

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in an Era of Generative Artificial Intelligence: A Challenge for Ecclesial Synchrony and Collective Witness

Gender-based violence has already been widespread and endemic. Androcentric bias is particularly evident and systematic in the context of male violence against women.¹ Feminist theory posits that both violence and sexuality are socially constructed to uphold the interests of male dominance. Additionally, non-violent expressions of heterosexuality, such as pornography, contribute to the maintenance of patriarchal structures and ideologies.²

In the subcontinent of India, where I reside, there were 4,45,256 crime cases against women registered during 2022, showing an increase of 4.0% over 2021 (4,28,278 cases). Majority of cases were as follows: ‘Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives’ (31.4%), ‘Kidnapping & Abduction of Women’ (19.2%), ‘Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty’ (18.7%), and ‘Rape’ (7.1%). The crime rate registered per lakh women population was 66.4 in 2022 in comparison with 64.5 in 2021.³

In the 21st century, digital existence⁴ has become a non-debatable reality, deeply shaping how societies function. Digital technologies led to positive worldwide social and cultural changes but they also facilitated abuse behaviours. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) has thus become recognised as a complex worldwide phenomenon, a “global-scale problem”⁵ with devastating results. With the introduction of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) models, UNESCO reports that along with unimaginable gains in its productivity, GAI has accelerated the production of content and interactions that foster or intensify gender-based violence. GAI has amplified existing methods and increased the potential avenues for technology-facilitated gender-based violence.⁶ This brings various health, safety, political and

¹ Annie Edwards, “Male Violence in Feminist Theory: An Analysis of the Changing Conceptions of Sex/Gender Violence and Male Dominance” In *Women, Violence and Social Control: Explorations in Sociology 23*, ed. Jalna Hanmer and Mary Maynard, (London: Macmillan, 1987), 14.

² Annie Edwards, “Male Violence in Feminist Theory,” 27.

³ National Crime Records Bureau Ministry of Home Affairs, “Crime in India 2022,” accessed on September, 14, 2024 <https://www.ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1701607577CrimeinIndia2022Book1.pdf>, xii.

⁴ Digital existence indicates that the distinction between physical and virtual, online and offline does not exist anymore as online environment like social media, online games, email messaging has become a central part of human existence and has become a dominant way through which people engage and experience social, religious, personal and economic lives. Amanda Lagerkvist, “Digital Existence: An Introduction,” In *Digital Existence: Ontology, Ethics, and Transcendence in Digital Culture*, ed., Amanda Lagerkvist (New York: Routledge, 2019), 4, <https://www.perlego.com/book/1380139>.

⁵ UNESCO, “Challenging Systematic Prejudices: An Investigation Into Bias Against Women And Girls In Large Language Models,” 2024, 10, accessed on September, 14, 2024, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971?posInSet=12&queryId=41a42f84-d013-41ae-b6e5-663e00ac349e>

⁶ UNESCO “Your Opinion Does not Matter: Exposing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in an Era of Generative AI,” 6,

economic consequences for women and girls and other infringements of rights and freedom⁷ on their families, communities, and society. To prevent TFGBV, women and girls self-censor their online activities, which silences their voices and undermines democracy. This poses concerns for the overall protection and promotion of human rights and for the safety of women and girls which shows the urgency of a synchronous responsibility of ecclesia to uphold human dignity and justice. This collective approach reflects the belief that the Church, as expressed in the Nicene Creed "one holy catholic and apostolic Church."

This paper addresses the global issue of TFGBV mediated by GAI tools and how churches can address it collectively. The first session deals with the definitions of key terms followed by clarifying why technology-facilitated violence is considered violence, how technological advancements shape violence, forms of TFGBV, and theological and ethical considerations.

I. Definitions

This session deals with the definitions of violence against women, technology-mediated violence, and Generative Artificial Intelligence.

A. Violence Against Women

The UN defines violence against women (VAW) as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."⁸ It is a distinct and separate category of violence as it recognises gender inequality, particularly the historical domination of men and the subordinate status of women and girls in society that serves to maintain an unequal balance of power.⁹ UNESCO research shows that among journalists, women are more likely to be abused than their male counterparts. Race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity/expression, socio-economic status like caste, disability, refugee status, and viewpoint on human rights and women's rights can intensify their susceptibility to violence.¹⁰

B. Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is primary violence against women (VAW), however, it includes violence against children and men as a result of their ascribed gender identity or gender

accessed on September, 14, 2024, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387483>.

⁷Rumman Chowdhary, *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in the era of Generative AI*, (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), accessed on September 12, 2024, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Technology_Facilitated_Gender_Based_Viol/N7rjEAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=definition+of+technology+facilitated+gender+based+violence&pg=PA8&printsec=frontcover.

⁸ World Health Organisation, "Violence Against Women," accessed on September 12, 2024, https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women#tab=tab_1

⁹ Gretchen Kerr, *Gender-Based Violence in Children's Sport*, (London: Routledge. 2023), 36, accessed on 15 September 2024, <https://www.perlego.com/book/3762502>.

¹⁰Rumman Chowdhary, *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in the era of Generative AI*, 7-8.

expression or perceived gender.¹¹ The different types of GBV are as follows:¹² psychological violence, sexual and physical violence, cyber violence which includes threatening or degrading comments, sharing sexually explicit pictures without consent, stalking in online environments, microaggressions like teasing, name-calling, sexist and racist comments or jokes which are considered minor but can harm physical and psychological welfare of individuals. GBV can occur against men, women and LGBTQA++, but in this paper, the scope will be limited to GBV against women.

