

Cyberbullying and Rights of Transgender in Delhi (National Capital Territory): Framework for Challenges and Pathways to Inclusion

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Abstract

Transgender individuals in India are facing various unique challenges stemming from social, cultural, legal, and economic factors. Despite some progress in recent years, they continue encountering significant barriers in various aspects of their lives. They often experience social stigma and discrimination from their families, communities, and society. They may be ostracized, marginalized, and face verbal and physical abuse. Although India recognized the rights of transgender people with the landmark NALSA judgment in 2014, legal recognition is not widespread. Access to essential services is hampered for many transgender people because of the difficulty of acquiring identification papers that accurately represent their gender identity. The study's objectives are to measure the challenges faced by this community and the future outlook from a legal point of view. This study highlighted the present conditions of the Transgender and their victimisation in the Delhi (NCT) region. For the data collection and analysis, 500 Transgender were gathered using a structured questionnaire with personal interviews and are being analysed using SEM with smart PLS software. The results are developed as an SEM model with 6 factors: Experience with Discrimination and Victimization, Legal Protections and Rights, Social Perception and Support Systems, Healthcare and Mental Health, and Future Outlook and Advocacy. A statistical model developed significantly presents the need for LP, SP, and HC for the future outlook of these communities in India.

Keywords: Transgender, Victimization, Discrimination, Bullying, Social Support, Future outlook and advocacy

Introduction

Estimating the exact transgender population across the world is challenging due to various factors (Scheim et al., 2024ⁱ), including different definitions of transgender identities, societal stigmas, and a lack of comprehensive data (Kohnepoushi et al., 2023ⁱⁱ). Additionally, some transgender individuals may not openly identify as such due to fear of discrimination or persecution (Anderson, 2020ⁱⁱⁱ). However, it is essential to acknowledge that transgender populations exist in every country and region globally. The prevalence and visibility of transgender individuals vary significantly depending on cultural attitudes, legal recognition, and social acceptance of gender diversity in different countries. The legal recognition of transgender individuals and their rights can dramatically impact their visibility and access to essential services (Falck & Bränström, 2023^{iv}). Countries with progressive policies and legal protections for transgender rights may have a more visible transgender population. Access to gender-affirming healthcare can also impact the visibility of transgender individuals, as some countries have more comprehensive healthcare systems than others.

The Internet's widespread availability has facilitated the emergence of a novel form of abuse, which is referred to as cyberbullying (also known as cyber victimization, online victimization, and online aggression). Recently, there has been a noticeable trend where individuals who identify as transgender are increasingly becoming targets of digital harassment solely based on their gender identity. Although Internet use can be helpful, it can also create a toxic environment, especially for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community (Austin et al., 2020^v). Researchers have demonstrated that cyberbullying victimization can affect transgender people; however, very few analyse these experiences by gender identity (Evelyn et al., 2022^{vi}). Gender diverse is a term that encompasses a wide range of gender identities that deviate from conventional binary gender ways. This term covers those individuals who identify as non-binary, genderqueer, and agender (Speechley et al., 2024^{vii}). Conversely, the term cisgender refers to individuals whose biological sex assigned at birth corresponds with their gender identification. Online TGD spaces are the primary social support network for people exploring their gender

identity (Austin et al., 2020^{viii}, Selkie et al., 2020^{ix}). These spaces provide strength and mental well-being, majorly at a time when there is limited or no offline support available (Smith et al., 2023^x). These digital spaces create a haven for expressing their true identity, especially when they know they cannot do it in their offline lives.

To understand the specific types of cyberbullying victimization experienced by transgender, one can help identify patterns and design targeted interventions (Ojeda et al., 2024^{xi}). Cyberbullying is an easy platform for making transgender people victims due to their different legal existence (Mkhize et al., 2020^{xii}). Research could explore transgender individuals' experiences with the criminal justice system and the barriers they face when seeking justice or reporting cyberbullying and victimization incidents. Therefore, to bridge the research gap presented above, the present research attempts to identify the various forms of cyber victimization on social media platforms of transgender in India and its impact on mental and physical health.

The Indian Census has historically omitted the recognition of the third gender, namely transgender individuals (Das & Saikia, 2023^{xiii}), throughout the process of gathering census data over the years (Raj & Juned, 2022^{xiv}). However, in 2011, data about individuals identifying as transgender was gathered, including information on their work status, literacy levels, and caste affiliation. It is estimated that 4.88 million transgender people in India, with a corresponding literacy rate of 56.07% (Census of India 2011). India stood 3rd position in the transgender population across the world in the 2021 survey (World Population Review). A worldwide study of 30 nations in 2023 found that 3% of respondents identified with a non-binary, non-conforming, or gender-fluid gender identity. About 6% of Swiss respondents considered themselves one of the mentioned genders (Statistica, 2025).

Table 1 provides demographic data on the transgender population in India and selected states, including caste distribution, child population, and literacy rates. It helps highlight disparities in education and social inclusion, guiding policy and advocacy efforts. The data also supports research on the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals in different regions.

Table 1: Transgender population in India, Delhi and selected states by caste and literacy rate

State	Transgenders	Child (0-6)	SC	ST	Literacy
Uttar Pradesh	1,37,465	18,734	26,404	639	55.80%
Bihar	40,827	5,971	6,295	506	44.35%
Rajasthan	16,517	2,012	2,961	1,805	48.34%
Punjab	10,243	813	3,055	0	59.75%
Haryana	8,422	1,107	1,456	0	62.11%
Delhi	4,213	311	490	0	62.99%
Total across India	4,87,803	54,854	78,811	33,293	56.07%

Source: Census of India, 2011

In this paper, efforts are being made to address these difficulties, including legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and support initiatives. However, progress remains slow, and there is a need for sustained advocacy and education to create a more inclusive and accepting society for transgender individuals in India. It is crucial to recognise that transgender individuals face various challenges, including discrimination, violence, and limited access to healthcare and education. Promoting inclusivity and understanding can help create a more supportive environment for transgender individuals globally. This study also adds to the literature on legal and constitutional provisions for protecting transgender rights worldwide, with special reference to India. It highlights various Legal challenges faced by the transgender community against cyber victimization in the Delhi region of India.

