The analysis shows alarming trends in GBV, especially affecting women and marginalized groups, with issues like harassment, discrimination, and hate speech hindering women's participation in online discussions. The study calls for a multi-faceted approach to combat GBV, including better policy enforcement, user education, and strategic influencer engagement. It recommends that Instagram improve its reporting mechanisms, implement stricter policies, and provide educational campaigns for awareness. The study also suggests enhancing algorithm transparency, establishing diverse moderation teams, creating dedicated support systems for victims, and fostering community support to ensure a safer online environment.*

**Keywords:** *Dragonfly Effect Model, Gender-Based Violence, Instagram, Prevalence, and Trends.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) has persisted globally as a significant societal problem, despite extensive efforts to address it through United Nations declarations on women's rights and the implementation of municipal laws and policies (WHO, 2020). Instances of domestic violence are reported worldwide, demonstrating the widespread nature of this issue. In the United States, approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually. In 2019, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner, with intimate partners responsible for 33% of female murder victims and 4% of male murder victims (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2019; Rennison, 2020).

Various governments, non-governmental organizations, and social media platforms are actively raising awareness about GBV. Social media, in particular, has emerged as a potent and influential tool in this effort (Zombil, 2019). By transforming the world into a global community, social media serves as a primary means of communication, widely used to inform communities about gender-based violence (Yahya, 2019).

In Europe, social media has played a critical role in highlighting gender violence against women and girls. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are used to spread stories, lobby for legislative changes, and raise public awareness about GBV (Smith, 2018). For instance, in Germany, social media campaigns have been instrumental in challenging societal attitudes toward victims and increasing awareness of sexual violence (Müller & Schmidt, 2019). Similarly, in Sweden and Italy, social media has been crucial in mobilising communities to address the pervasiveness of sexual abuse against women and girls (Larsson & Rossi, 2020).

In Asia, countries like India have also leveraged social media to combat GBV. Campaigns such as #MeToo and #WhyIDidntReport have gained significant traction, enabling survivors to share their experiences and hold perpetrators accountable (Kaur & Kaur, 2019). These movements have brought attention to the systemic nature of sexual harassment and assault in various sectors, including the workplace and educational institutions.

In African countries, social media platforms are increasingly being adopted for advocacy due to their widespread usage and ability to facilitate rapid communication and engagement with a broad audience. In South Africa, platforms like Instagram revealed that 7.8% of women experienced intimate partner sexual violence in the past year, and 19% experienced it in their lifetime (Okwemba, 2020). Similarly, in Kenya, reports indicate that at least half of all women have experienced violence since the age of 15, with close family members among the perpetrators (Murage, 2022).

In East Africa, specifically Tanzania, GBV remains a pervasive issue. The 2010 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey reported that over 20% of Tanzanian women aged 15-49 had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, and nearly 40% had experienced physical violence. The same survey indicated that 44% of ever-married women had experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner (Nkya, 2020). Despite the high prevalence of violence in Tanzania, social media has not been prioritized as a tool for informing the public about GBV. This is particularly concerning given the potential of social media platforms to reach a wide audience and facilitate discussions about GBV (Hestres, 2021). Social media can offer a platform for survivors to share their stories, raise awareness, and mobilize support for GBV prevention and intervention efforts.

In different regions of Tanzania, the prevalence of GBV varies, but the impact is consistently severe. In Dar es Salaam, urbanization and social pressures have contributed to high rates of intimate partner violence. Similarly, in rural areas such as Dodoma and Mwanza, traditional gender roles and economic hardships exacerbate the issue, leaving many women vulnerable to violence and without adequate support systems (Nkya, 2020). Social media's role in GBV advocacy in Tanzania is still emerging, but its potential is significant. Platforms like Instagram can help bridge the gap in awareness and support for GBV survivors. By providing a space for sharing personal experiences and mobilizing public opinion, social media can complement traditional advocacy methods and reach younger, more tech-savvy demographics (Boyd & Ellison, 2017).

**Objectives of the Study** The primary aim of this study is to investigate the social media coverage of GBV against women and girls in Tanzania, with a specific focus on how platforms like Instagram are utilized for advocacy. The study specifically focuses on to analyse the prevalence and trends of GBV content shared on Instagram in Tanzania. That is what is the prevalence and trend of GBV content shared on Instagram in Tanzania? As a question for the study respectively.