C. Technology-Facilitated Violence

Technology-facilitated violence and abuse¹³ (TFVA) are behaviours perpetrated online, offline and with the use of digital technologies to enact, mediate or perpetrate interpersonal harassment, abuse, and violence. According to the UN Women, Technology-facilitated gender-based violence is “any act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, and amplified” using information and communication technologies or digital tools¹⁴ which results in psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder and suicidal ideation.¹⁵ It is not a manifestation of coordinated online harassment, it is the testbed and origination point for the ever-evolving methods of harassment, sophisticated attacks...”¹⁶ The uniqueness of this is that women and girls are attacked for simply being online and for being girls/women. The similarity between TFGBV and real-world violence is that it is more focused on the most vulnerable and the disempowered.¹⁷ It happens in both public and private contexts in different human relationships: between strangers, acquaintances, friends, family members, and intimate partners. How is Cyberviolence different from Technology-Facilitated Violence? Cyberviolence refers to violence in control and networked systems. The term “cyber” refers to a virtual environment. The term implies a world separate from the physical world in cyberspace. We live in a society where digital experiences are as relevant and integrated as physical ones. Besides, the word, technology encompasses network devices and other devices, Technology Facilitated Violence (TFV) implies violence in digital and networked spaces such as the Internet, as well as violence perpetrated by different forms of technology, such as video and audio.¹⁸

¹¹ Nadia Aghtaie and Geetanjali Gangoli, “Key Issues Researching Gender Based Violence,” In *Understanding Gender Based Violence: National and International Context*, ed., Nadia Aghtaie. and Geetanjali Gangoli. 1st ed. (New York:Routledge, 2015), 6, accessed on 15 September, 2024, <https://www.perlego.com/book/1665628>.

Gretchen Kerr, Gender-Based Violence in Children’s Sport, 36.

¹² Gretchen Kerr, Gender-Based Violence in Children’s Sport, 37

¹³ Jane, Bailey, Nicola Henry, and Asher Flynn, “Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse: International Perspectives and Experiences,” In *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse*, ed. Jane, Bailey, Asher Flynn, Nicola Henry, (UK: Emerald Publishing Ltd, 2021) accessed on 15 September, 2024, <https://www.perlego.com/book/2350042>.

¹⁴ Rumman Chowdhary, *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in the era of Generative AI*,

¹⁵ Kailee Hilt, “Supporting a Safer Internet Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: Annotated Case Studies” https://www.cigionline.org/static/documents/OGBV_AnnotatedBibliography_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶ UNESCO, Your Opinion Doesn’t Matter, Anyway,” 15.

¹⁷ UNESCO, Your Opinion Doesn’t Matter, Anyway,” 8,

¹⁸ Suzie Dunn, “Is it Actually Violence? Framing Technology-Facilitated Abuse as Violence,” In *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse*, ed. Jane, Bailey, Asher Flynn, and Nicola

D. Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generative Artificial Intelligence is a subfield of Artificial Intelligence which can analyse and interpret data and generate content in the form of words, images, music and digital. The use of deep-learning models like ChatGPT 3.5, ChatGPT 4.0, Gemini (previously Google Brad), and CoPilot (earlier Bing) is revolutionising how people access information, produce, receive, and interact with content in an unprecedented way.

II. Why is Technology-Facilitated Violence named as Violence?

Because of the minimalisation of nonphysical abuse¹⁹ and the limited societal view of violence that only encompasses physical attacks, there is a question of whether TFV can be named as violence. It is challenging to categorise harmful technology-facilitated behaviour as violence as there is no physical contact between the perpetrator and the targeted person(s).²⁰ However, technology has become a tool to shape the form in which violence can happen and continues to shape new abusive strategies. Offline cultural norms and practices are represented and taken for granted in online platforms and established social norms shape the development of technological developments.²¹

Even before the advent of social media and smartphones, the feminist scholar Liz Kelly²² proposed a comprehensive view of sexual violence against women to include physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological as they are deeply interconnected. To her, all forms of sexual violence, from the more common, everyday abuses women experience to the less common experiences which are labelled as crimes are serious and have effects on the survivors. The idea that violence exists on a continuum suggests that harmful behaviours, even those that may not involve physical force, are deeply connected to physical abuse and can have equally severe or even more debilitating effects on survivors. Such behaviours, whether physical, psychological or technology-facilitated, communicate domination, intimidation, and control to women who are targeted, thus negatively influencing their autonomy. Moreover, such behaviours contribute to societal norms that minimise and normalise violence through a larger system of behaviours.

Henry, (UK: Emerald Publishing Ltd, 2021) accessed on 15 September, 2024, <https://www.perlego.com/book/2350042>.

¹⁹Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control.” In *The Routledge International Handbook of Violence Studies*, eds. W. S. DeKeseredy, C. M. Rennison, and A. K. Hall-Sanchez, (London: Routledge., 2019), 244–253, accessed on 15 September, 2024, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334440732_Technology-facilitated_Coercive_Control/link/6030701e299bf1cc26d98a8d/download?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19

²⁰ Suzie Dunn, “Is it Actually Violence?”

²¹ Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control.”

²² Liz Kelly, “The Continuum of Sexual Violence,” In *Women, Violence and Social Control: Explorations in Sociology* 23, ed. Jalna Hanmer and Mary Maynard, (London: Macmillan, 1987), 47-59.

Both physical and psychological actions which can degrade, control, and cause fear in women are part of the larger system of behaviours of sexual violence against women. The continuum of violent behaviour has been applied to Technology-Facilitated behaviours, thus naming it as violence as they have the characteristics of causing harm to women.

III. How Technology Promotes Spaceless and Widespread Violence and Perpetration

If violence within the home is immediate and direct interpersonal violence, the violence that characterises modern technological warfare is remote.²³ Technology is used not only to facilitate familiar forms of gender-based violence like domestic abuse, verbal harassment, and even sexual assault but also the digital space has become space for new and distinct forms of violence and harassment against women and other marginalised groups.²⁴ Individuals can be assaulted by misspelling the name or using the victim's nickname, but as the attack gets attention, others can easily identify the person. Thus it makes it difficult for victims to escape violent relationships.²⁵

According to Dragiewicz, et.al. perpetrators of violence use technology to enact coercive control that transcends fixed borders and boundaries which they call Technology Facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC). Victims are exposed to TFCC any time they access a device, digital media, or profile, and the use of technologies can imply “abuse and monitoring are hard to ‘escape.’”²⁶ TFV permeates victims’ homes and bedrooms, vehicles, their phones and workspaces. It often takes place online, but it also extends into physical spaces and can escalate to acts of femicide.²⁷ Dragiewicz et.al.²⁸ opine that the impact of such coercive control becomes even more invasive and widespread in various ways:

- Individuals within the perpetrator's network participate in the attack.
- Perpetrators can recruit others to monitor victims with the help of technology and victims’ online peer-support groups can be infiltrated by friends or families of perpetrators.
- Content flagging used to report harmful content can be used to attack victims by disabling their accounts by mass reporting their posts.

Miller²⁹ talks about how our “continual, omnipresent” online presence and ceaseless archiving of our data, actions and interactions make victims increasingly vulnerable as “being with” others

²³ David H. J. Morgan, “Masculinity and Violence,” In *Women, Violence and Social Control: Explorations in Sociology 23*, ed. Jalna Hanmer and Mary Maynard, (London: Macmillan, 1987), 181.

