

LEBANON GENDER EQUALITY BAROMETER

Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	3
PARTNERS AND WORKING TEAM	4
DEFINITIONS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
INTRODUCTION	9
OBJECTIVES	10
BACKGROUND	11
GENDER COUNTRY CONTEXT	12
1. Family Lives	13
2. Education	13
3. Economic Lives	14
4. Cultural Norms and Gender Roles	15
5. Legislation	16
6. Discrimination	17
CYBER EXTORTION	18
CYBER HARASSMENT	19
1. Cyber Stalking	20
2. Hate Speech	22
3. Cyber Threat	23
4. Fake Profile	24
5. Pornographic Content	27
6. Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment Effects on Mental Health	28
6.1 <i>The Impact of Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment on Children</i>	28
6.2 <i>The Impact of Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment on Women</i>	29
7. Campaigns against Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment	29
8. Services against Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment	30
RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	32
METHODOLOGY	33
LIMITATIONS	33
KEY FINDINGS	35
RECOMMENDATIONS	84
ANNEXES	89
Annex I – Sample Methodology	89
Annex II – Human Resources and Field Surveyors	89
Annex III – Data Management	89

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBVIMS	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ISF	Internal Security Forces
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LHF	Lebanon Humanitarian Fund
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOSAIC	MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration, and Capacity Building
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollars

PARTNERS AND WORKING TEAM:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

The Lebanon Gender Equality Barometer was produced by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It is published within the framework of the project 'Preventing Violence against women and girls' P-VAWG and is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)

The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) was established under Law N°720 issued on November 5, 1998, by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. NCLW's General Assembly gathers prominent activists in the field of women's affairs. The General Assembly of NCLW is composed of 24 members appointed by the Council of Ministers by decree for a renewable three-year term. Women members of the Parliament and ministers are considered ex-officio members of NCLW during their term and have consultative status. NCLW has an Executive Board comprised of eight members elected by the General Assembly from its members. The President of the Republic appoints the President of NCLW. NCLW members work through permanent and ad hoc committees in submitting program proposals to the Executive Board, as well as following up and monitoring projects and activities that are being implemented. The permanent committees are the following: The Legislative Committee, the GBV Committee, the Culture, Education & Media Committee, the Economy, Labor & Sustainable Development Committee, Women Participation in Politics and Decision-Making Committee, and the Environment Committee. The budget of NCLW is allocated from the budget of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers as well as from financial aid and donations received from international organizations.

The Commission is entrusted with three types of missions:

- 1. Consultative Tasks:** Recommendations to the government on policy and decision-making, development of strategies, and development of frameworks for activities related to women empowerment and gender equality.
- 2. Coordinative Tasks:** NCLW is the policy coordinator of gender-based issues between public institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- 3. Executive Tasks:** Development of national strategies and plans in collaboration with different stakeholders of public institutions and civil society organizations; implementation of gender-sensitive projects; elaboration and publication of studies and researches addressing women issues; organization of workshops, conferences, and events on the national, regional and international levels.

DEFINITIONS:

Barometer. In Meteorology a barometer is a tool to measure a change in the atmosphere. Gender Barometer is a tool to measure and monitor the development of gender equality in different fields.¹

Gender. Gender tends to denote the social and cultural role of each sex within a given society and this concept should be integrated through all life sectors.

Gender Mainstreaming. In 1995, at the Fourth UN International Conference on Women held in Beijing, “gender mainstreaming” was established as the internationally agreed strategy for governments and development organizations to promote gender equality. This was in response to consistent lessons that have emerged from at least twenty years of experience in addressing women’s needs in development work. To understand what “gender mainstreaming” means and why it is important, it helps to understand the journey that has been travelled to reach this point.

Gender Equality. (Equality between men and women) refers to the idea that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, follow their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, and prejudgments.²

Gender Equity. is used to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their particular needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, responsibilities, and opportunities.³

Gender-based violence (GBV). Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls or men and boys, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether they occur in public or private life. Gender-based violence is considered to be one of the most serious human rights issues. A countless number of persons in the world are being subjected to physical, sexual, and mental abuse.⁴

Gender-responsive. This refers to the articulate policies and initiatives addressing the different needs, such aspirations, capacities, and contributions of women and men. This is the translation of awareness into a change in perception and desired actions that ensure equality and equity, which is often achieved through gender mainstreaming. Gender-responsive policies respond to the needs, requests, and requirements articulated by men and women for policies that benefit one or both genders.

Gender roles. Assigned by society, examples include teacher, farmer, driver, doctor, nurse, secretary, mother, father, husband or wife. Gender roles are clusters of socially and culturally defined expectations and activities that men and women undertake in specific situations. Gender roles are learned through socialization and may be institutionalized through education, political and economic systems, legislation, and culture and traditions. Gender roles vary and are shaped by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and location of people culturally, socially and politically. When people’s circumstances change, as happens when they acquire power and wealth, their gender roles may also change. Women may be able to exert more power and authority over household members and neighbors as their wealth increases, while men could lose authority and power when their incomes decline within

the household. Women are frequently expected to play multiple roles simultaneously as wage laborers, child bearers and caregivers, domestic workers, and managers. These simultaneous and competing roles often take a toll on women's time, energy, and recreational opportunities.

Gender disparity. The difference in status held by men and women in society about opportunities, successes, and possessions. Gender disparity also refers to differences in income, status, opportunities, and power that exist between men and women in given settings. In many societies, men and women are conferred different roles, opportunities, and statuses. These gender differences tend to be systematic and institutionalized, requiring concerted action to eliminate them and bring men and women to parity. Devices and programs for affirmative action are used to bring about gender parity in many societies.

Gender norms. According to the gender statistics manual, Gender norms are ideas of how women and men should act in a specific community or society. They are used as expectations and standards that should be followed by women and men as a result of gender stereotypes.⁵

Gender transformative. Addresses the causes of gender-based inequalities and works to transform harmful gender roles, norms, and power relations.⁶

Gender-specific. A simple definition can be given to gender-specific. It is something referring only to one sex, either men or women.⁷

Gender awareness. Gender awareness means raising awareness and informing men and women about equality. It intends to provide accessible and reliable material to eliminate any misunderstanding of gender equality as a core value of democratic societies.⁸

Gender stereotype. It is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their abilities, pursue their professional careers, and make choices about their lives.⁹

Gender stereotyping. It refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation or violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁰

Gender blind. It is described as gender blind when no effort is made by institutional leaders and managers to become aware or sensitive to mainstream gender in the mission, vision, policies, programs, and everyday operations at all levels. More often than not, gender blindness is reinforced by historical, cultural, traditional, and religious factors, requiring more effort and advocacy.

Gender-neutral. Gender-neutral approaches, programs, and policies do not disrupt existing gender relations and may just sustain and/or reproduce them without any change. They may recognize the presence of gender equality issues but may not desire or aim to change or disrupt existing gender relationships.

Gender gap. Findings or results of a gender audit should reveal gender gaps indicating the differences in situations between women and men, as well as provide an assessment of prevailing knowledge, attitudes,

practices, and behaviors that need to be addressed. A gender gap can be said to exist when men's and women's scores differ on attitudes, interests, behaviors, knowledge, perspectives, and preferences on such issues as voting and support for specific policies, programs, or changes in society. Gender gaps can be attributed to differences between men and women in terms of perspectives, economic and social preferences, experiences, and autonomy. Gender gaps are influenced by race, class, age, marital status, and religion, among others factors. When men and women of the same social class and race share the same views and feelings about specific issues then one can conclude that there is no gender gap between them.

Gender-sensitive. Acknowledging that the differences and inequalities between women and men require attention. A gender-sensitive policy incorporates and translates actions into programs, strategies, and activities to improve gender relations and reduce gender inequalities.

Gender parity in education. (an indicator of the ratio of girls to boys). Gender parity is reached when there is equal representation and participation of male and female learners in education. It is a useful indicator, but on its own does not measure gender equality. The gender parity index (GPI) of the EFA Global Monitoring Report measures the ratio of a female-to-male value of a given indicator. A value between 0.97–1.03 indicates that gender parity has been reached.

Feminism. A collection of movements and ideologies for social, cultural, political, and economic equality. Feminism aims at defining, defending, and establishing equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Feminism campaigns against gender-based inequalities and provides women with information that enables them to make choices and free themselves from gender-based discrimination within their environments, cultures, societies, and communities. Over the decades, feminists around the world have developed theories in a variety of disciplines to respond to the social construction of gender. The earliest forms of feminism were largely criticized for only taking into account the perspective of white, middle-class, and educated women. This criticism led to more ethnic-specific and multicultural forms of feminism as a movement.

Gender unequal. Legal, social and cultural situations in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to the enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles.¹¹

Gender lens. A "gender lens" means working to make gender noticeable in social phenomena; asking why some opportunities differ between women and men in the same society. In other words, it sheds light on gender inequality and the reason behind it in society.¹²

Gender discrimination. According to the European Center for Gender Equality, gender discrimination is the unequal treatment of an individual based on gender. It is any distinction that can face women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.¹³

Gender empowerment. It is a way of change, a process of gaining self-confidence for individuals, to make choices and convert these desires into empowerment. It is the ultimate goal of gender equality by promoting gender equity measures.¹⁴

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Lebanon Gender Barometer for Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment provides information on opinions, attitudes and experiences related to gender equality in various areas of life and society. The gender barometer provides national and unique monitoring data on the development of gender in different sectors in Lebanon over a year timeline. The gender barometer also serves as a tool in the assessment of gender policy implementation and development needs. The gender barometer enables monitoring the development of gender equality in different sectors in life and society. It provides reliable information about gender-related attitudes, opinions and experiences that are unique in the national setting.

The gender barometer allows data to be accumulated on current issues of Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment, for example, experiences of cyber extortion, cyber harassment and mental health, on which information is not available elsewhere on a regular basis.

The survey took place over a critical period in Lebanon, in which economic and financial challenges are overwhelming the lives of the Lebanese population, compounded by the political tension and the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, respondents' priorities changed and were more focused on financial aid including basic needs to support their families.

The sample structure of respondents took into consideration all regions (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Bekaa, North Lebanon, and South Lebanon) across Lebanon. A total of 250 women and girls were interviewed and the small sample took into account the short timeline for conducting the survey. It is crucial for a larger sample to be selected in the next edition of the gender barometer. The sample clusters the age groups into six categories, 8-12, 13-17, 18-25, 26-35, 36-50, and over 50 years old. The majority of respondents belonged to the age group (18-25), followed by (26-35), and (36-50). Most of the respondents have a university background with 46% currently employed in various sectors or own a business, of which 58 women and girls are working in the field of education. The majority are single (47.2%) and 30.8% are currently married, while the remaining are either in a relationship, engaged, divorced or separated.

The majority of the respondents (79.6%) have a university background level and use social media, in which the Facebook platform was the most commonly used. However, the open-ended questions of the survey revealed that the remaining respondents either do not use or have never used social media platforms, and consequently have no experience regarding cyber extortion nor cyber harassment.