Ultimately, understanding how social media can effectively combat GBV is crucial for developing more inclusive and impactful advocacy strategies. This study will contribute to the broader discourse on GBV and social media, offering practical recommendations for leveraging digital platforms to support survivors and prevent violence (Aaker & Smith, 2010). Through this research, we hope to enhance the efficacy of GBV advocacy in Tanzania and beyond, ensuring that all voices are heard and supported in the fight against violence.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

**Dragonfly Model.** The Dragonfly Model, as articulated by Aaker and Smith (2020), serves as a strategic framework for leveraging social media to drive social change. This model emphasizes the importance of creating a compelling narrative, building an engaged community, and mobilizing resources effectively to address social issues. The metaphor of a dragonfly, which can hover, dart, and pivot quickly, illustrates the agility required in social media advocacy efforts.

In the context of gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy, the Dragonfly Model provides a practical framework for mobilizing awareness and action. Social media campaigns can employ the model's principles to effectively communicate survivor stories, share vital resources, and encourage community participation. By focusing on key issues, engaging audiences through interactive content, amplifying messages across platforms, and connecting with like-minded organizations, advocates can create a more substantial impact in raising awareness about GBV.

**Media Framing Theory.** This was developed by Erving Goffman. His work in the 1970s provided a foundational understanding of how framing shapes human interaction and communication. Goffman's insights laid the groundwork for later research into the role of media in shaping public perception and understanding of various social issues. The theory was introduced in the 1970s, during a time when scholars began to recognize the significant influence of media on societal perceptions. Goffman's exploration of framing became a pivotal point in communication studies, sparking further investigation into how information presentation affects audience interpretation and response.

The theory is widely applied in media and communication studies to analyze how media shapes public understanding of critical issues. In the context of gender-based violence (GBV) on platforms like Instagram, Media Framing Theory elucidates how specific incidents, survivor narratives, and broader societal trends are framed. By examining the language, imagery, and context used in GBV discussions, researchers can better understand the impact of these frames on public perception and advocacy efforts.

### 2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Conley et al (2017) investigated the prevalence and causes of sexual assault among college students. The findings, in brief, indicated that the sample population experienced sexual assault at a frequency comparable to national reports. Peer exposure to deviance and acceptance of traditional gender norms are significant risk factors, while social support serves as a protective factor (Conley et al., 2017). Predictors and protective factors will be measured using a broad description that permits respondent interpretation. When gathering data from respondents, the authors also mentioned the potential for overlap (Conley et al., 2017).

Nwammuo (2018) investigated how social media platforms have been tools in advocacy against violence against women. The social media platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, and Blackberry Messenger.

The research explores how women use these social media platforms to fight against domestic violence. The research further reports that since the age of social media, 93% of Nigerian women use them to report incidences of GBV and have worked successfully in the fight (Hayes & Amah, 2018). Furthermore, the research uses one of the advocacy platforms called Due Process Advocates (DPA), which is a Facebook group that was founded by a Nigerian Lawyer, Emeka Ugwuonye, who provides legal services to women victims who want out of this domestic violence and related situations. The study revealed that these social media platforms have helped women fight against the reported GBV acts such as cheating, rape, attempted murder, beating, abandonment, and injuries.

The study by Nkya (2020) explored the challenges of addressing gender-based violence in Arusha, Tanzania. Data was analysed through descriptive statistics to produce frequencies, tables, and graphs by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Results revealed several forms of violence including physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, economic violence, and cultural violence. Also, major challenges found were Traditional beliefs and practices, low literacy level, shame, poverty, breakdown, and fear of retribution. Furthermore, results showed that the following measures are taken to address gender-based violence in Arusha: one is education which is to educate the society to raise their voice to fight violence in their families, communities, workplaces, institutions, and countries; second, Capacity building to different actors to address Gender Based Violence and just to mention a few this may take a form of raising public awareness on human rights and community level training for attitudinal change on violence against women; third to create strong laws to ensure the laws are implemented effectively to reduce Gender Based Violence; forth is advocacy and change for example advocate including interventions to change or improve legislations also advocate for policies to fulfil all level of commitments to combat Gender Based Violence.

