Twitter Thread by Prajnya Initiatives

Prajnya Initiatives
@prajnya

Hi, I'm Radhika Radhakrishnan @so_radhikal, a feminist researcher working at @iNetDemocracy. I will be tweeting in this thread about gender-based online violence. You can quote-tweet the tweets in this thread with your thoughts, Qs, & experiences. #Prajnya16Days #16DaysOfActivism



Let's begin with understanding online violence. What is it, why it occurs, who is more likely to experience it, and how does it manifest in digital spaces. Have thoughts about these? Share and let us know here! Read on to understand more about it. #Prajnya16Days #nosgbv



Violence is always about power, both online and offline. One's identities, such as gender, caste, sexuality etc., play a crucial role in how online as well as offline spaces are experienced by us. The power hierarchies that govern society also govern the Internet. #Prajnya16Days

Historically public spaces have been the domain of men and women have had limited access to these spaces. The "private" domestic woman is considered a "good woman" and the "public" woman is considered a "bad woman". Do you think of the Internet as a public space? #Prajnya16Days

What does this have to do with violence? Once we understand how spaces are hierarchised based on our identities, it's clearer how violence is a form of "putting women in their place" when they have crossed the boundaries of the spaces they are permitted to be in. #Prajnya16Days

Violence then is a form of surveillance: a dominant mode of controlling ppl such that everyone is implicitly governed by expectations of social conduct. These expectations are also determined by our identities. See https://t.co/F4247BVp21 for more. @iNetDemocracy #Prajnya16Days



In physical spaces, women are expected to speak softly, not wear certain clothes, etc. In online spaces, women are expected to not share sexual content etc. Adhering to these norms is rewarded through protection from violence & deviations are punished via violence. #Prajnya16Days

Some women, who are considered more “deviant”, such as trans-queer women, Muslim women, Dalit women, etc. face higher levels of violence in physical as well as online spaces due to this “deviance.” Hence, we need an intersectional understanding of online violence. #Prajnya16Days

What does online violence include? Many things! Abusive comments, threats of violence, accessing & stealing personal data, taking & distributing photos & videos without consent, monitoring your movements & activities online & offline, blackmail... Add to this list! #Prajnya16Days

As an example, I'm linking here a thread based on a recent instance of image-based online violence that I faced earlier this year on @Twitter, in which I also talk about the role of platforms in responding to violence (more on that shortly, keep reading!):
https://t.co/zCtGrjgC9F

> In this thread, I'm going to share details of the harassment I faced here this year, with my pictures going viral with homophobic abuses, & how @Twitter shamefully failed to resolve this mass abuse, despite me speaking directly to their policy team.
> I am owed many apologies(1/n).
>
> — Radhika Radhakrishnan (@so_radhikal) March 13, 2020

As another example, earlier this year I also spoke to @annavetticad about the disturbingly common phenomenon of men sending rape threats to women online. Why does this happen? What is the thinking behind such actions? Read this article to find out more: https://t.co/gLhcSJIYTl

We are more familiar with terms such as "domestic violence." But does our understanding of domestic violence include violence through tech? Listen to this podcast I hosted with @SunoIndia_in with @busydot on expanding our definitions of domestic violence: https://t.co/Pj86qEUGLm

Do you know how our laws and policies understand online violence? They largely consider it to be a harm to our data. If our images are shared non-consensually online, it's only our data that has been shared and harmed. Do you agree with this? Read on to know more! #Prajnya16Days

An example by @anjakovacs: When women talk about online violence, they don’t describe its harms as data harms but as bodily harm, expressing fear, anxiety. Online violence is more than data violation. Our bodies are not just physical bodies, but are also our digital identities.