Statement of the Problem

Indian society, rooted in ancient traditions, historically recognized only two genders - male and female leaving transgender persons at the margins of social, cultural, and legal recognition. Although landmark developments

such as the *NALSA v. Union of India* (2014) judgment and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 have formally recognized transgender rights, the lived reality of this community remains fraught with challenges. In the digital era, one of the most pervasive threats is cyberbullying, which disproportionately targets transgender individuals through identity-based harassment, hate speech, threats, and digital exclusion.

While the Information Technology Act, 2000 and sections of the Indian Penal Code address cybercrimes in general, they inadequately cover the intersectional vulnerabilities of transgender persons. In the context of Delhi (NCT), where digital penetration, social media use, and public visibility are significantly high, transgender individuals face heightened risks of online victimization. According to the Census, Delhi records 4,213 transgender persons with a literacy rate of 62.99%, lower than many general literacy indicators. Low literacy levels, coupled with lack of awareness about legal provisions and rights under protective laws, make this community more vulnerable to online exploitation. This disconnect between legislative recognition and ground-level enforcement highlights a critical research problem that to what extent do existing legal mechanisms safeguard transgender persons from cyberbullying in the Delhi (NCT) region, and what pathways can ensure sustainable, inclusive protection? Addressing this gap requires not only evaluating the adequacy of laws and policies but also exploring long-term frameworks that operationalize constitutional guarantees of equality, dignity, and inclusion in the digital sphere. Research carried out by Schneider et al. (2012)^{xv} showed that over the last twelve months, about 59.7% of transgender persons were found to be the victims of cyberbullying, and 36.3% of victims of bullying at school also reported having become targets of online harassment. In addition to this fact, Kaur et al. (2022) stated that transgender people in the Delhi-NCR area are exposed to much more digital harassment and abuse, which are mainly caused by discrimination and prejudice associated with gender identity. These results demonstrate how vulnerable transgender people are even in online environments and how the lack of more effective cybersecurity and legal protection is becoming increasingly pressing.

This study is both timely and necessary given the escalating prevalence of cyber harassment against transgender individuals in India's rapidly digitizing society. With the post-pandemic surge in online interactions, social media has evolved into both a platform for visibility and a site of identity-based victimization. Despite the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, recent evidence indicates persistent digital discrimination and mental health risks among transgender users. Delhi, with its dense internet penetration, diverse social composition, and active gender-rights networks, presents an ideal context to investigate these complexities.

A key gap this study addresses is the lack of intersectional research connecting online victimization with the legal, social, and health dimensions of transgender well-being in India. Previous studies (e.g., Schneider et al., 2012; Kaur et al., 2022) have examined the prevalence of bullying or online abuse but have not explored the multifactorial effects--particularly how cyberbullying interacts with legal protection, healthcare access, and societal attitudes to influence mental well-being and future outlook. The absence of such integrative frameworks limits both academic insight and policy responsiveness. This research uniquely contributes by developing and empirically validating a context-specific analytical model linking discrimination experiences to broader psychosocial and institutional outcomes. It bridges theoretical gaps by applying an Indian sociocultural lens to global discourses on digital safety and gender justice. Practically, the findings will provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, digital platforms, and NGOs to strengthen cyber safety protocols, enhance legal enforcement, and improve mental health interventions for transgender individuals. Thus, the study not only advances academic discourse but also supports inclusive and humane digital governance in India.

According to this statement of problem the objectives of this study are as follows:

To analyse the future outlook of social identity-based discrimination and the vulnerabilities faced by transgender individuals across digital platforms, focusing on the patterns and consequences of cyber victimization experienced in India.

To develop a structured model that assesses the relationship between the intensity of online harassment and its legal, social, and healthcare implications for transgender individuals, with existing cyber regulation frameworks.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Transgender and gender diverse (TGD) individuals face disproportionately high rates of cyberbullying compared to their cisgender peers (Evelyn et al., 2022^{xvi}; Price et al., 2023^{xvii}; Nagata et al., 2025^{xviii}). This literature review examines the intersection of cyberbullying and the rights of transgender individuals, exploring the unique

challenges faced by this community and identifying pathways to inclusion. We will analyse the nature of cyberbullying targeting TGD individuals, its impact on their mental health and well-being, and the effectiveness of existing support systems and interventions. The review will also consider the broader societal context, including legal frameworks, cultural attitudes, and the role of technology in shaping these experiences.

Experience with Discrimination and Victimization of Transgender Individuals

Studies consistently demonstrate that TGD individuals are significantly more likely to experience cyberbullying than the general population (Herrmann et al., 2024^{xi}). It was found that in their sample of 66 TGD adults (mean age 24), cyberbullying was predominantly experienced on social media platforms and was largely anonymous (Mussap et al., 2023^{xx}, Nagata et al., 2025^{xxi}). The content of these attacks was frequently transphobic, often including physically and sexually threatening messages (Walker, 2023^{xxii}, Baider, 2025^{xxiii}). This aligns with findings from other studies that highlight the transphobic nature of online harassment (Sánchez-Sánchez et al., 2024^{xxiv}, Powell et al., 2020^{xxv}). Notably, some cyberbullying incidents were perpetrated by other TGD individuals, often involving identity policing and gatekeeping within TGD online spaces (Austin et al., 2020^{xxvi}). This internalized transphobia underscores the complex dynamics of online interactions within marginalized communities. The anonymity afforded by online platforms exacerbates the issue, allowing perpetrators to act with impunity and inflict significant emotional harm (Macpherson, 2022^{xxvii}).

Schauer's work on group-based cyberbullying further illuminates this issue by analysing the portrayal of transgender people in British newspapers. Our findings indicate how linguistic strategies of verbal aggression and manipulation in media contribute to the perpetuation of negative perceptions of transgender individuals (Lawson & Coffey-Glover, 2023^{xxviii}). This analysis demonstrates how media representations can directly influence public opinion and create a climate that normalizes and encourages real-world and online harassment (Galdi & Guizzo, 2021^{xxix}, Bezzina et al., 2025^{xxx}). The reactions of transgender charity members to the analysed articles highlight the real-world consequences of these negative portrayals, demonstrating the interconnectedness between media representations and lived experiences of cyberbullying (Drave, 2023^{xxxi}). The lack of similar linguistic studies focusing on the portrayal of transgender people in comparison to other LGBTIQ groups highlights a significant research gap (Ferrari & Mancini, 2020^{xxxii}, Bracco et al., 2024^{xxxiii}).

