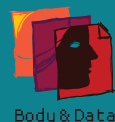


# Identities experiencing the internet

## Nepal Survey Report



## Identities experiencing the internet: Nepal Survey Report

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# ABBREVIATIONS

APC	Association of Progressive Communication
ETA	Electronic Transaction Act
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IT	Information Technology
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer Asexual
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
WMC	Women and Media Collective

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Shubha Kayastha

# INTRODUCTION

Nepal Telecom Authority has plans to reach a broadband internet subscription rate of 100%<sup>1</sup> (recent data shows it to be at 71%). Mobile connectivity has crossed the equivalent of 148% of the total population, and 35% of the population are active social media users<sup>2</sup>. However, there is a lack of disaggregated data to map out a clear digital divide based on gender, disability and geographical location. Nepal stands in 13th place<sup>3</sup> in the list of countries with the cheapest internet, but the cost is still high for citizens given the per capita. Affordability, access and digital literacy are still important concerns, and the Nepali government has put into place Digital Nepal Framework for ICT development, along with the ICT Policy and E-Governance Master Plan. However, these plans mostly look at the linear growth of access to public services based on global indicators of development like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and hardly address the socio-cultural barriers for marginalized communities to access technology and the internet. Neither do they place strategies to provide safer and protected spaces for citizens to be involved in digital life.

As the internet becomes a part of the daily lives of an increasing number of Nepali citizens, government presence online is also becoming more heavy handed. The policy and legal landscape is changing rapidly, with major government incursions via new legislations being drafted in a federal Nepal. There is increasing censorship of internet content and criminalization of online behavior under the premise of morality, obscenity, national sovereignty and social harmony. While citizens protest the loss of their freedoms, fault-lines are visible in Nepali society in terms of whose

voices are heard, whose demands are met, and whose stories never receive platform, even in the supposedly democratic space of the Internet.

Various recently introduced legislations including the Information Technology (IT) bill 2019, Media Council Bill 2020 and Special Service Bill 2020 entail growing restrictions around freedom of expression in Nepal, further opening the possibility of compromising online sexual expression of women and queer individuals. In a country where gender injustice is heavily pervasive in the legal and justice system, these marginalized groups are not protected against the harms and violence they face when expressing themselves online. Even though there has been a leap in the percentage of the population accessing technology and the internet, not all communities across Nepal reap the benefits, and this inequality stems from their economic status, disability background, caste, geographical location, gender and sexuality.

This report tracks recent trends in internet use in Nepal, incorporates findings from a survey administered to 196 individuals from Kathmandu valley and surrounding areas, and recommends a way forward to build a more inclusive, tolerant and feminist internet.

## A changing policy and legal landscape

After Nepal became a federal state and promulgated a new constitution in 2015, the policy and legal landscape around the internet has seen rapid changes, with new acts, bills and guidelines. Nepal had a low score of 3.9 out

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1 Nepali Telecom. (2020, May 24). Mobile, Internet and broadband penetration in Nepal. Nepali Telecom. <https://www.nepalitelecom.com/2017/07/mobile-internet-broadband-penetration-nepal.html>

2 (2020 February 18). Digital 2020: Nepal. DATAREPORTAL. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-nepal>

3 (2020, December 15) Cheapest internet in the world: 2021 country ranking. ATLAS & BOOTS. <https://www.atlasandboots.com/remote-work/countries-with-the-cheapest-internet-world/>

of 10 on freedom of opinion and expression according to a survey conducted by New Zealand-based Human Rights Measurement Initiative. Similarly, according to the 2019 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders, Nepal's position is at 106, a fall of six places from 2018.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, in 2018, the government replaced the outdated national legal code, known as the Muluki Ain, with a new penal code, which introduces its own set of regressions. As Human Rights Watch notes, "Although the constitution recognizes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected through fundamental rights, the criminal code failed to repeat the protection clause, which contradicts the constitution. Additionally, although Nepal has in many ways been at the forefront of protecting the rights of sexual minorities—including by legally recognizing a third gender category based solely on self-identification—the new law only recognizes marriage rights as being between a man and woman."<sup>5</sup> Likewise, a proposed amendment to the Citizenship Act if approved will require a person to provide with 'proof' of a gender reassignment surgery if anyone wishes to change their gender identity from what they were assigned at birth.<sup>6</sup> Nepal has a provision to acquire citizenship card and passport in 'O' category.

In the year 2019 alone, the Electronic Transactions Act has been used to arbitrarily detain critical voices online, including those of journalists, movie reviewers, comedians, and singers. In June of 2019, comedian Pranesh Gautam was arrested for posting a satirical film review on YouTube. Then in October, musical artists Durgesh Thapa, and Samir Ghising popularly known as VTEN, were arrested for

the content of their songs. Samir Ghising aka V-TEN, Durgesh Thapa and Pashupati Sharma all had to take down their songs<sup>7</sup> for allegedly advocating anti-social values. Though the government faced outcry from civil society and public about these arrests and the artistes were released within a few days, these incidents show Nepal government's positioning in increasing curtailment of civil and social liberties.

A report from Freedom Forum shows 104 incidents of press freedom violations in Nepal during April 2018- April 2019, nearly double of what was recorded in 2017. The incidents include journalists being subjected to physical attacks and lawsuits, being barred from reporting certain events, and even receiving death threats.

The current IT Bill (which is part of this wave of drafting) has come under fire for setting the conditions for broad overreach into individual lives, especially for its potential to police freedom of expression. Broader than the current Electronic Transactions Act that it will be replacing, Section 94(1) of the IT Bill has a list of the content and information that should not be posted on social media, including messages intended to tease, deceive, degrade, discourage, scold, create hatred, character assassination, libel and defamation,<sup>8</sup> casting a wide net. Harsh punishment follows, with up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 1.5 million Nepali rupees (approximately 13,000 USD).

Body & Data's own analysis of the Act's potential impact on marginalized communities including women, queer persons and indigenous groups shows the possibility of ambiguous and expansive language criminalizing the "obscene" could be used to curtail and even criminalize behavior and activities relating to sexuality

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4 Rai, B. (2019). People in Nepal are not enjoying their civil rights and political freedoms, new human rights report says. The Kathmandu Post. Retrieved from <https://kathmandupost.com/politics/2019/06/07/people-in-nepal-are-not-enjoying-their-civil-rights-and-political-freedoms-new-human-rights-report-says>

5 Human Rights Watch. (2018). Nepal Events of 2018. World Report 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/nepal>

6 Right to choose. [Editorial]. (2019, March 19). The Kathmandu Post. <https://kathmandupost.com/editorial/2019/03/19/right-to-choose>

7 Pant, S. & Baral, S. (2019, December 31). Social movements in 2019. The Kathmandu Post. <https://tkpo.st/2MIAHlr>

8 Why are IT Bill and Special Service Bill controversial? (2019, December 31). Online Khabar. <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/why-are-it-bill-and-special-service-bill-controversial.html>

even when practiced with consent<sup>9</sup>, and further erode marginalized people's ability to exercise their right to freedom of expression and right to privacy.<sup>10</sup>

The continually shrinking space for self-expression that these new developments represent provided the background in which we conducted our research on online self-expression, sexual expression and violence. It is more important than ever to see how individuals are using the internet for their self-expression, so we can hold on to the valuable spaces that are available, resist their encroachment, and also ensure these spaces are available to more of us.

This study was conducted as part of the EROTICS: Exploratory Research on Sexuality and the Internet project by the Women's Rights Programme of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), and was supported by AmplifyChange.

## Objectives of the study

The study aims to describe the access and usage of internet and technology by Nepalis when it comes to personal life and work. While doing so, it also looks into how people use their agency and autonomy in using the internet for self-expression. The study also explores harassment and violence that people are experiencing in digital spaces.

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9 Body & Data. (2019). Analysis of the IT Bill 2019. <https://files.bodyanddata.org/nextcloud/index.php/s/WCRo3DL6XcBGLij#pdfviewer>

10 For the analysis of the IT bill, Body & Data consulted with civil society members based on in-house analysis of the bill and a desk review from a feminist lens. The consultation saw participation from lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, women rights activists who flagged their concerns on how the provisions in the bill were going to affect the rights of their communities, and curtail freedom of expression and right to privacy.



# METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This research is based on a quantitative survey filled out by 240 individuals from Kathmandu valley, in the second half of 2019. Out of the 240 survey forms, the report includes analysis of 196 participants, the rest were discarded due to incomplete or inaccurate filling. Body & Data together with APC administered the survey, reaching out to their networks online as well as in person. The surveyed group included people aged 15 to 65, comprising a range of ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender, caste, class, and ability status. We also aimed to include diverse professional backgrounds, including respondents working in NGO sector, media, sex work, entertainment industry and students. There were eight organizations that we visited in person around Kathmandu valley.

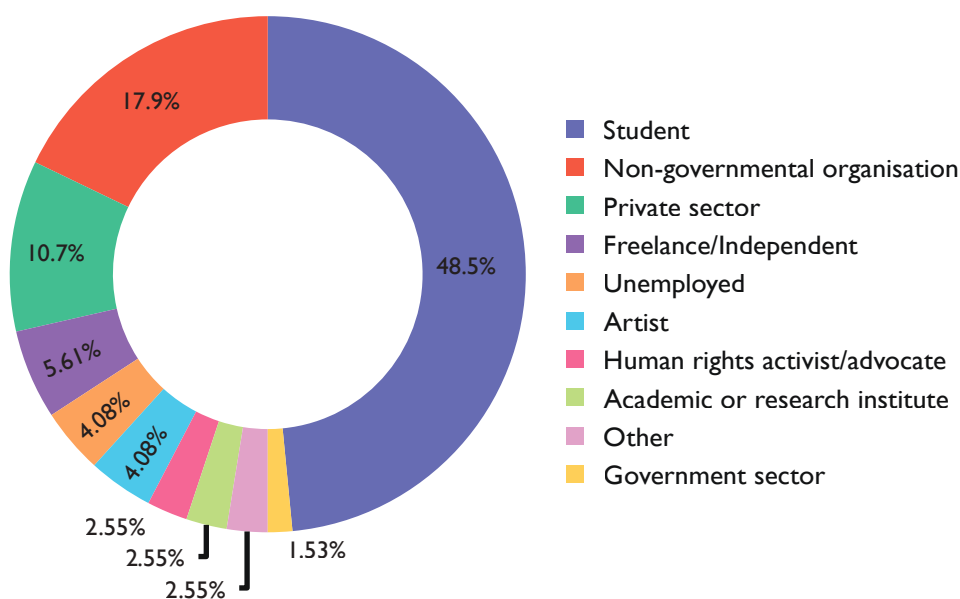
The data collected was coded into Excel and analyzed by type of experience: access, expression, and expression. These categories of analysis were correlated with demographic data in order to make visible any trends and patterns. Included was one open ended question on the importance of self-expression and the answers

to this were captured through qualitative analysis that categorized them by theme.