In general, most of the respondents showed positive knowledge and awareness about cyber extortion (89.2%) and cyber harassment (86.4%) although some did not experience such incidents. Only 20.4% suffered from cyber extortion while 39.2%, a higher percentage, suffered from personal experiences of cyber harassment.

The results of personal experience showed that fear was mostly the impact on mental health from the cyber extortion and the cyber harassment incidents. Only 68 respondents shared their experience with their friends and family or reported to the police while the remaining respondents were afraid; all had feelings of guilt, distress, anxiety, depression, social isolation, suicidal thoughts, and one respondent attempted suicide. For those who did not report the incident, some feared of being accused and felt guilty, other respondents stated that they were not aware of the laws and they don't trust the legal system in Lebanon.

A very low percentage of respondents used the hotline number of ISF and helpline numbers of NGOs to seek help or mental healthcare. The lack of awareness of existing laws and hotline / helpline numbers was significant in their responses. It is worth noting that few respondents refused to have the ISF hotline number relating the reason to their mistrust in the legal system and in the government as a whole. Other respondents indicated that the police cannot do anything. More importantly, less than 20% of the respondents knew about the existing laws of cyber extortion and cyber harassment and about 21% of the respondents knew about the "e-transaction and protection of data" law. In addition, less than 15% attended trainings on cyber extortion and cyber harassment.

The women and girls' respondents showed more than 80% need for free therapeutic and psychosocial support. The vast majority of respondents indicated that the best ways to prevent cyber extortion and cyber harassment is to raise awareness around the existing laws, reporting mechanisms and hotlines/helplines. Also, respondents requested the need to have more protective mechanisms and group discussions around cyber extortion and cyber harassment.

The gender monitoring tool is expected to be measured on a yearly basis using the same indicators and same data collection tools, in order to provide accurate insights about Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment in Lebanon. It is crucial for the sample to be extended during the next survey in measuring of the indicators to target more beneficiaries during better circumstances in the country rather than the current one related to COVID-19 health crisis and the political and economic developments.

INTRODUCTION:

The NCLW developed its first two barometers for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Participation of Women in Politics in 2020. In 2021, the NCLW updated the GBV barometer and created another barometer for Cyber Extortion. The barometers are monitoring tools to measure progress of the level of gender equality on a national level.

In fact, Lebanon does not have a national gender monitoring tool. The Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), developed by members of UN agencies, is a monitoring tool to effectively compile data on GBV national programs. However, in its current form, the GBVIMS is an incident recorder that cannot replace the country's existing case management systems. On the national level, measurements, exist though in several international development indexes, such as the human development index, and the global gender gap, where country information is collected through secondary data mostly, whereas indicators are universal and do not take into account any country-specific features or characteristics. Hence, there is a need for a national gender monitoring tool, with thought-out and customized indicators for the Lebanese context that simultaneously oversees and informs gender advancement in the country. In addition, such a measurement is also important to measure the pace of change and identify milestones as relevant, throughout the project implementation and beyond. In this regard, NCLW is now implementing the Gender Barometer tool, with the support of local authorities, associations, NGOs, and INGOs.

Many international and regional instruments have drawn attention to gender-related dimensions of human rights issues, the most important being the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The Convention defines discrimination against women as **"...Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."**¹

The Gender Barometer provides information on opinions, attitudes and experiences related to gender equality in various areas of life and society. The Gender Equality Barometer provides national and unique monitoring data on the development of gender in different sectors in Lebanon over a year timeline. The barometer also serves as a tool in the assessment of gender policy implementation and development needs. The barometer enables monitoring the development of gender equality in different sectors in life and society. The Gender Equality Barometer provides reliable information about gender-related attitudes, opinions and experiences that is unique in the national setting.

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of the research is to develop a barometer on gender equality as a monitoring tool due to the limited knowledge on the situation of women in Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment in Lebanon, under-reporting of cases of exclusion and sometimes ignorance on whether certain acts are to be considered as purposeful acts of exclusion and political violence. The full research is expected to identify specific customized indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, and develop data collection tools and methods, in coordination with NCLW and other partners, with the aim to report on violations of women rights and gender equality.

The Gender Barometer aims at regularly aggregating and publishing gender indicators with respect to international and national strategies and action plans, and serves to help citizens hold their governments accountable by being locally owned and produced. Without locally-owned statistics produced on a regular basis, national women machinery and experts' practitioners in related fields may not effectively monitor gender equality and weak accountability institutions where governments are not held accountable will continue to persist. A Gender Barometer can therefore be used to enhance the role of national women's machinery as accountability institutions responsible for advancing the situation of women in the region and raising awareness on existing gender discrimination in the private and public sector and increase the national statistical centers knowledge on gender mainstreamed data,² in line with National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021 which clearly mentions development of indicators to be measured to monitor the situation of women in the country, and also aligned with the first pillar with regards to the protection of women from violence in the National Action Plan of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 for 2019-2022 for Women Peace and Security.

The objectives of the gender monitoring tool is to: **1)** Identify main interventions in promoting gender equality issues; **2)** Monitor relative progress made in gender equality; **3)** Identify gender gaps in the targeted thematic areas on a policy level; **4)** Document good practices towards the achievement of gender equality;

5) Identify thematic areas where gender equality will be measured; **6)** Identify main interventions to achieve gender equality in the identified thematic areas; **7)** Measure perceptions of gender equality on a policy level; **8)** Measure the perceptions on grassroots level; **9)** Identify CSOs' main interventions; and **10)** Assess the level of resources allocated and spent on gender mainstreaming and gender activities.

BACKGROUND:

Women in Lebanon continue to face numerous challenges and discrimination in the most basic human rights. The lack of justice and equality in Lebanese laws, where sectarianism has taken control of personal status laws and secularism, which gives all citizens equal rights, particularly women, is absent. As a result, Lebanese women continue to face discrimination and gender violations.

Gender inequality in Lebanon is considered to be particularly stark. According to the Gender Gap Index 2021,³ which is based on indicators of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, Lebanon ranks at 132 and the progress has been moving in a very slow pace. Lebanon has closed an additional 3.8 percentage points of its gender gap, starting from an even lower position. Progress is mainly to improvements on the Political Empowerment subindex where the share of women ministers increased the most in January 2021 from January 2019 (from 3.4% to 31.6%); however, women make up only 4.7% of the Parliament. Women in Lebanon have been struggling to break through the "political glass ceiling," and have made only patchwork progress.

While Lebanese women might look better off than their Arab fellows, their legal situation remains equally unfair in comparison to men in Lebanon, who still enjoy certain privileges, mainly as a direct result of the absence of the Civil Code,⁴ whereby religious groups manage people's lives according to religious laws, very much unfavorable to women. Other legislations still discriminate against women, such as the Labor Law, and no affirmative action has ever been taken in Lebanon, including the women's quota. While Lebanon signed and ratified the CEDAW in 1997, the country had however placed reservations on some of the articles of the treaty. The reservations were mainly on article 9 related to the right of women to pass on their nationality to their non-Lebanese husband and children, and article 16 related to marriage and family life, as well as on article 29 in relation to arbitration.⁵

Given the multi-level challenges confronting women in Lebanon, this action proposes to address the needs of women from various perspectives, in order to better enable the environment for a greater participation of women in politics. Discrimination against women is still largely normalized in the Lebanese society, and many people tend to ignore or deny the legal, economic, political and socio-cultural obstacles that prevent women from being equally represented in Parliament and other leadership positions. As such, this action falls within the framework of the CEDAW, particularly articles 5 **(a)** "To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women", article 7, "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: **(a)** To vote in all elections and public referendum and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; **(b)** To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; **(c)** To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country", article 8 "States

Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations” and article 11-2) States Parties shall take appropriate measure to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work: **(a)** To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status; **(b)** To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances; **(c)** To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities; **(d)** To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

Lebanon's economic situation has deteriorated over the last year, with figures indicating that more than 55% of the country's population is now impoverished and unable to satisfy basic needs. This occurred at a crucial time, when the nation was registering a growing number of COVID-19 incidents. Furthermore, the Beirut port explosion on August 4th left thousands of people of all ages and nationalities, mostly disadvantaged communities, with post-traumatic stress disorder, mental distress, and financial difficulties.⁶

The COVID-19 outbreak increased violence against women, in particular the risk of violence around the world. This trend was more evident in countries where strict lockdowns have been put in place to prevent the spread of the virus such as Lebanon. In the first quarter of the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) report, Lebanon indicated a 4% increase of intimate partner violence compared to the same time period in 2019 and an 8% decrease in reporting in March 2020 compared to January 2020. This discrepancy between the increase of a certain type of SGBV and the decrease of an overall reporting sheds light on the very challenges that survivors are facing in the COVID-19 situation. During lockdown, tensions can easily mount within the household as families are confined to their homes and the dire economic situation of many families causes more stress and anxiety, leading to the increase of the risk of violence.

GENDER COUNTRY CONTEXT:

Lebanon is facing the immediate prospect of an exploding fiscal and economic crisis that continues to threaten the livelihood of swathes of the population. The fiscal crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the Beirut Blast magnified has accelerated the slide toward economic collapse and pushed the Lebanese economy into a downward spiral toward recession, soaring inflation, mass unemployment, shortages of imported goods and government insolvency.⁷

The deepening socioeconomic agitation has led to the increase of extreme poverty by nearly 50% across all regions and for all nationalities residing in Lebanon. The economic crisis, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, has exacerbated the loss of employment and livelihoods among refugees and host populations. COVID-19 and associated containment measures resulted in 30 percent of Lebanese households losing their jobs, and 20 percent had their incomes reduced. In a poll conducted by the World Food Program in June, half of Lebanese families and 75% of Syrian households expressed concern about food scarcity. Those who have lost their employment, whether since or before the COVID-19 pandemic, have been found to be more distressed than others, including women.⁸

1. Family Lives

Structure and values differ between traditional families in Lebanon and families who have lived in cities or outside Lebanon. However, family cohesion and solidarity are seen as fundamental to the Lebanese regardless of their family constellation. The father is the head of the family. The mother's job is mainly to do the housework and look after the children. Although gender roles are changing and women's rights to education and equal pay improved, women still do not have as much power as men. Social perception still views women being more inclined to shame families than men. As a result, women are sometimes still viewed as particularly vulnerable and victims. Most well-educated families have embraced full gender equality.⁹

2. Education

The educational sector in Lebanon has been struggling to overcome numerous challenges over the past two years, including the instability of the political situation, disruptive street demonstrations, repercussions of the Beirut Port blast, dramatic devaluation of the Lebanese currency, compounded with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a shift to online or virtual learning. Progress has been perceptibly improved in girls' enrolment at all education levels, yet wide gender disparities persist in some regions, particularly at higher educational levels.

