Parsing the 'Me' in #MeToo: Sexual Harassment, Social Media, and Justice Infrastructures

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India's #MeToo movement began in late-2018, and was largely a platform for some privileged women sharing their accounts of sexual harassment. Beyond issues of access to digital technology, our paper investigates why various sections of India's female and LGBTQ+ population chose not to engage with the #MeToo movement. Focusing on experiences with sexual harassment, we conducted 44 qualitative interviews with middle-class working women, feminist and queer activists, academics, and other stakeholders working against gender-based violence, to understand their perspectives on #MeToo. Our paper explores why some survivors bypass the legal infrastructure to speak out against sexual harassment using #MeToo, while others choose not to participate despite having access to social media platforms. Using the lens of infrastructure, we outline the imbrication of social media movements with existing social norms and legal infrastructures. Further, we highlight how infrastructural politics are connected to patriarchy, colonialism, caste, class, and gender struggles.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing** → **Empirical studies in collaborative and social computing**.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: feminism; LGBTQ+; intersectionality; sexual harassment; justice; infrastructure

1 INTRODUCTION

In October 2017, an unusual global feminist movement started over various social media platforms, where using the hashtag #MeToo (or some variants of it), women across the world publicly shared their untold stories of being sexually harassed [121, 154]. Before this, a few other hashtags were also used for similar purposes, including #MyHarveyWeinstein, #YouOkSis, and #SurvivorPrivilege. However, none of them could create such a massive movement on social media. While Tarana Burke, an African American social activist from the United States coined the phrase "Me Too" in 2006 when she launched a grassroots level campaign for "empowering through empathy" for the women of color within her community [121], it gained prominence only when several women from Hollywood came out with their stories of sexual harassment [120, 154].

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Sexual harassment is a serious offense that causes several negative impacts on the survivor/victims' physical, psychological, and social health [45, 73]. Unfortunately, the prevalence of sexual harassment is very high across the globe with women being the principal victims [51, 93]. The #MeToo movement on social media has been considered revolutionary as millions of women across the globe used these platforms available at their disposal to share their experiences and make their voices heard [139]. Such voluntary and spontaneous participation of women in breaking down a silence that had long been suppressing them was unprecedented in history.

Independent surveys of experts have ranked India as the most dangerous country for women due to a high risk of sexual violence [103], with national statistics in 2016 revealing a total of 27,344 cases of sexual harassment nationwide. A 2014 study by Oxfam India of formal and informal workers in 8 different cities reported that 17% women were sexually harassed at work, the most vulnerable being the female labourers (29%) and domestic workers (23%) [40]. Other statistics reported harassment as 88% in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector and 57% in the health sector [32]. However, owing to the taboo surrounding sex and sexual harassment in the conservative Indian society, these statistics are grossly under-reported.

The global #MeToo movement of October 2017 did not gain much traction in the Indian subcontinent [71, 85] and was shortly followed by a crowd-sourced list of (alleged) sexual predators in Indian academia on Facebook, known as the List of Sexual Harassers in Academia (LoSHA) [17, 118], which also failed to create ripples beyond the academic circles. The #MeToo that took India by storm is reported to have begun in late 2018 when one of the former actresses working in the Hindi film industry spoke up about being harassed by a male co-actor which then snowballed to television industry, journalism, corporate and other workplaces [59, 71, 74]. Even though India has a dedicated law that recognizes sexual harassment of women at workplace as a violation to the fundamental rights of a woman to life, equality and work with dignity [2], yet the survivors ditching the due process in favour of online feminist movements such as #MeToo highlights serious issues with the formal justice seeking infrastructures [79].

The #MeToo movement in India has mostly witnessed privileged and elite women speaking out, with a significant lack of stories from general middle-class women; women belonging to poor socio-economic strata (such as unorganized sector workers and domestic workers); Dalit, Bahujan, and Aadivasi women; and the queer community [1, 17, 89, 120, 123]. While the non-participation of those belonging to the poor socio-economic strata could largely be attributed to their lack of access to digital technology [56], questions still remain about those women and LGBTQ+ individuals[1] who in spite of being regular users of social media platforms chose not to engage with it.

CSCW research has increasingly been looking at issues of justice and equity related to the design and use of socio-technical systems, especially when actors and their struggles are rendered invisible [65, 115, 132]. Feminist [18] and intersectional [35, 43, 100, 114] approaches to computing have also begun to critically examine how gender, race, sexual orientation, and power shape technologies. Our paper builds on these themes to discuss the dynamics of online feminist movements playing out on social media in the relatively less studied context of Global South, more specifically in a diverse country like India.

Our research question was to understand why some survivors bypassed the legal infrastructure to speak out against sexual harassment on social media during India's #MeToo movement, while others did not participate in the movement despite having access and ability to participate on social media platforms (which we conceptualize as digital infrastructural routes of seeking justice in our work). We interviewed 44 middle-class working women, feminist and LGBTQ+ activists, academics,

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[1]More specifically non-binary, gender queer, or men identifying as gay who lack representation under the current law on sexual harassment

and other stakeholders working against gender-based violence. Our interviewees represented a diverse set of ethnic identities of India. Our findings, however, provided a complicated picture of power dynamics at play.

In this paper we demonstrate how nuanced heteronormative, patriarchal, classificatory and bureaucratic biases in the legal infrastructures, influenced by the social norms, deter victim/survivors from taking the 'due process' route for seeking justice for sexual harassment. We then show how the #MeToo movement emerged as a symptom of dissatisfaction with the due process and a push back against existing biases to disrupt the status quo. However, many participants reported their inability to align with the 'Western' values and politics of #MeToo owing to its lack of accountability and appropriation by a certain class of privileged women. Survivors, especially those at the marginalized intersections of class, caste, gender and sexual orientation felt alienated as lack of cultural backing and support systems further prevented them from utilizing such digital justice infrastructures for speaking out and seeking justice. Our contributions from this paper are threefold. First, using infrastructural analysis [26] we share in-depth insights about the imbrication [124] of digital infrastructural routes of seeking justice with legal infrastructure and social norms around sexual harassment in India. We demonstrate how the dis-alignments within this imbrication pave way for seamful spaces [145] that provide differential opportunities to some (relatively privileged) actors to push back against the challenges and exclusions to have their voices heard within and across the seams, and as a consequence shape social computing practices to act on social justice issues. Second, our work speaks of the torque and residuality experienced by individuals living with marginalized intersectional identities (in terms of caste, class, gender, sexual orientation) that further weakens their efforts to push back across these seams. Finally, we demonstrate that infrastructure cannot just be read off of its design and material configuration. It has to be read through the social practices of use that are mediated by social structures around the constructs of patriarchy, colonialism, caste, class and gender struggles.

2 RELATED WORK

2.1 Infrastructures for Seeking Justice

Star [130] conceives infrastructures as relational and ecological and calls for their study to understand the issues of "distributional justice," i.e., who the infrastructures exclude and silence. Dominant systems of knowledge and assumption with values based on purity and 'naturalness' may render lived experiences marginal, invisible, or unthinkable within an infrastructure [9], e.g., a transgender person who does not fit the cultural and gender dichotomies [131, 134]. However, infrastructures never operate in a vacuum. They always act in reference to arrangements, tools, and material objects and often inherit the exclusions from the inertia of their installed base [26]. The installed base serves as the foundation for change and development and can be both enabling and constraining [3]. Various scholars [9, 26] acknowledge that systems of all kinds and levels may break down. They assert that no classification system can ever fully satisfy the requirements of completeness, consistency, and division into mutually exclusive categories, and therefore should be analysed according to its points of tension, friction, and breakdown. Ahmed, et al. [9] also argue that we should consider the restrictions to accessing operative infrastructures due to barriers of cost, literacy, availability and social standing vis-á-vis socio-cultural norms.

Pipek and Wulf [98] have coined the term 'infrastructuring' to describe the process of reworking settled systems and procedures to align with digital infrastructures to accommodate breakdown, innovation, and change, across multiple "points of infrastructure" or seams [145]. This "uneven arrangement of heterogeneous things that changes over time and across places as the whole is edited/rearranged" is defined as an imbrication [124]. Often, an imbrication is a messy overlap of

socio-technical systems, creating seamful spaces in which actors work creatively and strategically to align themselves to have their voices heard within and across the seams [124, 145]. This overlap can create new modes of access, support and value leading to a creative re-appropriation of infrastructures [9, 60, 127]. In recent literature, scholars have re-imagined infrastructures in different creative and more generative ways [41, 65, 115]. They believe that infrastructure is not set in stone but is constantly changing and growing in subtle and fluid ways. Bowker [25] suggests an infrastructural inversion approach to scrutinize technologies and arrangements for interdependence of technical networks and standards as well as for their politics of knowledge production [26, 65]. Exposing the "taken for granted" in any formal system, residual categories exist in every classification scheme [26]. Star and Bowker [131] characterize them as too complicated to describe due to the confused 'grayness' of their experiences. System breakdown occurs as these categories are unable to fit into an existing schema, rendering their experiences invisible and 'torqued.' Torque is an analytic resource to describe the lived experience of excluded users of an infrastructure-in-use [124], and is defined as situations where the multiple identities of a body cannot be aligned with the classification system [26]. Friction is also experienced in the use of infrastructures and is conceptualized as exposing diverging values embedded in infrastructure or values that have been left aside during its design [68, 143]. Korn and Voida [68] argue that friction can provoke people to question conventional norms and values as well as actively pursue change on behalf of their communities. Collaborative forms of infrastructure use and engagement eventually help individuals navigate the conditions of residuality [9].

Infrastructural inversion exposes the norms and practices that perpetuate disempowering biases within various socio-technical systems such as legal infrastructures and technologies. In recent CSCW literature, besides an Actor-Network Theory (ANT) driven infrastructural analysis, scholars have focused on a 'fluid,' 'moving,' and 'in progress' version of infrastructure that has shifted the associated discourse toward a more progressive analysis. For instance, Soden and Kauffman [126] advocate for the development of a richer conceptual apparatus for describing the ways in which our socio-technical imaginations shape information infrastructures, and vice versa. In a similar vein, using a discourse-based analysis, Semaan [115] demonstrates how LGBTQ individuals in the United States are adopting and re-appropriating digital infrastructures by writing their own community narratives — using transformative fandom — to counter and push back against everyday systemic marginalization (e.g. homophobia), that has become internalized in the infrastructures (e.g. media) that permeate our society. This intersects with feminist perspectives to computing that highlight the sexist and gendered nature of socio-technical infrastructures leading to invisibility and silence in the face of oppression and violence. Feminist scholars have long been advocating to bring changes to the narrative to initiate a change to that infrastructure. Further, borrowing from the urban design concept of 'desire lines', it helps us focus on lived practice made visible through the trampled paths that crisscross landscapes as opposed to utilizing formal infrastructures [127], providing a precedent of making a norm of breaking norms. This is particularly helpful for social justice movements to push for countering the biases to create more inclusive infrastructures.