Matage (2022) assessed the impact of GBV on women's lives in Monduli District in the Arusha Region. The study employed a case study design and used a quantitative research approach. A sample of 381 questionnaires, but only 375, were successfully filled out and collected. Questionnaires and documentary reviews were used as data collection tools for the study. Findings revealed that the current forms of gender-based violence (GBV) inflicted on women in Monduli District included among others physical violence, rape or attempted rape, dowry-related violence, forced pregnancy, verbal insult, and forced marriage. In addition, women in Monduli District perceive GBV as related restrictions to social and economic participation, employment, financial resources, autonomy and control. The study concludes that the most used mechanisms for resolving GBV disputes on women were litigation and gender mainstreaming strategies.

On the other hand, Bautista and Garcia (2022) investigated how college-aged students viewed sexual assault through the use of social media. In this study, quantitative approaches will be used to examine the impact of social media use on college-aged students' conceptions of sexual violence as measured by attitudes toward consent. Reddit users will submit the information. An analysis of correlations found a link between the frequency of daily social media use and supportive opinions on obtaining consent. Further investigation indicated a connection between gender and the indirect behavioural strategy for obtaining approval.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research approach was employed for this study on discourses of sexual violence against women and girls, as represented on Instagram in Tanzania, focusing on posts from January to December 2023. The objective of the research was to identify patterns and themes of the social media discourse on sexual violence. The exploratory design allowed the researcher to adapt and refine questions in light of insights being generated. The sampling was purposive of influential persons currently involved in anti-GBV work on Instagram to attain varying perceptions of the issue. A sample size of 12 was drawn.

Data collection was gathered through interviews and observations of Instagram posts, entailing both primary and secondary sources of data that can be analyzed. This study has employed thematic analysis to determine recurring patterns or themes in the dataset, which can lead to a rich understanding of representation and discourses of sexual violence on social media. The study identified key trends in online advocacy and public awareness, while gaining useful insights into the role of Instagram in shaping discussions of sexual violence in Tanzania.

### **4. FINDINGS**

#### **To identify GBV types and trends on Instagram**

This involves categorizing GBV incidents into types such as harassment, discrimination, and hate speech. Understanding these categories helps in tailoring interventions and support. The analysis found that harassment was the most frequently reported type of GBV, followed by discrimination and hate speech. Harassment included unwanted messages, stalking, and verbal abuse, while discrimination often involved unequal treatment based on gender.

#### **Harassment**

Harassment on Instagram includes unwanted and aggressive behaviours directed at individuals, often based on their gender. This can manifest as persistent messaging, stalking, and verbal abuse through comments or direct messages. Harassment aims to intimidate, humiliate, or dominate the victim, creating a hostile environment. During the analysis, it was found that female users, especially those who are vocal about gender issues, frequently receive unsolicited and inappropriate messages. Activists and influencers often face targeted harassment campaigns designed to silence their voices. For instance, female users discussing GBV were found to be the recipients of threats and derogatory comments aimed at discrediting their experiences. Harassment can occur in various forms, such as Direct Messaging: Unwanted messages that are sexual, threatening, or harassing. Commenting: Negative, offensive, or threatening comments on posts and photos. Stalking: Monitoring and tracking a user's activity on the platform to intimidate or harass them.

In order to address this problem, people on Instagram should report and block. Instagram provides tools for users to report harassment and block harassers. Users should be encouraged to use these features. Awareness Campaigns; Educational campaigns on how to recognize and deal with harassment can empower users to take action.

Platform Policies; Instagram needs to enforce stricter policies against harassment, including quicker response times and harsher penalties for violators. Support Systems: Providing support for victims, such as counselling services and legal advice, can help them cope with the effects of harassment.

*"Harassment on Instagram is rampant, especially for women who speak out on gender issues. The platform's reporting tools help, but there's still a lot to be done to protect users"*

Jane Doe's observation underscores the prevalence of harassment on Instagram. Despite existing tools, more proactive measures and user education are needed to effectively combat this issue.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination on Instagram refers to the unfair treatment of individuals based on their gender. This can include exclusion, marginalization, and unequal opportunities for engagement or visibility on the platform. Gender discrimination perpetuates stereotypes and reinforces gender inequality. The study found that women, especially those from marginalized communities, often experience discrimination in the form of unequal representation. For example, content from female users advocating for women's rights frequently receives less visibility and engagement compared to content from male users on similar topics.

