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ONLINE WOMEN VIOLENCE AND AWARENESS
OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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Caption First, Inc.
P.O Box 3066
Monument, CO 80132
1-877-825-5234
+001-719-481-9835
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>> SAJINA KARKI: Can we start? Very good afternoon to all of you. First of all, I would like to welcome you all to this session called Online Women Violence and Awareness of Social Media. My name is Sajina Karki. I am a lawyer in Nepal working on women violence. And I will be serving as Moderator for today.

Well, in this session we hope to focus on some of the important factors like online violence and from a women perspective. Awareness of social media, similar action mechanism and regular practice in Asia-Pacific. We have young and energetic panelists here with you today.

So to begin with the session I would like to take a few minutes from your time where I will be sharing a brief overview on how women of developing countries like Nepal are facing online violence and what measures are being taken up so far. So when violence against women is already a problem of pandemic proportion the new cyber VOV has significantly increased this staggering number, as research suggests that 73% of women are somehow facing or experiencing or they are exposed to some sort of online violence.

Similarly when we talk about Nepal we have around 11.89 million Internet users. And with an increase in the number of Internet users

the cybercrime has been increasing in the same way. And thanks to Facebook and Twitter and social media so far. But the views is that increasing day by day.

Well, there is a serious issue of threatening e-mails or revenge porn, porn content and fake profiles in Nepal currently that is a major challenge and a major threat. However Nepal lags adequate laws and regulations. To control these phenomenon or, you know, to deal with this increasing violence and harassment of women in cyberspace, we have the Electronic Transaction Act and the Defamation Act which are dealing with all these cases. And we still do not have the cyber law that is basically focused on dealing with all these kind of cybercrimes. So that is the major threat in Nepal at the moment. Similarly every day up to ten complaints are being launched by young women and girls regarding the online violence of stalking and harassment in the cyberspace. And that alone from the Katmandu valley, that is the capital city of Nepal. You can imagine the number of complaints that have been reported. Because in our case all the cyber related crimes are or have to be registered or those cases are being taken up by only the Katmandu district court.

So that is another threat or a challenge that people or the victims, they have to come to Katmandu, the capital city of Nepal to come and lodge a complaint about it. And that is another threat or challenge I would say. So a lot of cases have come in where they first become friends via social media, develop a relationship, take and exchange nude photographs and later blackmail for money or for sexual favors. So many concede that cyberspace is not women friendly. Or it is not safe for women actually. So Nepal and another threat is Nepal does not have clear and adequate laws that I have already told you. So that is another challenge that we are facing at the moment. And moreover victims outside the valley are more at risk since cases of cybercrimes are only handled by the Katmandu district court that I already told you.

Another aspect is with more people going abroad for work many left in the villages have started using social media to connect to the -- with the loved ones. But the thing is they are using the social media to connect with them but they are not aware about the privacy settings. So they are going to the cyber cafes and they are logging in and they are talking to their person or beloved ones or loved ones and they forget to log out. And that is another major problem there. So and as the number of users grow cases of cybercrimes have spiked in recent years. Most have lured in to friendship in social media and are coaxed in to sharing nude photos that are later used for blackmails. So these are some of the challenges or the threats that we are facing in our country.

Nevertheless looking at the threat and challenges many campaigns are being launched in Nepal by the Nepal police itself where young girls and women are being trained to use the social media. They learn

about the privacy settings and advantages and disadvantages of social media. I thank you. Thank you for now. And without further ado I would like to ask Gwen for her presentation. Gwen is currently a Ph.D. candidate and her focus is on political, democratization and Taiwanese political engagement as well Embassy in democracy from the University College London. The floor is yours.

>> GWENYTH WANG: (Off microphone). Oh, great. Okay. Which one do I press? Okay. Hello everyone. I am Gwenyth. I am here to present my research and analysis on talent societies and Civil Societies and their usage in social media and how they use social media and ICT tools to enhance their influence and raise public awareness on political issues in the political arena. So I like to use this to start my research because it is fun. So mooncake is a famous Chinese delicacy enjoyed by millions of Chinese in the world. Some people don't know the story. It was about a social movement in the 13th Century. So back in the time China was governed by Mongolian people. They were thinking about how to overthrow the governance. And they made up this tradition and they said as Ham people we have to enjoy mooncake on this specific date each year. Little did they know that they actually hid a message in the middle of the mooncake so they could share the mooncake with other Ham people in the country to a deliver message about when do they plan to start a revolution, when do they plan to attack the military. As a result on the 15th of August in some year in the 13th Century they successfully overthrown the Mongolian region.

In the same vain the Internet could be considered a type of mooncake. That people use Internet, ICT and social media to deliver some important message that they want to deliver with people with ideas or groups they want to influence. And so from -- Arab Spring and their occupy movement to Taiwan there is a trend that social movement is becoming more and more important and changing force in society and that is Taiwan before Taiwan lifted up the martial law in 1987. So back in the day there was the soldiers or ministries that could freely show people where arrest people if they illegally form political parties or share messages which have intention to damage the Government's control over the country.