2.2 Feminism in Social Computing

HCI and CSCW research have used feminist perspectives to study how technology design can be cognizant of existing societal power structures and be a tool for potential emancipation. Bardzel's [18] seminal paper on Feminist HCI (and extended by others [19, 44, 105]) argues for the critique and design of technologies from a feminist lens that is informed by the lived experiences of women (and other marginal users). Research has also studied how gender plays out in diverse settings such as hackerspaces [46], research infrastructures [6], households [80], Wikipedia [76], fan fiction archives [44], among others.

Of particular significance is research and design work using feminist ideals to break the silence of women about harassment along with actively combating it. Vitak et al. [148] argue for a more collective stance to take on online harassment to ensure that women remain active participants in online spaces. Rubin et al. [110] argue that reactive solutions to harassment often put the burden of mitigation on the victim/survivor rather than the harasser. This is partly reflected in designed applications that look to help raise their voice against sexual harassment by either documenting and shaming harassers [39] or through collective action by women to create maps of safe spaces both virtually [8, 48] and in the offline world [147, 152].

2.2.1 The #MeToo Movement. The #MeToo movement, i.e., sharing of personal experiences of sexual assault on social media platforms via attaching the hashtag #MeToo, has been a significant event in online activism and has garnered worldwide attention. Studies show how these feminist counter-public narratives were making their way from hashtag campaigns into mainstream media discourse in clear and direct ways [151].

Studies [142] have also argued that the movement will push employers towards more transparency and accountability; however, warning that there will be backlash from employers, as workplaces deal with changing work practices in the face of the movement. One of the goals of the movement was reducing the stigma attached with disclosing sexual assaults, and studies[49] found that it indeed was creating a counterpublic safe space for disclosures for a section of the population. Andalibi, et al. [12] show that anonymity on social media sites such as Reddit played an important role in creating a safe space that facilitated support seeking and provision in such stigmatized contexts. However, studies also found that discussions of #MeToo social media posts online were polarized, with most conversations focused on its politics [104]. Studies in global contexts [72] found that the narratives and postings were shaped by culture, with the content reflecting the lived experiences of the posters. However, the success or failure of #MeToo movement in the Global South has been less studied. In China, studies reported the role of Chinese diasporic communities in the movement along with disguised collective action where hashtags were used to circumvent censorship. Studies of the #MeToo movement in the Global South found that there was less traction due to social and cultural differences [57]. For example, in Bangladesh, Moitra, et al. [85] discusses how the patriarchal society, lack of hope, and reliance on alternatives drove non-participation.

2.2.2 Critiques of #MeToo and Feminist HCI. It has been prominently observed that in the case of #MeToo movement, the experiences of the marginalized are notably absent, only bringing stories of urban, educated, privileged and articulate white women to the fore [91, 97]. Existing socio-cultural power structures exert control over how the social media platform is used, thus influencing people's participation on it [13, 52, 92].

The #MeToo movement has been heavily criticized for failing to recognize the nature of harassment that women of colour face, including their vulnerability [91]. Drawing from Crenshaw's [35] framework of intersectionality, most of these works have focused on the multidimensional nature of subordination and discrimination. For example, Phipps [97] argues that 'whiteness' shapes the #MeToo movement, especially in how it invokes institutional power to seek justice, along with employing tropes of 'woundability' and 'performances of fragility'. These intersectional critiques of the #MeToo movement closely relate to Dalit critiques in the Indian context and focus on the multiple 'layers of oppression' [35] that shape everyday experience. Scholars have drawn parallels between the discriminatory reactions of sexual atrocities against Dalit women compared upper-caste women and atrocities to Black women compared with white women [30].[2]

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[2]Historically, the Dalit movement in India has been closely related to the Black movement in the United States since the early 1970s. For example, the Dalit Panther Movement was inspired by the Black Panthers Party [11, 30]. At a more cultural level, there has been strong solidarity between the two movements and a continuous exchange of intellectual capital [149].

Making movements such as the #MeToo more inclusive is contingent on understanding how sexual violence exists at the intersection of capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism. In the context of feminist HCI in the Global North, scholars have [7, 100] increasingly stressed on how computing needs to engage with the marginalization and erasure of Black women. Ismail and Kumar [64] make a similar point in the context of the Global South where they critique current conceptualizations in computing as being rooted in western capitalist notions of feminism. This renders them inadequate to capture the perspectives and experiences of women and marginalized communities across many parts of the Global South where, as per Mohanty [84] different and valid ideas of feminism may be appropriate. Relative lack of participation in #MeToo in the Global South shows how social media activism is limited, with social media platforms even being labeled as platforms for the 'elite' [109]. Those women who have access to these platforms in the Global South further face multiple layers of resistance [122, 138] including existing gender norms [8, 33, 55, 113] and retaliation and abuse [113] from often anonymous harassers [90].

Postcolonial computing recognizes that the 'global' deployment of a Western technology not only fails in making effective changes in the local communities but can also contribute to the creation of cultural imperialism [9, 63, 137]. Moreover, due to the long and painful history of colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, Western feminism (deriving its concepts from a single theoretical framework) has often been explicitly rejected [16, 21, 27, 61] in favour of locally sensitive, diverse ideas of feminism which encourage comparison between multiple, overlapping and discrete oppressions [53, 83, 128]. Postcolonial computing is particularly relevant within the context of South Asian feminism because it emphasizes on the need for "discourse centered on the questions of power, authority, legitimacy, participation, and intelligibility in the contexts of cultural encounter, particularly in the context of contemporary globalization" [63]. In this vein, communitization or community-centric design has become a very popular mode of designing culturally appropriate systems and appropriating available technologies as per the local context [63, 75].

3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Sexual Harassment in India

Sexual harassment is bullying or coercion of a sexual nature or the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors [93]. This is a serious offense that causes several negative impacts on the victims' (survivors') physical, psychological, and social health [45, 73]. Unfortunately, the prevalence of sexual harassment is very high across the globe, especially in the Global South, with women being the principal victims [51, 93].

Thomson Reuters Foundation conducted a survey of about 550 experts on women's issues where India ranked as the most dangerous country for women due to a high risk of sexual violence [103]. An independent survey by a media analysis firm in India has found that the registered cases of sexual harassment in workplaces have skyrocketed by 54% from 371 in 2014 to 570 in 2017 [66]. Further, the latest available National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Statistics for the year 2016 reveal that a total of 27,344 cases of sexual harassment were reported nationwide with 741 incidents reported in the Delhi National Capital Region [28]. Constituting 94% of India's female workforce, women working in the informal sector and domestic workers are particularly prone to sexual harassment, but their issues of harassment hardly come to light due to their economic and social vulnerability [32]. A 2014 Oxfam India study of formal and informal workers in 8 different cities reported that 17% women were sexually harassed at work, the most vulnerable being the female labourers (29%) and domestic workers (23%) [40].

Working class people, mostly from marginalized identity groups, have particularly faced the brunt of sexual violence. Krishnan [70] documented the sexual harassment women factory workers endure

from male supervisors which is often accompanied by verbal abuse suggestive of their caste location and association with sex-work. It is important to understand that India is a hetero-patriarchal society, therefore sexual harassment of LGBTQ+ individuals is often not recognized and spoken about openly. Data from the Indian LGBT Workplace Climate Survey, 2016 [81] shows that about 40% LGBT+ individuals have faced workplace harassment on account of their Sexual orientation, Gender identity and Expression (SOGIE) [62] and therefore, most of them continue to remain closeted about their sexuality to prevent harassment and discrimination [5]. For instance, working-class trans-men interviewed for a study in India reported being sexually harassed, assaulted, and asked sexually suggestive questions such as "how do you have sex, how do you get pleasure, etc." by their (former) employers and co-workers which led them to quit their jobs [62]. The situation is further complicated when the historically oppressed lower-caste and Avarna castes (those outside of the present Chaturvarna caste system - the untouchables, unseeables and unapproachables - also referred to as 'Dalit') [106] and queer identities intersect at the workplace as many Dalit queers don't come out as Dalit and queer for the fear of harassment and discrimination [62, 117, 146].

In most places in the Indian subcontinent, sexual violence is a 'public secret' [20] – known but not spoken of – as speaking about "sex" is taboo, and hence talking about sexual harassment is seen as an act of immodesty [88]. Therefore, such statistics are often either under-reported or hard to get as many women do not talk about the sexual harassment that they experience [8] or tend not to report it, often due to cultural reasons such as victim-shaming and lack of support, or a lack of awareness about the reporting procedures or the fear of repercussions [74]. This is further compounded by the strong patriarchal culture [58] in India, where women often depend on men for most things needed for their living including food, shelter, education, transportation, and health [82]. Most incidents of sexual harassment remain unreported, making it challenging to find a solution [14].

3.2 Indian Women's Movement and Legal Frameworks on seeking justice against Sexual Harassment

Infrastructures don't exist in isolation. Standards such as laws are built on existing socio-cultural arrangements and politics [26]. It is, therefore, important to ground the legal reforms around sexual harassment in the history of women's movement in India. The subject of sexual harassment of women came into focus in the 1980s in India when (mostly middle-class) women in sectors like health, education, airlines, and government departments protested against the sexual harassment of female employees. However, these protests failed to garner enough attention from the authorities, whose response remained lukewarm [102].

The popular discourse around sexual harassment at the workplace began in 1992, when Bhanwari Devi, a social worker belonging to the Dalit community in Rajasthan, was gang raped by upper-caste men. They were angered by her efforts to prevent a child marriage in their family, which was a part of her official duty [30, 77, 94]. More than sexual harassment at workplace, this was a case of caste-based sexual violence, a controlling tactic, where Bhanwari Devi was raped because she as a Dalit woman dared to challenge the social norms of the upper-caste hierarchical structures. Therefore, she had to be publicly violated to provide a spectacle and serve as a lesson for others in her position [15].