The Impact of Cyberbullying on the Mental Health and Well-being of Transgender Individuals

Cyberbullying has profound and detrimental effects on the mental health and well-being of TGD individuals (Esposito et al., 2024^{xxxiv}, Elliott et al., 2022^{xxxv}). The constant exposure to transphobic abuse, threats, and hateful messages can lead to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation and loneliness. These negative emotions can significantly impact self-esteem, body image, and overall quality of life (Morales Rodríguez et al., 2020^{xxxvi}, Meneguzzo et al., 2024^{xxxvii}) noted that while participants demonstrated resilience by arguing with or blocking perpetrators, the emotional toll remained significant. The prevalence of suicidal ideation and attempts among transgender individuals is alarmingly high (Kohnepoushi et al., 2023^{xxxviii}, Cramer et al., 2022^{xxxix}), and cyberbullying is a significant contributing factor (Evelyn et al., 2022^{xl}, Nagata et al., 2025^{xli}).

Another research further emphasizes the link between cyberbullying and adverse mental health outcomes among transgender and non-binary youth (Sares-Jäske et al., 2023^{xlii}). Their study highlights the additional layer of vulnerability experienced by non-binary individuals, who reported receiving the least support from family and friends, leading to heightened feelings of isolation and unhappiness (Miller et al., 2022^{xliii}). This lack of social support exacerbates the negative impacts of cyberbullying, making interventions that address both individual and systemic issues crucial (Arató et al., 2022^{xliiv}). The intersection of gender identity and other forms of marginalization, such as race or socioeconomic status, can further complicate these experiences, leading to increased vulnerability to cyberbullying and its associated mental health consequences (Amadori et al., 2025^{xliv}).

Social Perception and Support Systems as Protective Factors and Resilience

Despite the significant challenges, research also identifies protective factors and resilience strategies that can mitigate the negative impacts of cyberbullying on TGD individuals (Tankersley et al., 2021^{xlvi}). It was also found that seeking social support acted as a protective factor against the negative emotional impacts of cyberbullying (Arató et al., 2022^{xlvii}). This highlights the importance of strong social networks and supportive relationships in buffering against the effects of online harassment (McLaughlin et al., 2021^{xlviii}). Online communities can offer a

sense of belonging and validation for TGD individuals, providing a space for sharing experiences and receiving support from others who understand their unique challenges (Teixeira et al., 2024^{xlix}), (Evelyn et al., 2022^l). However, it is essential to acknowledge that online communities are not without their potential risks, including cyberbullying and online harassment (Selkie et al., 2020^{li}). (Bowling et al., 2020^{lii}) investigated the perceived effects of community connectedness among trans individuals, finding positive effects such as contextualization and normalization of experiences, improved self-appraisal, and increased feelings of safety and relief. However, they also noted potential negative aspects such as energy drain and stigmatization within these communities (McGuire et al., 2022^{liii}). Our findings emphasise the importance of considering both the positive and negative aspects of community participation in research and interventions (Nagoshi et al., 2023^{liv}). Furthermore, our findings indicated that perceived discrimination strongly correlated with adverse mental health outcomes, reinforcing the need to address both individual and systemic levels of oppression (Cabral & Pinto, 2023^{lv}).

Legal Protections and Rights as Existing Support Systems and Interventions

Several studies highlight the need for targeted support systems and interventions to address the specific harms associated with cyberbullying among TGD individuals (Herrmann et al., 2024^{lvi}), (Gates et al., 2023^{lvii}). (Chan et al., 2023^{lviii}) emphasized the need for further research and targeted support to address the specific harms TGD individuals face. (Edwards et al., 2024^{lix}) describes a randomized controlled trial (RCT) pilot testing the feasibility of a game-based intervention to improve help-seeking behaviours and coping strategies among sexual and gender minority youth. This intervention utilizes a web-based platform, acknowledging the prevalence of cyberbullying and the potential of digital interventions to reach vulnerable populations (Lim et al., 2023^{lx}). The intervention's focus on enhancing help-seeking behaviours and coping mechanisms addresses the mental health challenges linked to cyberbullying (Matuschka et al., 2022^{lxi}).

Other studies focus on the role of schools in creating supportive environments for TGD youth (McGuire et al., 2010^{lxii}) examine the experiences of school administrators in developing and enforcing policies that support transgender students' identity expression. (Wilson & Cariola, 2020^{lxiii}, Cabral & Pinto, 2023^{lxiv}) discuss supportive educational policies and programs as crucial in mitigating the risks of isolation and mental harm for LGBTQI+ students. (Shattuck et al., 2020^{lxv}) describe a pilot cluster randomized controlled trial focusing on training school staff to create supportive environments for sexual and gender minority youths. These interventions emphasize the importance of bystander intervention behaviours and inclusive educational practices in creating safer spaces and reducing cyberbullying incidents (Christou et al., 2024^{lxvi}).

Legal Frameworks and Policy Implications

While legal frameworks vary across jurisdictions, the need for comprehensive legal protections against cyberbullying and discrimination targeting TGD individuals is paramount (Bowling et al., 2020^{lxvii}). It highlights existing policy gaps in addressing the specific needs of transgender individuals, leading to unequal treatment in education (Omercajic & Martino, 2020^{lxviii}) and also discusses the implications of their findings regarding digital harassment and abuse, emphasising the need for policy changes and prevention strategies (Powell et al., 2020^{lxix}). (Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2022^{lxx}) illustrates the disjuncture between progressive laws and actual conditions for LGBTQ+ individuals in Ecuador (a country in northwestern South America), emphasizing the need for effective enforcement and societal change (Rosa & Clavero, 2022^{lxxi}). The lack of proper governmental enforcement of existing laws creates significant barriers for LGBTQ+ communities, impacting their safety and rights (Kavanagh et al., 2025^{lxxii}). These legal and policy gaps highlight the need for comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that specifically address cyberbullying and online harassment, ensuring accountability for perpetrators and providing support and redress for victims (Fields & Wotipka, 2022^{lxxiii}), (Powell et al., 2020^{lxxiv}).

Further, the role of social media companies in addressing cyberbullying and promoting inclusive online environments is crucial (Cuesta Medina et al., 2020^{lxxv}) recommend that social media companies adopt, implement, and evaluate policies and programs for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying on their platforms. A study highlights the potential of digital interventions in improving mental health outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth, suggesting that social media platforms can also be leveraged for positive support and intervention strategies (Pinch et al., 2024^{lxxvi}). However, carefully considering such interventions' potential risks and limitations is essential, particularly concerning privacy and data security (Tomasev et al., 2025^{lxxvii}).