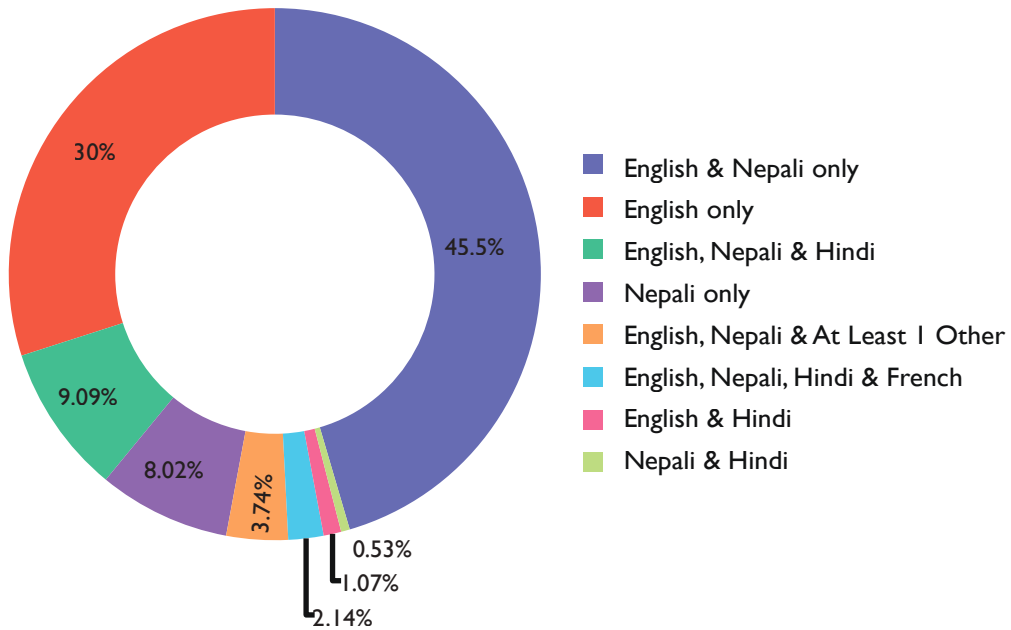
Exploring this dataset, we come away with valuable insights into the online lives of those who are living with a host of marginalization within their communities. Here lies the story of how the Internet features into the lives of individuals from different backgrounds, and the opportunities that exist to support issues of access, expression and rights from a feminist perspective.

Coming on the heels of rapid political changes in Nepal, with new laws written into the books every day and local governments now having real power to bring progress (or regress) to their communities, the research is timely in providing insights on what young Nepalis and women find the Internet most valuable for, how spaces for self-expression and sexual expression can be kept safe from any incursions and what the major threats to look out for and prepare can be for the days ahead.

Distribution of participants by employment backgrounds



## Languages used online by participants



### Knowing our research participants

The analysis is based on the 196 valid samples collected online and offline within Kathmandu Valley. The majority (58%) of our respondents were aged 25 or younger, with 35% in the 26-35 age bracket and 7% of respondents 36 or older. Almost half of the respondents were students (49%), with the second largest group being employees of non-government organizations (17.5%), private sector (11%) and freelance/independent workers (5.5%). The sample also had 4% artists and 2.5% human rights activists with a very small set (1.5%) of government sector workers.

### Intersection of identity

Women comprised an overwhelming majority of our respondents, with 67% identifying as cis-women. Women and queer groups are communities Body & Data's work focuses on, and this study is also an attempt to bring highlight the voices of women and queer persons on matters of online experiences. Among the survey participants, 6% have a disability, 36% belong to indigenous groups, 7% identify as migrants, and 5% as marginalized on the basis of caste. Our participants also included LGBTIQ+ participants (18%).

### Language spoken & used

In terms of survey language, 11% of our respondents filled out the survey in Nepali, with the rest filled it out in English. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) comprised 6% of our respondents.

Among our respondents, the majority (45%) used the internet in both English and Nepali, and 15% used English, Nepali as well as a third or fourth language. The additional languages used by participants online included foreign as well as indigenous languages. The data showed that the vast majority (62%) had a multi-lingual experience of the internet; only 8% of the respondents accessed the internet solely in Nepali, and 30% accessed it solely in English.

# ACCESS & USAGE



# ACCESS AND USAGE

The majority of the country accesses the internet via mobile networks with 96% of Nepali households owning mobile phones, and 21 million mobile broadband subscriptions reported as of November 2019.<sup>11</sup> Over half of those mobile phones are now smartphones, and a 2020 media survey shows “explosive growth in YouTube use” — from zero to 60% in the last two years.”<sup>12</sup> The rise in mobile internet users “has been attributed to exponential growth in users from the rural areas as more people are using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and communication platforms like Viber, Messenger, WhatsApp and WeChat.”<sup>13</sup>

Despite such dramatic increase, on the whole it remains that across the country access is still uneven and city centric; policy makers must pay attention to the demographic factors of internet usage to understand the socio-economic factors that shape internet access, quality and affordability.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the rural/urban divide, those belonging to categories of marginalization including class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability also face barriers to access, a finding underscored by research in rural Nepal that has found that access to a mobile phone and the Internet use is not evenly distributed across gender.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond having access or not, there are additional issues. In Nepal’s patriarchal society, there is heavy surveillance on women and queer bodies both in offline and online spaces. The legal structure is informed by a protectionist lens that

policing individuals from expressing themselves freely; they are likely to be deemed immoral and obscene if they step outside set norms. Data on the internet and tech devices generally fail to take into account the class structure of Nepali society. In addition, online spaces are not free of misogyny, homophobia, casteism and ableist narratives, so marginalized voices do not always feel safe express themselves there.

These questions around who is left behind in the national digital divide have become urgent in present-day Nepal, as government initiatives and services, including social security allowance payments, vital registration and important citizen benefits move rapidly towards digital and online formats. The digital divide is not just in terms of urban and rural, but also other variables such as literacy, gender, access to device and autonomy in using it, disability, tech proficiency and language. The state’s policy around expanding Information Communication and Technology (ICT) needs to go beyond the binary of whether people have internet access or not, and instead address inclusion of diverse demographics in online engagement.

## Place of access

In our study, nearly all of the participants accessed the internet at home. In terms of other locations, 65% also accessed it at work, around 50% also used it while travelling, while 16% also used it at a cafe or in public spaces. Tracking

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11 Nepal Telecommunications Authority. (2020). MIS Report. Retrieved from <https://nta.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/MIS-2076-Mangsir.pdf>

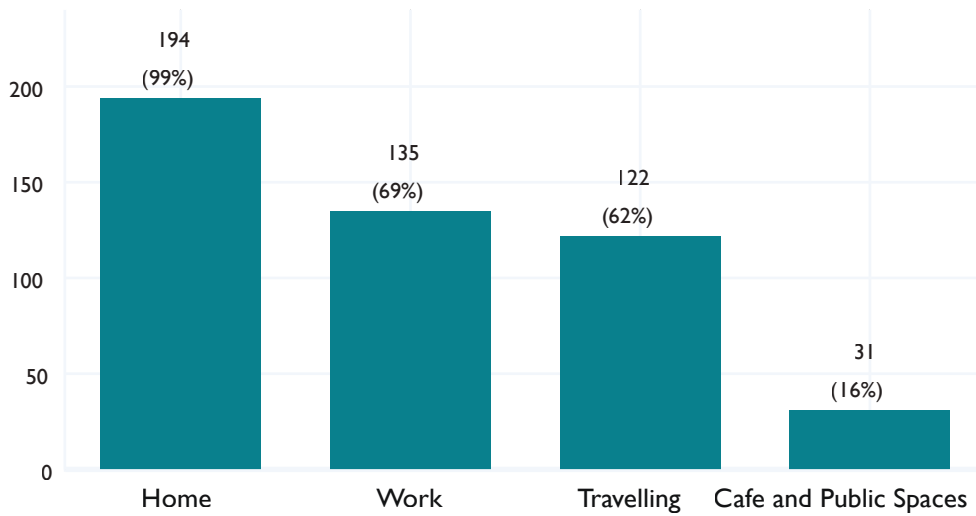
12 Dixit. K., (2020). Mobile Nepal is hooked on YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/mobile-nepal-is-hooked-on-youtube/>

13 Rijal. P. (2019, July 11). Half of Nepal prefer to access the internet via their mobile. The Kathmandu Post. <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2019/07/11/half-of-nepal-prefer-to-access-the-internet-via-their-mobile#:~:text=Nearly%20half%20of%20Nepal's%20population,of%203G%20and%204G%20services.>