Dalit women have historically been labelled as 'immodest' and 'available' as they work outside of the private spheres of their houses [30]. It is no coincidence that they remain thrice as likely to face sexual violence, based on their class, caste, and gender and are rarely believed (by the police and journalists) and served justice (by the judiciary), if they ever report such violations [15, 128]. It is because key institutions such as the judiciary, police, media, and most of the non-profit organizations supporting the women's movement are controlled by upper-caste individuals who

either appropriate Dalit women's voices for their own ends or silence them [38, 133]. Likewise, Bhanwari Devi faced many obstacles to get her complaint registered. The investigation in her case was botched up because of the various intersectional power dynamics working against her. In 1995, the Rajasthan High Court judge acquitted the perpetrators deeming upper-caste men incapable of sexually assaulting a Dalit woman (on grounds of caste purity) imparting impunity as justice [15, 30, 77]. This judgement led to a massive outrage across the country with widespread and collective protests [15]. Many women's movement and other civil society organizations in the country rallied around Bhanwari Devi to help her achieve justice, but 28 years on she still awaits justice [30, 77].

Importantly, those rallying around her largely focused on gender-based violence in relation to sexual harassment at the workplace as the state authorities (her employer) denied responsibility because she had been attacked in her own fields [15, 59]. The protests on this judgement helped build a momentum where Rajasthan-based NGO, Vishaka amongst others decided to file a writ petition at the Supreme Court of India to make workplaces safer for women [15]. It was highlighted that Bhanwari Devi had reported being sexually harassed by the upper-caste community members but the inaction on part of the authorities led to her gang rape [102]. This led to the 1997 landmark judgement (Vishakha vs. State of Rajasthan) in recognizing sexual harassment at the workplace and laying down guidelines (known as the Vishakha guidelines) for all employers to protect women employees from sexual harassment [77] till a legislation to deal with the issue could be passed [141].

However, this judgement is critiqued on the grounds of intersectionality as it failed to recognize and overturn violence of a public nature suffered specifically by those disadvantaged by gender, caste, and class at the same time [15]. The dichotomy of Vishaka was that the survivor/victim from an oppressed-caste background was unable to receive justice but legal guidelines were founded on the atrocities she suffered. These laws/guidelines go on to favor women relatively higher in the ranks of caste and class-based hierarchies while the situation of those marginalized by their intersectional identities remains unchanged.

It was the brutal gang rape of a paramedical student in Delhi in 2012 and the public outcry around it [30, 70] that provided the momentum to finally enact the legislation "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act" in 2013 [2] among other changes in the Indian Penal Code [102]. This legislation made it mandatory for every workplace having 10 or more employees to have an Internal Committee (IC) (or Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)) to look into reported cases of sexual harassment. The members of this committee are nominated by the head of the organization and include intra-organization as well as external members. Local Committees (LC) have been mandated to deal with organizations having less than 10 employees; informal sector and domestic workers and; where the head of the organization has been accused of sexual harassment. The District Magistrate appoints the LC members and also a nodal officer who receives complaints and forwards them to the LC. A simplified version of this legal framework is portrayed in Figure 1.

However, according to the Right to Information (RTI) petitions filed by the Martha Farrell Foundation (an organization working on the issue of sexual harassment in India), only 29% of the 655 districts in India acknowledged to have formed a LC. Among them, out of the 11 districts in Delhi, only 5 have formed a LC, out of which only 3 have received training [1, 59].

Additionally, a 2015 survey [153] reported that 27% of large companies and 50% of the small and medium companies have not been complaint with the legislation with many organizations yet to follow its basic requirements of constituting an IC and training its members [96]. The law is turning out to be an empty promise for most employed women [59]. It is also important to note
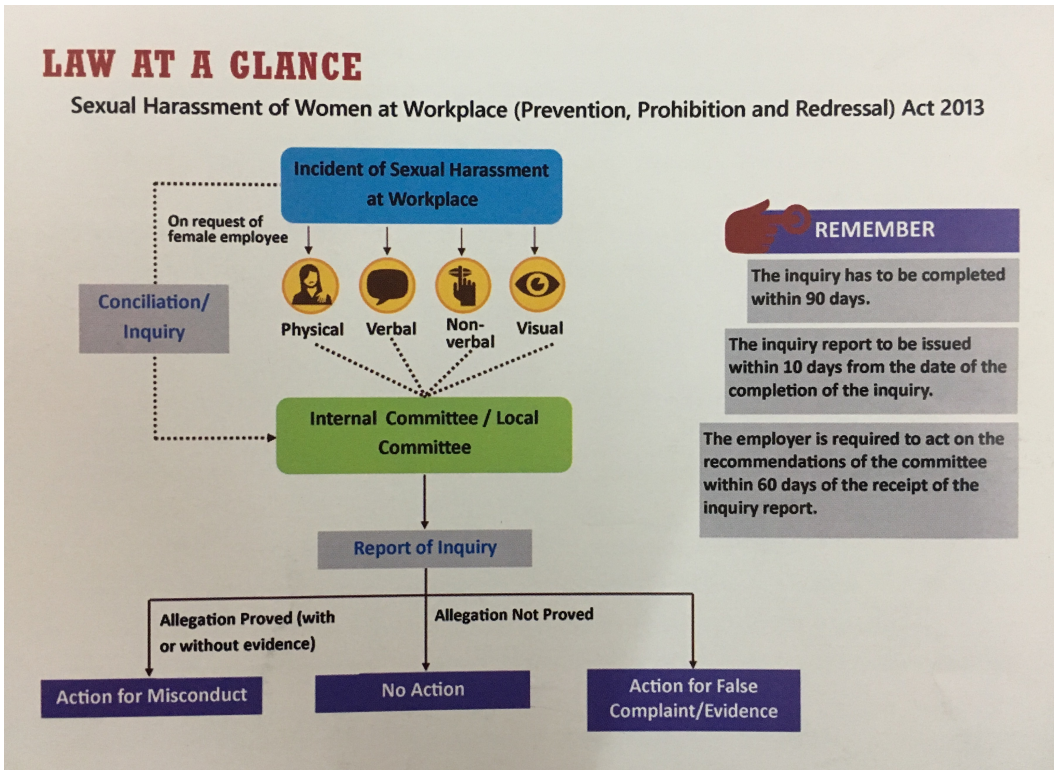
Fig. 1. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 [1]

the gender-binary classification of the law as it only caters to sexual harassment of 'women' in its present form.

3.3 Misogyny and the Indian Justice System

The mere presence of a legal framework does not ensure justice [42?]. Ability to make use of infrastructures, especially those that deal with the sensitive issues of gender-based violence, also depends upon the local socio-cultural norms [26]. For instance[3], the content of the law requires women to file their harassment complaint within 6 months of the occurrence of the last incident, thereby limiting the time period for reporting their experience [42, 112]. Many survivors find it difficult to process not just the trauma of violations to their body but also the additional trauma of recounting the incident many times over, society's denial or belittling of their harassment experience, societal labels, reputation harm, and going through with the complaint without any assurance of a positive outcome. As a result, many women reel under indecision regarding whether to report the issue or not [112]. Survivors also face a threat of punishment as the law provisions for penalizing them in case they are unable to prove their complaint and the complaints committee receives an adverse finding against them [42]. Most complaints committees fail to provide women with any kind of redressal, leaving them further vulnerable [42, 112].

It also explains survivors' frustrations with the 'due process' and in many cases, their cathartic release using the social media to name and shame their perpetrators as seen in instances such

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[3]Owing to the numerous issues with the law, we present only a few instances here

as #MeToo [107]. Nonetheless, women who have chosen to come out during the #MeTooIndia movement now face intimidation, threats, and lawsuits [111]. Most recent example is of the Delhi High Court ordering Facebook to reveal the identity of the curator of an Instagram page anonymously sharing sexual harassment stories, naming and shaming the perpetrators based on a defamation case filed by an Indian Artist who has been named/accused (without any evidence) on the page [24].

3.4 Tensions and Frictions within Indian Feminism: Use of Social Media for sharing Sexual Harassment accounts

A section of feminist scholars [78, 79] have criticized the use of social media platforms to name and shame alleged perpetrators as abdicating responsibility that is ensured by a just and fair 'due process'[4]. This critique came in the backdrop of Raya Sarkar's List of Sexual Harassers in Academia (LoSHA) shared on Facebook which is considered to have initiated #MeToo movement in Indian academia [29, 109]. The criticism was regarding the politics of the list as it promoted a vigilante brand of feminism where men are anonymously accused as sexual predators without any context or explanation [78, 79]. Sarkar claimed that this information always existed as whispers among the student networks and needed to become a declaration to warn students and also name and shame the sexual predators on campus [29, 47].

This list exposed the ideological tensions and divides between feminists who were for and against the due process of seeking justice [47]. Moreover, when it emerged that Sarkar was a Dalit and queer, the prominent feminists critiquing the list were called out for using their upper-caste privileges in suppressing the former's efforts [4, 108]. While recent publications refute Sarkar's Dalit identity [79], the question of caste has persisted over time and across different generations of feminists due to continued power imbalances between Savarna (upper-caste) and Dalit, Bahujan, and Aadivasi (DBA) feminists [108].

Owing to their social location, DBA women have historically been at a greater risk of encountering gender-based violence [30, 40]. Their struggles have been well-documented with scholars [11, 96] observing that upper-caste feminists do not speak up enough or demonstrate a similar degree of outrage and action against the violence and struggles of DBA women as they do for their fellow upper-caste women [30, 77, 133]. When the #MeToo movement finally erupted in India in late 2018 after a series of women from the media, entertainment, corporate and other service industries spoke up about their sexual harassment experiences [74, 107], critics pointed out that the spotlight was on the voices of relatively privileged urban women, and was not inclusive of those on the fringes, for example DBA women [4, 32, 69, 120], disabled women [96, 125], victim/survivors in rural India [122, 123] and the LGBTQ+ community [89, 120].

Activists have been using social media platforms for mobilizing support and action on various women's and LGBTQ+ issues since the early 2000s [109, 117]. Ray and Roy [101] provide various examples of spontaneous public protests that have taken place in the urban areas that have seen a number of middle-class youths participate with their sites of mobilization spanning both online and offline spaces. However, lately the trend has shifted towards 'slacktivism' [87], making excessive use of social media to lodge protests and there has been a general inability to translate online movements and discussions into offline action [136]. In order to bring about a meaningful change, Subramanian [136] argues for rooting of social media movements in offline initiatives and action because action carried out on social media is momentary and not sustainable.

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[4]In a later publication Menon [79] clarifies her stand on 'due process' to mean more than just legal proceedings, but in the larger narrative it is still understood as legal process.