Cultural Attitudes and Societal Change

Addressing cyberbullying against TGD individuals requires a multifaceted approach that tackles both individual behaviours and broader societal attitudes (Chan, 2024^{lxxviii}) link the prevalence of bullying among LGBT youth to societal stigma surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. (Hermaszewska et al., 2022^{lxxix}) demonstrates how a photovoice project can engage adult allies in rural communities to promote awareness and understanding of LGBTQ issues, leading to behavioural changes such as supporting LGBTQ students and using gender-inclusive language. (Kesler et al., 2023^{lxxx}) show that education can reduce stereotypes and discrimination against the LGBTQ community. These studies highlight the importance of education, community engagement, and societal shifts in attitudes towards gender identity and sexual orientation to create safer and more inclusive environments for TGD individuals (Coleman et al., 2022^{lxxxi}). Addressing cultural norms that perpetuate transphobia is essential to preventing cyberbullying and promoting the well-being of TGD individuals (Gallardo-Nieto et al., 2021^{lxxxii}). Cyberbullying against transgender individuals within the broader context of societal stigma and cultural norms. It underscores that combating such abuse requires transforming attitudes through education and community engagement. By linking behavioural change to societal acceptance, it highlights pathways for sustainable inclusion and protection of TGD rights in Delhi.

Research Gaps

Past studies revealed that Transgender people in India face severe victimization, discrimination, and exclusion, leading to high rates of mental health issues, suicide, and substance abuse. Studies reveal that transgender women (TGW) endure significant verbal and physical abuse, particularly from police, increasing their risk of sexual assault. Despite the prevalence of HIV and victimization, research on their correlation remains limited. Urgent interventions, including protective measures, inclusive suicide prevention, and access to gender-transitioning services, are needed. Government and NGOs must implement education, employment, and support programs to improve societal attitudes and ensure transgender individuals receive the dignity and rights they deserve.

Although the previous research has already contributed to the level of knowledge on cyberbullying among transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) people, there are certain gaps in the research that require filling in with the multidimensional nature of discrimination and the systemic implications thereof (Herrmann et al., 2024^{lxxxiii}). Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of cyberbullying on the mental health and well-being of TGD individuals (Nicholas & Bresin, 2024^{lxxxiv}). The biggest part of current research has been on personal victimization or psychological distress, and less has been done in terms of any empirical investigation on how these experiences influence perception of legal protection (LR), social support (SP), and healthcare access (HC) aspects that are key to overall well-being and empowerment (Velasco et al., 2022^{lxxxv}). The biggest part of current research has been on personal victimization or psychological distress, and less has been done in terms of any empirical investigation on how these experiences influence perception of legal protection (LR), social support (SP), and healthcare access (HC)- aspects that are key to overall well-being and empowerment (Lindley et al., 2021^{lxxxvi}). It lacks unified models of associating experience with discrimination (EX) to the perspective of the future (FO) using social and institutional mediators. There exists little research that utilizes structural equation modeling (SEM) to estimate these interrelationships, with the findings being disconnected and unable to be generalized (Arató et al., 2022^{lxxxvii}). Furthermore, research should focus on developing and evaluating interventions specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by transgender adults (Powell et al., 2022^{lxxxviii}). Another significant gap was found in understanding the lived experiences of transgender adults concerning digital abuse, and this requires further investigation. The development of effective interventions also requires a deeper understanding of the role of technology in perpetuating transphobia and the mechanisms through which online harassment occurs (Evelyn et al., 2022^{lxxxix}). In addition, the Indian context, where most of their evidence is found in cities like Delhi, has limited evidence of this- even though it has a distinct digital space and visible sociopolitical presence of transgender rights. By filling these gaps, the proposed study will add value by empirically endorsing a model of multidimensions links between the experiences of discrimination and institutional reactions and the promotion of psychosocial outcomes, which will provide a more complex perspective on the phenomenon of digital victimization in transgender adults (Tesfagergish & Damaševičius, 2023^{xc}). The development of multilingual hate speech and cyberbullying detection technologies is also crucial for addressing the global nature of this issue (Mahajan et al., 2024^{xci}).

Cyberbullying poses a severe threat to transgender individuals, impacting mental health and well-being. In India, stigma and discrimination extend to online spaces, yet research on cyber victimization remains limited. Legal and social barriers and underrepresentation in studies make it difficult to address their unique challenges. Transgender women face high rates of verbal, physical, and sexual violence, further increasing their vulnerability. A multifaceted approach - legal protections, support systems, education, and societal change - is crucial. Inclusive suicide prevention, gender-transitioning services, and targeted interventions can help reduce victimization. Collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and technology developers is essential to creating safer environments. This study addresses research gaps and promotes awareness to foster greater inclusion and protection for transgender individuals.

3. METHODOLOGY, TOOLS, AND TECHNIQUES

This study presented a detailed analysis of Cyber Socializing and Victimization in the Transgender Community in India. For this purpose, a thorough analysis is conducted with the views of the Transgender community. The universe of the study consists of the Transgender community living in the Delhi - National Capital Territory (NCT region) in India and have faced Cyber Socializing and Victimization on social media. The selection of Delhi as the geographical focal point of this research can be explained by the fact that the city has a distinctive sociocultural, policy, and technological dynamics and is therefore a perfect location to consider relationships between cyber victimization and transgender people. Being a national capital of India, Delhi symbolizes a mini-image of social diversity of the country, urban digital inclusion, and the changing gender discourse. This national capital possesses among the best possible internet penetration and digital infrastructure, which both enhances access to online spaces and risk exposure to cyber risks. Additionally, the city of Delhi has a visible transgender population and a number of advocacy groups including the Naz Foundation and Humsafar Trust (Delhi Chapter) are instrumental in creating digital literacy, mental health, and legal empowerment. Simultaneously, the socio-political situation in Delhi as a city is both advanced and biased, which makes the investigation of the identity-based discrimination on the online level rather intricate. Governmentally and in terms of policy, Delhi serves as the administrative hub of the practice of gender justice in laws in the country such as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, and other schemes to support them. This renders it an important area to evaluate the real-life results of these structures in the alleviation of online victimization. The presence of institutional support networks, mental health support, and active digital participation of the transgender population offers a multifaceted and highly informative basis of empirical research. Therefore, by picking Delhi as the study location, the contextual relevance will be guaranteed, but the research will also offer an analytical depth so as to capture the point of intersection of digital behaviour, social discrimination, and policy effectiveness within an urban Indian context. Thus, the study uses data related to the Transgender community and their views on Cyber Socializing and Victimization in Delhi-India. This research combines doctrinal and non-doctrinal (i.e., empirical) study methods. The essence and consistency of any research depend upon the research method applied to conduct it. The non-doctrinal research is based on the primary sources collected by the researcher. For this non-doctrinal study, primary data is collected from 500 transgender individuals residing in Delhi, India. The data is obtained through an NGO while ensuring the anonymity of the participants, all of whom have experienced cyber socializing and victimization. The questionnaire was also validated through Delphi technique and the expert opinion of 15 top academicians was taken to improve the questionnaire. The structured questionnaire with close-ended, 5-point Likert scale questions is used for data collection. Strict ethical safeguards have been implemented to protect the rights and privacy of the participants, ensuring adherence to ethical research standards.