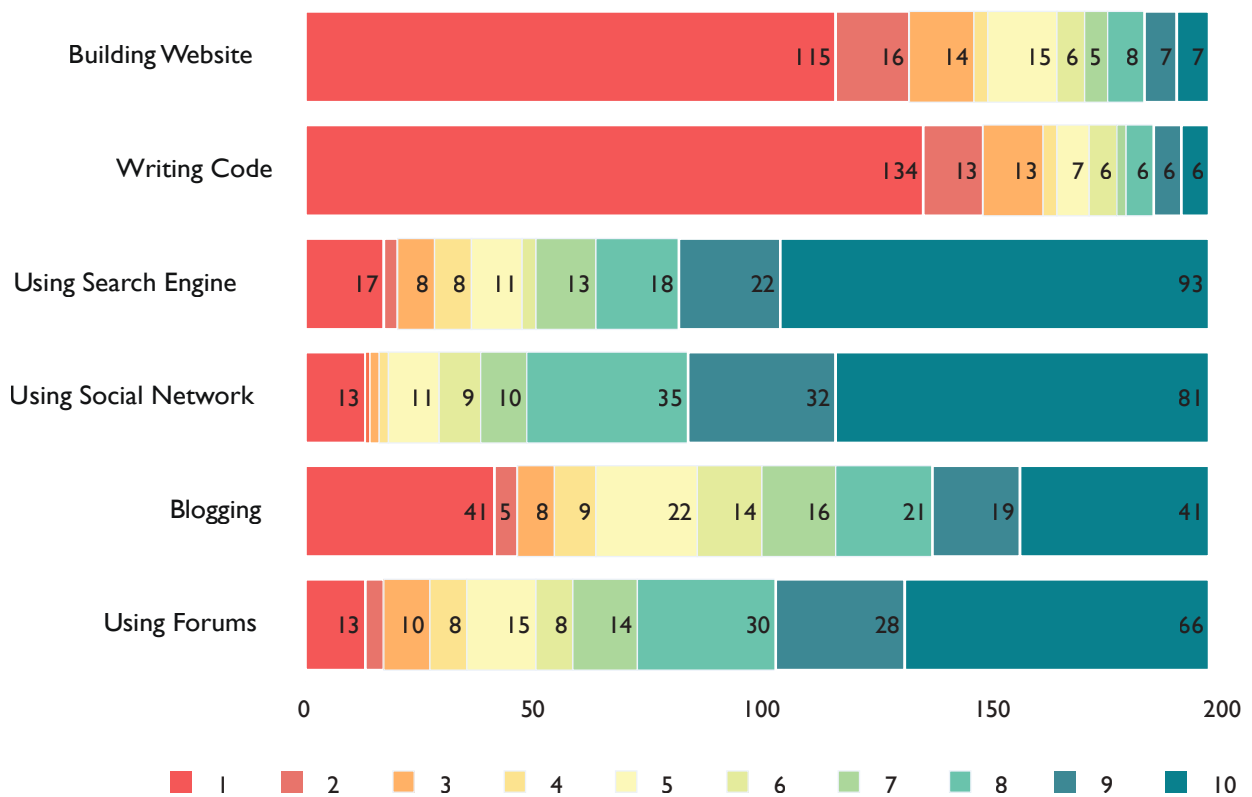
14 Regmi, N. (2017). Expectations versus Reality: A Case of Internet in Nepal. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 82(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1681-4835.2017.tb00607.x>

15 Pandey. S. & Raj. Y. (2016). Free float internet policies of Nepal. Martin Chautari. [http://www.martinchautari.org.np/files/SINHAS-Articles/SINHAS-Vol.21-No.1\\_Shailesh-Pandey-and-Yogesh-Raj.pdf](http://www.martinchautari.org.np/files/SINHAS-Articles/SINHAS-Vol.21-No.1_Shailesh-Pandey-and-Yogesh-Raj.pdf)

### Where do you access the internet? [Multiple choice]



How do you rate your skills for the below statements on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is “can do with ease” and 1 is “never done before”?



national use trends, majority of participants said they accessed the internet on their phone (86%) with less than 2% stating preference for desktops or tablets and around 8% stating they more frequently accessed it on their laptop.

## Internet Skills

When the respondents were asked to rate their internet usage skills, the results showed that they engaged in digital spaces for communication and expression, and did not necessarily partake in activities understood as ‘tech-savviness’. Skills such as building a website, coding and blogging got a low rating, with the majority of them giving it the lowest possible score (ranging from 1 to 5 out of 10) in terms of their familiarity of usage.

When it came to using search engines and social networks, the majority of respondents rated their skills as above average (i.e. above 5 out of the total 10), with 75.5% rating their search engine skills and 56.5% rating their social media skills in the higher ranges. Also 82% of our respondents also rated their ability to use forums as above average, with 33% rating their skill in using forums as a 10. Regardless of the perception of their own tech know-how among the participants, the majority of them were able

to navigate the internet through social media, forums and groups on the internet.

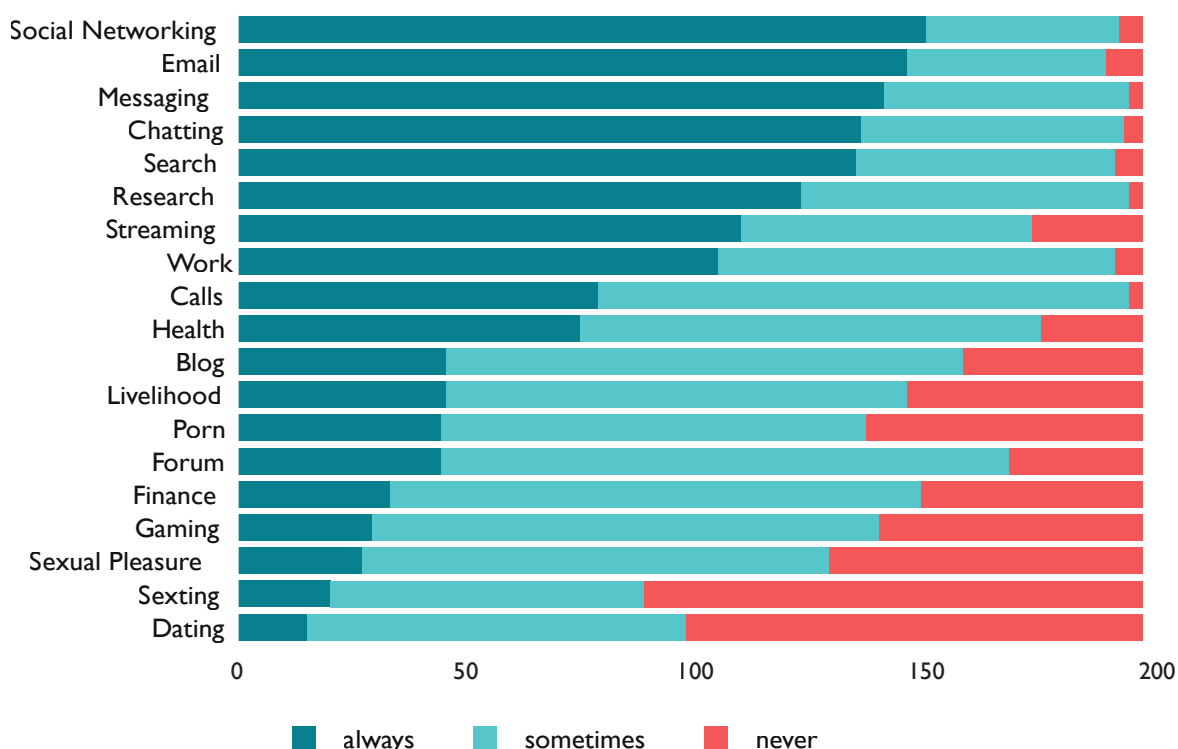
## Use of the internet

Our survey shows that majority of the participants use the internet for communication, work and networking. There is a big number of participants who use the internet to access information related to health. A significant number of participants also reported using the internet for matters related to sexual expression and sexual pleasure; 49.5% reported using the internet for dating, 45% reported using it for sexting, 69% reported using it for viewing porn, 65% reported using the internet for sexual pleasure.

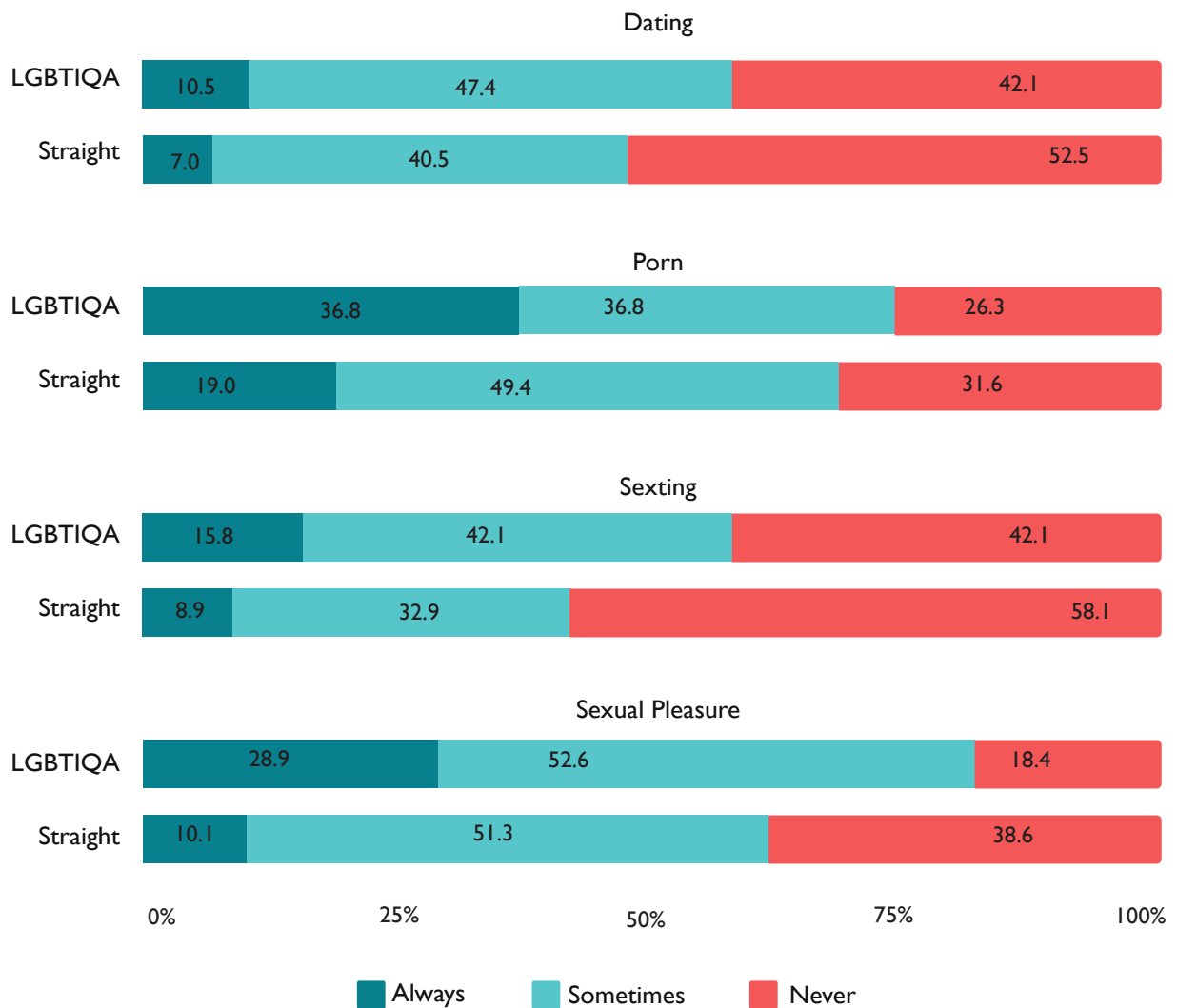
## Internet for sexual expression

In each of the categories of sexual expression (dating, accessing porn, sexting and for sexual pleasure) studied in the survey, there were at least half or more participants engaging in sexual expression in some form online. Despite the small sample size of the survey, a significant proportion of the participants engaged online for sexual expression. This is an important data

What do you use the internet most for? [Multiple choice]



## Use of internet for sexual expression



point that emphasizes how sexual expression through digital communication is not to be ignored.

