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A Study on Tackling on Online Abuse and Disinformation Targeting Women in Politics in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics in Tamil Nadu, India, and explores strategies for combating this issue. Using a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews with women politicians and activists, the study found that online abuse and disinformation are rampant in Tamil Nadu, and women politicians are particularly vulnerable to these attacks. The study identifies several factors that contribute to this phenomenon, including political polarisation, caste-based discrimination, and the normalisation of misogynistic attitudes. To address this problem, the study recommends a multifaceted approach, including policy interventions, community-based initiatives, and individual-level actions. The study proposes the implementation of legal frameworks that specifically address online abuse and disinformation targeting women, along with the creation of awareness-raising campaigns to educate the public on the negative impact of such behaviours. The study also emphasises the importance of building networks of support among women politicians and activists to provide emotional and strategic support for those who face online abuse and an evil form of sexual harassment.

Keywords: Political Polarisation, Intervention, Disinformation, online abuse.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Tamil Nadu, as in many regions globally, the rise of digital connectivity has brought both opportunities and challenges for women. While the internet has enabled greater access to information, resources, and networking, it has also become a platform for the propagation of online abuse and disinformation, specifically targeting women. Tackling online abuse and disinformation targeting women in Tamil Nadu requires a tailored approach that considers the unique cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic dynamics of the region. Beyond addressing the

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immediate manifestations of online harassment and misinformation, such as cyberbullying and false narratives, there is a pressing need to address the underlying factors perpetuating these phenomena. Central to this effort is the promotion of digital literacy and empowerment initiatives that equip women with the knowledge and skills to navigate online spaces safely and effectively. By fostering critical thinking, media literacy, and awareness of online risks, women can better identify and respond to instances of abuse and disinformation. Additionally, community-based interventions and collaborations between government agencies, civil society organisations, and tech platforms are essential for creating supportive environments and implementing effective policies and interventions. This includes initiatives to raise awareness, provide support services for victims, and strengthen legal frameworks to hold perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, elevating the voices and perspectives of women in Tamil Nadu through digital platforms can serve as a powerful counter-narrative to disinformation and online abuse. By amplifying diverse voices and fostering inclusive online spaces, we can contribute to building a more equitable and respectful digital environment for all individuals in Tamil Nadu. Ultimately, addressing online abuse and disinformation targeting women in Tamil Nadu requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach that addresses both the symptoms and root causes of these phenomena. Through concerted efforts, we can create a digital ecosystem that upholds the rights, dignity, and safety of women, fostering a more inclusive and empowered society in Tamil Nadu and beyond. The aim of this study seeks to contribute to the development of holistic and contextually relevant strategies for tackling online abuse and disinformation targeting women in Tamil Nadu, ultimately fostering a safer, more inclusive, and empowering digital environment for all individuals.

(A) Objectives:

1. To raise awareness about the prevalence and impact of online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics in Tamil Nadu.
2. To encourage public discussion and debate on this issue.
3. To strengthen legal and institutional mechanisms for preventing and addressing online abuse.
4. To promote the participation of women in politics in Tamil Nadu.
5. To work with media organisations and journalists to ensure that reporting on women in politics in Tamil Nadu is fair and accurate.

(B) Review of literature:

(Jharta) the use of social media by women politicians in Tamil Nadu and the challenges they face. The authors found that women politicians face online harassment, threats, and abuse, which hinder their political participation and undermine their credibility. They also found that women politicians use social media strategically to connect with voters and raise awareness of their campaigns. **(Rajput and Thakkar)** the nature and extent of online gender-based violence against women politicians in India, including Tamil Nadu. The authors found that women politicians are targeted with a range of abusive behaviours, including sexist and derogatory comments, threats of violence, and false information. They also found that women politicians are more likely to experience online abuse and harassment compared to their male. **(Rajput and Thakkar; Calman)** This paper examines the prevalence and nature of hate speech and online abuse against women in Indian politics, including Tamil Nadu. The authors analysed tweets from Indian politicians and found that women politicians were disproportionately targeted with abusive and derogatory language. They also found that the abuse was often gendered, with women politicians being attacked for their appearance, sexuality, and family background. **(Ghosh et al.)** This article explores the phenomenon of online misogyny in the Indian political sphere and its impact on women politicians, including those in Tamil Nadu. The author argues that online misogyny is a form of violence that undermines women's participation in politics and reinforces gender-based stereotypes. The article also discusses the strategies that women politicians use to counter online abuse and harassment. **(Iyer et al.)** the literature on tackling online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics in Tamil Nadu highlights the pervasive and harmful nature of this phenomenon. Women politicians in Tamil Nadu and across India face a range of abusive behaviours online, including hate speech, threats, and false information. While social media can be a powerful tool for political engagement and mobilisation, it is also a site of violence that can undermine women's participation in politics. To address this issue, researchers and policymakers must work together to develop effective strategies for preventing and responding to online abuse and promoting women's political empowerment. Online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics is a pervasive problem across the world. Tamil Nadu is no exception, and women politicians in the state are also facing **(Sinhā)** online abuse and disinformation campaigns. **(Agnew)** found that women politicians in Tamil Nadu face online abuse and harassment at a higher rate than men. The study identified caste, religion, and gender as the primary drivers of online abuse against women politicians in Tamil Nadu. The researchers also found that the most common form of online abuse was the use of derogatory language and

name-calling. **(Letha Kumari)** found that women politicians in Tamil Nadu were also targets of disinformation campaigns. The study identified several strategies used to spread disinformation, including the creation of fake social media accounts, the use of manipulated images and videos, and the spreading of false rumours. The study found that disinformation campaigns were particularly effective at influencing public opinion against women politicians in Tamil Nadu. **(Menon)** In addition to research studies, several journalists and media outlets have also reported on this issue. The Hindu, a leading English-language newspaper in India, published an article in 2019 highlighting the online abuse faced by women politicians in Tamil Nadu. The article featured interviews with several women politicians who spoke about their experiences of online abuse and harassment. The article also discussed the need for social media platforms to take action to address this issue. **(Rath and Majumdar)**, the literature on tackling online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics in Tamil Nadu suggests that this is a significant problem that needs urgent attention. The studies and articles highlight the need for more research on this issue and the importance of developing effective strategies to tackle online abuse and disinformation. The literature also emphasises the need for social media platforms to take responsibility for addressing this issue and implementing measures to protect women politicians from online abuse and disinformation campaigns. **(Rath and Majumdar; Gupta)**. This study explores news media coverage of online abuse and violence against women in politics in India, including Tamil Nadu. The authors analyse how news media frame these incidents and the impact of media coverage on public discourse and policy. **(Chatterji et al.)** This report examines the prevalence and nature of online abuse and harassment faced by women in politics in India, with a focus on Tamil Nadu. The authors provide recommendations for addressing this issue, including legal and policy reforms, social media platforms' responsibility, and awareness-raising campaigns. **(Sooraj and Krishna)** This article discusses the experiences of women politicians in Tamil Nadu regarding online misogyny and strategies they use to tackle it. The author highlights the need for effective legal and institutional mechanisms to prevent and address online abuse against women in politics. **(Karpagavalli)** This study investigates the forms and impact of gendered online harassment faced by women in politics in Tamil Nadu. The authors argue that online abuse has a chilling effect on women's political participation and suggest measures to prevent and respond to such abuse. **(Rajalakshmi)** This article discusses the prevalence and impact of online misogyny on women in Tamil Nadu's political landscape. The author argues that online abuse should be viewed as a form of violence against women and calls for stronger legal and institutional mechanisms to prevent and address it. online abuse reinforces existing gendered

power dynamics and undermines women's political participation. **(Narayan)** This article discusses how women politicians in Tamil Nadu challenge patriarchy in online spaces and use digital media to advance their political agendas. The author argues that online abuse should be viewed as a form of violence against women and calls for stronger legal and institutional mechanisms to prevent it. **(Women in Tamil Nadu: A Profile)** This article discusses the experiences of women politicians in Tamil Nadu regarding online harassment and the impact of such abuse on their political careers. The author argues that online abuse is a threat to democracy and calls for concerted efforts to tackle it. **(Santha)** This article discusses the prevalence and impact of gendered cyber violence in Tamil Nadu, including online abuse targeting women in politics. The author argues that online abuse is a manifestation of patriarchy and calls for a multi-faceted approach to tackle it. **(Raziya Parvin)** study examines how women politicians in Tamil Nadu navigate online misogyny and the strategies they use to counter it. The author argues that online abuse undermines women's political participation and calls for legal and institutional reforms to prevent and address it. **(Mageli)** the study investigates the prevalence and impact of digital harassment against women in politics in TamilNadu. The author argues that online abuse is a serious threat to women's political participation and recommends measures to prevent and respond to it.