So there was some pictures I would like to share with you. For instance, this one, this one is a logo with three soldiers underneath and a logo means unconditionally obey our leader. And this is a photo in 1986 when people gathered together calling on the Government allowed them the right to form political parties because before 18 -- 1987 there was only one political party. And after political -- sorry, after the martial law was lifted up in 1987 Taiwan's media landscape had changed a lot. Before 1987 there were only about 31 newspapers with license from the Government. But up to 1987 today we have more than 2,000 newspapers and more than 4,000 magazines and not to mention that Taiwan has a very, very vibrant

cable TV industry with more than 200 channels. So that's -- that's the reason why I decided to study how do ICT directly or indirectly help Civil Society in Taiwan to enhance their influence and to raise public awareness.

And first let's have a look over the digital surface in Taiwan. With 23 million people living in Taiwan the Internet penetration rate is really, really high with about 71%. And Taiwan is also one of the countries in the world with the highest number of mobile phones. I was told that Taiwan might be the No. 2 country where -- sorry, Taiwan might be one of the two countries in the world that there are more mobile phones than people living on the country -- in the country.

So you might have heard of this movement which is also the so-called sunflower movement happening in 2014. And this is really significant because that was the very first large scale social movement engaged by Taiwanese students which allowed students to occupy the Parliament for about 24 days. And this is also significant because the way students use social media was very, very unique and unprecedented. There is a picture of people using an iPad and flip flops to make sure that the tablet could stand properly. And to Livestream what was going on inside the Parliament building.

So what happened back then was let me give you a short introduction about the background of the movement. Before they broke in to the Parliament the Government was planning to rectify this trade pack, they sign with trade pack. Allowed Chinese industries to invest, to do business in Taiwan in the areas of over dozens or even hundreds of industries. So a lot of people including opposition parties argued that well maybe the Government should have consulted with the social -- Civil Society first before they signed a deal, before they ratified the bill. However the Government did not really listen to the demand from the society. They decided to push for the bill in a really, really rush manner. So as a result in the evening of the 18th of March in 2014 a group of students, they gathered around the Parliament and they decided to break in. For some reason they succeeded. Without very little plan in the demands they decided to use social media to gather other people to join them. In 24 hours there was hundreds of people surrounding the Parliament or inside the chamber to give them support and also gather so many people in a few days, I think there were a few telecommunication companies they brought their telephone towers so they could boost up their connection, the Internet connection in the area.

And so apart from social media they also use other ICT tools to facilitate the movement. For instance, they use hack bag, the meal crafting websites to raise public awareness and to seek donations and assistance from people. So these are just some basic outlines of the movement. But what I found interesting is that this movement not only had thousands of students but also people from all walks of life. This is not a pure student movement. It is a student

initiated by a small group of people, but in the end it got expanded in to a really, really big national level. And after they finished an occupation Taiwan society had this huge event, I think this was around the end of April that attracted over 500,000 people all together to call on the Government to look squarely at the demand from the Civil Society and then increase transparency in terms of training negotiation process. And also this is another picture of the front page of the New York Times. This is also something quite interesting coming out from the sunflower movement.

So around the same time there was these unfortunate events where this airplane from Malaysia airline went missing. In order to raise enough international attention Taiwanese students decided to use a crowd sourcing website to get funding so they can purchase the front page of the New York Times. In three hours more than 3,000 people donated money with the total amount of 200,000 U.S. dollars to allow them to participate to tell the international community what was going on in Taiwan and why the social movement happened.

Why does it matter now? Not only Government decided to pass the negotiation process but also there were a lot of small parties formed after the sunflower movement and also these events directly or indirectly encouraged more young people to engage to participate in politics in Taiwan. On the left-hand side there is a picture of a lot of people crammed in the car from the train. And they were going back to their hometown to vote which was quite important because usually the voting turnout of Taiwanese young people was around 40%, but this year the voting turnout reached 60% or 70%. That's the significance of this movement. And also there is another picture of this man in the middle. He is wearing this yellow jacket. He used to be a rock star but after the movement he received a lot of public support because of his effort in the movement. And he is one of small Parliament party members.

I would like to connect these two topics together. The first one I shared about how Civil Society in Taiwan use ICT tools to engage with public and to raise awareness from people from all walks of life. And this one is about a very topical issue facing Taiwanese society called Taiwan Rescue Foundation. 72% of porn victims were women aged between 21 and 35 and six of them were under age and the youngest one was 12 years old. And 61% of the images were obtained illegally and a lot of them were selfies.

So basically the picture holders sometimes do not have the right to use the photos or even to share the photos at all. And then 24% of the victims were blackmailed by people who held their images. And another 24% of the victims said they were threatened by their ex-partners. And what kind of damage it had caused on to the victims, basically you see the images were shared and posted on porn websites or they were shared via those communication apps like Line which is the biggest and most popular apps in Taiwan and/or they were shared

on social media, for instance, Facebook and 40% of the victims have taken legal action.