²⁴ Alexis Henshaw, *Digital Frontiers in Gender and Security Bringing Critical Perspectives Online* (Great Britain: Bristol University Press, 2023), https://ereader.perlego.com/1/book/4320736/10?element_originalid=c1

²⁵ UNESCO, Your Opinion Doesn’t Matter, Anyway,” 13.

²⁶ Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control.”

²⁷ United Nations People Fund, “Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: A Growing Threat” <https://www.unfpa.org/TFGBV>

²⁸ Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control.”

²⁹ Vincent Miller, “The Ethics of Digital Being Vulnerability, Invulnerability, and ‘Dangerous Surprises,’ “ In *Digital Existence: Ontology, Ethics, Transcendence in Digital Culture*, ed. Amanda Lagerkvist (London: Routledge, 2018), accessed on Sep 25, 2024, <https://www.perlego.com/book/1380139>.

has no time, space, and embodiment. While online social interactions are multiplied but remain disconnected from our physical presence, resulting in "dangerous surprises" as people become brave enough to become "keyboard warriors." This violence facilitated using technology is spaceless and its perpetration is also spaceless and has no borders.

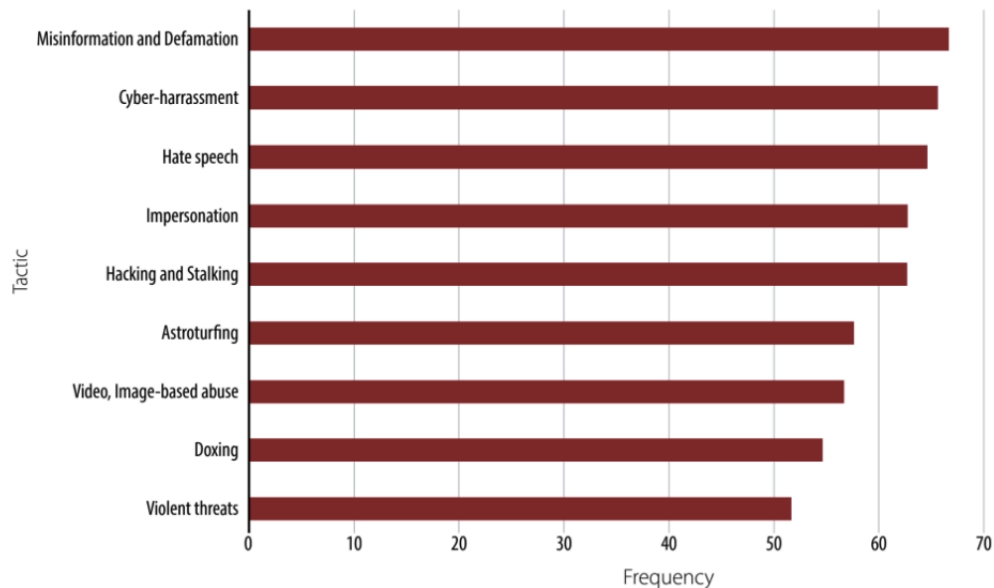
IV. Forms of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Violence against women includes sexual violence, domestic and family violence, prejudice-based hatred, and online othering. TFV happens through text, images, and unwanted digitally-enabled or enhanced surveillance and monitoring, using various devices and platforms from basic digital tools, such as texting, email, and social media, to more advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), GPS tracking and drones. TFVA is in various forms: sextortion-blackmail by threatening to publish sexual information, photos or videos), image-based abuse, sharing intimate pictures without consent), doxing (publishing private personal information), cyberbullying, online gender and sexual harassment, cyberstalking, online grooming for sexual assault, hacking, hate speech, online impersonation, and survivors of abuse are tracked using technology to inflict further harm.³⁰ The finding of research done by UN Women is depicted in the graph which shows nine common ways in which online violence happens against women.³¹ Three rampant ways of TFGBV as seen below are misinformation, defamation, and cyber harassment.³²

³⁰ United Nations People Fund, "Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: A Growing Threat" <https://www.unfpa.org/TFGBV>

³¹ Rumman Chowdhary, *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in the era of Generative AI*, 7.

³² UNESCO, "Challenging Systematic Prejudices: An Investigation Into Bias Against Women And Girls In Large Language Models," 2024, 8, accessed on September 17, 2024, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971?posInSet=12&queryId=41a42f84-d013-41ae-b6e5-663e00ac349e>



Source: <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/>

Alexis Henshaw further gave three other forms of TFGBV:³³ Synthetic deepfake or cheap fake pornography: images and videos are widely circulated to humiliate or silence the victims. Revenge porn: the non-consensual distribution of authentic, sexually explicit photos or videos without the permission of victims. Zoombombing is the intentional disruption of online gatherings using profane and graphic material. The disproportionate targets were events convened by or about women, people of colour, and LGBTQI+ populations.

With GAI, content whether it be photoshopped images, harmful screeds, or personal messages is fully automated and not created by humans. UNESCO points out that gender stereotypes and bias in large language models (LLM) can generate outputs that reinforce stereotypes without overtly offensive content. GAI provides tools to mitigate attacks, but, it presents a risk of enabling TFGBV and increasing online harassment and abuse, including doxing and the creation of deepfakes.³⁴ Automated attacks and generating convincing content in various forms to represent multiple voices can cause harm through hate speech, cyber harassment, misinformation, and impersonation and have a dangerously wider reach by going viral which can debilitate victims.

³³ Alexis Henshaw, *Digital Frontiers in Gender and Security Bringing Critical Perspectives Online*.