For the doctrinal research, secondary data was extensively gathered from PubMed, CINAHL, Google Scholar, journal tables of contents, and conference abstracts. In addition, consultations were held with subject-matter experts. Relevant laws, legislations, and case studies were also examined to understand the topic comprehensively. The study ensured methodological rigor through systematic validation, data coding, and model specification. Data were screened for missing values and outliers, and reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) (>0.70). Convergent and discriminant validity were confirmed through AVE (>0.50) and HTMT (<0.85) criteria. Responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale (1–5) and analysed using SPSS and SmartPLS. The model was specified based on theoretical linkages between discrimination, legal rights, social perception, healthcare, and future outlook. Model fit indices such as CFI (>0.90), and RMSEA (<0.08) were used to confirm

adequacy, ensuring the reliability and validity of the SEM framework applied to transgender cyber victimization in Delhi

Furthermore, it is based on various pieces of national and international legislation, reports, resources from law libraries, books (both fictional and nonfictional), commentaries, articles (both online and offline), historical and recent national and international judicial pronouncements, magazines, newspaper editorials, films (both national and international), websites, etc., all of which are adequately explained in the bibliography section.

Hypotheses

H₀₍₁₎: The experience with discrimination and victimization has a significant impact on the legal protections and rights of transgender people in India.

H₀₍₂₎: The experience with discrimination and victimization has an impact on the social perception and support systems of transgender people in India.

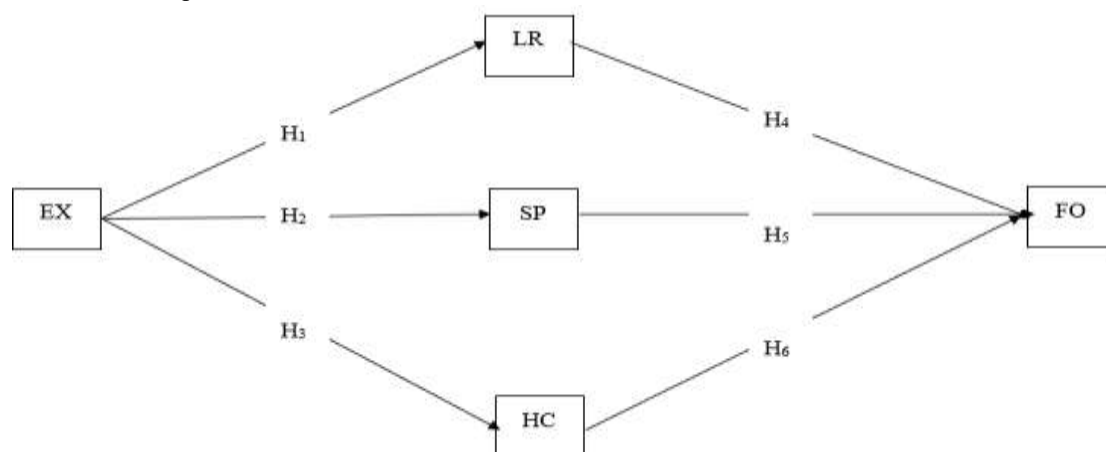
H₀₍₃₎: The experience with discrimination and victimization has an impact on the **healthcare and mental health** of transgender people in India.

H₀₍₄₎: Legal protections and rights have an impact on the future outlook of transgender people in India.

H₀₍₅₎: The **social perception and support systems** have an impact on the future outlook of transgender people in India.

H₀₍₆₎: Healthcare and mental health have a significant impact on the future outlook of transgender people in India.

To test the hypotheses, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) will be developed to identify the future outlook and improve the current situation of cyberbullying. The SEM is best suited for analysing complex, multivariate relationships among latent constructs such as discrimination and victimization, legal protections, social perception, healthcare and mental health, and the future outlook of transgender individuals (Sherman et al., 2024^{xcii}). Traditional statistical methods like multiple regression or correlation analysis are limited to examining isolated relationships, whereas SEM allows the simultaneous estimation of several interrelated paths within a unified theoretical framework (Logie et al., 2020^{xciii}). In this study, many key dimensions such as social perception, legal protection, and mental well-being are latent variables that cannot be directly observed but are represented through multiple measurable indicators derived from the survey responses. SEM provides the analytical strength to confirm the validity of these constructs using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and to test whether the overall hypothesized model fits the observed data through various goodness-of-fit indices such as CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. By integrating all theoretical constructs into a single analytical structure, SEM enables a holistic understanding of how legal, social, and health-related determinants collectively shape the experiences and well-being of transgender individuals who face cyber victimization in the Delhi region. Thus, the adoption of SEM enhances both the theoretical precision and empirical robustness of the study, offering a comprehensive and statistically reliable framework to evaluate the interconnected dimensions of cyber harassment and transgender identity. The model is designed to assess the combined impact of various variables and their implications for the future outlook. The analysis will be conducted using SPSS-AMOS 30 software. The theoretical model is presented as follows:



Note: EX=Experience with Discrimination and Victimization; LR=Legal Protections and Rights; SP=Social Perception and Support Systems; HC=Healthcare and Mental Health and FO=Future Outlook and Advocacy