Approximately two-thirds of Lebanese children now attend costly private schools, while public schools are the first (and often only choice) for poor families, especially in rural areas, when it comes to their daughters. The quality of private education is higher than public education, resulting in increased gaps between more economically advantaged youth and their poorer peers who cannot afford quality private education.¹⁰ There is a gender gap, with more girls than boys attending school and, in particular, pursuing higher education. Traditional stereotypes and patriarchal culture continue to prevent some girls from participating in the educational system. Girls from poor and marginalized families, in particular, are still considered a burden and are married at a young age. The government of Lebanon has yet to impose compulsory free education, making the situation more difficult for girls who want to study but are unable to do so.¹¹

Rural areas often lack basic features of infrastructure to provide quality environment for education, and have lower levels of educational performance and achievement. Due to the long distances to and from school, children find it difficult to join and attend classes.¹² In the absence of sufficient quality education opportunities, working is sometimes seen as a more productive use of children's time and children, giving more income for the family. As a result of demonstrations and civil disturbances which were initiated in October 2019, at least 1.2 million students in Lebanon have had their education delayed for more than a year, with many dropping out of schools.¹³

The economic crisis and resulting inflation have made remote schooling equipment increasingly unaffordable for many Lebanese households. Girls are much less likely to devote time to online learning in households with few devices, and remote learning technologies are frequently inaccessible to children with disabilities. Children from low-income families, especially those whose parents are illiterate, have little assistance at home for their distant learning.¹⁴ The lack of finances to pay teachers' wages has compounded some of the most disadvantaged children's lack of access to school. Teachers at public schools are paid in Lebanese Lira, which has lost an estimated 90% of its value, making a teacher's pay worth between 1 and 2 USD per hour. As a result, periodic teacher strikes have occurred, mainly impacting second shift schools where instructors continue their job after the first shift.¹⁵

For many students in Lebanon, access to online schooling and digital infrastructure remains extremely difficult. Internet access is a significant concern, with inadequate connectivity in many regions of Lebanon, costly top-up cards for managing usage, and frequent power outages impeding access to learning.¹⁶ Civil society expressed

worries about children who are unable to pursue online learning and, as a result, expressed fears about a lost generation, in which students are unable to be taught due to cost and technical difficulties. They emphasized mothers' efforts to teach their children in the absence of schooling, but that this was difficult for mothers with lower levels of education themselves, underlining some of the long-term consequences of an unequal society.¹⁷

3.Economic Lives

The majority of women in Lebanon are unemployed. In addition to 75 percent inactivity among women, among the 25 percent who are active and in the labour force, 10 percent are unemployed compared to 5 percent of men. North Lebanon has the highest unemployment average in the country, followed by Baalbek and Bekaa, where unemployment among men is also prominent compared to the rest of the country.¹⁸

Several programs exist in Lebanon that aim to add value to the economic empowerment of Lebanese women by strengthening women's access to stable and self-sustaining earnings and livelihoods, as well as boosting stakeholders' ability to appreciate women's particular economic needs and legislate policy changes to recognize them.¹⁹ Women's contributions to economic growth and stability are critical, yet women in Lebanon confronts a variety of cultural and structural barriers that limit their ability to start and run profitable enterprises. Local training and coaching programs, for example, are sometimes insufficiently adapted to the specific requirements and situations of women. Many women also have difficulty getting a loan or owning land, forcing them to keep their companies on the side. All of these restrictions, taken together, prevent women entrepreneurs from making a significant contribution to Lebanon's economy.²⁰

Lebanon has one of the world's worst overall gender disparities, as well as one of the lowest percentages of women's employment market involvement, averaging at 29% for women and 76% for men according to the latest data of the World Bank in 2019.²¹ Moreover, women make up only 4.6 percent of the parliament.²² Women in Lebanon have been struggling to break through the "political glass ceiling," and have made only patchwork progress. Despite the fact that the 2018 Parliamentary election had the largest number of registered female candidates in the country's history, women today hold fewer than 5% of the total 128 seats in parliament. Similarly, while the selection of four women to the ministerial cabinet is an achievement to be proud of, since it is a first in the country's history, these women make up less than 10% of the cabinet as a whole.²³ This shows that women have a relatively low participation in decision making, in spite of the existence of a substantial amount of advocacy for equal rights and women empowerment groups, as well as a rise in feminism, especially in the more "liberal" regions.²⁴

Women's employment in Lebanon is expected to decline by 14-19 percent as a result of ongoing economic recession rates, according to UN Women's estimates from June. As a result of the Beirut blast and the downgrading economic crisis, these figures will probably worsen.²⁵ Women Mercer found a leaky work flow for women in leadership in a 2020 post-COVID assessment of over 1,100 organizations around the world, with women's representation significantly reducing as the levels advance: 47 percent are support staff, 42 percent are professionals, 29 percent are senior managers, and 23 percent are executives. The COVID pandemic increased the pay disparity between men and women. This is partly due to the pandemic's uneven employment effects on women, who constitute the majority of frontline and critical employees and are disproportionately represented in industries and sectors that are facing closures (e.g., hospitality, education, and retail).²⁶

Women were already at a substantial disadvantage before the economic slump, making them more exposed to the catastrophic impacts of the economic crisis. Female unemployment is increasing, domestic abuse reports

doubled in 2020, and the number of women killed as a result of domestic violence is also rising. A rising number of women and girls can no longer afford sanitary goods due to a 500% rise in price, forcing them to rely on newspapers, toilet paper, or old rags instead.²⁷ When women do find a way to overcome the obstacles and further their education, skill development, and pursue employment or business, they encounter additional hurdles such as access to financing — only 3% of bank loans in Lebanon are given to women.²⁸

The great majority, if not all, of employees are exposed to labour exploitation in some form or another. However, women appear to bear the brunt of this prejudice. Official labour statistics, which state that just 23 percent of women over the age of 15 are in the formal workforce, dilute such observations. Labor data suggests that most women are not economically active, considering that the informal sector is excluded. Female exploitation, on the other hand, cannot be evaluated simply by looking at pay and perks in the formal labor force. The great majority of working women are unnoticed, laboring in the informal economy or at home.²⁹

Prior to the Beirut Port explosion, women workers and business owners were already in a vulnerable position because of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those with school-age children who had to leave work to assist with online learning. According to a recent UN Women report, the unemployment rate among women has risen from 14.3% prior to the crisis to 26% as of September 2020.³⁰

In Lebanon, as was already mentioned, the COVID crisis is not the only inhibitor to women's power and presence in the economic life. The Lebanese pound has lost 90% of its worth since fall 2019, and overall inflation in 2020 reached 84.9 percent. As per government figures, consumer goods prices had virtually quadrupled in the preceding two years as of June. The massive explosion in Beirut's port a year ago, which killed over 200 people and destroyed a significant part of the capital, further contributed to the despair. Years of mismanagement and disastrous policies have left the country severely in debt, with the central bank unable to keep the currency afloat as it has for decades due to a decline in foreign financial flows. Now that the economy has hit rock bottom, food, gasoline, and medication are in limited supply. In a country that was once known as the Middle East's Switzerland, the banks are mainly bankrupt. As teachers, professors, and investors of all genders seek better prospects elsewhere, education has taken a hit.³¹

4. Cultural Norms and Gender Roles

Gender is a social construct that is regulated by cultural conceptions. In essence, this implies that gender roles in them have characteristics that reflect cultural beliefs. As a result, violence in Lebanon is based on the behaviors adopted by society's members, the norms they follow, and the day-to-day dynamics that women and girls face.³²

Lebanon is known as a patriarchal society, and due to this factor, many females fear reporting any sort of cybercrimes. A large number of crimes committed against women are not reported for several reasons related to the existing patriarchal system and the lack of women's knowledge and confidence in official protection mechanisms, especially that the largest percentage of those who report about cybercrime violence are minors.³³

Then we go on to societal norms, which illuminate not just Lebanese society's traditionalist nature, but also the activities that sustain violence longevity, which are clearly recognized. The following are the predispositions of these social mores: a palpable preference for males over females, a propensity to perceive males as "active" players and females as "passive" agents, which leads to socially dominant-submissive relations. This, in turn, allows dogmas to perceive violence as accepted behavior, often placing the guilt that comes with it on males. The former establishes the foundations of service inadequacies, as well as the impediment that women pursuing legal

or informal assistance confront.³⁴ It should come as no surprise that societal norms that promote double standards have a detrimental impact on women. A girl's clothes and room are pink, and her toys are dolls and household-utensils. Constrained sexuality and gender social norms, on the other hand, contribute to hostility and discrimination toward boys, men, and individuals of various gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual traits, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) children and adolescents.³⁵ In addition, social norms and cultural attitudes give the household responsibilities to adolescent girls and therefore girls are not allowed to pursue education being deprived of their fundamental rights.³⁶

Furthermore, Lebanon has several extremely harmful regulations that simply make women's life more difficult. According to Human Rights Watch, the Lebanese government is failing to uphold its international legal obligations to protect women and girls from violence and discrimination. Human Rights Watch submitted a report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which convened in June 2021 to assess Lebanon's compliance with the CEDAW. Several recommendations from the country's last evaluation in 2015 were not implemented, including failing to develop a standard personal status code that would ensure equitable treatment for all citizens and amending the discriminatory nationality statute. Lebanon has made little headway in drafting a new civil code or revising its 15 religion-based personal status laws, as well as the religious courts that administer them. These courts tolerate discrimination against women of all religions and fail to defend their basic rights, especially when it comes to divorce, property ownership, and post-divorce child custody. Existing laws define domestic violence vaguely, and marital rape is not specifically deemed illegal. Members of parliament have introduced a slew of anti-sexual harassment bills since 2017, but the legislature has failed to act.³⁷

On a brighter note, more women can be found in the workforce. The economic crisis and coronavirus pandemic have pushed women from conservative shackles into the outside world in hopes of trying to improve their families' financial situation. While this does not eliminate GBV, it is a sign that reliance on women and girls is becoming more and more like that on men and boys in terms of employment.

5. Legislation

Lebanon is a signatory of key human rights treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), CEDAW, among others. With the exception of CEDAW, Lebanon has ratified these conventions without reservations.³⁸

In 2018, the Lebanese Parliament ratified Law number 81, "Law of electronic transactions and data protection", which contains a chapter on the preservation of electronic evidence. The e-transaction law does not clearly address cybersecurity issues, but could represent the basis for a solid legislative framework for protecting individuals and corporations, through the introduction of legislation to combat cybercrime.³⁹

In 2019, Lebanon endorsed its National Cyber Security Strategy entitled: 'Towards year 2022.' "Lebanon wants to have a secure and stable cyberspace, both within the national territory and in international exchanges." The strategy aims to regulate Lebanon's Cyber Space, to position the human element at the center of its responsibilities, to go through the awareness of building a national collective effort on home front, to guarantee minimum safety for the Lebanese community and to ensure that all stakeholders in Lebanon jointly implement this strategy, and to reach a stronger cooperation at the national and international level.