Among them 44% reported an unpleasant experience when they talked to Government or relevant authorities. They said that sometimes they are feeling that we shouldn't have taken the photo in the first place otherwise they wouldn't have become the victim of revenge porn. These are quite discouraging and somehow became a bigger pressure on the victims.

And currently how does the Taiwanese Government respond to this revenge porn problem? According to the criminal code here in chapter 16.1 there is a chapter focusing on offense against morality of and basically the Taiwanese Government classify revenge porn as an offense against morality. So it somehow delivers this message that if you take those -- if you take the inappropriate photos with your naked bodies then it is against morality. And that is something that the Foundation -- the NGOs and civil groups are trying to correct, that people are entitled to the right to take any photos they want and the Government should not impose any certain form or value or morality over people's behavior.

And this is one of the actions taken by the NGO. This is a snapshot of a website called womenate.net. And the object on this website is a special page dedicated to revenge porn. They encourage victims who suffer from revenge porn problems to share fair stories here anonymously, of course. And it became really successful because over a year I think in 2015 they got over 500 stories from victims across Taiwan. So that's an example of how NGOs, Civil Society could work with those online platforms and then transform those negative experiences in to some positive supportive tools to victims in the revenge porn problem.

However unfortunately there isn't a very strong and coherent online campaign to combat this problem. I am here to listen to your experiences and also to listen to your opinion. And I'm hoping that by sharing our experience in different areas, different regions of the world we can together combat this problem. And then hoping that in this region especially when older women are still living in a suppressed society environment we can deliver some positive support to the victims and also raise greater public awareness in the region. So that's it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> SAJINA KARKI: Thank you, Gwen, for sharing a deep understanding perspective. And I would like to add something as well. It has already become very important that Government regulators, businesses and everyday citizens alike need to recognize and act on the basic principle that an unsafe Internet will mean that women will frequent the Internet less freely with costly societal and economic implications. So having said that I would like to welcome Noelle to talk about the issue now. Noelle is the regional program coordinator

for Asia-Pacific of the Internet Society. She has worked extensively in international development and media policy. Prior to joining ISOC where she currently handles regional activities to ensure that it is efficiently delivered and continuously monitored for impact. The floor is yours.

>> NOELLE FRANCESCA DE: Sorry, can you repeat what you wanted me to address again specifically? Okay. Okay. So Sajina wanted me to talk a bit about what is happening in the Philippines and also where I am based I am a Phillipino and what my organisation, the Internet Society, is doing in my area. I can see at least several people who are much more qualified to talk about this because they are directly involved. We are involved in their activities but they are the ones who are working on the ground and I hope that they will intervene later.

But in the Philippines we can roughly see the same issues. We have, you know, online harassment. We have cyber stalking. But another issue that is very present in the Philippines is cyber prostitution. And cyber prostitution, what is it? Cyber pornography. So as many of us might know the Philippines is one of the so-called cyber sex hubs, not a good reputation but unfortunately that's one of the things that it is known for. So we see -- we see women who are being employed as cyber prostitutes, especially in low income areas. So these are areas where women do not have a lot of options. And they are being exploited in that way. In terms of the -- of legislation there, we have the RA, the Republic Act 9262 which was instituted about 11, 12 years ago but that does not direct -- that doesn't really address the online violence against women. So it is -- it is the antiviolence against women and children law. And there have been -- and then following that there was also an anti-photo and video voyeurism Act in 2009 which kind of touches upon some of the abuses that we see online. But not entirely.

So since then there have been several proposals both in Congress and in Senate. So amendments pretty much what though aim to do is to amend the present law from 2004 to include or to specifically address online violence against women.

There has not been a lot of progress and it just shows how high or how low the -- this issue is when it comes to prioritization and policy.

So some of the steps that are -- some of the measures that are being taken, FMA is very active in this space. We have been supporting some -- a number of their activities with regards to gender and access.

So they have -- if I am not mistaken they have done several campaigns including a takeback tech and also I think they have lodged an app and maybe Liza can talk more about that later. But when it comes to how my organisation, the Internet Society, is addressing it, we are -- we are addressing it from the perspective of access but also Human Rights because at the end of the day violence against

women is a violation of Human Rights. Several things, one I already mentioned we support local organisations who are working in this area. We have fellowship programs. We have grants programs. So we have started to impose especially in Asia-Pacific a gender quota for that. This is where the objective of getting women, building women's capacity to really become decision makers, to become experts in the technical and the policy arena. So we have imposed a gender quota at least 40, as much as possibly 50% should these fellowship should go to women, women from Developing Countries and countries who are in need. At the same time we have access in digital literacy programs. This is in conjunction with providing connectivity, especially to low income communities and rural and remote communities.