Figure 1: SEM model for Future Outlook of Transgenders against Cyberbullying

The descriptive of the respondents are shown as follows:

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Description	Percentage
Age	
18-24 years	12.00
25-34 years	36.00
35-44 years	24.00
45-54 years	16.00
55 and above	12.00
Gender Identity	
Transgender Woman	36.00
Transgender Man	26.00
Non-Binary	4.00
I prefer not to say	34.00
Education	
Below High School	26.00
High School	36.00
Undergraduate degree	18.00
Graduate	8.00
Postgraduate	12.00
Place of Residence	
North Delhi	14.00
South Delhi	34.00
East Delhi	24.00
West Delhi	12.00
Central Delhi	16.00

The table 2 provides demographic details of a sample group based on age, gender identity, education, and place of residence of the transgender view studied in this study. In terms of age, the majority of respondents are between 25–34 years old (36%), followed by those aged 35–44 years (24%) and 45–54 years (16%), with a smaller portion being either 18–24 years old or 55 and above, each representing 12%. Regarding gender identity, the highest proportion of respondents identify as transgender women (36%), followed by transgender men (26%), with a minority identifying as non-binary (4%) and a notable 34% preferring not to disclose their gender. Regarding education, most respondents have completed high school (36%), 26% have not completed high school education, and 18% have an undergraduate degree. Fewer participants have completed graduate (8%) or postgraduate education (12%). Geographically, the sample is predominantly from South Delhi (34%), followed by East Delhi (24%), Central Delhi (16%), North Delhi (14%), and West Delhi (12%).

To analyse the gathered data, we developed the items in the questionnaire from the previous literature; some of the questions combine several sources, as shown in Annexure 1. Five variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree". Five items are used to measure transgender victimization: Experience with Discrimination and Victimization, Legal Protections and Rights, Social Perception and Support Systems, Healthcare and Mental Health and Future Outlook and Advocacy.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This research study utilised SPSS-AMOS statistical software to analyze the questionnaire data. Descriptive analysis and bootstrapping assessed the influence and correlation between independent and dependent variables. The validity of the variables was evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with all variables achieving AVE values above 0.70 (Table 3). Reliability was examined through Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR), ensuring strong internal consistency for each item. As indicated in Table 3, all variables' CA and CR values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70.

Table 3. Construct Validity and Reliability

Variable	Reliability Test		Validity Test
	CA	CR	AVE
Experience with Discrimination and Victimization (EX)	0.87	0.92	0.74
Legal Protections and Rights (LR)	0.85	0.95	0.83
Social Perception and Support Systems (SP)	0.78	0.96	0.86
Healthcare and Mental Health (HC)	0.75	0.97	0.88
Future Outlook and Advocacy (FO)	0.68	0.94	0.81

CA= Cronbach's alpha, CR=Composite Reliability, AVE=Average Variance explained

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of Transgenders is shown in Table 4 as under:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

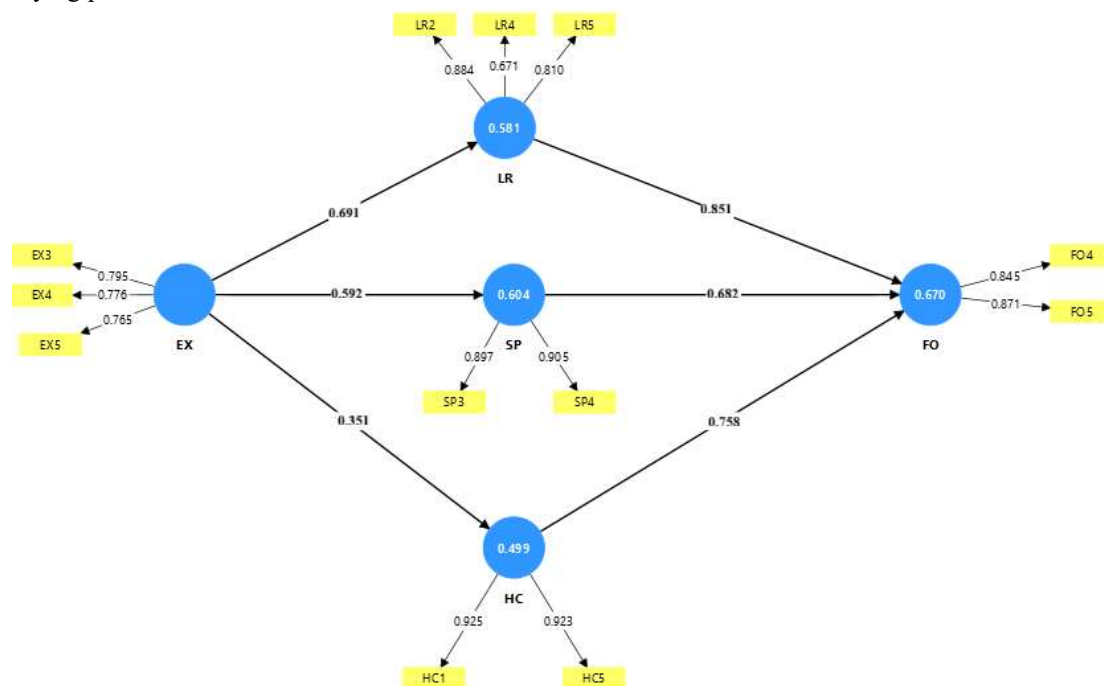
Variable	Mean	SD	EX	LR	SP	HC	FO
EX	3.558	0.966	1				
LR	3.774	0.841	.249**	1			
SP	2.786	0.833	.097	.755**	1		
HC	3.011	0.997	-.147**	.556**	.701**	1	
FO	2.836	0.932	.285**	.565**	.631**	.703**	1

**p < 0.01 (two-tailed test), SD = Standard Deviation, EX=Experience with Discrimination and Victimization, LR=Legal Protections and Rights, SP=Social Perception and Support Systems, HC=Healthcare and Mental Health and FO=Future Outlook and Advocacy