³⁴ UNESCO, *Challenging Systematic Prejudices: An Investigation Into Bias Against Women And Girls In Large Language Models*, 2024, 7, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971?posInSet=12&queryId=41a42f84-d013-41ae-b6e5-663e00ac349e>

The list below shows six ways of violence using GAI.³⁵

- a. Convincing Fake Media: GAI enables the creation of convincing fake media in various languages which can be used to target high-profile women in hacking and stalking attempts.
- b. An increase in fake media content. The amount of mis- and disinformation circulated removes our ability to identify low-quality media. There is an increase in auto-generated harassing images, messages, and chats including deepfake pornography sent to victims. In South Korea, 95,820 deepfake porn videos were identified from different sources, out of which 53% were their singers and actresses.³⁶ Washington Post reports the findings of NewsGuard an organisation that tracks misinformation that, “websites hosting AI-created false articles have increased by more than 1,000 per cent, ballooning from 49 sites to more than 600,” since May 2023.³⁷
- c. Unintended harms: Due to the embedded gender bias, without any intentional perpetrator, harmful sexualised images can be sent to individuals without their consent or prompting. See Melissa Heikila’s experience.³⁸
- d. Synthetic Histories and Compositional Deepfakes: Believable synthetic histories are created using multiple, different, but supporting fabricated media sources. This is an emerging threat of GAI. Images, audio, video and text are generated to reinforce the engineered real-world events.
- e. Interactive Deepfakes: Impersonation through deepfakes is a common form of TFGBV. With interactive deepfakes, one can create a convincing real-time online presence is possible without an individual’s consent. The number of artificially manipulated photos has increased by 550% between 2019 and 2023, demonstrating their alarming accessibility and potential for misuse.³⁹ High-quality deepfake technology is now readily available, enabling a wider user base to commit fraud or cause harm on a larger scale.
- f. Malware: Code generation available in LLM enables people to generate malware to steal personal information for doxing, hacking, and stalking their victims.

³⁵ UNESCO, Your Opinion Doesn’t Matter, Anyway,” 19-20.

³⁶ Ahn Young-joon, “AI is fuelling a deepfake porn crisis in South Korea. What’s behind it – and how can it be fixed?” *The Conversation*, September 24, 2024, accessed on September 27, 2024 <https://theconversation.com/ai-is-fuelling-a-deepfake-porn-crisis-in-south-korea-whats-behind-it-and-how-can-it-be-fixed-238217>.

³⁷ Pranshu Verma, “The Rise of Ai Fake News is Creating A ‘Misinformation Superspreader,’” *The Washington Post*, December 17, 2023, accessed on September 27, 2024 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/12/17/ai-fake-news-misinformation/>

³⁸ Melissa Heikkilä, “The Viral Ai Avatar App Lensa Undressed Me—Without My Consent,” *MIT Technological Review*, December 12, 2022, accessed on September 27, 2024, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/12/12/1064751/the-viral-ai-avatar-app-lensa-undressed-me-without-my-consent/>

³⁹ Felipe Romero Moreno, “Generative AI and Deepfakes: A Human Rights Approach to Tackling Harmful Content,” <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13600869.2024.2324540#abstract>

VIII. The Impact of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Pew research⁴⁰ foresees significant improvements in scientific advances, health care and education by 2035. AI integration will bring “smartness” to all objects and organisations, and personal digital assistants will ease our daily lives. Accessibility of data will improve human rights. Various industries, including visual effects, entertainment, and education can benefit from the diverse range of applications that Deepfakes possess if used without malicious intent.⁴¹ Globally, AI enables human connections through social media and creates labour efficiencies through automated tasks.⁴²

But there is another side to the impact of TFV and GAI. Pew Research findings warn of the potential harm of GAI by 2035: the weaponisation of social media platforms, massive unemployment, the spread of global crime, lack of human connectedness, population-level stress, anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation.⁴³ In the Global South, the absence of laws to address GBV and the lack of reporting mechanisms intensifies the fear of embarrassment and re-victimisation among women.⁴⁴ Dragiewicz et al noted that when technology is used to harm, dominate, and control people, it can have a cumulative effect on the person targeted. It has an overarching effect of breaking down the agency in the person and feelings of domination, which can have a physical and psychological impact on the person targeted.⁴⁵ According to Powell and Henry, technology-facilitated sexual violence not only extends and reinforces its harm to victims but also violence is made visible to others without the consent of victims.⁴⁶

The harm that follows TFV depends on whether it is acute or chronic harm. If it is an acute harm, the attack on the individual will not be sustained rather the attention dies down. Also, the attack is more on the event not on the individual. However, chronic harm refers to constant attacks on the person and is intensified over time and is extremely personal harassment of the individual using coded language. TFGBV is a form of chronic abuse. The sheer volume of attack makes it almost impossible for the victims to stop the harm.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035,” 4, accessed on September 30, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/06/PI_2023.06.21_Best-Worst-Digital-Life_2035_FINAL.pdf.

⁴¹ Felipe Romero Moreno, “Generative AI and Deepfakes: A Human Rights Approach to Tackling Harmful Content.”

⁴² UNESCO, “Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: The Recommendation,” <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics?hub=32618>

⁴³ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035,” 4-6.

⁴⁴ Rumman Chowdhary, *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in the era of Generative AI*, 8.

⁴⁵ Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-facilitated coercive control.”

⁴⁶ “Powell and Henry on Technology and Sexual Violence,”

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/blogs/social-sciences/powell-and-henry-on-tech-and-sexual-violence>

⁴⁷ UNESCO, *Your Opinion Doesn’t Matter, Anyway*, 14.

Henry and Powell⁴⁸ expressed that virtual violence in technology-mediated spaces or the sociospatial world has the same effect as geospatial violence, even though they are not directed at the physical body. Even though it is non-physical, it causes real psychological, physical, and social effects that impact a person's mental health, personal relationships, social position, and personal safety resulting from TFV. Words and images that cause fear and feelings of threat and insecurity are more than just expressions and will affect the overall well-being of individuals, reinforce subordination, normalise violence against them, and dehumanise victims.⁴⁹

The impact of victims' experiences of violence will be shaped by the place and space they occupy when experiencing TFGBV. Socially or geographically isolated people often rely on technology for communication, they will opt or feel compelled to disconnect from devices or digital media, which means a loss of support and assistance.⁵⁰

All forms of image-based abuse cause “severe and unique dignitary and expressive harm⁵¹” to victims as their images and identities are used for entertainment and objectification. With GAI tools available to anyone, anywhere, and anytime the harm it can cause to victims will be exponential compared to physical harm and TFGBV before the introduction of GAI. The table summarises the potential harm malicious actors can create with the help of simple GAI tools.⁵²

⁴⁸ Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell, “Embodied Harms: Gender, Shame and Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence in Cyberspace,” 13, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274399083_Embodied_Harms/link/5601f11508aeb30ba735582f/download?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19

⁴⁹ Suzie Dunn, “Is it Actually Violence? Framing Technology-Facilitated Abuse as Violence,” In *The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse*, ed. Jane, Bailey, Asher Flynn, Nicola Henry, (UK: Emerald Publishing Ltd, 2021) accessed on 15 September, 2024, <https://www.perlego.com/book/2350042>.