In December 2020, the Lebanese government finally passed the sexual harassment law. Adopted by the parliament, the new law criminalizes "any recurring bad behaviour that is out of the ordinary, unwelcome by the

victim, and has a sexual connotation". Under the legislation, harassment can be through "words, actions, or sexual or pornographic references," including those made online, and offences can be punished by up to a year in jail and a fine of up to 10 times the minimum wage.⁴⁰ The passing of the sexual harassment law was seen as a great stride for feminist organizations and activists and gives promising hope for the future of gender equality and women security in the country.

The Penal Code includes vague definitions of defamation, libel, and contempt, giving prosecutors and courts the authority to clamp down on freedom of expression online. The public prosecutor, the courts, and non-judicial bodies have used Penal Code articles related to defamation the most extensively to repress freedom of speech online. The Penal Code defines:

- Defamation as "the attribution of a fact to a person [factual allegation], resulting in injury to one's honor and dignity, even if only in the course of casting doubt about or questioning the character of this person."⁴¹
- Libel as "any verbal insult or utterance showing contempt, as well as any expressions or drawings that are injurious, without referring to specific facts about the person being insulted."⁴²
- Contempt as "any insult through words, gestures, drawings, or writings committed against a public official during or because of his or her public office."⁴³

Both the Penal Code and Publications Law distinguish between three categories of individuals: heads of state, public officials and bodies, and private figures.

Cases involving private figures do not give the defendant the opportunity to prove the accuracy of the published allegations, no matter their nature. Therefore, cases involving private figures that concern the public interest place the defendant in a disadvantageous and untenable position. The laws also give relatives the right to sue in defamation cases where the defendant allegedly sullied the reputation of a deceased relative after their death. As per the Publications Law, the penalty for the defamation of a private figure ranges from three months to one year in prison and/or a fine of LL6 million to LL10 million. Cases of libel incur more severe penalties than cases of slander. For libel, violators face three months to one year in prison and/or a fine of LL6 million to LL10 million. In slander cases, violators face one to six months in prison and/or a fine of LL2 million to LL6 million.

The Penal Code punishes the publication of false news with imprisonment for at least three months. However, in cases where the publication of false news may "distort the aura of the state or its financial status," the sentence increases to at least six months and a fine ranging from LL100,000 to LL2 million. When the false news is deemed to threaten the security of the state, the fine increases to between LL6 million and LL20 million. The Publications Law punishes publishing false news with a fine between LL10 million and LL30 million.

6. Discrimination

Lebanon's multidimensional crisis is taking place in the midst of a profound and structural gender inequality. Lebanon has one of the world's worst overall gender disparities. Legal safeguards against domestic abuse, sexual assault, and harassment continue to be insufficient. Spousal violence is prevalent at about 25%, while women make up only 4.6% of Parliament.⁴⁴

Lebanon lacks a Civil Code that addresses topics such as divorce, property rights, and child care. Instead, personal status concerns are governed by 18 different religion laws. All of these laws discriminate against women, and none of them guarantee basic human rights. These laws are administered by autonomous religious tribunals with little or no government control, frequently delivering judgments that violate women's rights. Moreover,

unlike Lebanese men, Lebanese women are unable to pass on their nationality to their children or foreign spouses. Furthermore, religious courts do not follow civil court judgments on domestic abuse, trapping women in violent marriages. Some religious courts issue obedience and cohabitation orders against women, ordering them to return to the married household.⁴⁵

Despite the fact that the Lebanese Labour Law requires men and women to be paid the same for doing the same job, this is not always the case. The lack of real laws and policies that promote women in the labour market has resulted in workplace discrimination.⁴⁶ National labour laws discriminate against female employees' welfare benefits, provide no protection against sexual harassment, and lack clear enforcement mechanisms for any provisions women may require, such as a short maternity leave.⁴⁷

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as ***“Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in discrimination, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberties whether occurring in public or private spheres.”***

Many of the difficulties that women encounter are the result of Lebanon's 2.7 million people living in poverty. Men, who have historically held political and ecclesiastical authority, deny women of their rights as a means of keeping women and children financially dependent on men. This implies that money remains in the hands of majority groups and may be used how they see fit.⁴⁸

Despite arduous efforts by a number of activists and women organizations, there remains serious obstacles that prevent women from fully accessing the public life in Lebanon and effectively participating in politics. Obstacles are political, legal, economic and socio-cultural. Women have been discriminated against in laws, practices, national policies, constitutional and legal frameworks, economy and, of course, politics. Discrimination against women is evident in laws, including the Lebanese personal status codes, labor laws, and penal code. In criminal code, women have been recently protected from GBV, even if the law still needs further amendment to be fully compliant with principles pertaining to gender equality and women's rights. Honor crimes and part of the rape law still persist, without amendment or annulment.⁴⁹

CYBER EXTORTION:

Cyber Extortion is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyber extortion can occur through SMS, Text, or applications, or online through social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content.⁵⁰ Cyber extortion includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private Information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyber extortion crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour.

When surfing the internet for information related to cyber extortion in Lebanon, the most popular results revolved around cyber extortion in schools, giving off the impression that cyber extortion is more profound in schools and among children and adolescents. According to a study conducted in 2021, 1 in 4 Lebanese adolescents is involved in bullying, with 12% being perpetrators.⁵¹ Also, according to the study, around 90% of bullying incidents in Lebanon occur in schools.⁵²

A study carried out by the Lebanese National Center for Research & Development, CRDP (2015), surveyed 1,000 students, ages ranging between 12 and 18 years, revealed that 12.9% of students have cyberbullied other students, 8.5% voted for humiliation purposes, and 18.5% shared sexual content against others. Another study surveyed 149 public school teachers from different governorates: Beirut, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, Nabatieh and Bekaa. The purpose of this study was to examine to which extent the teachers in Lebanon were aware of the concept of cyber extortion; as well as to investigate their beliefs of the best interventional presentational strategies to prevent this phenomenon. Teachers' perceptions focused on 4 areas: **1)** the impact of cyber extortion on students, **2)** the necessary interventional strategies for cyber extortion inside the school, **3)** the suitable interventional strategies for cyber extortion outside the school, and **4)** the possible prevention strategies for a cyber extortion program. Teachers showed awareness of cyber extortion among students and perceived its negative impact on them. Unexpectedly, the Lebanese teachers considered that cyber extortion equally impacts students as traditional bullying and is not bounded to specific time and place and hence can happen anytime, anyplace over 24 hours a day and across the entire week.

In fact, Lebanese teachers believed that males and females equally got involved in the process of cyber extortion. Another survey done by Save the Children Lebanon on 2,033 interviewees (Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinians) aged 9 to 18 and the caregivers of children aged 6 to 19, showed that 1 of 2 children has been bullied at some point in their lives, 59% of whom were children aged 9 to 12 and 45% were teenagers. Boys were more bullied than girls (54% vs 46%). All nationalities were bullied the same with the Palestinian children having the highest percentage (59%). Lebanese children are more likely to experience physical bullying (41 percent) and cyber extortion (6 percent), but Syrian children are more likely to experience verbal bullying (32 percent). Children between the ages of 9 and 12 are more likely to experience physical bullying (5 percent difference), but teenagers are more likely to experience social bullying (3 percent difference) and cyber extortion (4 percent difference). Both age groups face similar rates of verbal bullying (2 percent difference).⁵³

According to an article uploaded by Arab News in October 2020, the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdowns associated with it fueled and accelerated acts of sexual extortion or sextortion in Lebanon. The article also mentioned that figures from the Lebanese Internal Security Forces showed that such crimes had risen significantly in the lockdown months. Authorities received 47 complaints during July 2020 and 96 in August 2020 with the toll of people arrested for such crimes in the year 2020 reaching 133.⁵⁴ A security official from the Public Relations Division at the General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces noted that the victims of sextortion were aged between 11 and 60, and the percentage of female victims was greater than that of male ones.

CYBER HARASSMENT:

Regarding Cyber Sexual Harassment, and unlike face-to-face sexual harassment research and literature which continues to expand, little research has examined sexual harassment in an Internet context. The Pew Internet and American Life Project found that over 90% of people using the Internet reported e-mail use. With so many people

using the Internet on a regular basis, the act of cyber-sexual harassment has increased as well. In a British survey, 41% of females who regularly use the Internet reported being sent unsolicited pornographic materials, harassed, or stalked on the Internet.⁵⁵ In another study, it was found that 17% of women reported being harassed through e-mail in the workplace, while 49% reported having received offensive e-mails.⁵⁶

“ I live in a rural region where sexual harassment incidents are considered a taboo! We don't usually talk about these things. I did not know that this is important! ”

The most common form of sexual harassment is divided into four specific categories: active verbal sexual harassment, passive verbal sexual harassment, active graphic gender harassment, and passive graphic gender harassment. Active verbal sexual harassment appears as offensive sexual messages directly toward the victim. Passive verbal sexual harassment does not target a specific person, but potential receivers. Active graphic gender harassment occurs when erotic and pornographic pictures or videos are intentionally sent through e-mail, peer-to-peer messenger programs or posted somewhere online. Similar to active graphic gender harassment, passive graphic gender harassment involves pictures and videos, but they are published on Web sites.

Cyber-harassment can also involve the posting or other distribution of false information or rumours about an individual to damage the victim's social standing, interpersonal relationships, and/or reputation (i.e., a form of cyber-smearing). This false information is posted on websites, chat rooms, discussion forums, social media, and other online sites to damage the reputations of people and businesses. Offenders can also impersonate victims by creating accounts with similar names and, by making use of existing images of the victims, use these accounts to send friend and/or follower requests to victims' friends and family members to deceive them into accepting these requests (a form of online impersonation). The acceptance of these requests grants the perpetrators access to the accounts of victims' friends and families, and by extension, access to the victims' real accounts.⁵⁷

According to UNFPA, spikes in technology communication is producing new types of gender-based violence, including online discrimination, cyber extortion, cyberstalking, blackmail, and hate speech worldwide. ISF reports sexual harassment and blackmailing crimes to have increased by 184% through cyber extortion during COVID-19 lockdown.⁵⁸ The age breakdown of these victims shows that 41% are aged 12-26 years old as compared to 27% that are 26 years or older.⁵⁹ According to a Fe-Male study on online violence against women human rights defenders in the MENA Region in 2021, respondents reported different violence experiences; more than half of them (55.70%, n=64) received sexist, racist, and/or homophobic messages and experiences. Additionally, a striking 30.4% (n=35) received direct attacks or threats of violence, and only 21.70% (n=25) stated that they did not experience any of those options.⁶⁰

A 2017 survey by UN Women found that nearly 60% of women in Lebanon experienced some form of sexual harassment such as cat-calling and online harassment.⁶¹

1. Cyber Stalking

According to the Lebanese Army's official website, "Cyber-stalking is the use of the Internet or other electronic means to stalk an individual, a group of individuals, or an organization. It may include false accusations, making threats, damage to data or equipment, or gathering information in order to harass the targeted victim. The definition of "harassment" must meet the criterion that a reasonable person, in possession of

similar information, would regard it as sufficient to cause another reasonable person distress. Cyber stalking is different from physical stalking. However, it sometimes leads to it, or is accompanied by it. In extreme cases, cyber stalking could lead to murder.”⁶²

Perpetrators can engage in cyberstalking directly by emailing, instant messaging, calling, texting, or utilizing other forms of electronic communications to communicate obscene, vulgar, and/or defamatory comments and/or threats to the victim and/or the victim's family, partner, and friends, and use technologies to monitor, survey and follow the victim's movements (e.g., covertly inserting GPS tracking devices into cars, handbags and even children's toys).⁶³ Perpetrators can also engage in cyberstalking indirectly by causing damage to the victim's digital device (by, for example, infecting the victim's computer with malware and using this malware to surreptitiously monitor the victim and/or steal information about the victim) or by posting false, malicious, and offensive information about the victim online or setting up a fake account in the victim's name to post material online (social media, chat rooms, discussion forums, websites, etc.).⁶⁴

Cyberstalking behaviours and actions include (but are not limited to): flooding the user's inbox with emails; frequently posting on the user's online sites, pages, and social media accounts; repeatedly calling and/or texting the victim, leaving voicemails, and sending follower and friend requests; joining all online groups and communities the victim is a part of or following the victim's posts through acquaintances, colleagues, classmates, family members' or friends' social media accounts; and continuously viewing the victim's page (some websites log this information and inform the user when their page is viewed). Victims can be continuously watched, observed, and monitored by perpetrators with or without their knowledge on online spaces and/or offline spaces. The cyber-stalkers' behaviours and actions cause victims to fear for their safety and well-being, and depending on the cyber-stalker's actions, this fear could extend to the safety and well-being of the victims' families, partners, and friends.