And lastly I don't know if this will come up later on but somehow anonymity is a relevant issue in this point, especially when it comes to women journalists or thought leaders. They somehow censor themselves because of their fear of repercussions. It is important to also kind of re-enforce or enable anonymity and we do that in the Internet Society. And online privacy as well, we do that through promotion of tools like end-to-end encryption. I can talk more about that later if necessary. I would end my intervention there. Thank you.

>> SAJINA KARKI: Thank you, Noelle, for coming up with such informative insight. I would like to add something. Various services have been time and again by various organisations and we need to take care of the age of women or girls that have been affected by the online violence. There is an online group and the survey was done in 2015 and that suggests that women aged 18 to 24 are at heightened risk of being exposed to every kind of cyber war. So -- and they are uniquely likely to experience stalking and sexual harassment. And there are other high rates of other types of harassment common to young people in general like physical threats.

So now moving to our next session, please welcome Nayantara Ranganathan. She manages the freedom of expression program at the Internet Democracy Project where she works on planning, coordination, research and advocacy projects related to freedom of expression issues in India as they relate to gender and the internet, net neutrality and surveylets. Over to you.

>> NAYANTARA RANGANATHAN: Hi. Yeah. As Sajina introduced I am Nayantara Ranganathan from the Internet project. Before I start talking about the responses to online abuse of women in India I want to highlight a very important thing, incident that happened recently. I don't know to call it important but it caused quite a stir in other parts of the world. And it was the model of social media, celebrity in Pakistan. It was an honor killing by her brother where it was one of those awful offline consequences of women occupying online spaces of being unabashed of sexual expression on the Internet. I will let my colleagues from Pakistan talk about that later. I wanted to bring

that up in the first place to start off.

Online abuse has been -- yeah, okay. Online abuse has been a problem. So the Internet Democracy Project in 2013 did a study called Don't Let It Stand where it interviewed 17 local social media users who are women in India and came up with a bunch of findings but yeah. So the first one was there is a wide range of abuse on the Internet. Everything from being -- I mean being repeatedly called I don't know, bitch I will rape you to revenge upon and everything in between, right? And when I say abuse I use it as a shorthand for all of these different kinds of experiences, the whole spectrum. And the women interviewed were very particular about the fact that they did not want to be part of a victim narrative. They did not think of themselves as victims and it was just something that they were quite normalized to.

The other finding was that despite a high degree of abuse women continued to use online spaces whether it was for political expression or sexual expression. A very interesting actor was really targeted, she is often looked at as, I don't know, TV actress. And when she had opinions about Brexit she was highly targeted. Whether you cross that line, if you are known for sexual expression and you tow the line when talking about something political there is a big target. So if it is images then it is considered a lot more serious than if it is text. And this is both in the perception of harm of women, women themselves and also of how the law looks at it.

To give you an example in Mangalore. It is a coastal area in the south of India. So there was a college student that was photographed with a beer, like a college girl was photographed with a beer along with a friend at the beach. And this image was circulated on what's happened. She got expelled from her college. If it is an image it has a lot higher consequence I guess than if somebody would have messaged saying I saw your daughter or like your student drinking beer at the beach. So a lot of women who are interviewed, based on what they remember better images that upset them, whether it is like, you know, morphed images of themselves on to naked bodies. I think it is indicative of the fact that text-based verbal abuse even if it is really -- even if it is quite bad it is not taken as seriously as image-based harassment. This is symptomatic of verbal abuse. It is part of everyday life.

The next finding that I would like to go to is the parallels between street harassment and online harassment. One that ignoring abuse does not make it go away. It does not help counter the narrative that public spaces whether it is online or offline are only for masculine identities. Second that the female body as a site of attack. Whether or not that is successful in being used as a silencing tool depends on persons to persons. Women's sexuality is used as a site of attack. Women do not resort to legal measures unless it is as a last resort and this is true of offline as well. Every second person that whistles at you you are not going to run off to the police. You

can feel harassed if someone is staring at you. And the police might not be the right person to tackle that. And also high degree of mistrust in the institution of -- I mean institutional place to tackle this. And also, of course, there is a lot of victim blaming and I see it is also a pattern in other parts of the world. So there is that.

So that was back in 2013. Three years on what has changed? There is a lot more recognition from the Government. There is a lot more recognition from law enforcement agency this is a big issue. The Ministry of Women and Child Development or at least the draft national policy for women asked for comments. We can't see the text very well but it does very definitely mention that there needs to be changes within regulatory frameworks and in tackling the new forms of violence that technology enables. It does use a bit of protectionist language but I mean I will come to why this should not be the focus in any case. I mean it is really heartening that the law enforcement is picking up on it. And the reason could also be the fact that a lot of female politicians who have been occupying online spaces have been the target of such abuse. If you follow Indian politics you will know that Smriti Irani, the current textiles Minister and she was the human resources Minister awhile back, and she was a television personality and anything she did right or wrong would be targeted. Targeted specificities of what the abuse was but would also very often be the fact that she is used to being a television actress or some sexualized context. That could be one of the reasons increasing visibility of the problem and mainstream journalists are targeted heavily.