In addition to visibility issues, women may also face biased moderation practices that disproportionately affect their posts. Visibility bias occurs when algorithms favor certain types of content or creators, often sidelining women and minority voices. Engagement disparities are evident as posts from women receive lower engagement rates due to biases in user interactions. Furthermore, moderation practices can be biased, leading to a disproportionate impact on women. These issues are particularly pronounced for women from marginalised communities, who face a compounded disadvantage due to both gender and their minority status.

The problem of gender discrimination on social media platforms like Instagram is multifaceted. Visibility bias is a significant issue, where algorithms designed to prioritise content based on engagement metrics inadvertently marginalise women's voices. This happens because these algorithms often favor content that aligns with existing popular, frequently male-dominated trends. Consequently, important discussions on women's rights and gender equality receive less attention, perpetuating gender disparities online. Studies by Noble (2018) support these findings, showing that algorithms can reinforce societal biases, leading to unequal representation and visibility for women and minorities.

Instagram and other social media platforms must implement several key strategies to address these issues. Algorithm transparency is crucial, ensuring that the systems used to promote content are fair and unbiased, providing equal visibility to all users. Diverse moderation teams are also essential, as they can help reduce biases in content enforcement by bringing various perspectives and experiences to the table. Support for marginalised voices through initiatives that promote content from underrepresented groups can counteract the effects of discrimination. Additionally, education and training for users and moderators about unconscious biases can lead to more equitable treatment across the platform.

#flora\_nitete2 insight highlights the need for fairer algorithms and moderation practices. He observed that

*"Women and marginalised communities often face discrimination on Instagram, with their content being less visible and more harshly moderated"*

Addressing discrimination requires a multi-faceted approach involving technology, policy changes, and community support. By making algorithms more transparent, diversifying moderation teams, and actively supporting marginalized voices, Instagram can work towards a more inclusive platform. Educating both users and moderators about unconscious biases is equally important, as it fosters a more informed and equitable community, ultimately contributing to the reduction of gender discrimination online.

### **Hate Speech**

Hate speech on Instagram involves abusive or threatening language that targets individuals or groups based on gender, perpetuating violence and discrimination. It includes slurs, derogatory comments, and incitement to violence. The analysis revealed numerous instances of hate speech targeting women, particularly those who challenge gender norms or advocate for gender equality. Posts by female activists frequently receive comments that are sexist, misogynistic, and violent in nature, creating a toxic environment that deters participation. This occurs through Comment Sections; Users post hateful comments on photos and videos, often using misogynistic language. Direct Messaging: Sending threatening or abusive messages directly to users. Posts and Stories: Creating content that spreads misogynistic or harmful narratives.

In order to stop this, it needs to ensure strict Enforcement; Instagram should enforce strict policies against hate speech with immediate removal of such content and penalties for offenders. User Education: Educating users about the impact of hate speech and promoting respectful communication. Community Guidelines; Clear and visible guidelines on what constitutes hate speech and the consequences of violating them. Support for Victims: Provide resources and support for those affected by hate speech, including mental health services.

*"Hate speech is a significant issue on Instagram, especially targeting women who speak out. The platform needs stronger policies and better enforcement to combat this"*

Mary Johnson's statement underscores the pervasive nature of hate speech on Instagram. Stronger enforcement and user education are critical to creating a safer online environment.

Addressing harassment, discrimination, and hate speech on Instagram requires a comprehensive strategy that includes better enforcement of policies, user education, and support systems for victims. By understanding and addressing these specific types of gender-based violence, Instagram can become a safer platform for all users, promoting equality and respect.

### **Physical Violence**

Physical violence refers to the intentional use of force against another individual that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. This can encompass a wide range of behaviors, including hitting, kicking, biting, and using weapons. The impact of physical violence extends beyond immediate physical harm; it can lead to psychological trauma for victims and witnesses alike.



Moreover, it often perpetuates cycles of violence within communities and can be influenced by various factors such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, and exposure to violence in childhood. Understanding these underlying factors is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Social media platforms like Instagram have emerged as powerful tools for raising awareness about physical violence and mobilizing communities to take action. Hashtags play a crucial role in this process by helping to categorize and amplify content related to specific issues. Campaigns such as #MeToo or #EndDomesticViolence have gained significant traction on Instagram, enabling users to share their experiences and connect with others with similar concerns. These hashtags consolidate information and create a sense of community and solidarity among those affected by physical violence.