Most cyber-stalkers are familiar with their victims. For most people, frequent messages come from friends or colleagues. However, receiving intrusive messages from an unfamiliar person or a stranger can also be considered. It can have many motives including revenge, anger, control or even lust. Plenty of cyberstalking cases involve someone attempting to get the attention of a former or would-be partner. Other cases of cyberstalking, particularly those involving celebrities or other high-profile individuals, might involve complete strangers. Some perpetrators suffer from mental health issues and even believe their behaviour is welcomed.

Cyberstalking is not always conducted by individuals and might involve a group of people. They could be targeting an individual, group or organization for various reasons including opposing beliefs, revenge or financial gain.⁶⁵ In a Canadian study done in 2014, about 17% of the population aged 15 to 29 (representing about 1.1 million people) who accessed the Internet at some point between 2009 and 2014 reported they had experienced cyberbullying or cyberstalking. Of those who experienced cyberbullying or cyberstalking, 36% reported that they had experienced cyberbullying but not cyberstalking, 33% reported that they had experienced cyberstalking but not cyberbullying, and 31% reported experiencing both. Sociodemographic factors associated with cyberbullying and cyberstalking are not necessarily the same. Cyberbullying was more prevalent in younger age groups and within the homosexual/bisexual population, while cyberstalking was more prevalent among the single, never-married population and among women.⁶⁶

With regards to statistics related to cyber-stalking in Lebanon, not much information was found online, highlighting a gap in information related to cyber-crime topics.

2. Hate Speech

Online hate speech is a type of speech that takes place online with the purpose of attacking a person or a group based on their race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.⁶⁷ Online hate speech is the expression of conflicts between different groups within and across societies. Online hate speech is a vivid example of how the Internet brings both opportunities and challenges regarding the freedom of expression and speech while also defending human dignity.⁶⁸

Multilateral treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) have sought to define its contours and multi-stakeholders' processes (e.g., the Rabat Plan of Action) have tried to bring greater clarity and suggested mechanisms to identify hateful messages.⁶⁹ Yet, hate speech is still a generic term in everyday discourse, mixing concrete threats to individuals and/or groups with cases in which people may be simply venting their anger against authority. Internet intermediaries — organizations that mediate online communication such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google — have advanced their own definitions of hate speech that bind users to a set of rules and allow companies to limit certain forms of expression.

However, the Internet's speed and reach makes it difficult for governments to enforce national legislation in the virtual world. Social media is a private space for public expression, which makes it difficult for regulators. Online hate speech has been on the rise since the start of 2020, with COVID-19 tensions, Anti-Asian rhetoric, ongoing racial injustice, mass civil unrest, violence, and the 2020 Presidential Election.⁷⁰ Hate speech can happen both publicly, for example on public social media posts and comments, websites and forums, and privately, for example through social media, messaging apps, dating apps and emails.

*Examples of online hate speech include:*⁷¹

- Threats to an individual or group
- Online abuse and cyberbullying
- Words, images and videos that call for or glorify violence against a group
- Encouraging others to commit hate crimes
- Grossly offensive posts or comments
- Trolling (posting offensive, upsetting or inflammatory comments online in an attempt to hurt and provoke a response)
- Other online communication which could incite hatred towards a particular group or person.

Due to Lebanon's mosaic population and extremely complex political landscape, hate speech on online social networks is very noticeable.

"The internet facilitates anonymous and pseudonymous discourse, which can just as easily accelerate destructive behaviour as it can fuel public discourse."⁷² As Drew Boyd, Director of Operations at The Sentinel Project, has stated, "the Internet grants individuals the ability to say horrific things because they think they will not be discovered. This is what makes online hate speech so unique, because people feel much more comfortable speaking hate as opposed to real life when they have to deal with the consequences of what they say."⁷³ Many instances of online hate speech are posted by Internet "trolls," which are typically pseudonymous users who post shocking, vulgar, and overall untrue content that is meant to trigger a negative reaction out of people, as well as trick, influence, and sometimes recruit them, if they share the same opinion.⁷⁴ Social media has provided a platform for radical or extremist political groups to form, network, and collaborate to spread their messages of anti-establishment and anti-political correctness, and promote ideologies that are racist, anti-feminist, homophobic, etc.⁷⁵

Additionally, The Maharat Foundation conducted a study⁷⁶ on “hate speech on social media in Lebanon” in the year 2018, and the study analysed 98 social media posts, 58 Twitter tweets and 40 Facebook posts. In the study, hate speech was categorized into four types, and the results showed that the most spread type was inciting on violence which is considered the most dangerous type of hate speech. There were 25 posts on Facebook under this category, and 24 on Twitter. As for the second type of monitored hate speech was the recurring insults against certain people or groups, with 24 posts on Twitter and 8 on Facebook. In addition to using photos and statements related to sectarian violence and recalls of the civil war with all the crimes committed on sectarian and religious basis; the number of posts under this category were 6 on Twitter and 3 on Facebook. The direct threat of harm category included 4 posts in each of Twitter and Facebook. This study was in 2018 and highlighted some alarming findings. However, the political situation is only getting worse and since October 2019, it has been escalating, which calls for the importance of looking further into the topic and shedding light on more recent hate being spread on Lebanese social media platforms.

3. Cyber Threat

According to the Oxford dictionary, ‘a cyber-threat is the possibility of a malicious attempt to damage or disrupt a computer network or system’. There are different types of cyber threats, and one is ‘Cyber extortion’, which is an online crime in which hackers hold your data, website, computer systems, or other sensitive information hostage until you meet their demands for payment.⁷⁷ This type of cyber-crime is more common in governmental institutions, businesses, or other parties that may hold very important information. Another form of cyber threat is the act of hacking one’s social media account, email, or platforms that can include intimate, personal, and/or sensitive data that may not want to be shared by the owner of the platform account. One very common and malicious form of cyber threat is the act of ‘sextortion’. Similar to cyber-extortion, sextortion is defined as the act of someone threatening to distribute your private and sensitive material if you don’t provide them images of a sexual nature, sexual favours, or money.⁷⁸ Sextortion not only causes great individual harm, but, like other forms of corruption, has far-reaching implications for gender equity, democratic governance, economic development, and peace and stability.⁷⁹

In the case of cyber threats or cyber extortion, the perpetrators can be hostile nation-states, terrorist groups, corporate spies and organized crime organizations, hacktivists, disgruntled insiders, and hackers. Whereas in the case of cyber sexual extortion, or sextortion, there are several reasons that drive people to sextort others; however, the most common reasons are: **(1)** financial gain, **(2)** fulfilling sexual desires, **(3)** revenge, and **(4)** humiliation.⁸⁰

In the case of financial gain, the perpetrator may use the victim’s explicit images, videos, or messages to pressure him/her into providing the former with monetary assets. Victims often abide by the perpetrator’s requests in order to avoid the risk of having their sensitive content being made public. In the case of fulfilling sexual desires, perpetrators blackmail victims with already attained explicit content for the purpose of attaining more. Revenge acts of sextortion, or ‘revenge-porn’ usually occurs when a relationship ends. Revenge-porn isn’t always done because an ex-partner who wants something in return, sometimes it is merely committed because the partner is angry or upset that the relationship ended and wants the other to feel scared or worried that the compromising content may be seen by others. And finally, sextortion that is driven by humiliation is usually committed by individuals who enjoy seeing people humiliated or terrified of being humiliated. Such perpetrators blackmail victims with sexually explicit images, videos, or messages with the sole intention of making the victims feel uneasy.⁸¹

Moreover, in Lebanon, cases involving the non-consensual sharing of intimate images do not necessarily need to

be sexual images; for example, in one case, a former army officer threatened to send an image of a veiled woman without her hijab and in a swimsuit to her family members. As the GAB program director put it, “a picture on the beach could be used against [women].”⁸² While money remains the most common motive behind acts of sextortion, perpetrators can also be involved in a domestic dispute with the victim or seeking sexual favors. For example, the caseworker from IMC reported that in one case “a husband took photographs of his wife in her underwear without her knowing and then threatened to share the photographs.”⁸³ In some cases, images and information are shared for the purpose of revenge. In 2018, a PDF document began circulating via chat apps such as WhatsApp. The document, initially posted on Twitter, exposed the detailed story of the relationship between a man and a woman and included private conversations. The PDF resorts to name calling the woman in question, passing moral judgements about her sexual activities, and deeming her worthy of being exposed to society. The PDF ended with a photograph of the girl, her full name, and a quotation: “At the end of the day, you can take the girl out of the whorehouse, but you can’t take the whorehouse out of the girl.”⁸⁴ The document exposed the woman’s identity, as well as conversations she had over WhatsApp with two men. The conversations were allegedly screenshotted from her own phone - the technicalities and circumstances of which remain unknown. The identities of the men, and their photographs were also included. Within two days, her name was tweeted 40,900 times, while the man’s name was tweeted 21,700 times.⁸⁵ The PDF was circulated heavily on WhatsApp, triggering slurs and judgement aimed at the woman. The story even got the attention of the mainstream media and most outlets published the woman’s name. Non-consensual sharing of intimate images also occurs in the LGBTQI communities, but there are fewer reported instances, largely because it is much more difficult for these individuals to go to the authorities. In one case, a man entered into an intimate relationship with his driver, and the driver took images that were consensual at the time. When the relationship ended, the driver later used the images to blackmail the man for money, according to the employee from AFE. The man refused to pay, but the driver sent people to physically harm him; eventually, he came to a local NGO for help, as going to the police would jeopardize his freedom.⁸⁶

According to a study conducted by SMEX in 2018, the number of sextortion cases in Lebanon has grown in recent years, with the ISF issuing more warnings each year. In 2016, Joseph Moussallem, a colonel at the ISF’s Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Bureau, reported that it received 346 total complaints of online “sextortion” and by early 2017 it was receiving complaints practically every day. In April 2018, a security source from the Internal Security Forces reiterated to Lebanon Debate, an online publication, that they still receive these complaints daily.⁸⁷ In order to better understand the situation of sextortion in Lebanon, SMEX studied 22 cases of non-consensual sharing of intimate images reported in online media outlets since 2014, and across these cases, the same sextortion tactics were repeatedly used. Many of the perpetrators in the dataset convinced women to send them revealing images over online messaging applications, hacked into social media accounts, gained physical access to targets’ phones and computers, or already possessed compromising media about the victim because they were previously in a relationship. In one instance, perpetrators coerced targets into non-consensual sex acts and then recorded them without consent.