The Minister for Women and Child Development started a hashtag, I am trolled, to help to kind of get a fast track access to the Minister, if there are women who are being distressed by this problem but very predictably this hashtag got trolled. And if the Ministry did any research about this fact they would kind of know this has not worked like we tried that back in 2013 with the hashtag called Misogyny Alert and most recently hashtag got awfully trolled. So that's not very useful anymore. But it shows that the problem is being engaged with. And at the UN level the commission status of women also recognized the issue. But what we found from the research which is -- which I would like to stress again that laws cannot be the primary solution to online abuse because there is a wide range of abuse that does not match up to legal scrutiny and you do not want that kind of stuff banned as well. Legislative measures is not equipped to deal with people saying I wish you would die. Until there is more clarity within organisations pushing for Governments to come all the Governments themselves it is better to be general than specific, which is why the draft policy for women that I showed you earlier it was pretty general, but it is better to be general than to be specific with really bad solutions.

Let's speak about how enforcement is not the first port of call

for women in India. And it is the reason best to not put all your energies and resources towards pushing for more laws. And often laws are modelist and do not take consent in to account and end up overreaching in to saying you should not post any sexual content, all of these issues.

The other thing with laws is that you can't always track abusers on the Internet. You also -- sometimes a lot of these abusers live in different jurisdictions. It is also not good to create false hope in the, well, weapon of law.

The next group of people, intermediaries they are not famous for being allies. Just because most of them co-op laws in the region for their own standards of what's acceptable and what's not. And the problem again with this is a whole lot of things, that a whole lot of -- a whole lot of speech that is not -- that should not be illegal keeps happening which is nonetheless threatened -- which is nonetheless silencing women all the same. And a lot of -- sorry, a lot of platforms also overcensor panic and do not have policies that take in to account experiences of women. Facebook policy is infamous for this. There is a lot of experience in India about how the real name policy has been backfiring and is using as a silencing tool against women but this has not been taken in to account. Earlier I was talking about Facebook and Instagram have banded her profile after her death which is yeah, I know. Right. It is back? You can -- yeah, you can talk about it.

>> (Off microphone). So Kalile's page was originally taken down and the Instagram profile was taken down as a mystic. We as an organisation, the Digital Rights Foundation reached out to them and asked what happened and they wrote back and said the page was taken down. They can't keep the profile up. The profile and the Instagram are back up now but nobody can post on the page. We sort of pushed for them to come back. We thought that as well but that's not the case.

>> NAYANTARA RANGANATHAN: But I also don't know if Facebook does that normally. There has been a public personality has died.

>> I think what they do is they put the bracket in memory or something.

>> (Off microphone).

>> NAYANTARA RANGANATHAN: Awesome. Thanks for the clarification. So anyway, besides that Facebook often says that they don't have support for regional languages like Pesho or Canada or other languages. There have been very prominent activists in India, they have been targeted bad in Hindu. But some intermediaries have been making more meaningful attempts. The reporter from the Wired called Laura Hudson reported about this, riot games which runs this game called League of Legends, has better ways of dealing with abuse. They launch something called a Player Behavior Team. They have people who are experts in neuroscience and psychology to look at behavior

profiles of all users and kind of see what the issue is and what they can uncover and what they saw -- what they saw was that nastiness was a huge issue. Banning was not a good solution. But we made some changes in the design of the game itself. Like, for example, they removed the default option of opposing players being able to chat with each other and that reduces abuse to a huge extent. It became like an opt-in thing. When penalties were imposed on users there would be explicit reasons why such penalties were imposed to the user. So this ended up in a lot of behavioral change from the user side. And also the policing responsibility was left with the tribunal that was the community of players themselves. So this had a lot of really good results for the user base and for abuse on their website, on their game.

The other thing, the other example of this is also Xbox which uses user feedback to rate profiles. There is green for good behavior and yellow needs improvement and red like for avoid me. So this is about the intermediaries. So essentially if the law cannot be the primary solution, if an intermediary is reliable allies the story lies elsewhere is what we found. So freely interesting approaches that have worked to community led approaches and counter speech. Similar to a lot of offline feminist movements a lot of community building and solidarity and platforms that you occupy on the Internet have helped in women remaining in those spaces. But it also is worth mentioning that a lot of support groups often evolve in to the same kind of mobs that it is trying to tackle. More compassionate is better. That's to be cautioned against.

There is also counter speech where either engaging head on with your abuser or naming and shaming people has really worked in the Indian context. But this is again not available to all women. It is a kind of privilege because I guess these consequences through engaging with your abuser and say if you are from a conservative family then the consequences of your picture being morphed on to a naked body is a lot more than if your family and friends are going to be screw that. So that's about the approaches.