⁵⁰ Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-facilitated coercive control.”

⁵¹ Ari Ezra Waldman, “Addressing Real Harm Caused by Deepfakes,”

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/GO/GO12/20240312/116953/HHRG-118-GO12-Wstate-WaldmanA-20240312.pdf>

⁵² UNESCO, *Your Opinion Doesn't Matter, Anyway: Exposing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in an Era of Generative AI* (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), 28, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387483/PDF/387483eng.pdf.multi>

	Risk	Text Generative AI model	Image Generative AI model	Multimodal Generative AI model
Cyber-harassment templates	Exploit Accuracy	Medium		Medium
	Ease of Use	Medium		Medium
	Impact	High		Medium
Hacking/Stalking methods	Exploit Accuracy	Low		Medium
	Ease of Use	Medium		Medium
	Impact	Medium		High
Synthetic Histories	Exploit Accuracy	Medium		
	Ease of Use	Low		
	Impact	Medium		
Image-based abuse	Exploit Accuracy		High	
	Ease of Use		High	
	Impact		High	

IX. Gender-Based Violence As a Challenge to Synchrony and Collective Witness of the Church

The impact of GAI-mediated TFGBV brings various challenges to the synchrony and collective witness of the church. This complex nature of GAI-mediated violence can create divisions within ecclesial communities, especially when trying to address these issues from a pastoral, ethical, and theological perspective. Either everyone is not aware of the extent of damage this can cause to women or many do not care as they are preoccupied with daily concerns of life. Ecclesial bodies may struggle to provide a coherent and united response, as views on technology and gender ethics vary widely across denominations and cultural contexts. Rapid technological advancements in AI tools make it harder to derive clear and unified ethical boundaries, which leads to conflicting opinions and a lack of collective action. Varying legal standards and societal norms regarding GAI technologies and intellectual, financial, and legal backups of GAI companies often make it difficult to seek justice in court against these companies.

In some cases, the church is preoccupied with various institutional, structural and infrastructural concerns that prevent leaders from being empathetic to the silent sufferers and the voiceless. Women because of shame and personal and family dignity may not openly share the grievant nature of problems they face. Cultural understanding of women as “mother earth” who silently suffer violence makes others close their eyes to the need for restoration and healing in women. Also, this understanding hinders others to hold perpetrators of violence accountable and to see the need for transformative justice. Providing pastoral care in the context of GAI-mediated GBV can be challenging especially can be particularly challenging, especially when victims and perpetrators are separated by physical distance. The anonymity of the perpetrators and the wide reach of GAI platforms can further complicate efforts to offer care, protect victims, and implement church discipline or reconciliation processes.

A lack of coherent ethical action aligned with the theological understanding of human dignity can undermine the church’s collective witness which displays internal inconsistencies in addressing gender-based injustices and violence. The difficulty in maintaining ecclesial synchrony becomes more apparent when the church disagrees about the implications of GAI for community life, human dignity, and justice. This can damage the public witness of the church. Communities may perceive the church as unjust, complacent, apathetic, out of touch with reality or ineffective in confronting contemporary issues, leading to a loss of trust and credibility in its mission to uphold justice and human dignity.

Gender violence perpetuated through AI tools has no borders. So to address this global issue, the church can come together despite their differences. This collective effort is a witness to the commitment of the church to unveil unjust practices and restore the victims of violence. This aligns with the kingdom principle that any advancements at the cost of dignity are unjust. The synchronisation of ecclesial identities is a tangible response to the call of the Nicene Creed to be “one holy catholic and apostolic Church” and a clear and loud voice of shared identity and mission.

X. Theological and Ethical Considerations

The rise of GAI in the context of technology-facilitated violence (TFV), especially gender-based violence, requires theological and ethical responses. These will enable us to address the misuse of AI technology and the moral responsibilities of individuals, communities, and institutions in mitigating harm and promoting justice.

A. Theological Response

TFGBV in the context of Generative AI invites our attention to key theological concepts: imago dei and human dignity, sin, power, accountability, and justice and protection of the vulnerable.

i. Imago Dei and Human Dignity

The first statement in the Bible about humans indicates the divine intent to create them in God's "image and likeness,"⁵³ even though there are only a few direct references to this after the creation account.⁵⁴ There is an agreement among scholars regarding the image to indicate reflection but disagreements regarding what is reflected. Also, patristic and medieval scholars saw the two terms image and likeness have different theological implications but contemporary scholars see them as synonymous. There is consensus in the following aspects: "The image of God includes all human persons, sin has affected the image in some way, the image in the New Testament is a Christological concept, and the image of God is teleological."⁵⁵ It is good to look at the four approaches to understand the meaning of imago Dei:⁵⁶

- The structural approach views the image as a human capacity for rational thought even though human thought is differentiated from divine rationality. When the emphasis is given to rationality, it can potentially marginalise those with limited rationality. Also, violence harms the rational faculties of victims. Violent behaviours disregard the capacity for rational thought and moral agency in perpetrators which leads to dehumanisation and objectification of others. AI tools are used to create digitally fabricated violence and abuse, identity manipulation, and persistent harassment that transcends physical boundaries. Then victims cannot escape violence as it is accessible to anyone who connects online. This can constantly disrupt victims' ability to concentrate, make decisions, process information, think clearly or remember details. Pew Research findings confirm this fear: AI-mediated convincing misinformation and disinformation can give rise to deceptive or alternate realities which will threaten cognitive abilities as "reality itself is under siege".⁵⁷ Further, Pew Research anticipates that increasingly sophisticated AI can lead to job loss, which can give rise to poverty and the diminishment of human dignity.⁵⁸
- The functional approach sees imago Dei has to do with what human beings do rather than what they are. Human beings can fulfil God's purpose through stewardship and dominion

⁵³ Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (London, T&T Clark, 2010), 10.

⁵⁴ In the Old Testament Gen. 5.1; 9.6) and in the New Testament 1 Cor. 11.7; 2 Cor. 3.18; 2 Cor. 4.4; Eph. 4.24; Col. 1.15; Jas 3.9

⁵⁵ Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 16-17.

⁵⁶ J Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Publishing, 2005), 17-30. Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (London, T&T Clark, 2010), 18-29.