LGBTIQA+ participants seem to use the internet for sexual expression more than straight identifying participants. In the survey, 36.8% and 28.9% of LGBTIQA+ participants ‘always’ used the internet to watch porn and for sexual pleasure respectively, whereas only 19% and 10% of straight identifying participants said they ‘always’ use it for these purposes. This could mean LGBTIQA+ participants are using the internet to express themselves and to seek pleasure more than straight identifying participants because offline spaces for sexual expression and pleasure are not accessible for everyone, especially gender and sexual minorities.

## Consumers and creators on the internet

Out of 196 participants, 78.6% consumed internet content on a daily basis. In contrast, for frequency of creating, those stating they created content daily accounted for 24.2% of the participants. Content creation was more spread out across weekly and monthly frequencies too. Among cis-men participants, the majority (88.1%) said they consumed internet daily, whereas among cis-women, the share of daily consumers was 73.1%. In terms of being content creators online, 94.4% of the participants in the survey identified as creators; only 5.6% stated they never created content. Similarly, only 4.6% stated that they never consumed content on the internet, and all of these participants happened to be cis-women.

Frequency of use	As consumer		As creator	
	n	%	n	%
Daily	154	78.6	48	24.5
Weekly	11	5.6	45	23.0
At least once a month	8	4.1	52	26.5
Rarely	14	7.1	40	20.4
Never	9	4.6	11	5.6
Total	196	100.0	196	100.0

When analyzing participants' internet consumption habits across their sexual orientation, we find that straight participants were spread across varying frequencies of consumption (daily, weekly, etc), while among LGBTQIA+ participants, 94.7% said they used it daily, and 2 (5.3%) said they never consumed media on the internet. This suggests that the LGBTQIA+ identifying participants are more intense/frequent consumers of online content than the straight identifying participants.

In comparison, when we look at the numbers for how participants identified as creators, there were no sharp distinctions across the sexual orientation of the participants. Similar numbers were spread throughout the frequencies of creating for either demographic.

Therefore, we can say people are not just passive recipients of the content on the internet but are also generating their own content and identify as creators.

In addition, even those who stated that they never created content in the internet still considered internet important for their self expression. Out of 11 participants who said they never created content, 6 of them still ranked the importance of internet for self expression at 10. The general assumption is that of content creators as those who value the internet the most; our survey suggests even those who do not create content on a regular basis still consider the internet's expressive potential to be very important.

Consumer						
Frequency	Straight		LGBTQIA+		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily	118	74.7	36	94.7	154	78.6
Weekly	11	7.0	0	0.0	11	5.6
At least once a month	8	5.1	0	0.0	8	4.1
Rarely	14	8.9	0	0.0	14	7.1
Never	7	4.4	2	5.3	9	4.6
Total	158	100.0	38	100.0	196	100.0

Creator						
Frequency	Straight		LGBTQIA+		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily	38	23.8	10	26.3	48	24.5
Weekly	36	23.1	9	23.7	45	23.0
At least once a month	41	25.6	11	28.9	52	26.5
Rarely	33	21.3	7	18.4	40	20.4
Never	10	6.3	1	2.6	11	5.6
Total	158	100.0	38	100.0	196	100.0



AUTONOMY &



EXPRESSION

# AUTONOMY AND EXPRESSION

Having autonomy while participating on the internet is as important as access itself. Autonomy could start from something basic, such as having one’s own device, sim card, or otherwise full control over that device. Autonomy could also mean being free (or free-er) from social restraints such as having to seek permission from others, or having to defer to others for important moments of self and sexual expression. We explore the individual forms that autonomy on the internet takes for our respondents, which are nonetheless united by a thread of rebellion against the same social mores and norms.

The question of agency has always been at the forefront when talking of freedom and empowerment. What does agency look like on the internet? Feminist understandings have pointed to various markers, such the ability to make informed decisions on what aspects of public or private lives to share online as an example of women’s agency.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the ability to keep oneself safe online has also been recognized as an important aspect of agency.

While earlier, more utopian cyberfeminist movements “imagined the internet as a virtual world where women could leave the body behind and exist free from the restrictive gender roles that shape the ‘real’ world”,<sup>17</sup> today the realities have changed. Where once the internet held the promise of freedom through disembodiment and anonymity, today it has become increasingly corporatist, where our data is the commodity.

The utopian understanding of the internet has been abandoned. Instead, the focus is of taking on these private corporate forces to create a more feminist internet.

When we look at self expression, we are trying to find the spaces where uncensored self expression for women and queer persons is still possible, looking at the kinds of self expression that individuals are able to engage in, examining the sense of community or alienation, and taking a look at the experiences of safety and violence online. These can provide us an understanding of how the Internet in Nepal is shaping and facilitating new conversations, expanding the space for individual expressions.

The survey participants spoke of finding like-minded people and solidarity online, of being able to leave the oppressions in their offline lives at least for a while and feel free. And yet, participants also spoke of violence online, of being silenced, subjected to hate speech or direct threats of harm. With these paradoxes and contradictions in mind, we look to the data to appreciate the variety in individual experiences of the internet.

## Control over one’s device

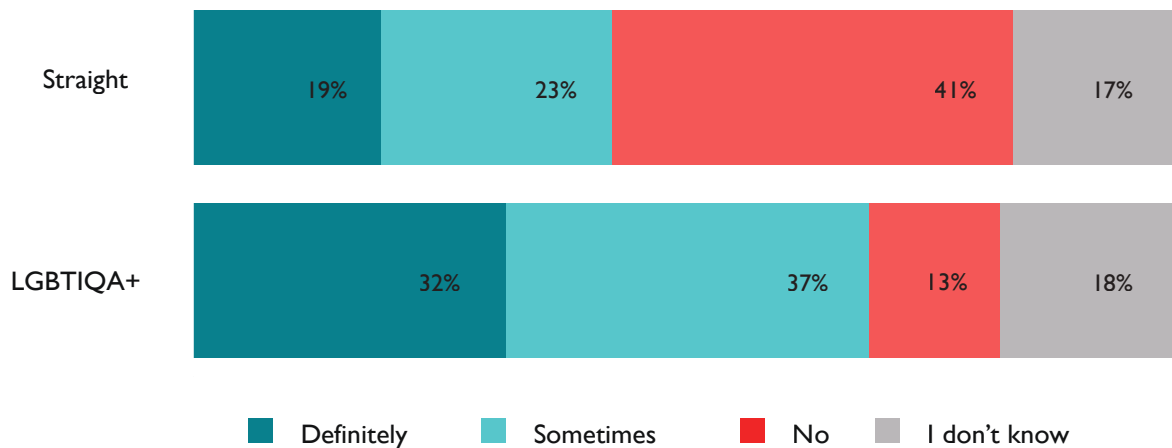
Among our respondents, 82.7% had full control over the primary device they used to access the internet, and almost 16.8% had partial control, with just one person (0.5%) having no control at all.

Control of device	Straight		LGBTIQ+		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Full control	127	80.4	35	92.1	162	82.7
Somewhat control	30	19.0	3	7.9	33	16.8
No control	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	158	100.0	38	100.0	196	100.00

16 Jones. R. (2017, December 7). The makings of a feminist internet. Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID). <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/makings-feminist-internet>

17 Parson, R. S. (2019, June 12). Toward a Feminist Approach to Digital Space. FIELD GUIDE. <http://mediacommons.org/fieldguide/content/toward-feminist-approach-digital-space>

## Has your sexual identity affected the way you use the internet?



Though the sample size of LGBTQIA+ participants was small, 92.1% of them said they have full control over their devices as compared to 80.4% of straight identifying participants.

Among the participants who said they only had somewhat control of their device, 11 were cis-men and 22 were cis-women. The only person who said they had no control over their device was a cis woman participant in the 15-20 age group.

### Influence of one's gender and sexual identity on the use of the internet

Among the cis women participants, the majority (59%, ie 23+36%) of them felt gender had affected their internet use, whereas majority of cis men said their gender had never (53%) affected their internet use.

The data showed the majority (41%) of participants who identified as straight said their sexual identity was not affected by internet use, where only 13% of those identifying within LGBTQIA+ said they weren't affected. In

addition, more than half (69%) of the LGBTQIA+ identifying people said their sexual identity had affected their internet use.

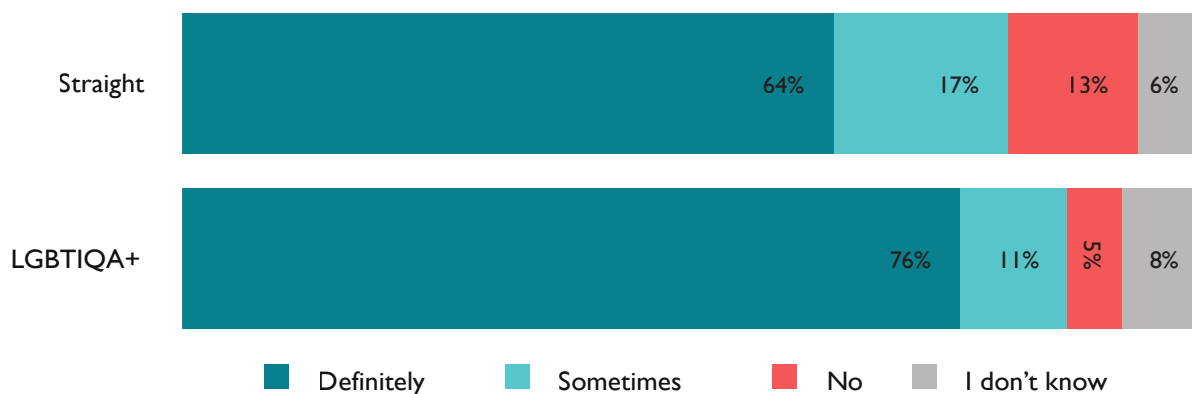
Though on the whole hetero respondents leaned towards their sexual identity not affecting internet usage, when breaking down this group into cis men and cis women and analyzing the distribution of responses, it is again worth nothing the contrast between cis men and cis women. 60.4% of straight cis men said their sexual identity did not affect their internet use whereas among straight cis women, the answers were more varied.