(C) Methodology:

This is Empirical research and the method followed for collecting the Convenient sampling method. The sample size is around 200 and the sample frame is Chennai and online mode method. The independent variables include age, gender , educational qualification and occupation of the respondents and the dependent variable is that the impact of women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

(D) Hypothesis :

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant awareness among the general public that women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is significant awareness among the general public that women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

II. ANALYSIS

age * misogynistic attacks

Crosstab

Count

		misogynistic attacks					Total
		agree	strongly agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
age	18 to 25	50	33	19	7	2	111
	26 to 40	89	39	12	5	2	147
	41 to 60	69	40	35	11	6	161
	above 61	23	11	10	5	2	51
Total		231	123	76	28	12	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.562 ^a	12	.043
Likelihood Ratio	22.467	12	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.986	1	.046
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 5 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.30.

RESULT

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .046, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved, so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

age * major online abuses:

Crosstab

Count

		major online abuses			Total
		cyberbullying	rape threats	disinformation	
age	18 to 25	62	30	19	111
	26 to 40	97	31	19	147
	41 to 60	98	42	21	161
	above 61	31	10	10	51
Total		288	113	69	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.607 ^a	6	.595
Likelihood Ratio	4.559	6	.601
Linear-by-Linear Association	.115	1	.734
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.49.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is 0.734, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

age * online violence:

Crosstab

Count

		onlineviolence					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
age	18 to 25	56	24	21	9	1	111
	26 to 40	65	40	28	12	2	147
	41 to 60	74	55	22	6	4	161
	above 61	28	14	6	3	0	51
Total		223	133	77	30	7	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.600 ^a	12	.399
Likelihood Ratio	13.511	12	.333
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.446	1	.229
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 5 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .76.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .229, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

age * dalit women politicians:

Crosstab

Count

		Dalit women politicians		
		yes	no	Total
age	18 to 25	65	46	111
	26 to 40	98	49	147
	41 to 60	102	59	161
	above 61	26	25	51
Total		291	179	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.665 ^a	3	.198
Likelihood Ratio	4.615	3	.202
Linear-by-Linear Association	.259	1	.611
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 19.42.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .611, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

gender * misogynistic attacks

Crosstab

Count

		misogynisticattacks					Total
		agree	strongly agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
gender	male	123	67	39	12	6	247
	female	81	44	30	12	3	170
	transgender	27	12	7	4	3	53
Total		231	123	76	28	12	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.522 ^a	8	.807
Likelihood Ratio	4.073	8	.850
Linear-by-Linear Association	.695	1	.405
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 3 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.35.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .405 hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

gender * major online abuses

Crosstab

Count

		Major online abuses			Total
		cyberbullying	rape threats	disinformation	
gender	male	160	54	33	247
	female	98	48	24	170
	transgender	30	11	12	53
Total		288	113	69	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.636 ^a	4	.228
Likelihood Ratio	5.281	4	.260
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.895	1	.089
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.78.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .089, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

gender * online violence

Crosstab

Count

		Online violence					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
gender	male	135	69	31	10	2	247
	female	66	52	35	13	4	170
	transgender	22	12	11	7	1	53
Total		223	133	77	30	7	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.432 ^a	8	.013
Likelihood Ratio	18.936	8	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.705	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 4 cells (26.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .000, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

gender * dalit women politicians

Crosstab

Count

		Dalit women politicians		
		yes	no	Total
gender	male	151	96	247
	female	111	59	170
	transgender	29	24	53
Total		291	179	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.052 ^a	2	.358
Likelihood Ratio	2.038	2	.361
Linear-by-Linear Association	.068	1	.794
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20.19.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .794, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

educational qualification * misogynistic attacks

Crosstab

Count

Misogynistic attacks

Total

		agree	strongly agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
Educational qualification	schooling	92	36	26	9	1	164
	undergraduate	74	45	23	4	2	148
	postgraduate	58	32	18	11	4	123
	illiterate	7	10	9	4	5	35
Total		231	123	76	28	12	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.849 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.695	12	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.352	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	470		

a. 5 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .89.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .000, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

educational qualification * major online abuses

Crosstab

Count

		Major online abuses			Total
		cyberbullying	rape threats	disinformation	
Educational qualification	schooing	104	41	19	164
	undergraduate	96	33	19	148
	postgraduate	74	29	20	123
	illiterate	14	10	11	35
Total		288	113	69	470