⁵⁷ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, "As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035"

https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/06/PI_2023.06.21_Best-Worst-Digital-Life_2035_FINAL.pdf, 6.

⁵⁸ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, "As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035"

https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/06/PI_2023.06.21_Best-Worst-Digital-Life_2035_FINAL.pdf, 6.

over creation. AI tools can help to fulfil or distort God's purpose in us and others. However, when AI tools are used for violence for example harassment, image-based abuse or cyberbullying, these actions are not to extend care for others but to impair their dignity, freedom and sense of agency to participate and contribute meaningfully in online communities. This punishes, silences, and humiliates women, forcing them out of their online presence and debilitating their ability for stewardship and dominion.⁵⁹

- The relational dimension of human beings related to God, other humans and creation contends that image has to do with "relations." Sexually different human beings are to reflect the relationship inherent in the Trinity. Technology is to be used to uphold others' dignity and to protect others. However, GBV through AI-mediated interactions, like deepfakes, and digital harassment can damage relations, human interdependence and interconnectedness, and opportunities for intimacy and trust. Such digital interactions corrupt and exploit relationships.
- Another approach to imago Dei is that it is applied to the entire person- physical, mental, emotional and spiritual not just to one aspect. AI tools can be used to promote the well-being of others, at the same time AI-mediated interactions like online harassment and bullying, and nonconsensual deepfake pornography undermine the holistic well-being of individuals which can even lead to "self-harm or suicide."⁶⁰

The image of God can be understood as God manifesting his presence in creation through his covenantal relationships with human persons, whom he has created as personal beings to serve as his representatives in the creation and to whom he keeps faithful despite their sinful rejection.⁶¹ Violence distorts the dignity and worth of individuals and dehumanises the victim, reducing them to objects of exploitation, manipulation, and abuse. It impairs individuals' ability to form covenantal relationships with human persons, to serve others, and to trust others and thus distorts the image of God.

ii. Sin, Power, and Accountability

Theologically violence is a manifestation of sin. The use of AI to create and publish fabricated or genuine content while remaining anonymous and unaccountable reflects the opposite of God's intended purpose of power. When dominion is understood as stewardship and serving and caring for others, AI-mediated violence portrays how AI becomes a powerful tool to perpetuate violence and control and oppress others. This distorts human relationships and harmony and leads to exploitation and dehumanisation, not empowerment and liberation. This promotes fear, shame and lack of freedom.

⁵⁹ Ari Ezra Waldman, "Addressing Real Harm Caused by Deepfakes,"

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/GO/GO12/20240312/116953/HHRG-118-GO12-Wstate-WaldmanA-20240312.pdf>

⁶⁰ Ari Ezra Waldman, "Addressing Real Harm Caused by Deepfakes,"

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/GO/GO12/20240312/116953/HHRG-118-GO12-Wstate-WaldmanA-20240312.pdf>

⁶¹ Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (London, T&T Clark, 2010), 37.

Further, the patriarchal structure can legitimise male dominance using AI tools to silence women. This is a distortion of the biblical understanding of mutual submission and respect. Besides, harm targeted towards individuals can disturb the functionality of communities and institutions leading to a culture of silence and complacency. As women and marginalised communities are often the most vulnerable to these forms of violence, this further amplifies power imbalances and reinforces existing inequalities as perpetrators can anonymously exploit or manipulate others online. The Biblical teaching of repentance and justice towards restoration is mitigated when perpetrators continue to remain anonymous to avoid accountability.⁶²

iii. Justice and Protection of the Vulnerable

Society has various laws to promote the welfare of vulnerable populations. This is consistent with the biblical paradigm to protect the vulnerable and seek justice (Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8). Women are uniquely susceptible to attack or harm which makes them vulnerable⁶³ and causes them to be disproportionately affected by GAI-generated violence and exploitation.

Theologically, there are three reasons for us to help the victims of violence: (1) they need it and deserve it, (2) God commands us and invites us to do so, and, (3) it is essential to experience the fullness of life for the community.⁶⁴ Besides, God has a preferential concern for the weak and the unprotected. This shows the urgency to respond to God's mandate to pursue justice to guard the vulnerable. Justice for Faith communities is manifold: holding perpetrators responsible for their actions, giving them opportunities for restoration, promoting the welfare of the victims, and ensuring protection for the vulnerable.

B. Ethical Considerations

The ethical implications of GAI in TFGBV are multifaceted, touching on issues of privacy, consent, bias and discrimination, and the misuse of technology.⁶⁵

i. Privacy and Consent

There are various ethical concerns regarding privacy and consent with the development of GAI. Generative AI has made it easier to create deepfake content and other forms of digital manipulation without the victim's knowledge or consent. This represents a grave violation of privacy and autonomy, as it often exploits images or data without permission. This violates privacy, promotes false representation without consent, and threatens principles of respect and

⁶² Perpetrators use methods to bypass AI detection, such as VPNs, anonymizing software, or creating deepfake content that obscures their identity. Also fake accounts are used to amplify the created content.

⁶³ David W. Gill, "Theology of Care for the Vulnerable," In *Women, HIV, & the Church: In Search of Refuge*, ed Arthur J. Ammann & Julie Ponsford Holland (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), accessed on September 30, 2024,

<https://www.gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2019/04/GillD.TheologyofCarefortheVulnerable.pdf>

⁶⁴ David W. Gill, "Theology of Care for the Vulnerable,"

⁶⁵ Justice, accountability and power imbalances are discussed in the previous topic.

autonomy. Pew research⁶⁶ portrays surveillance advances, sophisticated bots embedded in civic spaces, the spread of deepfakes and disinformation, advanced facial recognition systems, and widening social and digital divides as looming threats. Their findings foresee crimes and harassment spreading more widely, and the rise of new challenges to human agency and security. Ethical concerns of AI are usually an afterthought thus data about the people will be used for controlling them not to empower them to “act freely, share ideas and protest injuries and injustices.”⁶⁷ This raises grave ethical concerns as misuse of technology can exploit vulnerable populations and reinforce existing power imbalances. This needs to be addressed with mechanisms to protect individuals from such abuse and hold violators accountable towards restoration.