### Internet changing the understanding of gender and sexual identity

Among the participants, 66% said their perception on gender and sexual identity had 'definitely' changed because of the internet, in addition to 16% who said their perception has changed 'sometimes'. Meanwhile, 11% of the participants said their perception on different gender and sexual identity had never been

Is internet use affected by your gender? "No" responses only	Affected by gender		Affected by sexual identity		Change in their perception on gender and sexuality		Change in their perception on people of different gender and sexuality	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cis men	31	52.5	30	50.8	12	20.3	9	89.1
cis women	34	26.2	37	28.5	11	8.5	12	20.1

## Has access to the internet changed how you perceive people of different gender and sexual identities?



changed because of the internet. 90% of the participants who identify as LGBTQIA+ said the internet has changed their understanding on gender identity as opposed to 77% of straight identifying participants.

Has your perception of gender and sexual identity changed because of the internet?	Participants	
	n	%
Definitely	130	66
Sometimes	31	16
I don't know	13	7
No	22	11
Total	196	100

Similarly, the internet seems to be important in changing perceptions about people from different sexual orientations and gender identities for both straight and LGBTQIA+ participants, with a total of 81% of straight participants and 87% of LGBTQIA+ participants affirming it, as shown in the chart below.

A significant number of participants stated that there had been a shift in their understanding of gender and sexuality because of exposure to the internet.

*“I learnt a lot about my sexuality on the internet. I depend on the internet to connect with all of my queer friends around the world. And I have learnt a lot about how to express myself through the internet.”*

—Response from survey participant.

When looking at the distribution of answers among cis women and cis men for questions on correlation between gender and sexual identity and online experience (their use of internet given their gender and sexual identity and if that has changed their perception on people of different gender and sexual identity), the percentile share of “no” responses was always greater among cis men than cis women.

This suggests that cis women’s internet usage, understanding of gender identity and perception of people of diverse gender and sexuality is affected by their gender more so than cis men.

### Internet for self expression

Majority of the participants in the survey highlighted the importance of the internet for their self-expression with over a quarter (28%) awarding it the highest score of 10 and only 1% selecting the lowest score of 1.

Among those who valued the internet highly for their self expression, the vast majority noted the ability to share one’s thoughts and emotions, discuss with like-minded people, engage with taboo topics, find or create a community, as well as ignore comments, judgments or social censure... things that are difficult to do offline. Some responses also noted how the Internet helps widen one’s social circle, and helps amplify one’s message to reach more people.

*“I feel like internet has given me a platform to voice out my opinion and sort of give*

*validation through the engagement I receive. Through the communities I have found on the internet, I have seen and met people with similar interests, struggles and viewpoints. Furthermore, Internet has been a way through which I can source out my creative output as well... the resources available on the internet has only made me grow more and learn more about myself and the world around me. This has helped me express myself more cohesively and informatively.”*

One trend in the dataset has been how self expression relates to emotional expression, as well as mental health. A sizable number of our participants noted that sharing feelings, and especially expressing difficult feelings, helps them feel lighter and less alone.

Conversely, those whose responses indicated other states such as sorrow or vulnerability that are considered less acceptable types of emotional expressions said that they did not

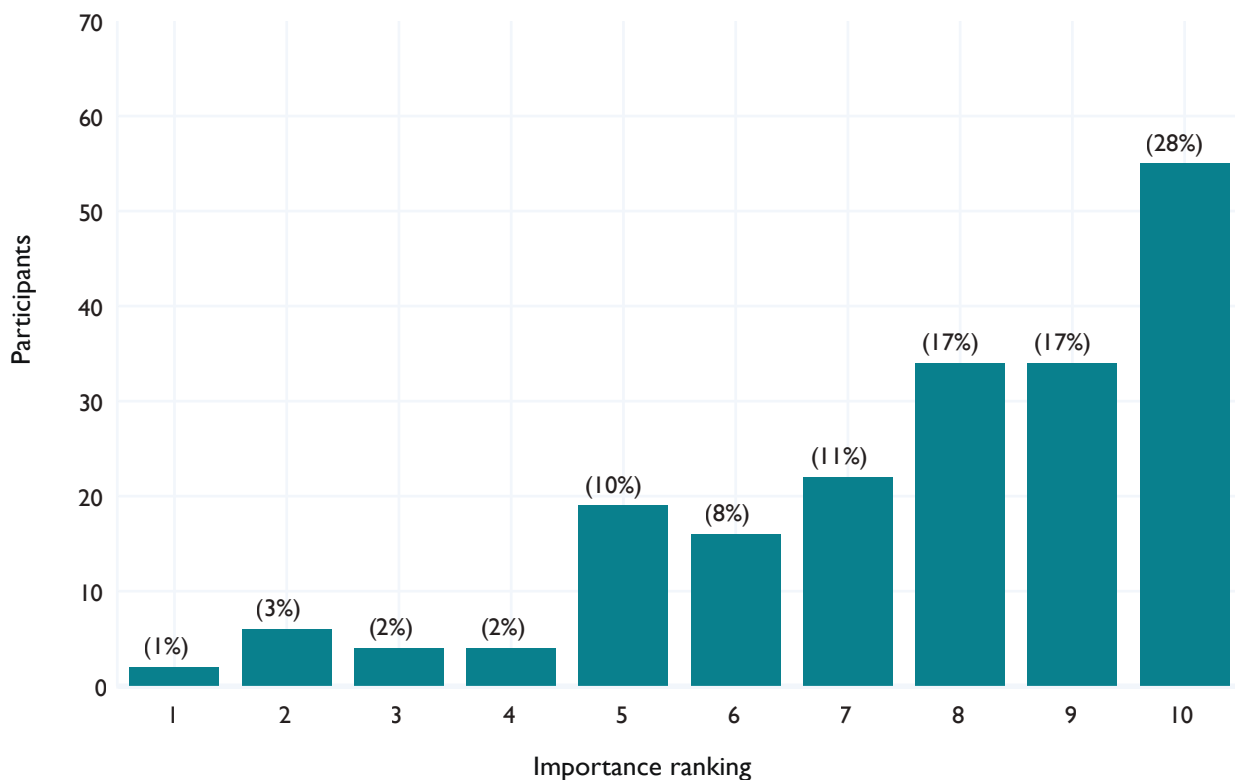
find the internet an important medium for self expression. In fact, they felt the need to actively censor their feelings online.

*“I don’t like to post my current situation which i am going through because it feel like i am saying openly that I am [weak] and in bad conditions.”*

*“I don’t really express that much on the internet. I dont really like to talk about all the events happening in my life specially sad ones. But I occasionally share some happy moments.”*

Similarly, many of those who gave low rankings to their perception of use of internet for self expression, still mentioned the importance of internet for gathering information, knowledge and for entertainment. These ‘passive users’ whose purpose of the internet use is different felt they do not need to express themselves on the internet or some did not use internet much. It should be noted that any participant giving a low score to the importance of internet for

How important is the internet in your self-expression on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is “essential” and 1 is “not important at all”?



self expression did not necessarily mean the participant used the internet less.

Anonymity was also a recurring theme in participants responses. It was mentioned by participants regardless of how they scored perceptions of self-expression. Those who gave a high score valued the anonymity the internet offered; those who low scores said that they avoided giving personal details or sharing personal expressions, implying they preferred to remain anonymous through less self expression online.

As stated by participant who gave a high score:

*“It is an easily accessible platform and there is a considerable autonomy to the way you want to project yourself on the internet.”*

As stated by participant who gave a low score:

*“Its not compulsory to let other people know about your identity and what you think.”*

In terms of the platforms used for self-expression, the majority mentioned social media: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. One response mentioned dating apps like Grindr and one sophisticated user shared the details of how they use the various platforms available to them.

*This one is hard to answer. I use twitter to share my views and opinion, Insta for my pictures and stuffs, Facebook is for family stuffs, Medium is for blogging and all, Reddit to get info about new interesting topics and Youtube for entertainment.*

# EXPERIENCE





# EXPERIENCE

With government incursions into online spaces in 2019, particularly through the Electronic Transactions Act 2063, Nepal witnessed numerous movements for freedom of expression. For example, after singer Pashupati Sharma was threatened and forced to take down his song on corruption ‘Lutna sake loot,’ #lutnasakelutkancha and #pashupatisharma started trending on Twitter. When stand-up comedian and YouTuber Pranesh Gautam was arrested after posting a negative movie review, citizens expressed support for him through hashtag #FreePranesh and also assembled in Maitighar Mandala in protest.<sup>18</sup> Nepali Internet was similarly abuzz with #FreeVTEN to ensure V-TEN’s release after his detention over the content of his songs.<sup>19</sup>

However, besides from such instances of citizens rising up against incursions into self-expression, there are another set of stories that receive less focus: the story of how women and “their issues” are constantly undervalued in Nepali society. Women and girls are constantly questioned and surveilled online not just by the family but also by the community and the state. In Simraungadh, Bara, the local government even decided not to give mobile phones to girls<sup>20</sup>. Many women on social media platforms like TikTok are mocked and slut-shamed. Recently, Sophiya Thapa’s music video poking fun at patriarchal stereotypes promoted by Teej (a Hindu festival where women fast and pray for their husbands’ longevity) was taken down after a Hindu extremist group threatened the female artiste. The Nepali government tends to have a protectionist notion when it comes to violence against women; it brings in regulations to counter violence against women and girls

instead of bringing changes to structural issues that are unfair and discriminatory. “Women’s issues” are a universe of political concerns that are not deemed worthy of mainstream attention in Nepal, whether they pertain to citizenship rights, representation in the government, sexual and reproductive health rights, violence against women, or migration. The #metoo movement that trended internationally failed to make significant headway in Nepal; another testament to the general sidelining of issues that affect women.

Gender and sexual minorities also face a similar plight, where often only the most extreme cases involving physical violence against them come to the forefront. Legal and structural concerns surrounding LGBTQIA rights tend not to be staple of mainstream discourse. While a few rare examples such as #justiceforNikisha materialized in support a transwoman who had been harassed, discussion around most instances of violence online and offline remain in the background.

With these social contexts in mind, we asked survey participants questions around how pleasurable internet use was for them, and what their experiences with violence online had been like.