4 DATA AND METHODS

We began our study when the #MeToo movement in India was at its peak in October 2018. We conducted qualitative semi-structured, in-person interviews of middle-class working women in the Delhi-National Capital Region, India to understand their perspective on online feminist movements in general with a focus on the #MeToo movement. Women who had active accounts on any of these three social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (as the 2018 #MeToo movement in India was active on all these platforms) were chosen for our study. We used a snowball sampling technique [22] for recruiting our interview participants from a range of occupations. As the first author was based out of Delhi at the time of data collection, we started by interviewing participants within her social network, and then recruited participants following the suggestions of our already interviewed participants.

Iteratively analyzing our responses, we realized that our sample was lacking in diversity. Therefore, in order to include more diverse and intersectional perspectives we approached women's and LGBTQ+ rights activists, academics, as well as different stakeholders working in this domain (such as lawyers, members of the Internal Committee, and allied multi-media organizations creating interactive content) requesting for an interview on their perspectives on the #MeToo movement in India. We first identified stakeholders within our networks and then used snowball sampling. We also reached out to activists and organizations based on the impact of their work established in noted print and online publications. Many responded to our request but declined to participate in the study due to a lack of time at their end. Time is a precious resource for these activists because time spent participating in studies comes at the cost of other priorities (e.g. helping survivors and doing actual work on ground). Further, we attended public events on the issue of sexual harassment where those stakeholders we could not reach directly participated, and we took extensive notes of their talk.

Activists and stakeholders were asked about their experiences in dealing with workplace harassment issues, their perspectives on the efficacy and lacunae of the legal framework on sexual harassment in India, opinions on the #MeToo India movement, reasons for their participation/non-participation and how their initiative/work furthers the fight against sexual harassment or more broadly against gender-based violence.

Between October 2018-July 2019, we conducted 44 interviews until we reached theoretical saturation. Among our participants, 32 were heterosexual women (including women's rights activists), 10 queer individuals (5 identified as gay men, 4 as queer cis-women, 1 as non-binary trans-femme person) and 2 heterosexual men (lawyers/activists). Our participants were between the age range of 22-60 years, had a minimum qualification of being a graduate and were mostly from middle-class families. Ethnically, even though most of our interviewees lived in Delhi, they belonged to different regions of India. All the interviews were done in English and Hindi (depending on interviewees' fluency with the language), lasted between 45 minutes to 2 hours, and audio recorded with permission. These interviews were later transcribed in English by members of our research team. The data was iteratively analyzed using the grounded theory methodology [135], entailing repeated cycles of data collection and analysis.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, all in-person interviews were conducted upon taking a written consent of the interviewees. Barring the exception of most activists, lawyers, and other organizational stakeholders, almost all the interviewees who consented to the interviews requested to keep their responses anonymous. While most interviews were done in a single meeting, some interviewees required the researcher to familiarize themselves with the individuals to be interviewed by first speaking with them over phone or even meeting them once before they chose to share their stories. Owing to issues of trust and comfort, some interviewees (mostly women)

also preferred to give their interview in groups with their friends/colleagues. We conducted two such group interviews, where one was a group of 2 friends and the other was a group of 7 women colleagues.

Our interview protocol comprised of 13 questions around the participants' demographic information, use of social media, opinions about sexual harassment at workplace, and online protests. Since sexual harassment is a sensitive topic, we refrained from asking any direct question regarding our participants' experience with it. Instead, we asked them if they participated in any online feminist movements, and solicited their opinions and experiences around these movements on social media. We began the initial coding [31] of our data by engaging in line-by-line coding and followed it up with incident-to-incident coding. Finally, in order to sift through our entire data and categorize it incisively and completely we practiced focused coding [31].

Our participants used the terms 'digital media' and 'social media' as a catch-all phrase to describe their online experiences in general. They used various social media platforms, chiefly Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. While our study and the interview responses did not focus on user experiences across the different platforms, the majority of participants reported being active on Facebook, followed by Instagram with very few active on Twitter. Participants further claimed to only be passive readers of the #MeToo posts which appeared on their timelines as shares - most of these posts were authored by their extended connections rather than their immediate network.

During our analysis, we found that our data lacked Dalit women's #MeToo accounts as well as related perspectives by Dalit feminist activists. We conducted a further review of relevant writings in English, focusing on public threads of twitter conversations (for example, statements put forth by #Dalitwomenfight in the context of #MeToo), Dalit feminist webpages, magazine articles, and published scholarly literature. This secondary data was analyzed and used to inform a more nuanced analysis of how intersections of caste, class, and gender relate to the #MeToo movement.

4.1 Methodological Reflections

The first author involved in the data collection process identified as a heterosexual, middle-class, upper-caste Hindu female belonging to the dominant majority in India. Having lived in India for 30+ years, she had also endured her own share of sexual harassment/violence in various domestic, public, recreational spaces. This definitely had a bearing on the nuance of the questions asked on the basis of class, caste and gender, but further conversations with activists working on these issues allowed the questions to be refined to reflect various intersectional standpoints.

We thus attempted to understand how complex, intersectional identities [35] in terms of gender, class, caste, religion and race [15] – configured within the South Asian processes of differentiation and systems of domination [34, 150] – navigate these legal and digital justice infrastructures. Even though we attempted to purposely sample for diverse intersectional perspectives, we could barely scratch the surface. A major limitation of our study was our inability to break into the communities of resource-poor informal sector workers (who have access to smartphones and internet), caste-oppressed Dalit and Other Backward Classes (OBC), and cis- and trans-women within the queer community. Among the Dalit activists/women we approached, majority didn't respond to our emails. Among those who did respond to our requests, only one woman consented – most denied participation owing to paucity of time, as previously discussed. Further, apart from 4 queer cis-women, no lesbian and bisexual individuals in the first author's personal networks or snowball reference consented to be interviewed – as they considered themselves more vulnerable and didn't want to risk identification.

On one hand, the first author sharing her own personal incidents provided for an empathetic environment where participants opened up – from being initially reticent, they reflected and shared their personal stories of abuse and sexual harassment. We would like to think of this as having

cultivated a safe and secure environment, since the author trusted them with her personal stories, the participants may also have felt confident to discuss their harassment accounts of a rather personal nature.

On the other hand, the dominant identity characteristics of the first author may have evoked the sentiments of structural violence that oppressed-caste and minority communities have traditionally faced in India thereby leading the potential participants from those communities to refuse to have their stories told by someone in the first author's subject position. A lot of Dalit feminists writing reflects on the the issues of voice and identity privileges and takes the questions of who gets to speak on whose behalf, to what end, very seriously [4, 69, 96, 140].

We feel that remaining sensitive to the context of survivors of gender-based violence is extremely important when considering research on such sensitive topics, especially in the context of inter-sectional and conservative South Asian countries. For our study, we observed that even seeking harmless opinions around online feminist movements from the first author's immediate network was not taken positively, with most women participants getting defensive, denying any incident of gender-based violence to have ever occurred to them. We were hence referred to many survivors of sexual harassment through the snowball, yet we were unable to interview most of them as they understandably declined to even remotely talk about the issue. Among those, the ones who initially consented to share their story later rescinded their consent owing to the trauma of recounting the experience again. The survivors who had sought legal measures reported the anguish and exhaustion resulting from repeated telling of the incident(s) for legal purposes and did not want to undergo the pain to do so for an academic study. For those who still chose to share their accounts, we honored their wishes to leave the interview midway, not answer any question they did not want to, and also deleted certain parts they initially shared but later were not comfortable in that being analyzed for the study.

5 THE BLURRED BOUNDARIES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The legal infrastructure for seeking justice against sexual harassment operates within the over-arching frameworks of patriarchy and imbibes its ensuing politics and power dynamics from the social norms. While the current legal frameworks in India have classified 'sexual harassment' of 'women' at 'workplace', its experience is far from being so neatly boxed. Our participants shared that the boundaries of sexual harassment are blurred and don't always conform to the strict binaries of gender and workplace relations for the survivors who try to make sense of their traumatic experiences. These experiences, especially for LGBTQ+ individuals, have multiple dimensions of power and variables of emotions for which they lack vocabulary and language to express.

5.1 Expression in binaries

The legal framework imposes different kinds of binaries, such as either being the helpless victim (seen as a feminine characteristic) or the brute masculine oppressor; proclaiming what is right versus condemning what is wrong; the binary of "if it is not justice, then it is injustice". Our participants felt that many times, this kind of dichotomous perspective forgoes the gray areas found within the historical context of the people involved, the complexities of their relationship coupled with power dynamics at the workplace. Few of them reported that these binaries are grounds on which this law can easily be exploited, as explained by one of the activists,

> "Leaving aside the very small proportion of fake cases, let's say that I am in a consensual relationship and my partner (who happens to be my co-worker or boss) rejects me or decides to move on, then, there is no space to talk about that hurt. There is not enough sympathy. If I say sexual harassment, it gets me that sympathy... If there were spaces to

speak about hurt and rejection, in the same hierarchy as compared to sexual harassment, then a lot of cases of sexual harassment would have been seen differently…" -(QA2, Queer cis-woman, Queer Activist, Delhi)

The complexities of (inappropriate but not illegal) workplace relationships, as observed in the example above, are layered with the choice of consent within power structures and whether those lower in hierarchy have a choice, if not give consent. Their unique power dynamics are messy to dissect and contribute to the gray areas in the continuum of incidents usually construed as purely black or white.

5.2 Lack of appropriate vocabulary and its acceptance

The legislation on sexual harassment at workplace is not gender neutral. It has been specifically classified to cater to the harassment of 'women' at the workplace. This was a consequence of feminist groups engaged with drafting the legislation not wanting cis-gendered men taking advantage of the law and hence they fiercely lobbied to keep them from being identified as 'survivors'. As one of the activists engaged in framing of this law shares,

> "While I am not denying the existence of sexual harassment of men, its proportion is miniscule in comparison to the harassment women in India face. Operating within staunch patriarchal power structures, the law runs the risk of being dominated by men… India is not yet ready for a gender-neutral law…" (A4, Women's Rights Activist, Female, Delhi)

Attributing it to the heteronormative character of the Indian society, many participants, particularly those identifying as LGBTQ+, reported that there is a general lack of vocabulary to talk about their sexual harassment experiences. Due to the legal classification of the sexual harassment experiences of 'women', the harassment LGBTQ+ people undergo at the workplace falls through the cracks. This particularly stood to affect men identifying as gay, non-binary or gender-queer from accessing justice. They note that even within 'sensitized' activism settings, only women are spoken of as being sexually harassed. Due to this reason, there is a significant lack of safe spaces as well as lack of language and vocabulary-initiated inhibition to talk about sexual harassment within their identity frames, as one of the interviewees shares,

> "… we don't look at sex from a very orthodox perspective… we are much more positive and friendly towards sex per se, which is also true to a certain extent but that doesn't also mean that we are also not people who don't have the sense of integrity or self-boundary – so before raising the issue [of sexual harassment] I'll be afraid that what if I am type-casted as another promiscuous person? And what if my concern won't be taken so seriously? … when accepting yourself as a queer, [we are] unable to make a clear distinction between what is a positive flirt or sense of boundaries. There is also the concept of hurt, we also tend to get hurt by non-consensual advances… there's a lack of language and [safe] space to talk about it." (QA3, Trans-Femme, Queer activist, Delhi)

Struggling with the idea of facing harassment while being queer and negotiating power hierarchies between two equal people in the same spectrum, the mainstream narrative ends up homogenizing the experiences of the entire homosexual (LGBTQ+) community. Hence, in a situation of being violated, LGBTQ+ participants share that they lack language or a mutual frame of interpretation for their experiences to inform the mainstream understanding.