The descriptive statistics in the table 4 provide the mean, standard deviation (SD), and correlations for five variables: EX, LR, SP, HC, and FO. The means range from 2.786 (for SP) to 3.774 (for LR), with SD values indicating some variability in responses, with the highest being 0.997 for HC. The correlation matrix reveals significant relationships between the variables. EX (mean = 3.558, SD = 0.966) shows positive correlations with LR ($r = 0.249$, $p < 0.01$), SP ($r = 0.097$), and FO ($r = 0.285$, $p < 0.01$), but a weak or insignificant correlation with SP. LR (mean = 3.774, SD = 0.841) is strongly correlated with SP ($r = 0.755$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that as LR increases, SP also increases. It also has a significant positive relationship with HC ($r = 0.556$, $p < 0.01$) and FO ($r = 0.565$, $p < 0.01$). SP (mean = 2.786, SD = 0.833) shows strong positive correlations with HC ($r = 0.701$, $p < 0.01$) and FO ($r = 0.631$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of SP are associated with higher levels of HC and FO. HC (mean = 3.011, SD = 0.997) is negatively correlated with EX ($r = -0.147$, $p < 0.01$), but strongly correlated with FO ($r = 0.703$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that HC tends to decrease as EX increases, but is positively related to FO. FO (mean = 2.836, SD = 0.932) shows significant positive correlations with all the other variables: EX ($r = 0.285$, $p < 0.01$), LR ($r = 0.565$, $p < 0.01$), SP ($r = 0.631$, $p < 0.01$), and HC ($r = 0.703$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that FO is positively related to all the other variables, particularly HC, showing the highest correlation.

Overall, the table 4 reveals significant relationships among the variables, confirming that they are interrelated and providing evidence of the robustness of the constructs. The strong correlations between certain variables, such as

LR with SP and HC with FO, suggest essential dynamics in the data that could provide valuable insights into the underlying patterns.



Note: EX=Experience with Discrimination and Victimization; LR=Legal Protections and Rights; SP=Social Perception and Support Systems; HC=Healthcare and Mental Health and FO=Future Outlook and Advocacy

Figure 2: SEM model for Future Outlook of Transgenders against Cyberbullying

Figure 2 displays the structural model's results, including standardised estimates, illustrating the relationships and influences among the variables. The findings reveal that the Experience with Discrimination and Victimization (EX) significantly impacts Legal Protections and Rights (LR) ($\beta_1=0.691$, $p<0.05$), Social Perception and Support Systems (SP) ($\beta_2=0.592$, $p<0.05$), and Healthcare and Mental Health (HC) ($\beta_3=0.351$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, LR significantly influences the Final Outcome (FO) ($\beta_4=0.851$, $p<0.05$), while SP ($\beta_5=0.682$, $p<0.05$) and HC ($\beta_6=0.758$, $p<0.05$) also demonstrate strong positive effects on FO. These results underscore the critical roles of LR, SP, and HC as mediators in linking EX to FO, highlighting their importance in achieving the desired outcomes.

The Goodness of a fit index of the same is presented in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5. GoF statistics for models

Variable	χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	AGFI	p
Model for Measurement	2.2818	0.987	0.0157	0.982	0.9877	0.8974	0.001
Structure model	2.2838	0.987	0.0157	0.982	0.9867	0.8984	0.001

Each model comprising 40 items was evaluated using standard goodness-of-fit indices. The following cut-off criteria were employed: $\chi^2/df < 3$; GFI > 0.9 ; CFI > 0.90 ; NFI > 0.90 ; AGFI > 0.85 and RMSEA < 0.08 ; The results indicated model fit's acceptability with $\chi^2/df = 2.2838$, GFI = 0.987; RMSEA = 0.0157, CFI = 0.982, NFI = 0.9867, and AGFI = 0.8984.

Table 6 displays the conclusive results, representing a significantly positive association amongst the three extents of GFI and both IGF and the future outlook of the trans community in the Delhi NCT region. Therefore, the measures' convergent validity is deemed satisfactory and adequate, given that the AVE values were >0.50 and the

CR values exceeded 0.60, the constructs were considered valid and reliable. Table 5 presents the GoF indices, which indicate an acceptable model fit. The model fit statistics for the structured model were as follows: $\chi^2/df = 2.2838$, GFI = 0.987; RMSEA = 0.0157, CFI = 0.982, NFI = 0.9867, and AGFI = 0.8984; and p-value = 0.001. While the AGFI value of 0.8984 did not reach the criteria of 0.90, they are still considered acceptable since they are close to the reference value. Bentler (1980) states that the GFI, CFI, NFI, and AGFI should have a minimum value of 0.90 to be acceptable. Additionally, an RMSEA value of ≤ 0.05 is treated as suitable. The results suggest that 40 variables from the first-order CFA model of GF analysis of the aspects and banking sustainability performance in India were suitable as a study sample. Hence, the entire model's adequacy and satisfaction are confirmed.

Table 6. Hypothesis test result

Impact	Beta	z-Test	p	Result of relation
H1: EX.→LR.	0.691***	6.662	0.000	Confirmed
H2: EX.→SP.	0.592***	2.752	0.000	Confirmed
H3: EX.→HC.	0.351***	1.433	0.006	Confirmed
H4: LR. →FO.	0.851***	1.067	0.001	Confirmed
H5: SP.→FO.	0.682***	3.012	0.007	Confirmed
H6: HC. →FO.	0.758***	2.941	0.002	Confirmed

Notes: *** $p < 0.05$; SPSS AMOS outcome by Authors' 2024.

The findings of the hypothesis test indicate that all postulated relationships are statistically significant and validated. The Exogenous Variable (EX) has a substantial impact on Legal Protections and Rights (LR) ($\beta=0.691$, $p<0.001$), Social Perception and Support Systems (SP) ($\beta=0.592$, $p<0.001$), and Healthcare and Mental Health (HC) ($\beta=0.351$, $p<0.01$). Furthermore, LR has a substantial effect on the Final Outcome (FO) ($\beta=0.851$, $p<0.01$), while SP ($\beta=0.682$, $p<0.01$) and HC ($\beta=0.758$, $p<0.01$) also demonstrate significant positive influences on FO. These data validate the strength of the proposed linkages, highlighting the essential roles of EX, LR, SP, and HC in facilitating FO.

The findings underscore the crucial impact of Experience with Discrimination and Victimization (EX) on outcomes, significantly affecting Legal Protections and Rights (LR), Social Perception and Support Systems (SP), and Healthcare and Mental Health (HC). This signifies that EX is a fundamental element that strengthens organisations' or communities' legal frameworks, social support systems, and healthcare infrastructures. The significant positive effect of EX on LR ($\beta=0.691$) indicates that experiences of discrimination and victimisation are intricately linked to establishing and fortifying legal protections and rights, underscoring the necessity for comprehensive legal frameworks to rectify injustices.