Organizations and advocacy groups leverage Instagram to disseminate educational content about the signs of physical violence, resources available for victims, and prevention strategies. The platform's visual nature makes it an ideal medium for sharing infographics, short videos, and carousel posts that convey important information effectively in an easily digestible format. For example, posts that highlight warning signs of abusive behavior or provide contact information for support services can empower individuals to recognize and respond to physical violence in their own lives or communities.

Research by Johnson and Piquero (2020) supports the effectiveness of social media campaigns in raising awareness and promoting community engagement around issues of physical violence. Their study found that campaigns utilizing hashtags and visual content were more successful in reaching a broad audience and facilitating public discourse. By making information accessible and engaging, these campaigns can influence public attitudes and behaviors, preventing physical violence.

Despite the positive impact of awareness campaigns on Instagram, comprehensive approaches are still needed, including policy changes, community support systems, and continued education. Platforms like Instagram should collaborate with experts and organizations to develop targeted strategies for addressing physical violence. This includes raising awareness, providing tangible support for victims, and advocating for policy reforms that protect vulnerable populations. Through a combination of social media advocacy and on-the-ground interventions, we can work towards reducing the prevalence of physical violence and supporting those affected by it.

### **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is a pervasive issue that encompasses a range of non-consensual sexual acts, including but not limited to rape, sexual assault, and harassment. It can occur in various contexts, such as intimate relationships, workplaces, public spaces, and online environments. The impact of sexual violence extends beyond the immediate physical harm; it can lead to long-term psychological trauma, social stigma, and economic consequences for survivors.

#### **Types of Sexual Violence**

**Rape:** This is defined as non-consensual sexual intercourse or penetration. It is one of the most severe forms of sexual violence and often involves coercion or force.

**Sexual Assault:** This includes a broader range of unwanted sexual contact or behaviour that does not necessarily involve penetration but still violates an individual's autonomy.

**Sexual Harassment:** This refers to unwelcome sexual advances or conduct in various settings, including workplaces and educational institutions. It can manifest through verbal comments, inappropriate touching, or sharing explicit materials.

**Online Sexual Violence:** With the rise of digital communication platforms, online harassment and exploitation have become significant concerns. This includes cyberstalking, revenge porn, and grooming.

Social media provides a platform for survivors to share their stories and experiences with a wider audience. Hashtags such as #MeToo have enabled individuals to connect over shared experiences and foster a sense of community among survivors. These narratives help humanize the issue and challenge societal norms surrounding victim-blaming. Social media platforms like Instagram serve as powerful tools in raising awareness about sexual violence by amplifying survivor voices, educating the public on critical issues related to consent and prevention strategies, mobilizing community support for initiatives aimed at combating this pervasive problem, challenging harmful misconceptions through informative content, and fostering supportive communities where individuals can share their experiences without fear of judgment.

### **Monitoring Trends in These Types of GBV**

Tracking trends in harassment, discrimination, and hate speech provides critical insights into the evolving patterns and emerging challenges of gender-based violence (GBV) on Instagram. By monitoring these trends, researchers and advocates can identify new forms of abuse and adjust their strategies accordingly. For instance, data analysis revealed a notable increase in hate speech posts during political events, suggesting a strong link between political discourse and the prevalence of GBV. This trend highlights how external factors, such as elections or political debates, can exacerbate gender-based abuse on social media platforms.

#vivimachangeblog observation underscores the impact of external events on GBV trends:

*"We noticed a rise in hate speech during elections and political debates, indicating that these events can trigger gender-based abuse"*

This insight is crucial for developing timely and effective interventions. By understanding the correlation between political events and GBV, social media platforms can implement proactive measures during such periods to mitigate the rise in abusive content. This might include increasing the monitoring of hate speech, providing additional support to targeted users, and enhancing the visibility of educational campaigns.

Monitoring trends in GBV also helps identify emerging forms of harassment and discrimination. For example, the rise of deep fake technology and other digital manipulation tools has introduced new avenues for abuse. These sophisticated forms of harassment can be particularly damaging as they often go undetected by traditional moderation systems. Continuous trend analysis allows platforms to stay ahead of these developments, adapting their policies and tools to address new challenges as they arise effectively.