Chi-Square Tests

		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson	Chi-Square	11.912 ^a	6	.064
Likelihood	Ratio	10.685	6	.099
Linear-by-Linear	Association	6.417	1	.011
N of Valid Cases		470		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.14.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .011, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

educational qualification * online violence

Crosstab

Count

		Online violence					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
Educational qualification	schooing	90	44	22	7	1	164
	undergraduate	82	33	23	8	2	148
	postgraduate	42	44	25	12	0	123
	illiterate	9	12	7	3	4	35
Total		223	133	77	30	7	470

Chi-Square Tests

		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson	Chi-Square	48.971 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio		37.912	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association		20.565	1	.000
N of Valid Cases		470		

a. 5 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .52.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .000, hence the alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

educational qualification * dalitwomenpoliticians

Crosstab

Count

		Dalit women politicians		Total
		yes	no	
Educational qualification	schooing	104	60	164
	undergraduate	87	61	148
	postgraduate	78	45	123
	illiterate	22	13	35
Total		291	179	470

Chi-Square Tests

		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson	Chi-Square	.902 ^a	3	.825
Likelihood	Ratio	.898	3	.826
Linear-by-Linear	Association	.000	1	.996
N of Valid Cases		470		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.33.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .996, hence the

alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

occupation * misogynistic attacks

Crosstab

Count

		Misogynistic attacks					Total
		agree	strongly agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
occupation	private sector	91	47	17	12	7	174
	public sector	78	43	23	7	2	153
	self employed	44	24	25	4	2	99
	unemployed	18	9	11	5	1	44
Total		231	123	76	28	12	470

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.211 ^a	12	.063
Likelihood Ratio	19.625	12	.075
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.872	1	.090
N of Valid Cases	470		

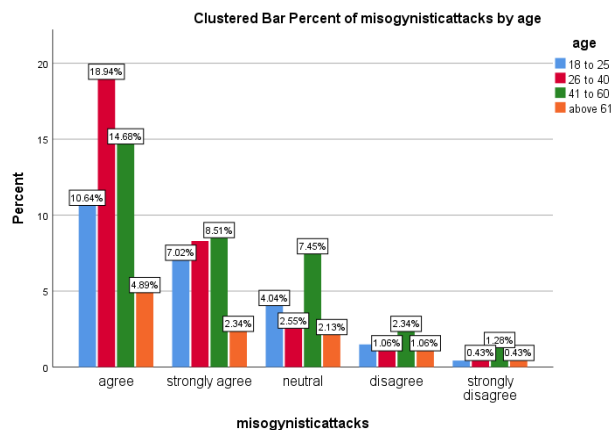
a. 5 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.12.

RESULT:

The expected count is less than 5, and the minimum expected count is .090, hence the

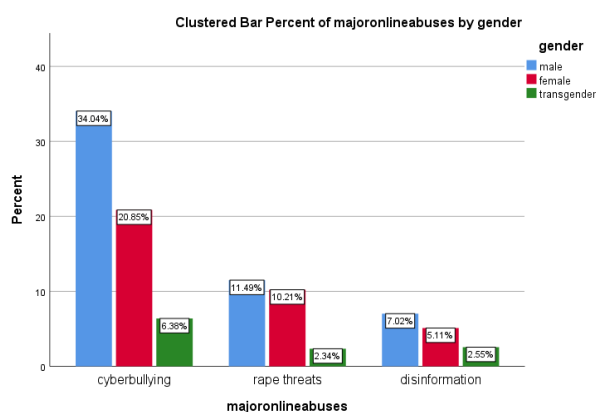
alternative hypothesis is proved so there is significant awareness among the general public of how women politicians face all forms of evil acts.