4. Fake Profile

Online Social Networks (OSNs) play an important role for internet users to carry out their daily activities like content sharing, news reading, posting messages, product reviews and discussing events etc. At the same time, various kinds of spammers are also equally attracted towards these OSNs. These cyber criminals including sexual predators, online fraudsters, advertising campaigners, catfishes, and social bots etc. exploit the network of trust by various means especially by creating fake profiles to spread their content and carry out scams.⁸⁹ Fake social media accounts are accounts used to hide the identity of the individual to be able to send bullying or threatening

messages; or imitate their victim to try and damage their reputation or cause them distress or trick their friends and family into connecting with a profile impersonating the victim to trick them into engaging with malicious content. This is a very common form of cyberbullying that can cause serious distress to the victim and have an impact on their online reputation.⁹⁰

Based on the method of creation, targets and prevention mechanism, there are several types of profiles in OSNs, a few will be further discussed and identified below.

Compromised profiles:

Compromised accounts are actually real accounts but their owners don't have complete control over them and they have lost the control to a phisher or any malware agent. According to a study, compromised accounts are the most difficult type of accounts to be detected. Another recent study says that more than 97% of profiles are compromised rather than fake. The fake profiles are generally created to steal the credentials from the real users, and then fake profiles are abandoned or deactivated. Compromised profiles have much value because they have already established a level of trust within their network and therefore cannot be easily detected and removed by the service providers. Attackers usually use compromised profiles with strict care in order to leverage the level of trust.

Cloned profiles:

Profile cloning is the theft of identity from an existing user's profile to create a new fake profile using stolen credentials. In other words, we can say that profile cloning is the process of stealing the victim's private information in order to create one more profile that can acquire the private information of the victim's friends. The attackers are usually well funded, skilled persons and have almost everything available at their disposal and have control over compromised and infected accounts. The adversary can be a strange person, but statistics show that adversary has the knowledge of the victim and can be one of the victim's relatives, friends or colleagues.

Fake profiles:

Fake profiles are different from cloned ones in many ways. In case of cloned profiles, an adversary creates one more profile of the already existing one which is not the case for fake profiles. Cloned profiles are mostly created to extract the information of a victim or his/her friends whereas the fake profiles are used for various other purposes like spamming, advertising, etc. Some people create fake profile just to have one more account whereas some create multiple accounts deliberately to enter into people's sub graph. There are two ways to create fake profiles: one is created by writing a script and another is by manually creating one more account. And there are three main reasons for creating fake profiles: First, OSN service providers allow one account per mobile connection or per email-id, and to overcome this limit, people create one more account using different email-ids or phone numbers. Second is to enhance the popularity or the level of trust among others. Third is to spread spam content among real users. Fake entities exist everywhere on the internet like social networking websites, shopping sites, discussion blogs and forums, online dating websites, banking systems etc.

Sockpuppets:

Sockpuppet is an account developed with an aim to deceive others or to promote someone or something on discussion forums, blogs, social networking sites etc. In other words, sockpuppets are those online accounts which are created to cheat the netizens in different ways, for example, to promote a particular product, convince people by saying there is low risk in an investment plan with high return etc. Usually, in case of OSN sites, the blocked users create new accounts which are referred as sockpuppetry.

Sybil accounts:

In case of Sybil accounts, the malicious users create multiple accounts and handle them manually to attack the trusted network. Sybil attackers have many goals like bad mouthing an opinion, using voting applications, to access resources, to compromise the security and privacy etc. For instance, in online voting systems, a single user by using multiple IP addresses can submit a large number of votes, companies try to get popularity and higher ratings on Google page rank by using Sybil attacks, etc. Social networks with well-defined community structure are more exposed to these Sybil attacks because their links can be used by the Sybil attackers more effectively.

Bots as fake profiles:

A bot is a computer program that produces some data to interact with humans especially the persons using internet (netizens) in order to alter their behaviour. More than 60% of the total web data is generated by bots. Online bots, also known as web robots, or simply bot is a computer program that performs various tasks quickly and automatically which were not possible for a human alone. Basically, the bots were designed to assist the humans to speed up their work and make it automatic. The main role of bots was to automatically aggregate contents from various news sources, work as an automatic responder to customer queries, act as a medical expert to resolve health related issues and automatic travel guide. But nowadays the bots are misused by the public in various domains. In social networks, bots are used to retweet a post without verifying its source in order to make it viral. In online multiplayer games, bots are used to gain the unfair advantage. Sometimes bots act as automated avatars to interact with humans and create social networks, which are even more difficult to identify. Bots can also be used to influence users, post messages and send friend requests in online social networks. From the working point of view, bots are similar as Sybil accounts but the main difference is that Sybil accounts are handled by users manually whereas bots are automated computer programs. The main use of bots is web data crawling where a simple online computer program identifies and extracts the information from web servers at much higher speed which was not possible by a human alone. Bots designed for malicious activities have become a serious threat for the internet. Various OSN service providers employed several ways to fight the spam bots. For example, Twitter and Facebook have added an option "report as spam" to identify a spam bot. Facebook also has its Facebook Immune System (FIS) to deal with such issues. But still, the research in this domain is in its early stages. Users in various OSNs claim that their legitimate accounts are being caught by the detection techniques. According to a study, more than 8% of bots exist in Twitter network. Most of them have been developed for commercial purposes. Bots can be of two types benign and malignant.

According to a recent report, Facebook estimates that 8.7% (83.09 million) of its accounts do not belong to real profiles. Moreover, Facebook also estimates that 1.5% (14.32 million) of its accounts are "undesirable accounts", which belong to users who may deliberately spread undesirable content, such as spam messages and malicious links, and threaten the security and privacy of other Facebook users.⁹¹ In a study done at the end of June 2012, an initial version of the SPP software as a "free to use software" was launched and received OSN users, owners, user friends massive media coverage with hundreds of online articles and interviews in leading blogs and news websites, such as Fox news and NBC news. In less than four months, 3,017 users from more than twenty countries installed the SPP Facebook application, 527 of which used the SPP Facebook application to restrict 9,005 friends. Moreover, at least 1,676 users installed the Firefox add-on out of which 111 users were estimated to have used the add-on recommendation and removed more than 1,792 Facebook applications from their profiles.⁹²

Fake profiles and their motives are also greatly found in the MENA region, and Lebanon is no exception. Researchers at the Canadian digital rights organisation Citizenlab found that recent protests in Iraq and Lebanon

were accompanied by frenzied campaigns on Twitter in which influencers, often from the Gulf, played a central role. They examined interactions on Twitter and found that the main hashtags used by demonstrators to share information about the protests were also prime targets for manipulation. Marc Owen-Jones, a researcher at Hamad bin Khalifa University, has studied the rapid spike in the use of bots and the “weaponization of social media” since the 2017 blockade and believes that “there is almost certainly an influence campaign on Twitter to generate support for an Iraqi revolution. Almost 20% of all accounts tweeting one specific hashtag are likely fake.”

Type of OSN Profile	Compromised Profiles	Cloned Profiles	Socket Puppets	Sybil Accounts	Bots
Affected Group	Real account owners, user friends	Existing online users, People without online accounts	Bloggers, Wikipedia users, Reseachers	Netizens, Politicians, Celebrities, Organizations etc..	OSN users, Bloggers, OSNs etc..
Target Networks	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Online Payment systems etc.	MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter	Wikipedia, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

5. Pornographic Content

Cyber harassment of pornography refers to the use of cyberspace to publish, disseminate or design pornographic content. This pornographic content has disadvantages and is the result of technological progress. With the popularity of the Internet, people can now view thousands of pornographic contents on their mobile phones or laptops, and they can even upload pornographic content online. Pornography refers to behaviours that arouse sexual excitement through movies, pictures or books. Pornography is only part of obscenity which is any behaviour that is immoral and contrary to human emotions.

Online harassment of women and girls on the Internet highlights some worrying trends in public attitudes and behaviour, and points to possible harm that pornographic content can cause. After careful analysis, typical pornography projects share more characteristics of sexual activity than characteristics of communication, emotion, or artistic process. When considering whether to supervise pornographic material, pornography as action rather than speech is an important distinction. Empirical evidence shows that there is a causal relationship between pornography and violence against women.

According to Lebanese law, the dissemination and production of pornographic content is illegal. Compared with other Arab countries, Lebanon had almost no restrictions on online content before the promulgation of the 2020 Sexual Harassment Law. There are relatively few websites and/or applications blocked in Lebanon. In terms of censorship, only about 50 websites were banned in 2019, and most of them were related to pornography. The service provided by Ogero allows household heads to block pornography in their homes, which is a good thing because it gives individuals the right to make decisions that suit them.^{94 95}

6. Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment Effects on Mental Health

6.1 The Impact of Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment on Children

Any type of bullying can have physical and psychological effects on a child. Anxiety, fear, depression, low self-esteem, behavioural issues, and academic struggles are just of the few challenges kids may experience if they are targets. Cyber extortion, however, may be particularly damaging.

There are several possible reasons for this. For example, unlike traditional bullying—which is often limited to school and known bullies—cyber extortion can occur at any time, day or night, and be perpetrated by anonymous sources. This makes it more relentless and, often, crueller. While cyber extortion can happen in a public digital space, like on social media post, it can also take the form of private messages—leaving some kids managing this secret, and its effect on them, alone.

Not surprisingly, cyber extortion is a significant stressor in a young person's life. In addition to feeling distressed, they also may feel embarrassed, hurt, and even fear for their safety. They may even blame themselves for the cyber extortion. Because cyber extortion occurs in cyberspace, online bullying feels permanent. Kids know that once something is out there, it will always be out there. They can feel exposed, embarrassed, and overwhelmed. When cyber extortion occurs, the nasty posts, messages, or texts can be shared with multitudes of people. The sheer volume of people that know about the bullying can lead to intense feelings of humiliation.