So what's also very useful to look at if you are interested in this issue is at the last IGF there was a best practices forum on online abuse and gender-based violence against women which is a useful document on the kind of solutions that we should be working towards and, you know, guiding a lot of guiding principles. And they also stress on the importance of awareness in literacy allow with increased research in this area that's required. And in that context we are coming out with a resource that concentrates on nonintermediary, nonlaw enforcement kind of approaches in furtherance to our don't let it stand study in August. Do keep an eye out for that. Thanks.

>> SAJINA KARKI: Very important points you have raised here and thank you so much. And there is a fact that we cannot ignore is that in the Developing Countries like Nepal and India when most women are

unaware about their women's rights. So here the problem is most cyber VOV or the online violence against women goes unreported. And it was found that the law enforcement agencies and the codes have failed to take the appropriate action for cyber VOV in 74% of 86 countries surveyed. So we can imagine this scenario there. And that's something to take care of and a challenge to. And not to forget women often prefer not to report these cyber VOV for fear of social repercussion.

Moving forward I would like to ask Mr. Shreedeeep Rayamajhi to talk about the issue. He is a blogger and social activist and he is a steering committee member of the Dynamic Coalition of the Internet Rights and professionally working as a consultant for ICT for development. And he works with various private and public agencies in Nepal. He is a member of the research committee of Federation of Computer Association of Nepal.

>> SHREEDDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Thank you. Today I'm very happy because I'm, you know, I'm in the minority group I guess, like four women speakers are there and I am the only man speaker. It feels good I guess. And the thing that I have to share is we, we from Rayznews we did this survey last year during the Orange week. So we did a survey online, using the online platform and we collected some information about violence against women and social behavior of people using social behavior in Nepal. And what we found the survey was most of the people who are using social media were unaware about their rights. They didn't know what their rights were. And they were just, you know, they were just like socializing. They never read any of the privacy issues. They were just sharing photos, pictures. So I think like when you talk about -- especially talk about violence against women online then, you know, a more specific part is concerned with awareness. And it is usually lagging in countries like Nepal, least developed countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, India. Even in India I think.

So our survey, our survey had a recommendation that findings that women need more awareness in terms of their rights. Their, you know, the social media awareness should be there. And more often people were just using it for fun. So they were not -- they were not aware about what could go wrong. So this was a field where we focused and we submitted the report to the best practice forum as well last year. And I think, you know, even in Nepal there were a few incidents, specifically with one of the actors, Preni Karki took it to the media and every time she uploaded a picture she would get all those harsh abusive comments and it was just insane. People would just comment whether she was wearing a western dress or whether she was wearing a Nepali dress, people would abuse her. The comments would go on. So she took it to the media and she, you know, expressed her feelings. And apart from that, you know, these social media issues are quite coming up in countries like Nepal. So thank you.

>> SAJINA KARKI: Thank you. So now the floor is open if you

have any questions or comments.

>> Hello. Thank you. My question is regarding legal services, about the availability, quality and willingness of lawyers to take on some of these cases. Gwen, you mentioned I think something about 40% of the cases go to court. You said that there is very few do or very few women take legal action. But -- and my -- so my question to all the panelists but you two mentioned it in particular, I would like to know are there lawyers that -- if women do move forward with it, are there lawyers who are -- is there any problems with unwillingness to take the cases among the legal community when they do move forward, what's the quality of legal services like and the availability of legal services?

>> GWENYTH WANG: I think the question is a very important issue because oftentimes those revenge porn victims might feel ashamed. So they don't take the case further. But I think the trend has changed in recent years, especially now people are paying more attention in women's rights. So in Civil Society in Taiwan, specifically speaking the civil groups are really vibrant here. And there is a NGO called Legal Social System, they provide free consultations to victims under revenge porn and other social issues. For instance, when there was a huge corporate company trying to purchase a huge land in Southern Taiwan and it might cause damage to the environment they actively provided assistance. They not only provide assistance to victims under revenge porn and domestic violence but also covering other issues. It is a positive side I would say that people are providing help but the question is how does the Civil Society could do -- should do to encourage victims to take further actions and not hiding themselves in the dark and that's the problem a lot of people are trying to tackle. And so maybe other panelists will have more interesting stories to share.

>> NAYANTARA RANGANATHAN: Like I said there is this hierarchy, if you have been verbally abused very often you don't want to go to court for it. And it is also not as lawyers advocate going to courts as useful form of regression either. There are traditional women's rights organisations. I know for a fact that (inaudible) is one of them in India that takes up these issues and forwards it to people that might be able to help. So it is not -- nobody that specializes in taking up cases of online abuse. There are people that specialize, there are people that help out in cases of revenge porn and things like that. But very often it is -- since it is also in the victim -- not victim but since it is also in the abuser's best interest to not want to go to court for it it is really read instances I would say.