## Is your experience on the internet pleasurable?

Majority of the participants gave 5 or higher when asked to rate how pleasurable their experiences on the internet had been. Among the participants, 4% rated their experience at

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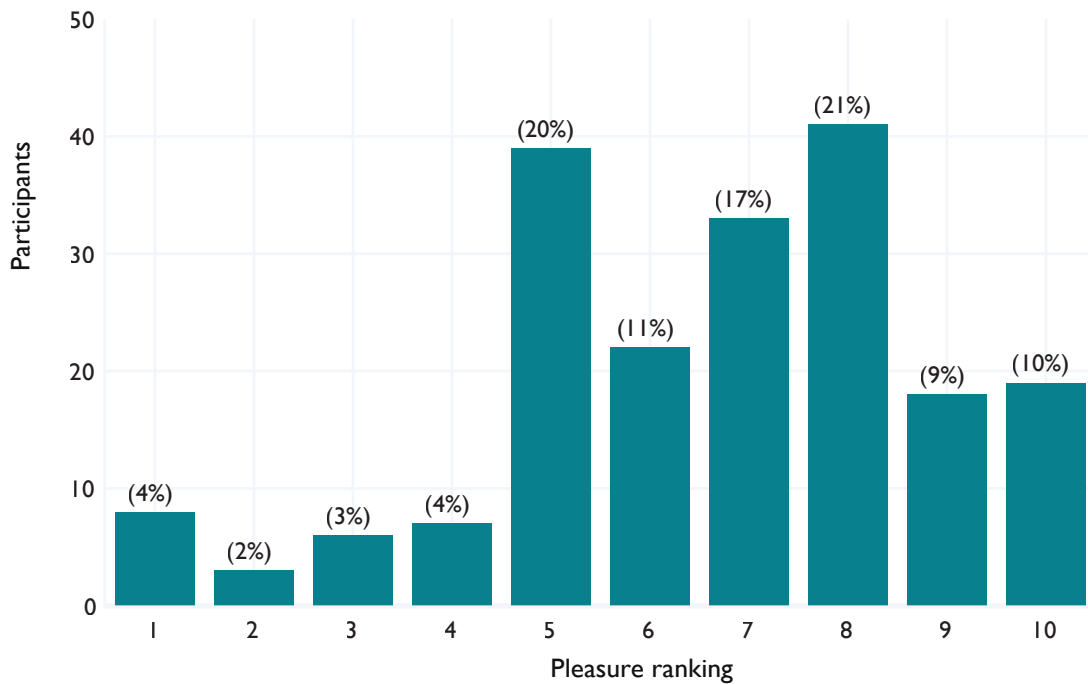
18 Pant. S., & Baral. S., (2019). Social movements in 2019. The Kathmandu Post. Retrieved from <https://tkpo.st/2MIAHlr>

19 Rapper VTEN released on general date. (2019, October 25). The Himalayan Times. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/rapper-ven-released-on-general-date/>

20 सिम्रौनगढ- ५ मा अविवाहित केटीलाई मोबाइल बोकन प्रतिबन्ध. (2020). Online khabar. <https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2020/03/845327>



Rate your experience of using the internet from pleasurable to not, on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is highly pleasurable).



1, and all of these participants happen to be cis women (included both straight and LGBTQIA).

A total of 28% of participants had rated the importance of the internet for their self-expression at 10<sup>21</sup>, however only 10% of the participants rated their experience as pleasurable at 10. This suggests that while more participants felt certain about the role of internet in self expression, participants were more hesitant to score the highest number when asked if internet use was pleasurable for them.

When correlating the survey results on pleasurability of internet-use with survey data on violence, we found that, counter-intuitively, even participants who had stated that they had faced some form of violence online still tended to lean towards the higher rankings on the pleasurable scale. So, we may infer that despite facing violence, participants still find their internet exploration worthwhile.

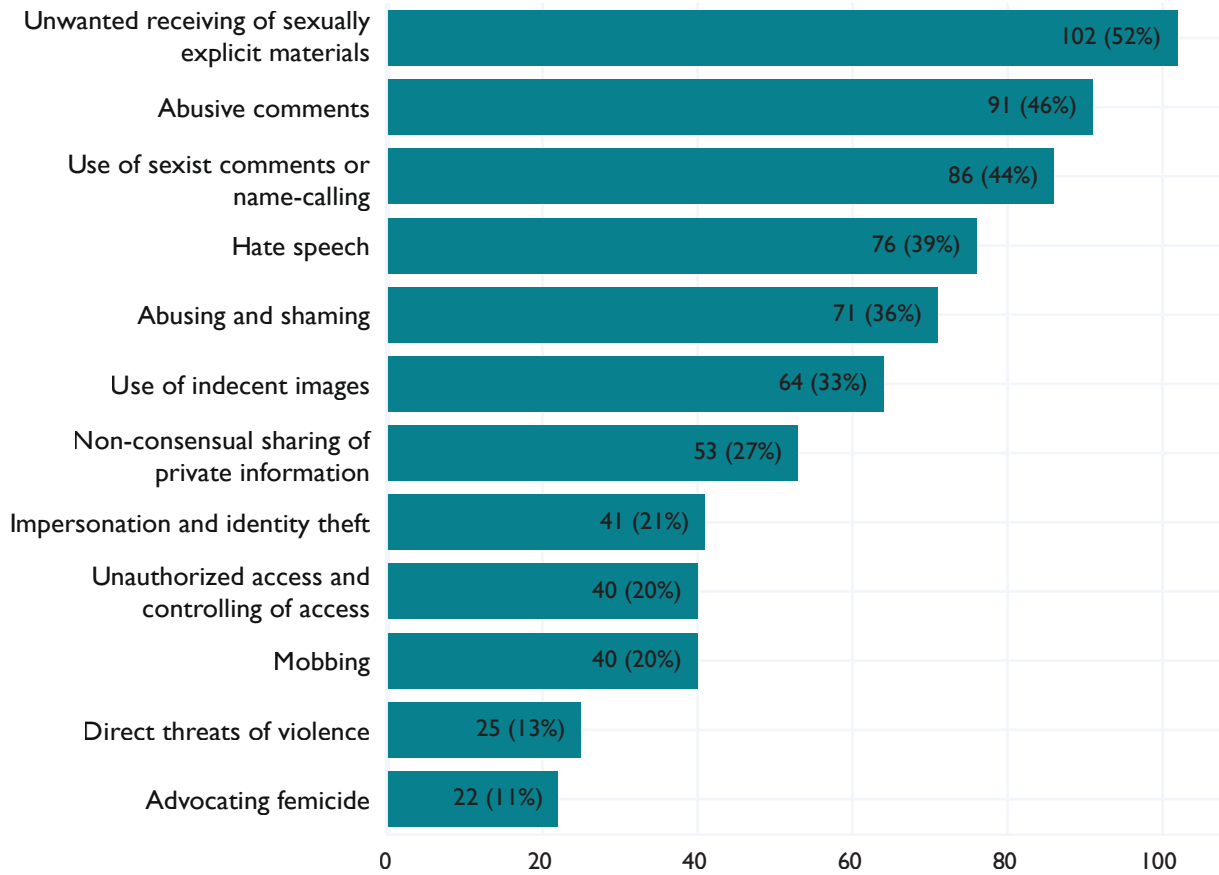
## Violence online

Violence on the internet is a common occurrence with more than 86% of our respondents

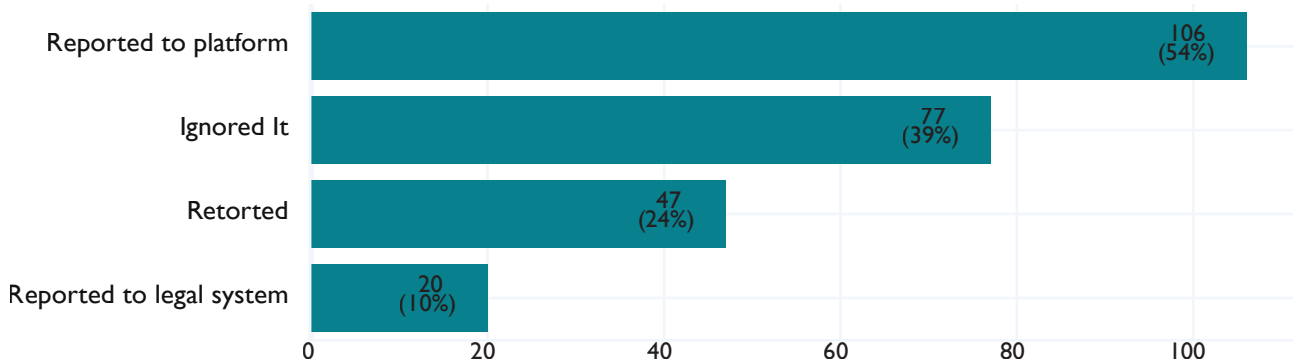
having experienced violence of some sort in their online lives. Among the total straight participants, 83.5 % said they had experienced some form of violence online. Similarly, 97.4% of the set of LGBTQIA+ identifying participants stated that they experienced online violence. When disaggregating the types of violence surveyed, we also looked at which particular forms of violence straight and LGBTQIA+ participants faced the most; 50% of the straight identifying participants experienced ‘unwanted receiving of sexually explicit materials’, and 63% of LGBTQIA+ participants had experienced abusive comments. In general a greater share of LGBTQIA+ participants faced violence throughout the various categories of violence surveyed.

The type of violence most commonly mentioned was receiving unwanted sexually explicit messages (52%), the second highest experience is of abusive comments (46%), followed by name calling (45%); 39% had experienced hate speech on the Internet, and 36% had experienced abuse and/or shaming a woman for expressing views that are not normative, for disagreeing with people and also for refusing sexual advances. Of

## Types of violence experienced on the internet [multiple choice]



## Responses to online violence [multiple choice]



Types of response to violence	Ignore		Reported to platform		Retorted back		Sought legal support		Other	
	Straight	LGBTIQ+	Straight	LGBTIQ+	Straight	LGBTIQ+	Straight	LGBTIQ+	Straight	LGBTIQ+
Sexual identity										
Number	60	17	81	25	34	13	18	2	3	2
As % of demographic	38	45	51	66	22	34	11	5	2	5

our respondents, 13% have also received direct threats of physical or sexual violence.

From the same set of data, besides from 14% who had not faced any kind of online violence, majority of participants had faced 1 or 2 types of online violence listed on the survey form. A significant share also indicated facing 4 or 5 types of online violence, and one person had faced all 12 listed categories of online violence.