The substantial impact of EX on SP ($\beta=0.592$) highlights EX's influence in changing societal beliefs and cultivating supportive social systems. The affirmative correlation between EX and HC ($\beta=0.351$) underscores the necessity of tackling mental health and healthcare issues in response to experiences of prejudice and victimisation. The next level variables - LR, SP, and HC - significantly influence Future Outlook and Advocacy (FO) ($\beta=0.851$), illustrating the interconnection of legal, social, and healthcare systems in fostering a positive and proactive future viewpoint for affected individuals or groups.

Moreover, the results underscore the changing dynamics within impacted communities, where incorporating legislative safeguards, social assistance, and healthcare frameworks is crucial for enhancing long-term outcomes. The substantial effects of SP ($\beta=0.682$) and HC ($\beta=0.758$) on FO underscore the imperative to cultivate inclusive societal norms and guarantee accessible healthcare and mental health services. This dual emphasis enables communities and people to surmount obstacles created by prejudice and victimization, cultivating a sense of hope and empowerment for future activism and advancement. The research emphasizes the significance of expenditures in areas such as fortifying legal institutions, advancing mental health awareness, and improving social support networks. Ethical considerations, transparency in judicial proceedings, and community-driven advocacy are vital elements for a balanced and progressive approach. By prioritizing these interrelated factors, communities may address the intricacies of systemic difficulties, reduce possible dangers, and seize opportunities for sustained

growth and resilience. This comprehensive strategy bolsters future advocacy initiatives and fosters sustained societal advancement and enhanced quality of life for underrepresented populations.

5. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the profound challenges faced by the transgender community in India, particularly in the realm of cyber victimization and its implications on mental and physical well-being. Transgender individuals endure widespread discrimination, exclusion, and victimization across various societal platforms, including cyberspace. While significant progress has been made, such as legal recognition of transgender individuals and evolving social narratives, persistent barriers hinder their inclusion and safety, especially online.

The exploration of cyberbullying victimization among transgender individuals in the Delhi NCR region highlights the critical need for targeted interventions and comprehensive legal frameworks. The findings emphasize that cyber victimization is not only a product of societal prejudices but also a reflection of systemic inadequacies in education, healthcare, and law enforcement. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that integrates legal reforms, societal education, and support systems designed to empower the transgender community.

By documenting the prevalence and impact of cyber victimization, the findings of this study underscore the interconnected influence of Experience with Discrimination and Victimization (EX) on Future Outlook and Advocacy (FO) through its significant impact on Legal Protections and Rights (LR), Social Perception and Support Systems (SP), and Healthcare and Mental Health (HC). The results highlight the critical roles of legal frameworks, social perceptions, and healthcare systems in mitigating the effects of discrimination and fostering a positive future perspective. The strong and statistically significant relationships among these variables demonstrate that addressing systemic issues such as discrimination requires a multidimensional approach that integrates legal protections, supportive social structures, and accessible healthcare. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of empowering individuals and communities to advocate and drive meaningful change supported by robust institutional mechanisms.

In addition to the same, the SEM findings indicate subtle mediation and interaction direction. Indirectly, discrimination affects future perspective of transgender in terms of healthcare and mental health which highlights the role of psychological vulnerability as the channel of transmission. The interaction between legal protection and social support is positive, which increases optimism when they are both high. Interestingly, the correlation between social perception and healthcare access was not significant, which means that social acceptance is not a sufficient factor to ensure institutional accessibility. These overlapping effects underscore the need to have policy interventions that are interdisciplinary, as opposed to addressing legal, social and mental-health aspects independently.

These insights provide a comprehensive framework for policymakers, social organizations, and healthcare professionals to design interventions that address immediate challenges and build sustainable pathways for advocacy, inclusion, and societal progress.

Policy Recommendations

The results highlight the necessity of a prompt institutional and legal change. The Information Technology (IT) Act 2000 must be modified to incorporate the specific clauses on gender based cyber harassment and this is to make it legally binding so that transgender individuals can take legal action against cyber harassment. The Digital Safety that should be operationalized in the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 also demands the nature of responsibilities of the jurisdiction between the cyber cells and the social-media intermediaries. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Coordination Centre (NCSC) and Delhi Police Cyber Cell ought to set up a special redressal system to address instances of transgender digital-rights violation.

NGOs can also help instantly to train community paralegals, create cyber-awareness hotlines, and cooperate with technological platforms to notify hate content. Policymakers ought to also require that digital service providers enter into data sharing arrangements with law-enforcement agencies to ensure that perpetration of online abuse cases is investigated jumbo faster. Together, these specific measures make advocacy a roadmap of

implementation-providing the decision-makers with a point in the direction of inclusion, but the path to the point of inclusion.

Further, recommendation for the mandate sensitivity and digital-rights training for law enforcement and cyber-cell officers handling complaints from LGBTQ+ persons to ensure empathetic, bias-free investigations is required with Integrate transgender health and digital-safety modules into public health and social-work curricula to build awareness among future professionals. Another major aspect is to establish formal partnerships with social-media and tech platforms to monitor, flag, and remove transphobic or cyberbullying content in real time and launch targeted digital-literacy and mental-health campaigns through NGOs and community centers to empower transgender individuals with online-safety skills and emotional support.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The current research recognizes some restrictions of generalizability because of the limited sample size and geographical focus of the study in the Delhi area. Although Delhi offers a corresponding scenario due to the high level of digital-based connectivity, considerable number of transgender populations, and well-developed LGBTQ+ advocacy networks, the results might not be the best representation of transgender experience in other states of India since the situation in these states can be markedly different in terms of sociocultural attitudes, access to the Internet, and reaction of law enforcement. To increase the external validity, subsequent studies are necessary to replicate the study across different regional environments like Mumbai or Bengaluru in semi-urban areas of Uttar Pradesh or Bihar in the southern states of Kerala or Tamil Nadu to ensure a wider range of digital victimization and social identity processes. The application of the SEM-based framework to these contexts would enable comparative learning and finding a way to construct a methodological prototype that can be applied to various sociocultural settings, which would strengthen the academic soundness as well as the need to implement the research model to policy-relevant domains..

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