“ Once, a guy sent me pornographic videos and pictures on Facebook (messenger) and threatened me that if I don't reply to his messages, he will publish this video on my Facebook account. Although I blocked him and the issue ended, this incident happened two years ago, but till now whenever I receive a message on Facebook, I panic immediately! ”

Also, Cyber extortion sometimes causes kids to be excluded and disliked at school. Consequently, they often feel alone and isolated. This experience can be particularly painful because friends are crucial at this age. When kids don't have friends, this can lead to more bullying. When cyber extortion occurs, parents sometimes recommend shutting off the computer or turning off the cell phone. But for many kids, using these devices is considered the most important way they communicate with others. Turning them off often means cutting off their connection with their world, which can make them feel more secluded.

Furthermore, victims of cyber extortion often find it difficult to feel safe. They may feel vulnerable and powerless.

Typically, these feelings surface because the online bullying can invade their home through a computer or cell phone at any time of day. They no longer have a place where they can escape. Additionally, because the bullies can remain anonymous, this realization may escalate feelings of fear. Sometimes kids who are targeted may have no idea who is inflicting the pain, although some cyberbullies choose people they know and have no problem identifying themselves.

Apart from different psychological effects, cyber extortion can have tough mental effects on children. Such mental effects can include depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, poor academic performance, and suicidal thoughts and self-harm. Sometimes, the feelings of overwhelm and stress can manifest physically and lead to issues such as

gastrointestinal issues, disordered eating, and sleep disturbances.

Cyber extortion can also have behavioural effects on children. Kids who are cyberbullied may display the same behavioural changes as those who are bullied in more traditional ways. For example, they exhibit a loss of interest in activities and engage in secretive behaviour. In extreme cases, or when cyber extortion is prolonged, kids sometimes even exhibit more significant behavioural changes. These noteworthy behavioural changes can include the use of drugs or alcohol, skipping school, and even carrying a weapon.

6.2 The Impact of Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment on Women

Like any type of harm, cyber extortion can cause major psychological impacts on women. According to a 2017 survey done by Statista ⁹⁶ on the psychological impact of women experiencing online abuse or harassment worldwide, several issues came to surface when a woman was experiencing online abuse. The different impacts inflicted on women due to cyber extortion and harassment include:

1. A feeling of powerlessness in her ability to respond to abuse or harassment online;
2. Not being able to sleep well;
3. Lower self-esteem and loss of self-confidence;
4. A feeling of apprehension when thinking about using the internet and social media;
5. Less able to focus on everyday tasks;
6. Experiencing panic attacks, anxiety, or stress;
7. A feeling of isolation;
8. Experiencing mood swings;
9. Not being able to accomplish what she usually would on a typical day;
10. Unable to concentrate for long periods of time;
11. Less able to make day-to-day decisions.

7. Campaigns against Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment

Several schools and universities across Lebanon ignited anti-cyber extortion campaigns to raise awareness and spread the anti-bullying mentality across the country. In 2016, SABIS school students organized impressive campaigns that addressed issues such as cyber-bullying, and the downside of social media.⁹⁷ The SLO Students started with a 14-day social media campaign informing their followers about how to recognize and stop cyber-bullying. The SLO at the school also held a full-blown campaign on campus with presentations and flyers and posters delivering an anti-bullying message. Following on their campaign's success on campus, SLO prefects took their cause to the streets, where they spread awareness on cyber extortion through brief discussions and interviews with passers-by.

Additionally, Brummana High School provided their intermediate students with an in-depth session on cyber extortion in March 2021. The session included experts and scholars from different organizations that have launched anti cyber-bullying campaigns. The end of the session included an activity for students to post on Instagram using the hashtag #Together_Against_Cyber extortion and were asked to tag a new online initiative against cyber extortion called 'together vs cyber extortion (TAC)'.

Apart from educational institutions, NGOs have also launched campaigns against cyber extortion. In accordance with its objective to eradicate all inequalities and injustices geared toward women, Fe-Male NGO is tracking intently and with an extraordinary consciousness the increasing rates of cyber violence reported cases by women.

As indicated by Fe-Male's recent data from The Lebanese Internal Security Forces Directorate, women and girls report on a monthly basis over 100 cases of distinct types of cyber-violence. In response to this problem, Fe-Male released "Screens Do Not Protect" campaign in May 2020. The campaign aims to highlight that women and girls have the right to access and use online platforms with full security and protection without being exposed to any type of cyber-violence.

In September 2021, the NCLW launched a cyber extortion campaign on social media portals targeting children and young people, as cyber extortion cases (also known as cyberbullying or blackmail) are rising sharply in Lebanon due to the increasing use of electronic products such as phones, computers, and electronic devices. The media campaign emphasizes that cyber extortion is a crime and that women and girls can report any suspicious act to ISF with the aim to prevent and fight violence against women and girls in Lebanon.

Lebanon due to the increasing use of electronic products such as phones, computers, and electronic devices. The media campaign emphasizes that cyber extortion is a crime and that women and girls can report any suspicious act to ISF with the aim to prevent and fight violence against women and girls in Lebanon.

8. Services against Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment

The ISF cybercrime webpage includes guidelines on behaviour on Internet, protecting children and family, protecting devices and accounts, protecting money, and what steps to follow in case of cyber extortion or blackmail online.

Once the ISF official webpage is entered, an icon that says 'Ways to prevent the dangers of the internet' is clearly seen on the page. When the icon is pressed, the webpage is redirected to the 'Cybercrime' page of the website.⁹⁸

The cybercrime page has 4 sections:

1. Protection of Financial and Electronic Transactions
2. Electronic Device Protection
3. Family Protection
4. Child Protection.

Each page will be further discussed below.

Protection of financial and electronic transactions. The protection of financial and electronic transactions page includes tips and steps for people to follow in order to secure their financial data online. The page also includes steps to follow when her/his mobile phone or tablet is lost or stolen, how to deal with the most common computer problems (technical computer problems), and to contact the Internal Security Forces (ISF) for assistance through a mentioned 8-digit phone number and a link to the 'Report Form'.

“

It is not a big issue! We can easily block the account without requesting services from the police!

”

Electronic device protection. The electronic device protection page includes tips and steps for people to follow in order to secure their electronic device protection. The page also includes steps to follow when her/his credit card is stolen, when she/he falls victim to a financial fraud, and to contact the ISF for assistance through a mentioned 8-digit phone number and a link to the 'Report Form'.

Family protection. Similarly, the family protection page includes tips and steps for people to protect themselves and their families from the dangers of the internet. The page also includes steps to follow when she/he falls victim to a cyber-threat (blackmail threat), and to contact the ISF for assistance through a mentioned 8-digit phone number and a link to the 'Report Form'.

Child protection. The child protection page includes tips for individuals regarding their behaviour online, tips on how to protect their devices and accounts, the definition of cyber blackmail and sextortion, and steps to follow in case fallen a victim.

The steps include:

- Talk to an adult you trust, such as your family, relatives, or your teachers.
- Do not give in or respond to the requests of the blackmailer, no matter how much they are pressuring you.
- Keep all evidence from the blackmailer, whether it is pictures, videos, messages, comments, e-mails, instant messages, ... so that they can be used to prove the crime when required.
- Report all attempts of online blackmail or sextortion to law enforcement or Judicial Authorities immediately when they happen to you.
- Avoid telling the person blackmailing you that you plan to report him/her to relevant authorities. This will help law enforcement catch the person after you inform them of the blackmail attempt.
- Take advantage of the abuse reporting service provided by social media websites, such as YouTube or Facebook when these websites are used to post private and personal pictures and videos of yourself.

The end of the page includes a section calling victims to reach out to the ISF in case they are faced with any cybercrime, online blackmail threat, or cyber threat and provides individuals with a phone number to call, and a link to the ISF official website and 'Report Form'. However, none of the pages include steps to follow in case an individual has been subject to online hate speech.

The Local NGO Himaya provides an online helpline to help victims of cyber extortion seek assistance and protection. Himaya's e-helpline was created to serve as a safe space for children and teenagers online. A team of Himaya's professionals can be reached through the e-helpline platform and are ready to provide the necessary assistance to those who seek it. Children can request technical help for security online, request legal help for problems regarding cybercrimes or cyber extortion, express a concern, ask questions and even report abuse. Himaya states that once a report has been submitted, reporters can expect a reply within 48 hours.

After a thorough search of the Internet, no other services were found. Perhaps other services are present but finding them online was a challenge for the researchers, and in turn are bound to be a major challenge for possible victims of cyber extortion trying to seek help

The ISF webpage also includes an 8-digit number to contact in case any individual falls victim to one of the cybercrimes mentioned above, the 8-digit number is '01/293293'. Additionally, the ISF webpage includes an image of a telephone and the ISF hotline at the top of the page '112'.

Apart from the telephone number and hotline number, the ISF includes a link to the 'Report Form' on their official page is redirected to a page that includes Report Type, Email, Phone, a question asking 'Would you like us to contact you?', whether or not the form will include attachments, and a given space to dictate the report. However, in case the type of cyber harassment experienced by the victim is not classified as a cybercrime, perhaps the ISF would not be of much assistance and not much help could be done.

You can download the Cyber Threats Awareness Booklet from the ISF webpage. This guide aims to raise public awareness of the most important cyber threats and cybercrimes, and to strengthen protection and personal privacy when connecting to the Internet and using digital services. In addition, this guide emphasizes the precautions or measures and best practices that should be followed to protect information and personal data from theft, prevent electronic devices from being hacked, avoid becoming victims of cyber extortion, and ultimately help children and other family members stay safe on the Internet.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK:

The approach focused on profiling of the respondents that included personal information, family life, economic life, level of education, employment, etc. and was disaggregated by age, geographic location (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, and Bekaa). This was followed by experiences and witnesses in the thematic area of the research, psychological impact, knowledge and access to available services pertaining to the hotline by ISF and helplines by NGOs and reporting. Moreover, the report explored to what extent services provided to women and girls' beneficiaries and survivors have affected them (positively or negatively) or improved women's mental health and psychological well-being. The report included the women and girls' needs and their recommendations.

The report's focus was a survey using quantitative approach with a comprehensive literature review providing findings examining multiple sources of available information in the country. In organizing the survey questionnaire, the survey followed the basis of multiple-choice questions and gave way for some open-ended questions for respondents' opinions, needs and recommendations.

The survey was conducted through online platforms like WhatsApp, Skype or simply by phone. A team of surveyors was designated to call several interviewees in parallel for fast collection of data. The data was entered directly by the interviewer to an online survey platform which would be carefully managed and validated by the consultancy team before the data analysis. The survivors' survey was conducted by the partner's organizations that know these survivors in order to make the survivors feel safer and more comfortable.

Finally, the report provided a set of recommendations for policy-makers presenting current challenges facing women and girls in Lebanon, highlighting best course of action for potential adjustments and integration in programming and up-scaling the implementation approach with regards to awareness, trainings and advocacy, with the aim to address violence against women and girls and their immediate and long-term needs.