6 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE AND EXISTING JUSTICE INFRASTRUCTURES

Under the Indian legal justice system, 'place' is a key dimension in classifying and standardizing gender-based violence. It serves not just to mean a physical location but also the context within which an incidence of harassment occurs. Through covering specific experiences and excluding others, harassment can be tried under relevant legislations and criminal codes (not in a mutually exclusive way). For instance, violence in the context of a 'domestic' setting is covered under the Protection of Women under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005; sexual harassment in a 'public' setting is covered under Section 354A of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013; and likewise, the sexual harassment occuring in the context of 'workplace' is accounted for within the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The law comprehensively lists the 'acts' constituting sexual harassment as well as the various kinds of workplaces (office-based, organizational, online, home-based, third-party workspaces, transportation, etc.) to be inclusive of diverse settings. However, patriarchal power dynamics operating within these sanitized categories continue to keep survivors of sexual harassment from speaking up and utilizing these frameworks for seeking justice.

In this section, using the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, we discuss the workings of the legal justice infrastructure in India in terms of the biases that the infrastructure carries and how they relate to existing social norms and organizational practices. From the experiences of our participants, we outline a range of biases inherent in the legal infrastructure for seeking justice for sexual harassment that makes the process challenging for survivors.

6.1 Organizational Intent

In order to decentralize and fast track the process of justice-seeking, the legislation on sexual harassment of women at workplace mandated setting up of ICs at the organizational level. However, for the legislation to work, it is important that the organization truly believes in a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and not view it solely as a legally mandated administrative requirement. Participants shared that many organizations are guilty of paying lip service to the legislation by merely conducting the mandatory awareness generation sessions on what constitutes as sexual harassment at the workplace, and when someone complains, they don't provide proper support, appropriate resources and referrals. They also shared that within their work culture, the IC is perceived differently from an ordinary inquiry committee because of the term 'sex' in it.

In many cases the IC does not have the information it needs because organizations don't cooperate with its members. Other points of contention arise when the survivor is no longer part of the organization but the person accused is still working there and/or the complaint goes back in time to when the accused wasn't a part of the organization. There are also questions on the way forward if the principles of natural justice are compromised when, for instance, the accused chooses not to appear for the IC hearing because they have left the organization or are absconding, or the accused is there but the survivor (complainant) doesn't appear for the hearing. In all these instances, an organization's commitment to fight sexual harassment determines their response of whether to follow up or ignore the allegation.

Legal experts and activists participating in our study also shared that nothing is stopping an organization from following a gender-neutral policy towards the prevention of sexual harassment. Since the ICs are decentralized at the organizational level, their members can use the same framework to set up an inquiry in case survivors not identifying as women choose to report their case. While participants reported that a handful of NGOs in the activism settings had taken this path,

they also noted that eventually it all depends on the organizational intent to root out the culture of sexual harassment from their workspace.

6.2 Hierarchy and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Hierarchies, power, and bureaucracy manifest in different levels of justice-seeking infrastructure. If the survivor chooses to take the Internal Committee (IC) route, then the committee has the legal power to investigate sexual harassment at workplace, and based on their finding, recommend disciplinary action. The power to implement these recommendations, however, rests with the chairperson of the organization (workplace of harassment). Members of the IC (especially external members) don't have a say in the implementation of the recommendations they make, and are rarely informed about the final action taken by the organization.

The legal framework has put in place Local Committees (LCs) for taking into purview all those instances that are not included under IC; however, despite mandated by the legislation, LCs are not in place in every district. Our findings reported funding to be a key issue as the Central Government doesn't have allocated funds for this purpose. Our activist participants shared that the officials responsible for forming LCs get transferred very frequently, leading them to restart their advocacy efforts in appointing a LC and the allocation of funds. This bureaucratic issue renders the LCs non-existent or dysfunctional as they cannot even rent an office space for the committee to discharge their duties, let alone paying an honorarium to the members for their services and/or to even provide compensatory relief to the aggrieved woman/survivor. However, even in places where the LCs are functional, its members are often unaware of their roles and responsibilities due to lack of training. Even where the members are trained they lack sensitivity to deal with such cases. For instance, women's rights activists reported that there are just two functional local committees in Delhi, yet their members have not received proper sensitization training and carry orthodox patriarchal mindsets. They often cast doubt on the survivors' experiences and demean them. Survivors, in their bid to prevent further harassment and trauma, are thus deterred from taking their complaints to LCs.

Since the maximum punishment that can be awarded by taking the IC/LC route is suspension, transfer or termination from duties, our findings report that many legal experts now recommend survivors to file civil suits under labour laws if they seek monetary compensation or file a criminal complaint if they seek jail term for the accused. While it is not advisable that a survivor file a criminal complaint after being dissatisfied with IC/LC proceedings, but if they choose to do so then a detailed justification has to be provided.

Once the survivor files a criminal complaint, a formal police investigation begins. Lawyers dealing with the cases of sexual harassment share that this is a hassle. Often, the police lack sensitivity and the survivors are made to answer uncomfortable questions, where it is not uncommon to question their character (blaming the victim). There are also chances that the police delay filing the First Information Report (FIR) or may choose to not file one, as the authority to do so lies with them. Further, there are concerns of corruption and bribery.

There is also scope for additional backlash as counter cases of defamation are slapsuited on women who file criminal complaints, making it a prolonged legal wrangle for them. Even with the survivors pushing past all biases and hurdles to file a complaint by any of the means discussed above, the larger frame of societal dynamics is often more disabling for them than enabling. Commenting on such hostile ecosystem for seeking justice, one of the study participants said,

> "... This is a hostile patriarchal set up… when we thought the Farooqui Judgement[5]
> [on consensual sex] " A feeble no is not a no" was a nail in the coffin… the Chief

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[5]https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/26/a-feeble-no-may-mean-yes-indian-court-overturns-conviction

Justice of India made a mockery of the whole justice system by heading the same panel which was formed to investigate him for allegedly sexually harassing a young female employee… The helplessness of survivors has emboldened people [to commit such acts and get away with them]… the whole system appears to be a sham!" (Ac7, Female, PhD student, Delhi)

6.3 Technology and Burden of Proof

There is a heavy reliance on technologies that carry evidence, such as CCTV camera footage, screenshots of chats and messages, call records, etc. highlighting that even though a balance of probabilities[6] is followed in ICs/LCs determination of sexual harassment, if such evidence is not available then it is just one person's words against the other, which leaves them undecided on how to proceed further. There are witnesses, but they may choose not to testify or might turn hostile; in those cases it is a struggle to determine who's telling the truth.

In case of criminal proceedings, the burden of proof solely rests on the survivor to prove that they are not lying or "did not ask" for the harassment and that the accused is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Even with the evidence in place, there are questions of due diligence – if the police are doing everything properly, if they are collecting all the evidence mentioned in the original complaint and are maintaining the chain of circumstances. As a lawyer we interviewed shares,

"...When you look at [a] criminal complaint, the crime has to be proven beyond doubt. The path to travel to say that "yes, the offence has been committed" has to be with a lot of evidence… Therefore, the real struggle is in cases of such nature where you're saying something that the other party will of course deny, in the trial if there is a variation in the chain of circumstances or statement to what is recorded earlier, conviction is difficult…" (L2, Lawyer, Male, Delhi).

Our participants shared that there can be variations in the chain of circumstances between what is recorded by the law enforcement agencies and what is presented during the trial. This can be for a variety of reasons, including an honest oversight or deliberate malfeasance, such as corruption (e.g. acceptance of bribe) or general apathy towards the survivor's accounts. This, of course, can get complicated, in the scenario of fake accusations.

6.4 Social Norms and the Workplace

Despite the existing legal infrastructure, most of our participants reported that women tend to ignore workplace harassment because of: a) the social norms of stigma and shame associated with speaking out about 'sexual' harassment, and b) fear of being easily replaceable, as one of the participants shared,

"..For a predatory mind, women are an unending supply - she goes another comes - this sense of entitlement is a colossal problem that makes women opt out of seeking justice using the due process…" (Ac6, Female, College Principal, University of Delhi)

Most of the times, the power and influence held by the perpetrators in terms of their workplace hierarchy, social standing of class, caste, gender and social networks vis-a-vis the 'type' of employee the complainant (survivor of sexual harassment) is - e.g. permanent, contractual, freelancer, informal sector worker, etc.- is a product of social norms which stacks up against the survivor. Existing power dynamics often lead to complainants being relieved from their job duties on some pretext or not offered work within the community, especially if they work on contract or freelance. Women's rights activists shared examples on how even well known women face the same fate.