## Responding to the violence

When surveying the types of responses to violence, we have included ignoring/ avoiding the violence/ harassment as a form of response as well, alongside other direct measures such as reporting to the platform or the legal system. For the analysis of this research, we have considered choosing to remain silent as a form of resistance/ response as well. We are doing so under the acknowledgement that silence can also be a form of power, as opposed to the

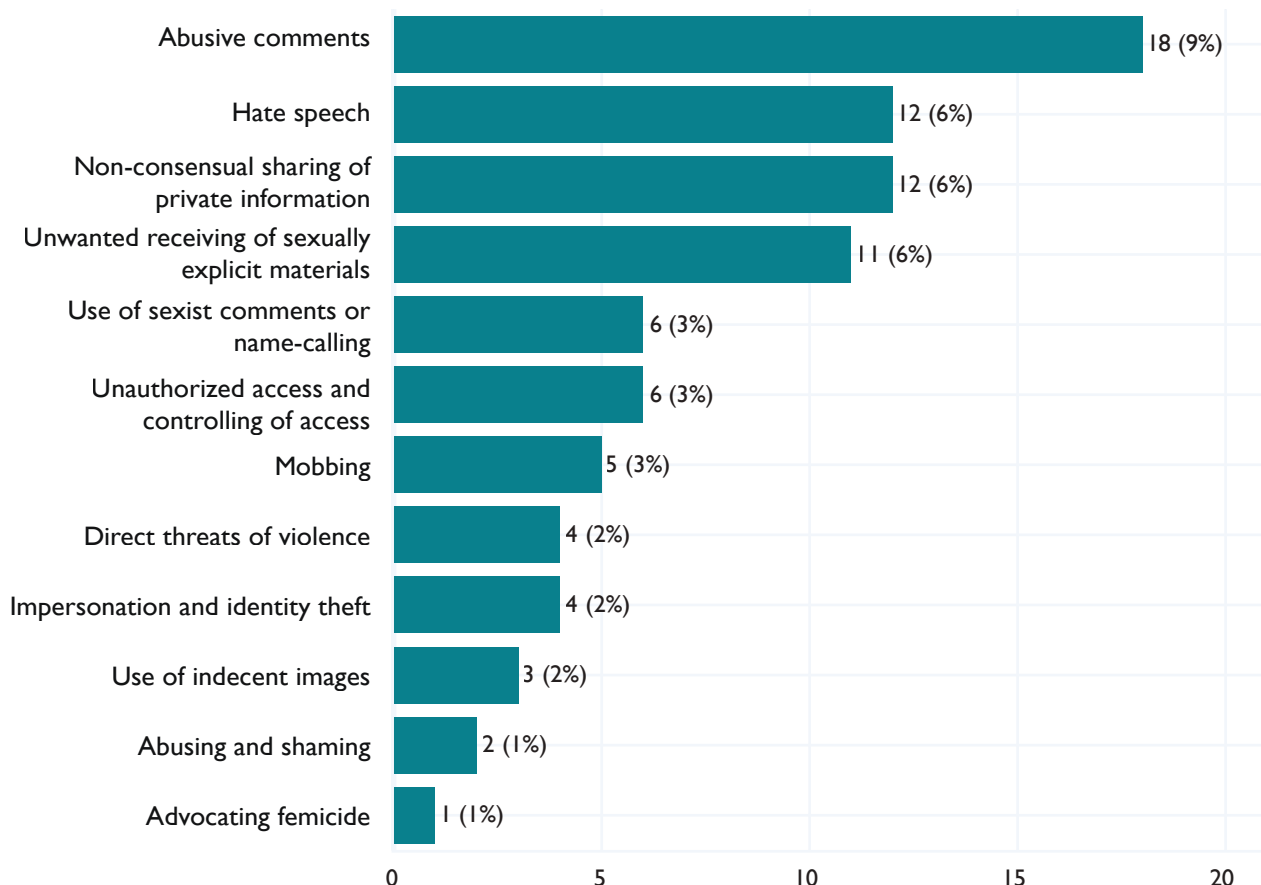
dominant narrative of only voicing out being seen as an ‘active response’.

In terms of their response to the violence after it occurred, 54% of the participants chose to report the incident of violence to the platform, 39% chose to ignore it, 24% of them retorted back. In 10% of the instances, respondents had reported it to a legal system, while, 3% of them chose other responses. On the other hand, 11% of the participants did not state themselves as having taken any of the categories of response.

When diaggregating on the basis of sexual orientation, a higher percentage of LGBTIQ+ identifying participants responded in some way in all the categories except for the option of ‘sought legal support’. This could show LGBTIQ+ participants felt the need to respond to online violence, but their lack of trust in the legal system in the country makes them hesitant to opt for legal methods.

Out of the total participants, there were 13 participants who had themselves not faced

Types of violence participated in [multiple choice]



violence but had selected one of the options under responses to violence. Among these, 8 of them resorted to direct measures of response such as reporting to the platform or legal process or retorting back. Since they did not state that they themselves had faced violence, we can infer that they were responding to the violence on behalf of others or supporting those who were facing violence.

Faced violence/ responded	Responded	Did not respond
Have faced violence	161	8
Have not faced violence	13	14

There were also some participants (n=8) of the survey who had faced online violence of some type but did not respond. Among these 8 participants, 6 had faced more than one form of violence.

Out of the participants, 65% mentioned they spoke to someone when faced with violence. Only 30% of the cis men said they had spoken to someone about it, whereas 71% of cis women had done so. Similarly, a total of 51 participants who faced violence said they did not share the experience with anyone.

## Participating in violence

Among our respondents, there are also those who admitted in participating in online violence, mainly related to abusive comments (9%), hate speech (6%) and non-consensual sharing of private information (6%). While a small subset, its existence in our dataset encourages us to look for the nuances in the story. A victim/perpetrator binary can be as false as other binaries that marginalize; such a narrative favors broad sweeps of the brush instead of feminist perspectives that focus on grounded-ness. Here is also an opportunity to fill what seems to be an information gap, and improve awareness on the nuances of issues of privacy, consent and harassment online. Similarly, 50 participants involved in the survey said they had participated in violence in some form while also having faced some kind of violence themselves.

# KEY FINDINGS

## Access and Usage

- Nearly all of the participants accessed the internet at home, 65% also had it at work, around 50% also used it while travelling, while the remaining at a cafe or in public spaces. Almost all accessed it on their phone (86%) with less than 2% using desktops or tablets and around 8% accessing it on their laptop.
  - When it came to using search engines and social networks, the majority of respondents rated their skills as above average (above 5 out of the total 10), with 75.5% rating their search engine skills in the higher ranges, and 56.5% rating their social media skills in the higher ranges. 82% of our respondents also rated their ability to use forums as above average, with 33% rating their skills to use forums as a 10.
  - Among our respondents, the majority (45%) used the internet in both English and Nepali, and 15% used English, Nepali as well as a third or fourth language such as Hindi, German, French; Indigenous languages such as Maithili, Nepal bhasa and Tamang were also mentioned as the additional language used. In terms of single language use, 8% of the respondents accessed the internet only in Nepali and 30% accessed it only in English.
  - Majority of the participants use the internet for communication, work and networking. A significant number of participants use the internet to access information related to health, to watch porn, for sexting, dating and for sexual pleasure.
  - LGBTQIA+ participants seem to use the internet more than straight identifying participants for sexual expression. 36.8% and 28.9% of LGBTQIA+ participants 'always' use the internet to watch porn and for sexual pleasure respectively, whereas only 19% and 10% of straight identifying participants said they 'always' use the internet for these purposes.
  - 78.6% of the participants consume internet content on a daily basis whereas only 24.5% creates content on a daily basis. Majority (88.1%) of the participants who said they consume internet on a daily basis are cis-men whereas 73.1% of them are cis-women. Only 4.6% stated that they never consumed content on the internet. Where straight participants were spread across varying frequencies of consumption (daily, weekly, once a month), among LGBTQIA+ participants, 94.7% used it daily, and 2 people (5.3%) said they never used it for consumption.
-

## Autonomy and Expression

- 82.7% of the participants had ‘full control’ over the primary device they used to access the internet, and almost 16.8% had ‘partial control’, with just one person (0.5%) having ‘no control’ at all. 92.1% of the LGBTIQ+ identifying participants said they have ‘full control’ over their devices as compared to 80.4% of straight identifying participants.
  - Those who only had ‘somewhat control’ of their device, 11 were cis-men and 22 were cis-women. The only person who said they had no control over their device was a cis woman in the 15-20 age group.
  - Majority (59%) of cis-women felt their gender affected their internet use whereas majority of cis-men said their gender never (53%) affected their use of the internet. Only 26% of cis women said their gender did not affect how they used the internet.
  - Majority (41%) of the total participants who identified as straight said their sexual identity did not affect their internet use, where only 13% of those identifying within LGBTIQ+ said so. More than half (69%) of the LGBTIQ+ identifying people said their sexual identity affected their internet use.
  - 66% said their perception on gender and sexual identity had been ‘definitely’ changed because of the internet, in addition to 16% who said their perception has changed ‘sometimes’. 90% of the participants who identify as LGBTIQ+ said the internet has changed their understanding on gender identity as opposed to 77% of straight identifying participants.
  - The internet seems to play an important role in changing perceptions on people from different sexual orientation and gender, with a total of 81% of straight participants and 87% of LGBTIQ+ participants agreeing to it.
  - Majority of the participants in the survey highlighted the importance of the internet for their self-expression with most ranking it 5 and above; 28% even selected the highest score (10). Only 1% selecting the lowest score (1).
-

## Experience

- A total of 28% of participants had rated 10/10 to rank importance of internet for their self-expression, however only 10% of the participants has rated 10 when asked if their experience is pleasurable. Majority of the participants rated 5 and higher when asked how pleasurable their experience on the internet has been.
  - 86% of the total participants had experienced online violence of some sort. Among the total straight participants 83.5 % said they had experienced some form of violence online while among LGBTQIA+ participants it was 97.4%.
  - 52% of the participants faced receiving unwanted sexually explicit messages, 46% had experienced abusive comments; 45%, name calling; 39%, hate speech; 36%, abuse and/or shaming a woman for expressing views that are not normative, for disagreeing with people and also for refusing sexual advances, and 13% had received direct threats of physical or sexual violence. 54% of the respondents chose reporting the incident of violence to the platform, 39% chose to ignore it, 24% of them retorted back, in 10% of the instances respondents had reported it to a legal system and 3% of them chose others ways of response. 11% of the respondents did not choose any of the categories of response as something they had taken up.
  - 65% mentioned they spoke to someone after facing violence online. Only 30% of the cis men said they spoke to someone whereas 71% of cis women had confided in someone. Similarly, 51 participants who faced violence said they did not share the experience with anyone.
-

# CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Body & Data endorses the feminist principles of the internet<sup>22</sup> drafted in 2016 and its articulation of the kind of internet we want, which includes a principle of access which “enables more women and queer persons to enjoy universal, acceptable, affordable, unconditional, open, meaningful and equal access to the internet,” by cultivating digital spaces that protect and uplift marginalized voices. The survey conducted among 196 straight and LGBTIQ+ identifying individuals between the age of 15-65 describes the access and usage of internet and technology in their lives and explores their agency and autonomy while using the internet for self-expression.