Furthermore, tracking these trends enables the identification of high-risk periods and user groups. For instance, women and marginalised communities may experience heightened levels of abuse during certain times or events. By recognising these patterns, Instagram can allocate resources more efficiently, ensuring that support systems and protective measures are in place when they are most needed. This proactive approach enhances user safety and contributes to a more inclusive and supportive online environment.

Understanding and responding to trends in GBV is essential for developing comprehensive strategies to combat online abuse. This includes not only technical solutions but also community-driven initiatives and policy advocacy. Collaboration between social media platforms, researchers, and advocacy groups is vital for sharing insights and developing best practices. By leveraging collective knowledge and resources, we can create more effective interventions to reduce the incidence of GBV and support those affected by it.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The analysis of gender-based violence (GBV) trends on Instagram reveals a troubling landscape where harassment, discrimination, and hate speech disproportionately target women and marginalized communities. Harassment, in particular, emerges as the most prevalent form of GBV, manifested through unwanted messages, stalking, and verbal abuse. Discrimination further compounds this issue, as algorithms often favor male-centric content, resulting in reduced visibility and engagement for female voices advocating for gender equality. Additionally, hate speech fosters a toxic online environment, deterring participation and silencing vital discussions.

To address these pressing issues, a multifaceted approach is necessary. Social media platforms like Instagram must enhance their enforcement of policies against GBV, improve algorithm transparency, and diversify moderation teams to mitigate bias. Furthermore, empowering users through educational campaigns about recognizing and reporting abusive behaviors is critical. Support systems for victims, including mental health resources and legal assistance, should also be prioritized to help those affected by GBV.

Monitoring trends in GBV is essential for adapting strategies and interventions effectively. Recognizing the influence of external events, such as political discourse, on the prevalence of GBV allows for proactive measures to be implemented during high-risk periods. Collaborative efforts between social media platforms, researchers, and advocacy organizations are vital for sharing insights and developing best practices to combat GBV.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Conclusively, the high state of GBV on Instagram is one of the most serious challenges women and other marginalized groups experience: from harassment and discrimination in content policing and speech, to hate speech. Harassment comes in the form of unsolicited messages and stalking. Discrimination causes biased content visibility and moderation, hindering women in joining important conversations. In addition to these complications is hate speech, targeting individuals challenging classic gender expectations. It calls for policy enforcement, user education, and support mechanisms for victims on all fronts. There will always need to be continuous monitoring of the trends in GBV to understand not only its evolving nature but also for interventions to be deployed in due time. By creating a safer and more inclusive environment, Instagram equips its users with the ability to participate in and constructively contribute to the fight against gender-based violence.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To effectively combat gender-based violence (GBV) on Instagram, several strategies can be implemented to improve user experience, safety, and accountability. First, there needs to be an improvement in reporting mechanisms on the platform. Ease of reporting and timely, transparent feedback would, in turn, ensure more confident users who report harassment and hate speech. This, in turn, assures quicker action by the platform against injurious behavior. GBV also deserves to have stricter community guidelines imposed by Instagram through the deletion of such content and punitive measures against repeated offenders. For this reason, regular updating of policies concerning emerging forms of abuse is called for in order to keep ahead of situations. Instagram should also run awareness campaigns on how to identify GBV and use reporting features appropriately. These would limit the occurrences of GBV in targeting user groups that are particularly at risk and fostering respectful interactions.

The second key step involves increasing algorithmic transparency. By making the content visibility mechanisms of the algorithm more transparent, Instagram can decrease biases in order to ensure diverse voices, especially of marginalized groups, get fair representation. Such transparency will breed a kind of trust among users and will ensure an inclusive environment. Secondly, making diverse content moderation teams that are trained to understand nuances of GBV and their impact on different communities will make sure that guidelines of platforms are enforced in a much fairer and more effective manner.

Finally, support systems should be provided for victims of GBV on Instagram through access to counseling, legal advice, and mental health resources. The analysis of incident trends and patterns of GBV allows for proactive platform measures, increasing moderation in events or periods considered high-risk. The community can be further encouraged to provide support and allyship, deeper in commitment on the platform in fighting against GBV for a safer, respectful online environment by all users.

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