ii. Bias and Discrimination

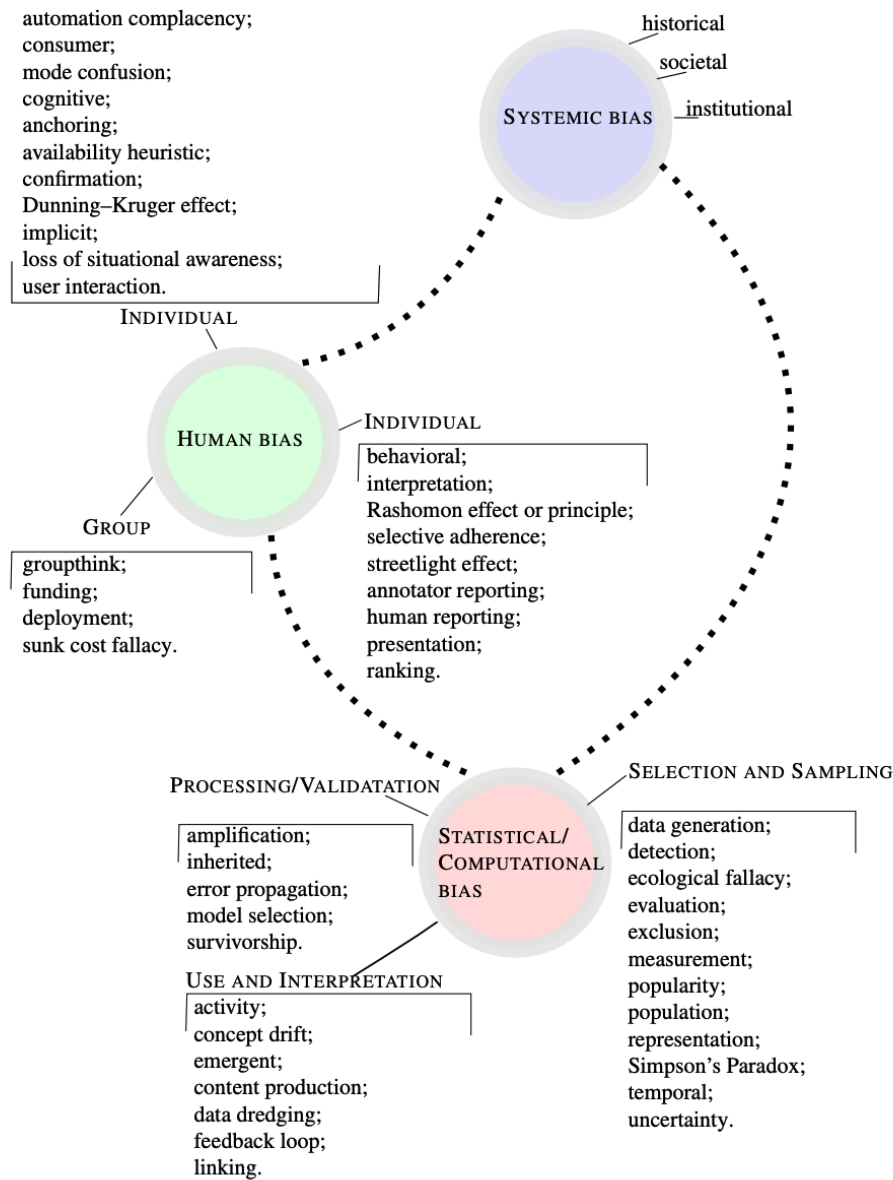
AI systems are not neutral as they deliver embedded or inserted bias, inaccuracies, and discriminatory outcomes.⁶⁸ The figure below shows that the bias in AI is complex and multi-faceted.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035” https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/06/PI_2023.06.21_Best-Worst-Digital-Life_2035_FINAL.pdf, 6.

⁶⁷ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035”, 5-6.

⁶⁸ UNESCO, “Artificial Intelligence: Examples of Ethical Dilemmas,” <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics/cases>

⁶⁹ Reva Schwartz, et.al., Towards a Standard for Identifying and Managing Bias in Artificial Intelligence, accessed on September, 30, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.SP.1270>



Search engine technology is also not neutral. In addition to processing big data, it prioritises results based on user preferences and location. AI algorithms can reflect biases and deepen inequalities considering the ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status of users.⁷⁰ This warns us not to indiscriminately accept AI-generated content as it can exponentially promote bias much more than human-generated content. This fuels the post-truth phenomenon, where objective

⁷⁰ Ayhan Dolunay, Ahmet C. Temel, “The Relationship Between Personal And Professional Goals And Emotional State In Academia: A Study On Unethical Use Of Artificial Intelligence,” <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1363174/full>

facts are overshadowed by misinformation and traditional metanarratives are replaced by constructed virtual narratives.

iii. The Misuse of Technology

According to Pew research findings, the choice to use AI tools for good or evil determines how it will impact the world.⁷¹ Malicious use of powerful AI tools raises ethical questions about the moral responsibilities of developers, platforms, and users. Unlike painters who create art, AI-generates an image based on a text prompt that will reflect the information fed into it by others. Then the question of ownership and accountability of AI-generated content emerges especially with generated misinformation: who owns the generated content? Who should be held accountable for the content, especially if it is fake? Thus malicious use of technology and unintentional harm caused by embedded harm in AI tools cannot be ignored.

XI. Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Generative Artificial Intelligence Era

What has been done to address this issue of GBV in the GAI era? Even though GAI offers new avenues to address GBV through prevention, detection, and support services, communities and organisations work to mitigate violence. Considering the global scale of the problem of gender-based online harassment, several countries agreed to form A Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse was founded at the 66th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).⁷² UNESCO⁷³ suggests that GAI-mediated TFGBV requires “an ecosystem of actors and cooperation” or a multi-stakeholder approach to address this issue. They are as follows: content distributors (e.g., social media companies), policymakers and governments, civil society organisations,⁷⁴ individual actors and GAI companies that are content generators. All have a role to play in mitigating the harm. Further, the complexity of TFGBV requires examining the situational or systemic factors which are at play to promote violence.

UNESCO provides the following suggestions to various stakeholders to mitigate and stop TFGBV:

A. Content distributors can

- i. Give due diligence to human rights issues, especially gender-related risk mitigation measures

⁷¹ Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “As AI Spreads, Experts Predict the Best and Worst Changes in Digital Life by 2035” https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/06/PI_2023.06.21_Best-Worst-Digital-Life_2035_FINAL.pdf, 4.

⁷² US GOV, “Launching the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse,” March 18, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/gpc/briefing-room/2022/03/18/launching-the-global-partnership-for-action-on-gender-based-online-harassment-and-abuse/>

⁷³ UNESCO, “Your Opinion Doesn’t Matter,” 29-31.