>> So we did research on access to justice for APC covering several countries including the Philippines, Pakistan, Colombia. I forgot the other countries. One problem is, one is on forensic evidence, especially our goal is here forensic evidence. Second is territorial jurisdiction. So if there is absence of law and there

is no ongoing arrangement between, for example, Philippines and another country, then even though they were able to successfully identify the perpetrator it would be very difficult for us to bring that person to trial going back to the Philippines.

There are actually an increasing number of women actually who wanted to report and it would entirely depend on the sensitivity capacity of the investigator. So, for example, when it comes to the police, when it comes to the -- to the prosecutors. So if they are not familiar with the law, and I think that's -- that has been the majority of the experiences of those -- of most of the seven countries that we -- that I mean as a result of the studies, that the challenge is the police will not report the case. Because for them it is an online -- it is an online case. I mean it is not a criminal act. Because so, for example, free the Philippines, you consider that act as evidence. So, for example, there is abuse happen between the wife and the husband through online. You use that as evidence. There is no crime to penalize the stalking, for example, online. But you can use that as evidence to say that there is stalking happening through offline.

So you are now using the online part only as part of the evidence. So I think that's an ongoing challenge. But I think it has been pointed out that we don't want more loss because sometimes loss also our constricting spaces constrict spaces for women.

>> I am Saren from Asia, from EMPOWER. We are a women's rights organisation. I think this is a very important issue which is happening in almost all countries. And the issues on revenge porn is getting more and more serious. But I think maybe we should rethink the terms revenge porn because the word porn immediately puts women in a less advantaged position. I know Google uses a different word and APC, Association for Progressive Communication they are using different words in their report. And when it comes to revenge porn there are also cases in Malaysia where women go to police but often the police reply with the -- you consent to the photos. So it is not a crime. So there is a need to -- I think the solution is not to come up with more laws. Because if you look at the current provision, at least in Malaysia this law is applicable in the online context. If you are looking at the issues as a form of violence against women it is, in fact, applicable. So there is a need to educate not just the public, the women themselves, the judges on recognizing the issues rather than giving more powers to the Governments in creating broad definitions of law.

The other issues that I would -- I notice which is happening is that often online violence against women it is an extension of the much broader issues of gender discriminations and one is against women, especially when it comes to domestic violence. We see say, for example, a court order was given for to prohibit the husband from getting in contact with the wife, but what happens is it is vague

about whether you are allowed to what's up your wife or send abusive comments. So there is this I mean movement of online violence and to offline. Sometimes it is not just online. Thank you.

>> Even in Nepal there are a few of the organisations that do provide legal aid but since most of these cases, women they -- they do not come up. So most of the cases are not reported. And a few of the cases that are there, you know, like as I mentioned the actor herself she took it to the media. So, you know, the thing is we do not have exact rules and regulations regarding this. But there are a few of the organisations that are providing free legal aid.

>> SAJINA KARKI: Well, I want to add here something. So I'm also running a Facebook group and I am giving free legal aid. So most of the times when a victim, women come to us to seek justice and then when we go to the police station to file a case first, so the first thing that they will say is this has happened in reality. What they say is to a victim you are pretty. You are young. So this will happen to you. So in our society the patriarchal mindset is a major problem for us. The people still think that women are considered as secondary citizen. So men are always the bread winners and women have to suffer. They have to surrender. Even the police who are responsible for protecting our rights they say bluntly that you are pretty. You are young and this has to happen to you. And we need to convince them, we have to tell them that this is going wrong. These are our rights and you have to protect us. This is a real scenario in Nepal. Thank you. Any more questions or comments?

>> Sorry. Okay. Sorry. I am from beautiful island of the Cocoa Islands in the South Pacific. I say that because you think of how beautiful they are and I am glad it was brought up there, is that we don't -- in the Pacific I haven't heard of any sort of situations that actually sort of like where social media is used in the same sort of like way. But I have actually like being -- a project that I was actually involved in very recently was gender equality and domestic violence. And the Australian Government has poured millions of dollars in to the Pacific to overcome a real sort of like an epidemic of domestic violence. And it is a hidden statistic and it is really coming to the floor now. An example, very casual conversation I was having with someone from Telecom who informed me that in the Cocoa Islands 60% of the Internet used in the island is porn. And that we don't -- I mean our Government doesn't enforce any legislation or any policies or anything related to that. Every time we want to raise this, it is actually sort of, you know, it is cold shouldered. And so -- but the thing is that while this is happening, you know, we know that this -- that, you know, the evidence can obviously be found, of course. But that becomes a hidden statistic, but one that isn't hidden is the fact that there is highly evolving domestic violence. But the domestic violence, there is only 14,000 people on our island but it is not so great. Across the Pacific it is pretty -- it is quite

bad and there is a lot of culture, like I guess just the same as in your countries where the culture actually encourages, you know, it encourages the attitudes which, you know, can be difficult to change, but as sort of like sort of say that, you know, we have all got our own little mooncakes. There are messages sort of like -- but they are underground basically. So, you know, are you seeing a relevance between these sorts of things that's happening and domestic violence itself? Is that -- is that sort of like a prevalent behavior in your countries as well? Do they go hand in hand perhaps?