FIGURE 1:



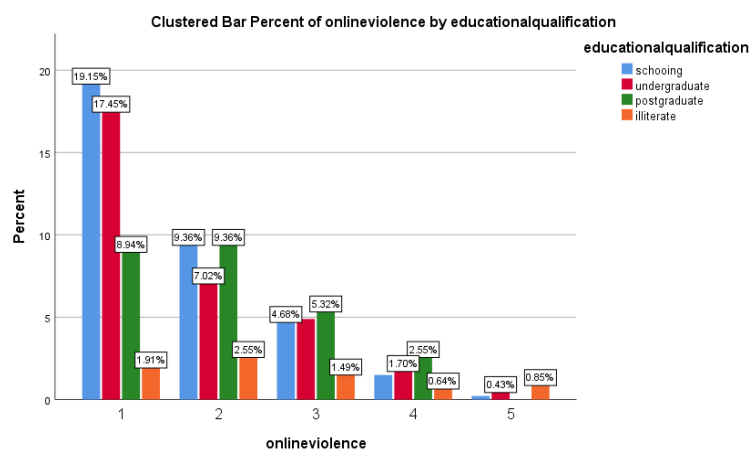
LEGEND: The figure 1 is compared with age and misogynistic attacks.

FIGURE 2:



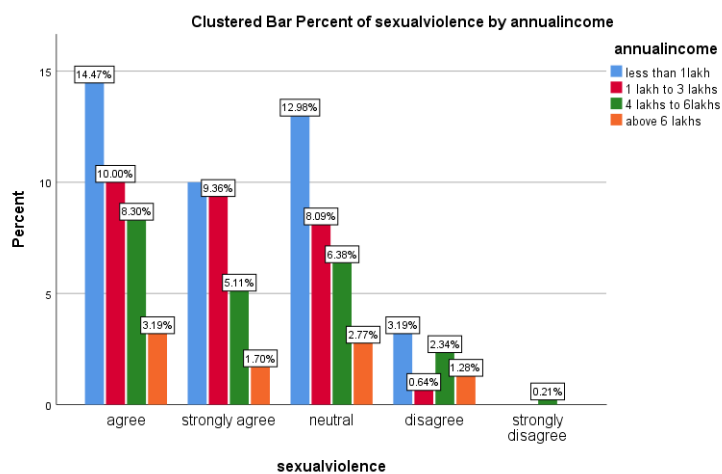
LEGEND: The figure 2 is compared with gender and major online abuses.

FIGURE 3:



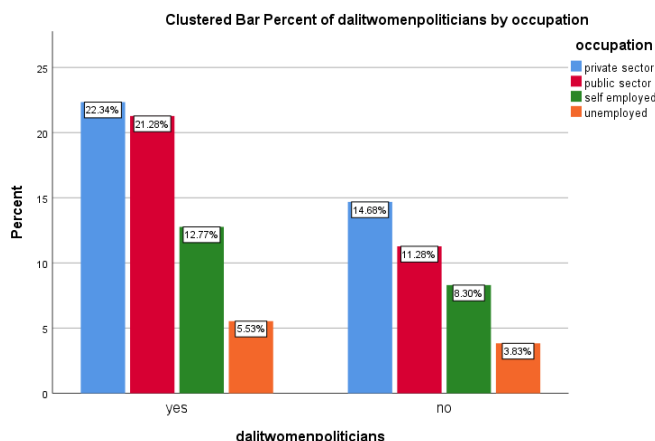
LEGEND: The **figure 3** is compared with educational qualification and online violence.

FIGURE 4:



LEGEND: The **figure 4** is compared with annual income and sexual violence.

FIGURE 5:



LEGEND: The **figure 5** is compared with occupation and dalit women politicians.

III. RESULTS

Figure 1, is compared with age and misogynistic attacks, here 18.94% of responses from the age group of 26 to 49 agreed with the statement and 0.43% of responses from age groups of above 60 disagreed with the statement. **Figure 2**, is compared with gender and major online abuses, here 34.04% of male responded with cyber bullying and 2.55% of transgender responded with disinformation. **Figure 3**, compared with educational qualification and online violence, here 19.15% of responses from schooling and 0.85% was from illiterate. **Figure 4**, compared with annual income and sexual violence, here 14.47% of responses agreed with the statement and 0.21% of responses disagreed with the statement. **Figure 5**, is compared with occupation and dalit women politicians, here 22.34% of the private sector stated yes and 3.83%

unemployed stated no to the statement.