Mobile phones are used by vast majority of the participants, and social networking was the most common use of the internet among the participants. In a country where online sexual expression is criminalized by the law in the name of obscenity and decency,<sup>23</sup> our research shows people find ways through internet to explore and express their sexuality through sexting, dating apps and by watching pornography. In a highly patriarchal and heteronormative Nepali society, more LGBTIQ+ participants find refuge in digital space for sexual expression and to seek sexual pleasure than straight identifying participants. Majority of the study participants consumed internet on a daily basis; they also created their own content either on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The survey findings show people across different gender identity and sexual orientation as not just passive recipients of internet content but as also active participants generating their own content. In addition, the data also shows that even those

who did not create content still value internet for self-expression.

Having access to internet and technology (devices) does not necessarily mean one has control over internet use and self expression online. The survey findings show that for the many of the participants, their gender and sexual orientation affects how they use the internet; however in this finding, more cis-women and LGBTIQ+ identifying participants of the survey expressed this view than cis-men participants. Similarly, the internet was perceived as an important factor that shaped understanding about people from different gender and sexual identities.

Majority of the survey participants believed the internet to be important for self-expression. They valued the ability to express themselves and find community, and be informed, including on taboo topics. Anonymity was a recurring theme; many participants stated that they preferred to remain anonymous by avoiding giving personal details or sharing personal expressions.

Despite the violence faced online by a high number of survey participants, the majority of them still stated that their experience of the internet was pleasurable. Violence online was a common occurrence with receiving unwanted sexually explicit materials and abusive comments being among the most prevalent. Many participants also faced multiple forms of violence. However, a significant share of participants also responded to the violence in some way, whether through willfully ignoring/avoiding or through direct action against the violence. When disaggregating on the basis

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22 Association for Progressive Communications. (2016). Feminists Principles of the Internet. (2nd ed.) [https://feministinternet.org/sites/default/files/Feminist\\_principles\\_of\\_the\\_internetv2-0.pdf](https://feministinternet.org/sites/default/files/Feminist_principles_of_the_internetv2-0.pdf)

23 Body & Data. (2020). Online Gender Based Violence: Mapping Laws Related to Online GBV in Nepal. <https://bodyanddata.org/ogbv-laws-mapping-chart/>



of sexual orientation, a higher percentage of LGBTIQQA+ identifying participants respond in some ways in all the categories except for the option of 'sought legal support' which shows their lack of trust in the legal system in the country.

Based on the research findings, here are our recommendations for building a feminist internet that is safer and secure for everyone, where diverse individualities to be expressed and celebrated:

1. Improve awareness on the nuances of issues of privacy, consent and harassment online: As access to the internet is increasing given the increase in use of mobile data, Nepali citizens need digital literacy programs for them to make optimal use of digital technology and to make them aware of the nuances of digital rights such as privacy and consent.

2. Respect for self-expression and sexual expression of women and LGBTIQQA+ people: Online expression within and outside social norms should be perceived as legitimate forms of expression which should be encouraged by society and social institutions.

3. Take up the opportunity offered by penal code to prosecute online crimes against women: Online violence is prevalent among people across age groups, gender and sexual orientations, and also must be acknowledged as a replica of its offline versions. Legal recourse should be used by victims, lawyers and activists in order to discourage the proliferating online gender based violence without enforcing protectionist notion to control online expression of individuals online.

4. Amplify global conversations taking place in online spaces by creating stronger offline networks of feminists (e.g. #metoo): Strong offline networks and organizations are needed in Nepal to be able to make a difference online. While online spaces might provide openings for resistance, it will be offline connections and solidarity that eventually determine how successfully we move towards a feminist internet.

To make the internet inclusive and respectful of all voices, we need further exploration of the experiences of marginalised groups in Nepal including those from Dalit, people of diverse gender and sexual identities, indigenous communities and persons with disabilities, both within and across different social movements.

# APPENDIX

## Regional Monitoring Survey

Please read the instructions before filling out the survey:

This survey aims to understand more deeply how people use the internet (on any devices) in their work, personal life, activism, etc.

All responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Some questions are optional. If you have any difficulty filling out the survey, contact us for support.

We appreciate the time you have taken to answer these questions. All answers will help us in understanding your usage of the internet. We will be producing country- and region-specific reports on internet, gender and sexuality to share any unique patterns specific to your country and region and to ensure that our advocacy is informed by specific priorities and needs of local communities

This survey will take you between 25 and 30 minutes to complete.

This survey is applicable to those whose nationalities are Bangladeshi, Nepali and Sri Lankan.

Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in the survey.

## Context

### Location:

- Bangladesh
- Nepal
- Sri Lanka

### What do you do?

- Non-governmental organisation
- Academic or research institute
- Student
- Freelance/Independent
- Artist
- Human rights activist/advocate
- Government sector
- Private sector
- Unemployed
- Other (please specify):

### Age:

**You are (choose all those relevant):**

**a. Gender\*:**

- Cis woman
- Cis man
- Trans woman
- Trans man
- Intersex
- Non-binary
- Genderqueer/gender non-conforming
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:
- Other (please specify):

**b. Sexual orientation:**

- Heterosexual/straight
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual/ Pansexual
- Queer
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:
- Other (please specify):

**c. Other:**

- Disabled/differently abled
- Ethnic minority
- Indigenous person
- Migrant
- Marginalised group on the basis of caste
- Marginalised group on the basis of race
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:
- Other (please specify):

**Email/contact details (optional):**

**Languages spoken:**

**Languages used on the internet:**

## Access

**Where do you access the internet? (Choose as many as applicable)**

- At home
- At work
- While travelling
- At a cybercafe
- Other:

**What is the device you most often use to access the internet?**

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Mobile phone
- Tablet
- Other:

**How do you rate your skills for the below statements on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is can do with ease and 1 is never done before?**

- Can build a website
- Can write code
- Can use search engines
- Can participate on social networks
- Can blog
- Can participate in forums/groups on the internet

**How much control do you have over your primary device that you mentioned [earlier]? Please check the statement(s) that are the most applicable to your situation.**

- Full control (I own the device, I don't share it with anyone, I don't need permission to use it)
- Somewhat control
- No control (I don't own the device, I share it with others, I need permission to use it)

**How often do you read the terms and conditions before installing a mobile application or computer software?**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

## Usage

**Has your gender identity affected the way you use the internet?**

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

**Has your sexual identity affected the way you use the internet?**

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

**Has access to the internet changed how you understand gender and sexual identity?**

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

**Has access to the internet changed how you perceive people of different gender and sexual identities?**

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

## Expression

**How important is the internet in your self-expression on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is essential and 1 is not important at all? Please specify why.**

**What do you use the internet most for? (Check as many as applicable):**

- Work [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Research [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Livelihood [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Dating [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Chatting [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Calls [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Banking or financial transactions [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Sexting [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Porn [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Gaming [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Social networking [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Health information including sexual and reproductive health (pregnancy and menstrual apps) [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Video streaming [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Blogs [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Forums [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Email [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Instant messengers [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Sexual pleasure [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Search engines and other websites [ ] always, sometimes, rarely, never
- Others (please specify):

**How often do you use the internet as a:**

**Consumer of content on the internet:**

- Daily
- Weekly
- At least once a month
- Rarely
- Never

**Creator of content (blogs, vlogs, memes, code, instagram posts, uploading photos, etc.) on the internet:**

- Daily
- Weekly
- At least once a month
- Rarely
- Never

**Please rate the following questions based on your experiences:**

***Diverse people participate and engage in debate/conversations on the internet.***

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

***The internet connects me to people more easily.***

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

***I can find information on the internet about topics that are considered taboo/problematic by society.***

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

***Only women get harassed on the internet.***

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

***The same violence we see in the offline world is replicated on the internet.***

Definitely | Sometimes | Not really | I don't know

**Have you experienced any of the following? (optional)**

- Direct threats of violence, including threats of sexual and/or physical violence (e.g. threats like “I am going to rape you”)
- Abusive comments
- Unwanted receiving of sexually explicit materials
- Hate speech, social media posts and/or email, often targeted at an identity
- Use of sexist and/or gendered comments or name-calling
- Unauthorised access and controlling of access
- Non-consensual sharing of private information
- Use of indecent or violent images to demean women
- Abusing and/or shaming a woman for expressing views that are not normative, for disagreeing with people and also for refusing sexual advances
- Advocating femicide
- Impersonation and identity theft
- Mobbing, including the selection of a target for bullying or harassment

**Have you participated in any of the following? (optional)**

- Direct threats of violence, including threats of sexual and/or physical violence (e.g. threats like “I am going to rape you”)
- Abusive comments
- Unwanted receiving of sexually explicit materials

- Hate speech, social media posts and/or email, often targeted at an identity
- Use of sexist and/or gendered comments or name-calling
- Unauthorised access and controlling of access
- Non-consensual sharing of private information
- Use of indecent or violent images to demean women
- Abusing and/or shaming a woman for expressing views that are not normative, for disagreeing with people and also for refusing sexual advances
- Advocating femicide
- Impersonation and identity theft
- Mobbing, including the selection of a target for bullying or harassment

**What was your response to the violence? (optional)**

- Reported it to the platform
- Ignored it
- Retorted back
- Reported to a legal system
- Other:

**Did you talk about this with anyone? (optional)**

- Yes
- No

**Rate your experience of using the internet from pleasurable to not on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is highly pleasurable).**

**Of all the platforms you use, which do you think provides you a space for expression most? Provide a brief answer:**

## Reaching out

**Are you interested in talking to us more about your experience of using the internet? If yes, please share with us the best way to reach you:**

## Definitions

\*Gender identities: Those who identify with the same gender as that assigned to them at birth they can choose cis man or cis woman. Those who identify with a different gender than that assigned to them at birth can choose trans man or trans woman. Those who want to choose none of the above can choose “rather not say” or use the “other” option to share how they identify.

\*Harassment: Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours that are offensive and that threaten or harm somebody.

\*Hate speech: Speech or expression that specifically attacks a person’s or a group of people’s race, religion, gender identity or sexuality.

\*Femicide: Femicide is generally understood to refer to the intentional murder of women because they are women, but a broader definition includes any killings of women or girls. (This definition might not be inclusive of intersex persons.)

# Identities experiencing the internet: Nepal Survey Report



Body & Data

Body & Data is a digital rights organization in Nepal that aims to increase women and queer persons' engagement in digital spaces through suitable strategies for expression, autonomy and agency.

[bodyanddata.org](http://bodyanddata.org)