⁷⁴ Church comes under civil society.

- ii. Better reporting mechanism to report falsified content,
 - a. Protection methods do not remove the victims from the public sphere but rather empower them to find long-term solutions.
 - b. Proactive methods of falsified content detection like auto-checking, watermarks, content identification
 - c. Transparency and access to third-party controls can be improved to ensure innovation in user protection. For example, automated bots monitor for abusive language, filter out harmful content or provide warnings about suspicious behaviour.
 - d. Collaborate with independent observers and groups to monitor and address violence.
 - e. Options for users to swiftly report harmful content
 - f. Provide information about the tools and products to the users.
- 2. Civil societies and Independent researchers can
 - a. Include GAI-based harm identification and protection toolkits
 - b. Advocate for the protection of at-risk people to the governments and policymakers
 - c. Create awareness in the community regarding the misuse of GAI through campaigns
 - d. Address the root cause of abusive behaviour and identify its patterns
 - e. External, unbiased monitoring bodies can evaluate how well content creators and distributors address TFGBV.
- 3. Policymakers can
 - a. Organise online or physical gatherings of users of GAI to gather feedback and suggestions.
 - b. Review laws and regulations related to content creators and content distributors.
 - c. Organise media and information literacy programs and campaigns with multiple stakeholders to stop distributing, reacting or interacting with harmful content.
- 4. Platform users can
 - a. Vigilant for the falsified content
 - b. Report harmful content to the platform
 - c. Be proactive in protecting their data, for example, women can ask the platform to remove their pictures.
 - d. Learn about falsified online content through Media and Information Literacy Programmes.

At the same time, Dragiewicz, et.al noted several barriers to effective legal responses to technology-facilitated violence:⁷⁵ the rapid pace of technological change-Rapid innovations bring

⁷⁵Molly Dragiewicz, et.al., “Technology-facilitated coercive control.”

applications and devices to abusers are constantly changing, numerous, and cheap. Consequently, the legislation cannot respond to rapid technological advancements. Besides, because criminal and civil law are jurisdiction-dependent, it may not be clear who is responsible for responding to crimes that cross national or state boundaries. Thus existing laws, policies, and frameworks to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls have not kept pace with technological developments.⁷⁶ At this juncture what can the church do to address thus promoting ecclesial synchrony and collective witness:

1. **Naming violence clarifies** and enables people to situate violence within their cultural understanding. A theological response to accountability means creating a culture where sin is named, power is stewarded responsibly, and justice is sought actively. This helps to recognise and condemn GBV in our society today. As Christians, these understandings cannot be shaped solely by legal definitions, but they can provide useful legal remedies and help shape societal views on violence.⁷⁷ Naming leads to clarity in understanding within the church which can lead to work to prevent and respond to GBV effectively.
2. **Develop Theological and Ethical Frameworks to address GAI:** Churches can create theological and ethical frameworks specifically addressing the implications of GAI on GBV. This addresses inherent power imbalances and the misuse of authority in a patriarchal society by affirming the biblical understanding of *imago die* in both men and women and calling to embrace unity beyond gender distinctions (Gal 3:28).
3. **“Equip the Saints:”** Clergy and lay leaders need training on how to handle TFGBV in the digital era, including understanding the potential misuse of GAI and providing pastoral care (Galatians 6:2: “Carry each other’s burdens) that recognises the unique nature of technology-facilitated abuse. Training can help to identify the root cause and patterns of abusive behaviour and provide prevention strategies. Training can include information on various technological tools which promote safety, support reporting mechanisms, and enable other protective measures. The need for education, advocacy, and change in societal attitudes toward TFGBV are also critical components of changing social attitudes of blaming victims for their victimisation.⁷⁸ Churches can share resources and knowledge in various educational programs.
4. **Promote Ecclesial and Ecumenical Collaboration:** The church as the body of Christ can collaborate across denominations and cultural contexts to create a unified response to TFGBV, ensuring that policies, guidelines, and resources reflect the shared commitment to justice and human dignity. This can lead to work for systemic changes in society.
5. **Jointly Advocate for Safe Digital Spaces:** Coalitions of Christian communities can partner with technology companies, other stakeholders, and advocacy groups to promote

⁷⁶UN Women, “Accelerating Efforts to Tackle Online and Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls, (VAWG)”

https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Accelerating-efforts-to-tackle-online-and-technology-facilitate-d-violence-against-women-and-girls-en_0.pdf

⁷⁷Suzie Dunn, “Is it Actually Violence? Framing Technology-Facilitated Abuse as Violence,”

⁷⁸Suzie Dunn, “Is it Actually Violence? Framing Technology-Facilitated Abuse as Violence,”

safe digital spaces to address the misuse of GAI. Collectively they can create policies and ethical guidelines consistent with the church's mission and witness.

6. **Restoration of Victims and Perpetrators:** The church has a pastoral responsibility to care for (James 1:27) those affected by violence. The church is the place to offer healing, restoration, and reconciliation (Isaiah 61:1-3) through care for victims as they walk towards recovery to regain their sense of worth and dignity. The church can protect the vulnerable, be the voice of the oppressed, and be a haven for victims to heal and seek justice. Besides, the church can mediate between victims and justice systems, advocating for reforms and healing practices. This can help to develop policies, and partner with organisations that combat GBV.

However, if perpetrators are not brought towards transformative justice, they will continue to instil harm and violence. So the witness also includes inviting such people towards restoring their covenantal relationships with God and humans, to love their neighbours, and thus fulfilling God's invitation to be stewards of creation. Church has an "international network of communications" and a "potential network of cross-cultural relationships."⁷⁹ These resources can be utilised in providing pastoral care to the victims and perpetrators of violence.

Conclusion

If the church stays as a silent and passive observer in "a time such as these," it can be misinterpreted as complacency and support those who design and perpetuate violence and injustice through technology in the GAI era. As we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," we invoke our moral and theological responsibility to speak out, advocate for justice, and protect the vulnerable locally and globally. By standing together and proactively engaging in this and other contextual challenges, the church can strengthen its collective witness and promote peace and justice that aligns with Christ's teachings and mission.

⁷⁹ Lukwikilu Credo Mangayi, "Mobilising the Local Church for Social Justice and Reconciliation: Theological /Missiological Reflections on the Ministries of the Baptist Union of Southern," January 2014, accessed on October 4, 2024, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267212660>