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[6]Not based on strict proof but taking into account the inherent probability or improbability of the occurrence of an event when weighing the probabilities and deciding whether, on balance, the event occurred

Moreover, when a complaint is filed, survivors also face opportunity costs that disproportionately hurt those who are economically vulnerable and work on daily wages. Perpetrators, on the other hand, have been reported to face little legal consequence as shared by one of the lawyers present at the Network of Women in Media Public Meeting,

> ".. We have to acknowledge everybody is someone's friend. Unwritten social sanctions help in the social rehabilitation of the perpetrators and further marginalize the survivor and their chances at justice. It appears that they [the perpetrators] face little consequence to the law, job, or even a marginal shame..." (Female, Lawyer, Delhi)

6.4.1 Marginalization and Intersectionality. For a large number of women from poor socio-economic backgrounds, specially Dalit women and LGBTQ+ individuals, sexual harassment is an everyday story. Women's rights activists we interviewed reported that most of those women working in the informal sector are unaware of LCs where they could go to complain about sexual harassment. Even if they are aware, previously discussed issues with LCs, and a toxic combination of their economic vulnerability, lack of job security, stigma, isolation, family pressures render them unable to report the harassment. Dalit women have traditionally been seen as 'available', irrespective of their disadvantaged or privileged background. One of our study participants shared that when her friend – who identifies as a middle-class Dalit woman – was working for an International Human Rights NGO, she was sexually harassed by her male boss. The IC of her organization let her down by being unsupportive. Her contract was later terminated on the pretext of lack of funding. Likewise, from secondary data sources we find that the social location of (relatively privileged) Dalit women has been a professional detriment to their careers [86, 133]. It is imperative to analyse this situation from the intersectional lens of caste, class and gender because upper-caste cis-men tend to dominate most corporate boards and upper management positions in India [10, 54]. Therefore, the caste and gender dynamics of a workplace can make an unequal situation unbearable.

The harassment accounts shared in our data also pointed to the problem encountered if the harasser and victim/survivor are from the same marginalized community (e.g. DBA and queer communities). The survivors are often pressurised to resolve the matter privately in the larger interests of the already marginalized community. If they choose otherwise, then they are ostracized for sabotaging the struggle of the entire community over the wrongdoing by a member of that community. Further, our participants also shared that even when those most marginalized at the intersections, e.g. Dalit women and transgender people sought justice taking the criminal complaint route, the police did not believe them and kept rejecting their claims of being sexually harassed.

In keeping with all these issues, our participants shared that many times survivors choose not to complain, withdraw their complaints or settle because they want to take the path of least resistance.

7 DIGITAL JUSTICE INFRASTRUCTURES

This section presents the point of contact between existing legal (justice) infrastructures and digital justice infrastructures (such as online feminist movements). Using the instance of #MeToo, we share how online feminist movements push back against the biases of due process as well as reinforce existing power dynamics and create new ones.

7.1 #MeToo: Pushing back against existing biases

We highlight how #MeToo, emerges as a symptom of survivors' dissatisfaction with the due process by discussing the reasons behind sharing their sexual harassment experiences as part of the online social media movement.

7.1.1 Sharing without any expectation of justice. A section of participants reported that they or the survivors in their networks shared their stories of harassment during the #MeToo movement as a cathartic measure to validate their experiences. They did not have any expectation of seeking legal justice. Those who were able to share their stories, were able to do so because of the support of their families and friends. As a women's rights activist noted,

> "My understanding is that women who write on Facebook haven't gone there for justice. All these women are not saying that "we want justice", what they are trying to say is that they are mirroring the reflections of society, that all this is happening with us ... Success is not just the fact that you were able to get someone punished. What punishment can you give in this case? 2 month punishment, 3 month demotion – what good is it going to do for the survivor? The shame that the perpetrators go through is a huge success for me." (A1, Female, Women's Rights Activist, Delhi)

The public naming and shaming accompanying the catharsis of sharing the experience on social media was reported to bring about some kind of a closure to survivors of such experiences and served as an example of pervasiveness of the issue for others.

7.1.2 Sharing with expectation of justice. Certain participants felt that survivors' shared their sexual harassment experiences online to gain visibility as a last resort for justice. The survivors ranged from those who followed due process and didn't find the results satisfactory, those who wanted to reopen unresolved old cases/incidences, to those who wanted to use this as an opportunity to augment their present case by using it as an initiation or accompaniment to the due process and build pressure on the institutions involved. As one of the participants working in a women's rights organization shared,

> "So the women who came out during MeToo, they know that nothing is going to happen even after [or just by] being a part of the court [legal] processes and that's why they speak up online... We have a few success stories, but can't share them because of ethics... Some #MeToo cases are under process where we have some hope of getting success, some cases have been reopened... " (A2, Female, Women's Rights Activist, Delhi)

This expectation raise comes in the backdrop of the mainstream media's coverage of high profile cases, which has led to significant public pressure in moving the justice machinery towards rapid trials. However, this has not been without its limitations of some unfavourable judgements in face of powerful 'perpetrators' (e.g. the Chief Justice of India [23]) and counter-cases of defamation slapsuited against the survivors [24].

7.1.3 Sharing in Solidarity. This was the most common response of our study participants. Almost all our participants agreed that publicly sharing sexual harassment experiences is an extremely courageous act because it involves reliving the trauma and managing the sensitive and insensitive reactions of both friends/family and strangers. The trauma of not being believed, trolled, or being seen as someone who has invited some form of harassment takes a lot out of the survivor. Therefore, many study participants reported sharing social media statuses with hashtag 'MeToo' in solidarity with those who penned down detailed accounts of sexual harassment. These participants didn't share their personal accounts but just shared their friends'/acquaintances' statuses by adding the hashtag 'MeToo' or just a '#MeToo' as a general status to acknowledge the pervasiveness of sexual harassment.

During the interviews, some women participants shared that they don't like sharing anything private (i.e. posts that are personal in nature involving family and work life) because they access social media for other purposes such as to keep in touch with old friends and/or to read news and

articles of interest. Therefore, sharing of harassment experiences of such intimate nature was out of the question for such people. However, other participants who were relatively more open to sharing their personal lives on social media reported being cautious about sharing their harassment experiences because they didn't want a digital footprint of their harassment accounts and didn't want their identity to be solely associated with that incident. One of the participants elaborates on this aspect of digital archiving of such memories,

> "...When I was first molested, I could not share it with my mother for years. At that moment I didn't have that language. When I told my boyfriend [that's the] first time I said MeToo... by putting it on Facebook, [such experiences] always remain there... I believe that narrative should not define my life. I only want to share with a few. I don't want to go back to it, I don't want to have a harrowing conversation on the topic in the public, I don't want it to be a topic of gossip... [such experiences have] emotionally scarred me. I want to get away, I don't want to revisit it..." (Ac7, Female, PhD student, Delhi)

7.2 #MeToo Interacting with Existing Legal Systems

A common thought echoed among the participants that the kind of disruption brought about by the #MeToo movement presents an opportunity for government organizations and activists working on the issue of sexual harassment to use such moments creatively to complement the activities they are already doing. On their part, the activists highlighted their efforts in utilizing the momentum by organizing a series of consultations with the Government bodies to push for a more accessible justice infrastructure. This involved pushing to make the LC infrastructure stronger and ICs more effective by ensuring they are not just acting on paper but actually stepping up to fulfil their responsibilities. They also acknowledged the issue of ICs being just a recommendations body and questioned its overarching role if the power to agree with and implement the recommendations rested with the head of the organization, which was outside the jurisdiction of the ICs.

Most of our study participants, however, demonstrated a lack of faith in social media movements due to the issues of accountability. Their views projected #MeToo and similar movements such as the list of sexual harassers in academia (LoSHA) as kangaroo courts lacking in the principles of natural justice, i.e. where those accused of a wide spectrum of misconduct from casual flirting to being a repeat offender of gross violations have their names on the same list or platform and are branded as perpetrators without being given a fair chance to be heard. On the other end of the spectrum are the survivors who, although heard by a larger audience, are often viciously trolled for speaking out. Under these circumstances, the question arises about the trust and accountability factors survivors consider when making a choice of speaking up about their harassment. One category of participants believed that if the survivors place their trust in the due process of going via the various committees entrusted to provide relief by law, they would be protected from other forms of nasty and unwanted legal complications such as defamation suits, as shared by a participant,

> "... it is important to understand that #MeToo is not a magic wand... it exists in an environment where there are many other factors when it [recourse] comes into play... otherwise, one party does something that the other party doesn't want [share incidents publicly over social media], the other party takes other legal measures [e.g. defamation lawsuit], making it very difficult [to reconcile]..." (Ac5, Female, PhD student, Delhi)

Another category of participants shared that survivors seek assurances in the form of 'support groups' among the people they know and they can trust as opposed to approaching a committee (IC/LC) formed of unknown people they don't know and hence don't trust in the matters of sharing such intimate details. In a similar vein, the study participants felt that they and the people in their

networks who might be survivors of sexual harassment would not consider sharing their experience over social media, due to the factors of trust, issues of accountability of social media movements as well as due to the temporality of the matter and lack of on-ground support. As a participant shares,

> "It's the 'flavor of the season' effect... Everyone who uses social media knows that public memory is short. People who are on social media flit from one issue to the next because they want to make public on every issue and I think that victims by and large prefer to put their faith in people who they know, whom they trust and who would hold their hands and see [them through] to the end, because digital media also opens you up to immense amount of trolling from completely disconnected people... It's okay to chat and share on social media, especially when there is momentum of a movement... but the momentum in itself is momentary and that would be the case of any movement on social media... It [#MeToo] lacks the commitment of a grassroots movement or organizing... In my experience, they [survivors] would much rather go to a real person." [Ac6, Female, College Principal and Chairperson IC, University of Delhi]

7.3 #MeToo Interacting with Existing Social Norms

The #MeToo movement was also able to push back and disrupt the status quo because the mainstream media publicized these experiences. The furore it created around the issue initiated a conversation and in the process – intentionally or unintentionally – normalized the phenomenon of sexual harassment to an extent. Some study participants, especially young women reported, that it has made it easier for them to break the silence around this topic at home and have a rather normal conversation on this otherwise taboo topic with their parents and close relatives. One of the participants shared,

> "... Because of #MeToo movement being highlighted in the Indian [mainstream] media, my parents are getting to know about this... my mother generally asked me and my brother about this movement the other day, we told her it was about sexual harassment... I come from a conservative family where females of older generations don't ask such questions [that have sexual connotations], especially not to their sons and daughters... Now she is coming to terms with the fact that women are speaking up these days... It is a progressive first-step that I can talk to her and my father about it... " (P1, Female, Scientist, Delhi)

Many participants reported that the older generations still have a tendency to blame the victim, but even to get them to initiate a conversation on the issue which involves the word 'sex' should be viewed as progress, within the patriarchal norms of our society. While social media movements did not explicitly restrict anyone online from participating, our study participants unanimously agreed the #MeToo movement was elitist, heteronormative and lacked intersectionality. They remarked that in spite of the movement operating in an online space, it clearly reflected the offline societal caste, class and gender dynamics of excluding the voices of the marginalized.