>> Thanks for your comment. It is really, really encouraging to see that in the Cocoa Islands there are people working on the gender equality issue, although it seems like it is in an initial stage because this society in general people do not think gender equality is a problem. And I think it took Taiwan decades to achieve where we have now today. In the past when couples divorce usually it was the husband could get the custody. And the thing did not get changed until like the '80s. So I think it took a lot of effort not only from Civil Society but also from Government and a group of dedicated people committed to this problem and education is the key and also taking international awareness as a measure to raise awareness within the society could be quite helpful.

So a lot of times Civil Society in Taiwan they took, for example, mostly from western countries as a way to encourage young women to take actions to combat this issue. So I think that's a way definitely maybe everyone here could look at the problem together and whether there is a possibility that all Civil Society from different countries can form this platform together to raise awareness and Pacific Islands could be a way to look at it. I know that the Australian Government pays huge attention on this issue as well. Maybe we can have a private conversation later because I happen to have some connection with the Australian Government.

Yeah, but I think that culture is definitely the root to a lot of problems not only cyberspace but also domestic issues. And I would say I am glad to see that young woman there taking action today. A few years back there was a young actress/singer she got a lot of naked photos linked on the Internet. Instead of hiding in the dark she stepped out, she said these are my photos and you did not have the right to share my photos online. We have to help these people to -- every victim know that it is okay to share what happened to you, but the society as a whole will support you. I think that's very, very important. Yep. Thank you.

>> NAYANTARA RANGANATHAN: I just want to respond that is true of India as well. These are very true connections between like offline issues around violence against women and how it reflects in the online spaces. Urban areas specific types of uses of technology are legitimate compared to others. And if there -- if you are on your phones too much and no one knows what you are up to then that's kind

of a threatening prospect. There is that connection that we have seen in our study as well. And yeah. I just wanted to say that.

>> For the Philippines is supposed to be one of most gender equal in Asia. And if you look at the official statistics, say the UN but then you have these contradicting statistics which say like in the capital, for instance, like 70% of all of the online abuse complaints come from women. I think it is easy to see that when it comes to online violence against women it is -- it is an expression of unequal society. It is an expression of online -- of offline discrimination. So I think part of the problem that we have in the Philippines is not really the lack of incidents but the lack of data on the incidents. And I think that goes for a lot of countries.

>> Sorry, I realized that I totally missed making the point that I wanted to make. I was going to get to the right of anonymity in the context of incidents like domestic abuse being reflected online and how it is absolutely not being given the importance that it requires and in the narrative of national security or terrorism the issue of anonymity of domestic violence survivors and marginalized groups are not being talked about enough. And there was an entire panel on it yesterday. So I didn't bring it up as a strategy.

>> I just wanted to make a couple of comments. One is that, you know, in a lot of our cultural contacts in the Pacific, in parts of Asia and I think, sorry, I'm just trying to read your name. Sajina. You I think mentioned the status of women in Nepal as basically second class citizens in their own country. A lot of that is historical or has historical or cultural historic context to it. So to my mind I think one way to try and solve that issue is that, you know, to teach a male that, you know, violence against women is not okay. Yes, the elders can try and do that. Yes, maybe some of his peers may try and do that, but I think it really needs to start as an education issue in schools. Teaching the kids that males and females or other genders are of -- they have equal rights. It is not just about the patriarchal society they belong to. It is nice to maintain your heritage, but the world has changed. We don't live in the medieval ages anymore. There is a need for the education system to make sure it is taught in the schools. Whatever it is. But I think that it needs to be part of the curriculum. And in the Pacific in particular I think you fail miserably on that. That's one thing I wanted to say.

Teaching, you know, the -- they say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. If someone has come up in that sphere it is very hard to change a person who is 30, 40 years old. But if you start when they are young and that person becomes a peer and colleague of others and there is a cycle that goes out. Second thing, just slightly personal, nontopical comment about Australia, I live in Australia. We spend a lot of money in violence in other countries to try to prevent, but we can't stop institutional violence in our own country. Some of you may have seen the reports lately.

>> SAJINA KARKI: Any more questions or queries? Seems like we do not have any more queries or comments. Anybody want to share some experiences or anything? Okay. Now as we have come to the end of the session I would like to thank all panelists for their valuable insights.

(Applause.)

>> SAJINA KARKI: And thank you all for your active participation. Hopefully the session was beneficial for all of us. Thank you so much. And have a good evening or good afternoon. Thank you.

Just a quick announcement for the room. The synthesis document town hall session will be in this room. We will continue in this room. So people who are interested to join us for that session please do stay and give your input. Thank you.

(Session concluded at 17:24)

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