IV. DISCUSSION

Figure 1 it is seen that most of the respondents have agreed that in the past two decades, the women politicians have faced various forms of misogynistic, attacks and harassment because of male dominant society thought that women should be inside the house only has been prevailing till now even in the modernise society it is highly observed in the age of 18 to 25 age group of people and the highest rate is above 50%. **Figure 2**, it is seen that most of the respondents have agreed that in the past two decades, the women politicians have faced various forms of misogynistic, attacks and harassment because of male dominant society thought that women should be inside the house only has been prevailing till now even in the modernise society it is highly observed in the age of 18 to 25 age group of people and the highest rate is above 38.9%. **Figure 3**, it is seen that most of the respondents have responded that cyber bullying is a major cause for the online abuse, the face by women and the laws or not that much effective in order to control cyber bullying and it is high among the male and female gender with the observation of 35%. **Figure 4**, Seen that most of the respondents have responded and rated that one among 10 rating scale that online violence or frequently occurring for the women when compared to men. **Figure 5**, It is seen that most of the respondent have strongly agreed that sexual violence are faced by women both online and also in school areas, office areas also in when compared to men.

(A) Suggestions:

Educate women politicians and the general public about online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics. Create campaigns to raise awareness of the issue and its impact. Develop policies and guidelines to prevent online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics. These policies should be developed in consultation with women politicians, media, and social media companies. Create safe online spaces for women politicians to discuss issues and exchange ideas without fear of being abused or harassed. Encourage the media to provide positive coverage of women. Encourage women politicians to report online abuse and disinformation. Develop mechanisms to report such incidents and provide support to the victims. Collaborate with social media companies to develop tools to detect and remove abusive content. Encourage them to take a more proactive approach to monitor and remove abusive content. Online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics is a serious issue that needs to be addressed urgently. It has a negative impact on women's participation in politics and undermines the democratic process. To tackle this issue, it is essential to raise

awareness, develop policies and guidelines, create safe spaces, encourage reporting, and collaborate with social media companies. Only then can we create a more inclusive and equitable political environment in Tamil Nadu.

(B) Limitations :

The major limitation of the study is the sample frame. Time is also a major factor limiting the study . The sample frame is near Aravind eye hospital and it acts as a major constraint for collecting samples.

V. CONCLUSION

Online abuse and disinformation targeting women in politics is a serious issue that needs to be addressed urgently. It has a negative impact on women's participation in politics and undermines the democratic process. To tackle this issue, it is essential to raise awareness, develop policies and guidelines, create safe spaces, encourage reporting, and collaborate with social media companies. Only then can we create a more inclusive and equitable political environment in Tamil Nadu. Women in politics are also frequent targets of gendered disinformation campaigns, defined as the spreading of deceptive or inaccurate information and images. Such campaigns often create story lines that draw on misogyny and gender stereotypes. The disproportionate and often strategic targeting of women politicians and activists has direct implications for the democratic process: it can discourage women from running for office, push women out of politics, or lead them to disengage from online political discourse in ways that harms their political effectiveness. For those women who persevere, the abuse can cause psychological harm and waste significant energy and time, particularly if politicians struggle to verify whether or when online threats pose real-life dangers to their safety. They should also take steps to proactively prevent the spread of hateful speech online, including through changes in risk assessment practices and product .Worldwide, women in politics are frequent targets of abuse and threats online, but social media companies and governments are not doing nearly enough to combat it.The disproportionate and often strategic targeting of women politicians and activists has direct implications for the democratic process: it can discourage women from running for office, push women out of politics, or lead them to disengage from online political discourse in ways that harms their political effectiveness. For those women who persevere, the abuse can cause psychological harm and waste significant energy and time, particularly if politicians struggle to verify whether or when online threats pose real-life dangers to their safety. They should also take steps to proactively prevent the spread of hateful speech online, including through changes in risk assessment practices and product .Worldwide, women in

politics are frequent targets of abuse and threats online, but social media companies and governments are not doing nearly enough to combat it.

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