7.3.1 The Class and Caste divide. To assume that survivors have the autonomy to post their harassment experiences online is naive in the context of a patriarchal society. It is further complicated when class and caste divisions come into play. In our study, issues of hierarchy and privilege surfaced with the question of access to social media as there was an observable absence of the voices of poor and marginalized working in the informal or domestic sector, or those who lack familiarity with English as the study participants reported not seeing any posts in Hindi or local languages in their networks when the #MeToo movement was active. One of the participants shared,

> "... Take the working class perspective, for a large number of women from poor socio-economic background, specially Dalit women and Queer women, sexual harassment is an everyday story. What definitely plays out is access to spaces where you can make yourself heard, access to language and vocabulary to express it… even the privilege to put a hashtag on your experience is a huge privilege…" [AcQ3, Queer cis-male, Gay, Ph.D. student, Kerala]

Participants also felt that the #MeToo movement had been springboarded from the white Western setting in the same non-intersectional manner among the urban located and educated in India, where a certain class of feminists who spoke in suave English appropriated that movement. Thus, recognizing that the #MeToo narratives were mostly shared by upper-class and upper-caste Savarna women, many Dalit women and feminists chose not to participate for various reasons as a participant (who identifies as an ally) says,

> "... As a Hindi-speaking person reading that, you wouldn't even have the confidence to post your narratives. When you see that most of the narratives are posted by Savarna women, you wouldn't want to participate because there is a severe lack of support systems for Dalit feminists. The trolling Dalit women and Savarna women face is different… because the Dalit woman knows that she doesn't have the cultural backing that a Savarna woman has… [hence] she says this is not my movement. I'd create my own movement, whisper network, safe spaces…" (Ac7, Female, PhD student, Delhi)

Participants also highlighted the lack of narratives from minority communities such as Muslim women and Aadivasi (indigenous) women, along with those who come from a poor socio-economic background and often don't have the access to social media or the vocabulary to share their stories. Some participants reported reading a few #MeToo accounts from survivors belonging to the marginalized communities of Dalit and queer women (especially among those who had the access to social media and the vocabulary to write), but concurred that these voices did not receive as much attention as others.

One of our participant (A6) who identifies as a Dalit shared that since Dalit women have always been in the public space doing physical labor, they have been considered to be 'loose women' or as [sexually] 'available'. Sexual violence against Dalit women has been a manifestation of them raising their voices and saying things that were not liked by people. The #MeToo movement might thus be a moment for Savarna women but it was not new for Dalit women. In the quote below, we see their response to the purported absence of Dalit voices in the #MeToo movement:

> "... Someone in an argument told me that the Dalit feminist movement is next to arrive, so I shared an example of Bhanwari Devi and Phulan Devi as Dalit women who've questioned the status quo and asserted themselves, they didn't wait for due process. That's the kind of strength Dalit women bring to movements... I am sure they have posted their [#MeToo] narratives in their spaces, but when you say that we didn't see any narratives posted by them, we put the onus of invisibility on them. Historical exclusion occurs when we choose to close our eyes. So, visibilize them, go the extra mile to look for those narratives or articles, share them and post them. I feel that as a Savarna woman you can do that…" (A6, Queer cis-woman, Activist, Delhi)

Taking the suggestion of participant A6 and other activists, we searched the web and found many Dalit women and feminist activists' writings on this issue. A Twitter statement put out by Dalit feminists/activists with the hashtag #DalitWomenFight on #MeToo shared the sentiment around the issue most comprehensively. It reinforced that Dalit women have for long resisted sexual harassment from dominant-caste men, mixed-caste men, men from their own caste and dominant-caste women, yet they can't locate themselves in the 'me' of the Indian #MeToo [36]. Dalit

feminist activists such as Dhanaraj [38] and Stephen [133] also contend that the struggles of Dalit women have been invisibilized by the complicity of media, NGOs, feminist/women's movement, academia, the police and the judiciary, as the upper-caste individuals that control these institutions either appropriate Dalit women's voices for their own ends or silence them. Likewise, other writings have pointed out that the absence of Dalit voices is a willful erasure of the structural inequalities within the Indian society and not just a #MeToo-specific phenomenon [96].

7.3.2 Politics of Sexuality. A shred of consolation for the women marginalized by the class and caste divide in the #MeToo movement is their 'visibility' in the formal legal infrastructures as 'women' who can seek justice against harassment. This is not the case with the LGBTQ+ individuals (more specifically men identifying as gay, non-binary, gender-fluid and gender-queer) who in addition to not being 'recognized' by the legal framework at present, didn't find representation / chose not to participate in the #MeToo movement as well. While many of our queer participants noted that the queer movement leadership in India is very Hindu, upper caste, gay, male and urban, even this did not reflect in terms of their representation or participation in the #MeToo movement.

Many participants attributed their non-participation to the lack of language and vocabulary-initiated inhibition for talking about Sexual Harassment within their queer identities, as previously discussed. Thus, for the fear of misinterpretation of their perspectives, unnecessarily inviting trolling objectifying their identities on open online forums, that they don't consider as their safe spaces, they chose to remain silent about their harassment experiences. In general they felt that the #MeToo movement, further amplified the heteronormative nature of the society and excluded those who did not want to be categorized in various binaries as previously discussed. Moreover, queer individuals who considered posting about their experiences online with the hashtag 'MeToo' felt certain trade-offs in terms of aligning with the politics of those at the forefront of the #MeToo movement and how confining to the larger narrative would come at the cost of them negotiating with their queer identity. One of the participants elaborates on this,

> "...Those women who are at the frontline of the #MeToo movement [in India] have certain political ideas around sex that maybe as a queer person I don't completely agree with... I feel that those women are women in power, they have a certain bit of influence and so it became their own agenda... my experiences are not so black and white, but if I am coming out with my experience and tagging it as a #MeToo confession, then whether I agree or disagree with their politics, in order for me to get a certain validation for my post, I'll need to fall back upon them. I think somewhere I have a problem with that... I don't think I'm comfortable taking that risk... My story first will be stereotyped in the binaries of a perpetrator and I'll be expected to be a helpless victim... on the other hand I'm still that promiscuous, loud personality which they are not able to accept. For a queer person, I think accepting vulnerability in a very public space also eats away a bit of your strength that you've been gathering." (QA3, Trans-Femme, Queer Activist, Delhi)

If on one hand, our LGBTQ+ participants shared the fear of diluting the queer movements' strength by coming out as victims sharing their stories with the hashtag #MeToo, they, on the other hand, also feared appropriating the movement by taking spotlight away from the Women's cause as they understood women's invisibility and their fight. A participant explains this view,

> "I felt that this is a space that the women are trying to reclaim in our society where there's not enough space to talk about even violence and sexual violence survivors are shamed. So I felt that it was a space for women and it was a space for the survivors to talk about it. A lot of queer people were hesitant to speak up because we thought we

are taking their space at a time when they need it. I feel MeToo serves a very unique purpose. It has its own relevance, it has its own context and it needs to be seen in that context. It cannot just be replaced in the queer movement..." (QA5, Queer cis-male, Gay, Queer Activist, Delhi)

Thus, the residuality of LGBTQ+ individuals seems to have fuelled a dichotomy of fear of being appropriated by the politics of the #MeToo movement and diverting the attention of the movement from the cause of women.

7.4 #MeToo and Gender Relations at the Workplace

Gender relationships at workplaces in India have significantly changed over the last few decades. Since the 90s economic liberalization in the country, there has been a rapid influx of women in professional workplaces [99], precipitated by the emergence of the transnational call center and IT industries [119]. This has led to changes in organizational policies and practices, many attempting to create gender-neutral workplaces. Our participants shared that, for better or for worse, the advent of #MeToo instilled fears among men in the workplace with men genuinely afraid, not wanting to end up on any lists of sexual harassers. Thus, workplace relationships between men and women are reported to have been strained after the #MeToo movement due to the fear and ambiguity of what can be construed as sexual harassment. For instance, many participants shared that men are afraid of having casual conversations (e.g. joking) with their female co-workers, as one of them elaborates,

"...It [the #MeToo movement] has taken the joy out of light relationships we used to share with men... we've had wonderful colleagues and friends with whom we could share a thing or two without feeling compromised, but now they fear if we perceive their behavior as affront or as sexual... whether rightly or wrongly..." (Ac6, Female, College Principal, University of Delhi)

In some sectors, #MeToo is also reported to have created a general environment of fear towards hiring women, with employers hiring men for the positions they hired women before. This strategy of avoidance has stemmed from perceiving women as the root of the problem where if an employer does not hire them, then they can avoid dealing with the issues of sexual harassment at their workplace.

7.5 Critical Engagement with #MeToo

Our study participants felt that the movement was a threat to critical thinking and engagement, as its functioning within the echo chambers of social media promoted the binaries of mainstream heteronormative imagination, slacktivism and lacked a clear purpose/goal. As one participant shares,

"There are people who put up posts and then there are people who troll them, and if this is how it will be – trolls will keep on trolling and those who post will keep on putting up the posts, then what added thing is social media is bringing into this discourse? There are a lot of hate speeches among each other and that too going into the heteronormative discourse of #MeToo versus #NotAllMen; perpetrator versus survivor... against men, against women. When we don't open up [offline] spaces, there are echo chambers and opinion bubbles that are restricting the discourse." (QA3, Trans-Femme, Queer Activist, Delhi)

Likewise, many participants commented on the futility of such armchair exchanges on social media where they felt everyone was arguing to defend their position as opposed to engaging in an open-minded critical discussion. They felt no learning could be synthesized from such futile

exchanges. Participants also felt that by virtue of #MeToo being a social media movement adapted from the West, it was ideologically entrenched in the very Capitalist and Patriarchal structures it challenged and therefore should ideally not be a venue of lodging such protests. One of the participants noted,

> "... The use of social media tools [to spread the message of feminism is ironic given it] reeks of patriarchy and capitalism... Feminism is about equality of all human beings and also the acknowledgment of their differences... Feminism and capitalism are incompatible... and the use of such tools [social media] by white women to protest against gender-based violence made me reflect on my ideas on feminism and in general on the politics of protest... After all, you can't use the master's tools to break the master's house" (P5, Female, Freelance Editor, Delhi)

Finally, activists working with the objective of removing taboos around 'sex' felt that the discourse around #MeToo has pushed back the conversation about desire and sex to have such negative consequences as sexual harassment. As a queer activist shared,

> "I have always thought of it from what a disservice it did to that whole sexuality debate that now there is love and sexual harassment, there is nothing in the middle. Sex is there which can be good, which can be bad... having said that we don't think this movement has affected our intent to work on sex positivity in anyway, we still keep talking about it." (QA1, Queer cis-woman, Queer Activist, Delhi)

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Imbrication and its issues

The ideal notion that the "due process" within the legal infrastructures will provide justice against all odds was challenged by women who used digital infrastructures in an unconventional manner (e.g. to initiate an online feminist movement with a hashtag on social media or lists of sexual harassers) to demand or rather produce a kind of 'anarchist' justice. The imbrication [124] of digital infrastructural routes of seeking justice with legal infrastructures and social norms provides seamful spaces [145] – particular points of disjuncture, tensions, frictions and breakdowns – in infrastructuring [98]. These spaces play a crucial role in determining how actors push back against the challenges and exclusions to have their voices heard within and across the seams [124].

Seamfulness in earlier (offline) campaigns against sexual harassment was observed in terms of how legal guidelines emerged out of the Bhanwari Devi gang rape moment where a case of caste-based sexual violence was interpreted in the context of sexual harassment and unsafe workplaces [15]. Fueled by the momentum of outrage arising from the judgement on grounds of which Bhanwari Devi's rapists were acquitted, this landmark legislation was achieved due to the traditional (offline) virality of on-ground protests [30, 77]. There was a popular sentiment regarding the lack of seriousness around sexual harassment against female employees [102], which tapped into the atrociousness of the judgement delivered in the Bhanwari Devi case to make a case for safety of women at their workplaces [15]. In a similar vein, the seamfulness of #MeToo as an online, social media campaign in India was initiated over the course of multiple moments – Raya Sarkar's LoSHA [29, 109], complaints of women working in the media and entertainment industry [71, 74] – gaining online virality and indicating a symptomatic dissatisfaction with the due process.

Social norms and the divisions in the Indian society on lines of caste, class, and gender emerged as common denominators between the past and the present, with online social media-based movements deepening these fissures. While certain kind of 'women' were able to navigate across the seamful space, many others could not and some chose not to. Those who could not push back against the challenges and exclusions across the seams were those who lacked appropriate support systems

and didn't share a) similar 'class' privileges in terms of their access to social media; and b) privileges of 'caste' and 'sexual orientation' (to an extent) as those who were able to push back. Those who, with their mainstream privileges or at the intersections of minority, caste and sexuality, chose not to utilize digital infrastructures for justice (in spite of having access and ability to do so) could not reconcile with the friction arising from the issues of privacy and safety, movement's politics, and lack of accountability fulfilling the purpose of the digital justice aspect of the online feminist movements.

8.2 Residuality and Torque

Residual categories, whether explicitly labelled or not, exist in every classification scheme [26] and expose the taken-for-granted in any formal system [131]. Residuality across these infrastructural imbrications was observed because of the gender-binary classification of the law that caters to sexual harassment of only 'women' at workplace. Intending to exclude the patriarchal influences of heterosexual men[7] [120], the law also rendered the experiences of already marginalized queer men, gender non-binary, gender-fluid and gender-queer individuals residual [131] within the existing legal infrastructure. At this point, it is important to note that the exclusion of queer individuals from being recognized under legal protections historically derives from Section 377, a remnant of the colonial era regulation in India that criminalized consensual sex among same-sex adults [77, 144], which the Indian judiciary struck down in 2018 [129]. Many organizations are now advocating amending the existing sexual harassment laws to implicitly recognize sexual harassment of queer individuals and are pushing for the amendment to be accompanied by a comprehensive anti-discrimination law [5, 62]. However, standards possess significant inertia and they can be very difficult and expensive to change [26].

The system breakdown due to its inability to classify the harassment experiences of the queer community led them to experience torque not only as a part of the legal infrastructure [26] but also as part of the digital justice infrastructure. Their torqued experiences in the legal infrastructure either silence them from sharing their experiences or lead them to resort to different categories of law (e.g. criminal law) that can help legitimize their experiences and seek justice [5, 89]. Something similar plays out over digital infrastructures. Due to lack of a mutual frame of interpreting their diverse experiences and the complex nature of power dynamics in the queer experience of sexual harassment, they choose silence and closed 'safe' spaces over the open spaces in which online feminist movements operate. Their decisions are also influenced by the tensions operating in terms of either aligning with the heteronormative politics of women leaders at the forefront of #MeToo that they don't agree with (as the women leaders promote various binaries and make their 'queerness' invisible to fit into the mainstream narrative) [120] or the fear of taking away the spotlight from women's experiences and appropriating the movement to highlight their unique struggles. Since the strength of the queer movements lies in making bold choices, portraying themselves as victims while aligning with the narratives of the #MeToo movement brings the frictions [68, 143] they experience to the forefront.

8.3 Marginalization of Intersectional Identities

Since infrastructures don't function in isolation, this particular infrastructural imbrication was no different as it inherited the class and caste-based biases of the ecosystem within which they operate. Both working-class and relatively privileged Dalit women were seen as 'available' and while the working-class Dalit women could not complain due to factors ranging from the various issues with

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[7]Indian feminists resisted making it a gender-neutral law, citing women's vulnerability within the largely patriarchal structure

LCs to the punishing realities of their intersecting class, caste and patriarchal oppressions, those relatively privileged middle-class Dalit women were also not provided with adequate support when they complained of harassment and faced detriments to their careers that they claim was due to the social location of their caste [133]. This is true of different marginalized communities such as Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi and queer communities [96]. We also observed that in the case of intersectional identities, existing power dynamics complicate issues of justice - for example, the rights of the community might take precedence over the rights of the violated individual if both the survivor and accused both belong to the same marginalized community [50, 96, 120].

In a similar vein, #MeToo movement, as part of the digital justice infrastructure, was observed to be springboarded from the West through appropriation by privileged and elite women posting their accounts in suave English. Even if we discount the experience of women/survivors belonging to resource-poor backgrounds due to their lack of access to online spaces, there was a marked absence – rather erasure – of (relatively privileged) Dalit and other survivor's accounts that belong to the minority intersections of caste, tribe and religion. Dalit feminist activists argue that it is because they (and other minorities) lack the cultural backing of individuals belonging to the dominant caste and religion, as they control various institutional infrastructures (e.g. media, judiciary, police, academic, non-profit, etc.) that silence their voices and render their experiences invisible [37, 38, 69, 89, 133].

Dalit women have historically been at the forefront of feminist struggles, Bhanwari Devi is a case in point who didn't receive justice for her gang rape but her case formed the basis of mobilization around the formation of Vishakha guidelines and ultimately a law on sexual harassment [30]. This law went on to actually benefit more upper-caste, middle-class women (if at all) than Dalit women because of their structural privileges [15]. Given the fact that Dalit women are at a greater risk of facing sexual harassment, their conspicuous absence of their narratives on #MeToo movement reeks of caste privileges and substantiates the allegations of Dalit feminist activists that upper-caste feminists don't go the extra mile to visibilize Dalit narratives [86, 96].

This also exposes the frictions [68, 143] arising from the diverging values of elitism and privilege embedded in infrastructures vis-á-vis the values of intersectionality that have been left aside by design. Pegu [96] provides some interesting ideas on the way forward such as acting with solidarity in creating and vacating spaces for intersectional narratives over social media because movements that don't work for the most marginalized rarely move the needle on status quo.

8.4 Postcolonial Computing and Online Feminist Movements

The #MeToo is a classic example of the challenges recognized by postcolonial computing on how the 'global' deployment of a Western technology often fails to make an impact on local communities in the Global South. However, the mere occurrence of this online feminist movement provides insights about the survivors' dissatisfaction with the due process and highlight the "trampled paths that crisscross landscapes" (utilizing digital infrastructures over legal infrastructures) [127] they are willing to take to seek a more just society.

In this regard, our study participants unanimously expressed – as also observed in historical offline campaigns of women's movement – that the momentum arising from such online feminist movements can be tapped in a more constructive and intersectional manner if they are appropriated by organizations/collectives that have a local (online or offline) presence [15]. These local collectives that individuals can trust can then translate the movement from abstract online spaces and do more actionable work. A case in point is the Twitter #MeTooIndia handle that was initiated by two female journalists to curate sexual harassment survivor accounts (anonymizing the victim/survivors' identity) but went much beyond naming and shaming the perpetrators by following up on the cases while also providing a support system to those who came forward [95]. Similarly there are many other examples of culturally embedded and appropriated local initiatives that have been

built/led by individuals within their culturally situated positions [63, 138], using the approach of community-centric design [75, 116].

The findings of this paper feed into new conceptualizations of feminist movements that make visible the struggles of those with minority identities, and where race, class, caste, gender, sexual orientation and other social divisions are understood as lived realities. We discuss the marginalization and erasure of voices of women belonging to Dalit and minority identities in India whose concerns and claims of violence are hardly taken seriously [38, 133]. This deeply resonates with criticisms of the #MeToo movement in the Global North too where movements often fail to recognize the nature of harassment that women of colour face, including their vulnerability [91]. From a CSCW perspective, our paper stresses on how the study of existing movements in the Global South can inform more localized technology appropriation and help build new grassroots movements of social justice. However, besides acknowledging and studying inequalities between subgroups, our paper also emphasizes a transnational focus that brings to fore North-South power relations and their role in shaping social media movements [67, 84, 128]. As we seek to build and support more inclusive movements, we argue for an intersectional and a postcolonial approach: an intersectional approach visibilizes relations of power and inequality while a postcolonial approach acts as a necessary critical voice challenging the imbalance of power existing between north and south, western and non-western settings [67].

9   CONCLUSION

As CSCW research explores the design of socio-technical systems that account for local and historical specificities, our paper draws on infrastructural ecologies to present in-depth insights about the imbrication of digital infrastructural routes of seeking justice (like #MeToo) with legal infrastructure and social norms around sexual harassment in India. Our findings demonstrate how the dis-alignments within this imbrication pave way for seamful spaces that provide differential opportunities to some (relatively privileged) actors to push back against the challenges and exclusions to have their voices heard within and across the seams, and as a consequence shape social computing practices to act on social justice issues. We also highlight the torque and residuality experienced by individuals living with marginalized intersectional identities (in terms of caste, class, gender, sexual orientation) that further weakens their efforts to push back across these seams. Our work speaks to the global feminist movement where the struggles of the most marginalized are often invisibilized, erased, not believed and not paid heed to by the key institutions such as the judiciary, police, media, etc. – reiterating that infrastructure cannot just be read off of its design and material configuration. Instead, it has to be read through the social practices of use that are mediated by social structures around the constructs of patriarchy, colonialism, caste, class, race and gender struggles. Future socio-technical systems need to act with solidarity and sensitivity in creating and vacating spaces for intersectional and postcolonial narratives over social media in order to make such online feminist movements work for the most marginalized across the world.

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