“ After I understand exactly what is cyber extortion and cyber harassment, I will be more aware of such violence and accordingly will save the hotline number on my mobile phone! ”

It is worth noting that the political, economic and COVID-19 health implications were emphasized in the findings and data analysis, in particular COVID-19 health crisis which increased GBV and sexual harassment in the country as it is crucial to highlight the setbacks that affected assistance provided to women and girls in the country by the government as well as by local NGOs.

Another important note to add is that the available data collected and the analysis that will be provided in the barometer reports, along with the women and girls' database that will be provided to NCLW with the procured survey platform by end of research, have broader coverage that will offer NCLW with useful information that can be used for cross-cutting to identify new gaps and collect new types of data to improve quality in future programming.

To conclude, findings and recommendations from the gender barometer for GBV are expected to play a major role in determining the focus of NCLW in government implementation of laws and in shaping future programming.

METHODOLOGY:

The study followed a flexible, dynamic, comprehensive and participatory approach that upholds the expectations of NCLW and key project stakeholders. Given the short timeframe of the study and given the tense socio-political situation, simplified methods were employed for more flexibility, efficiency and analysis from a sequential perspective. The methodology used by the consultant entails:

Literature Review

The review of literature provided an overview of the existing situation of GBV, along with existing legal provisions that are put in place to combat such issues. The research was also based on extracting data from secondary resources such as articles and reports done by United Nations bodies (United Nation Women, United Nation Development, United Nation Development Fund, ESCWA, etc.) accumulating literature review that were relevant and delving into secondary data that shows both vertical and horizontal cleavages when tackling the issues of the three thematic topics. In addition to these reports, some data will be collected from studies done by local organizations such as ABAAD, KAFA, Arab Center for the rule of law and integrity, the Legal data base of National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and other reports.

Research Survey

The quantitative data collection tool or survey, served to gather actual statistics of the situation in Lebanon. The survey included collecting and analyzing primary data through a quantitative approach by using questionnaires. The methodology had been developed to ensure covering all relevant aspects related to GBV.

LIMITATIONS:

There are a number of actual limitations to the research:

1. The report took place over the month of November and December 2021 during which the COVID-19 pandemic was a major limitation for meetings and data collection. Physical meetings with women and girls were very challenging, with the rising numbers very challenging, with the rising numbers of coronavirus cases in Lebanon and government ongoing discussions of potential lockdown. To mitigate this challenge, the survey relied on virtual meetings using online platforms to conduct the survey as well as phone call conversations.

2. The short duration to conduct the survey over 1-2 months to collect data before submitting the report in December 2021 affected hugely the sampling with no sufficient time to collect data for a larger sample of beneficiaries. As a result, the survey was based on a sample of 250 women and girls' beneficiaries while an increase of the number of the sample would not be possible to be conducted during the short timeline.
3. The survey was conducted during a time of economic and financial crisis in Lebanon and where the priorities of people is in the other direction, seeking basic needs to preserve their families. This is a key point that should be taken into consideration in future reports and it would be interesting to compare once the situation is more relaxed in the country.
4. The biggest challenge was Internet and electricity outages which caused delays in completing 250 surveys. The surveyors used to contact more than 30 females to have only 10 completed surveys.
5. Some respondents were not able to answer, and apparently family members or husbands were around or near them.
6. A high number of females know nothing about topics of cyber extortion and cyber harassment and were not able to understand the questions.
7. Many respondents refused to take part in the survey.

KEY FINDINGS:

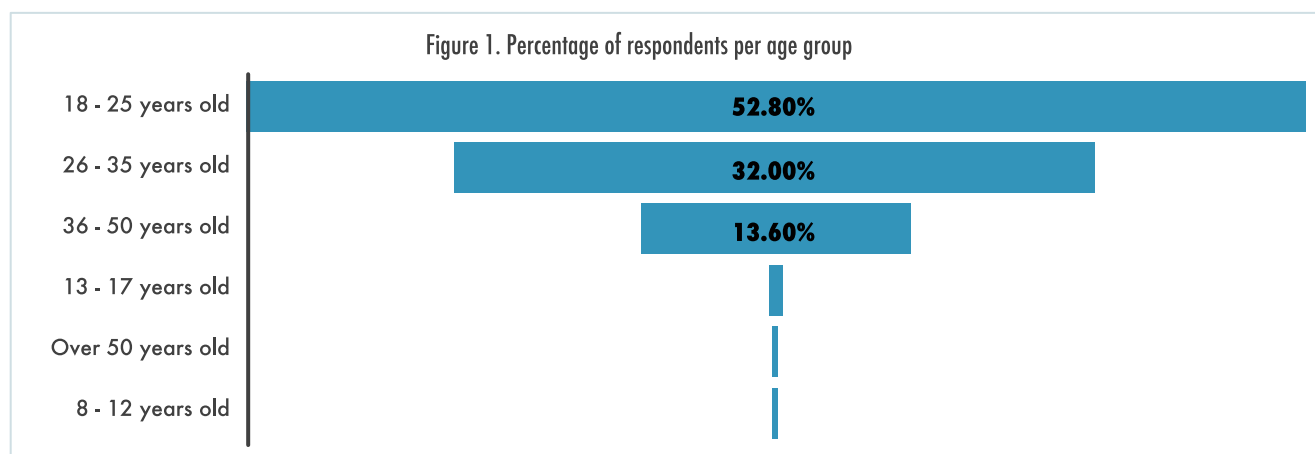
1. Demographics

A purposive sampling approach was used to assess the living conditions of girls and women in Lebanon, their knowledge of cyber violence, their exposure to cyber violence, and their level of awareness of the laws and services available to victims of cyber violence. The targeted areas included zones in all of Lebanon. All participants were females, heterosexual, and of Lebanese nationality.

The sample clusters the age groups into six categories, 8-12, 13-17, 18-25, 26-35, 36-50, and over 50 years old. The majority of respondents belonged to the age group (18-25), followed by (26-35), and (36-50). Below is a table detailing the percentage of participants for each age group:

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 - 25 years old	132	52.8%
26 - 35 years old	80	32%
36 - 50 years old	34	13.6%
13 - 17 years old	2	0.8%
Over 50 years old	1	0.4%
8 - 12 years old	1	0.4%

Table1: Distribution of Age Groups



2. Personal Information

1. What is your level of education?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The level of education is high with 79.6% of the respondents having a university background level, and therefore use social media in their research and education. When asked about their level of education, 145 respondents (58%) stated having a Bachelor's degree, 51 respondents (20.4%) stated having a Master's degree, 22 respondents (8.8%) stated having a technical certificate, 13 respondents (5.2%) stated having a primary certificate, 11 respondents (4.4%) stated having a high school certificate, 5 respondents (2%) stated having an elementary certificate, and 3 respondents (1.2%) stated having a PhD degree.

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents per level of education

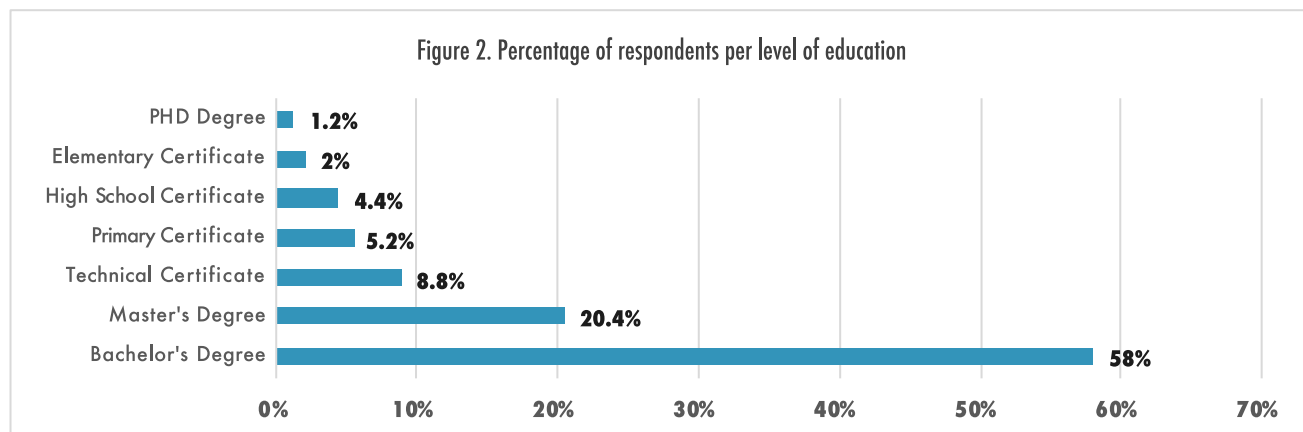
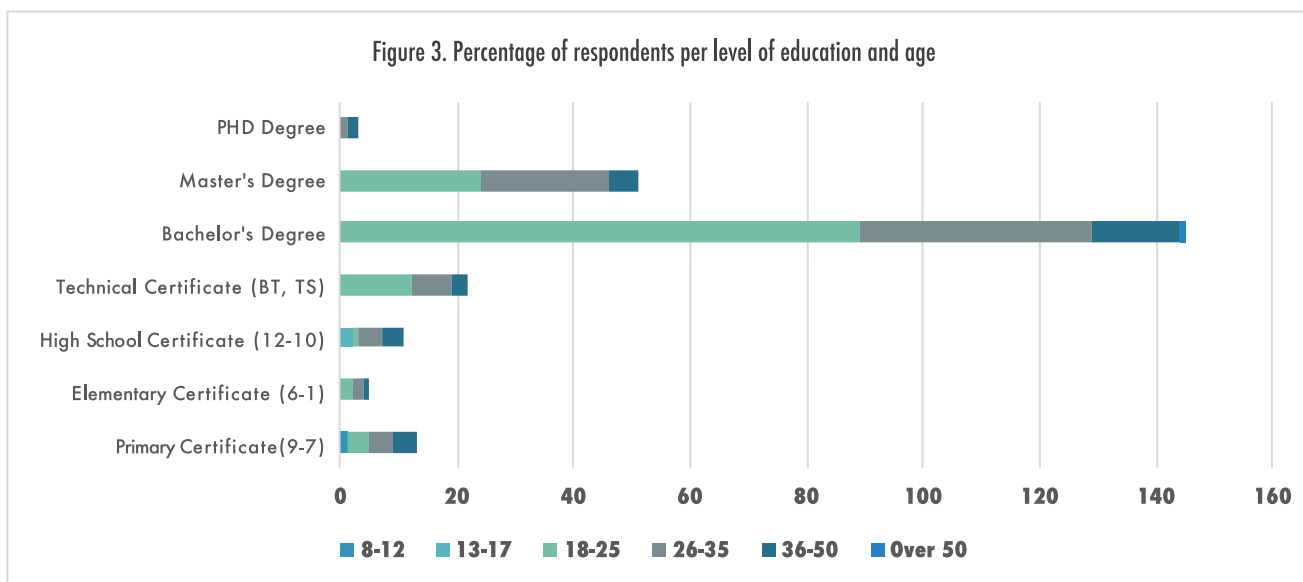


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents per level of education and age

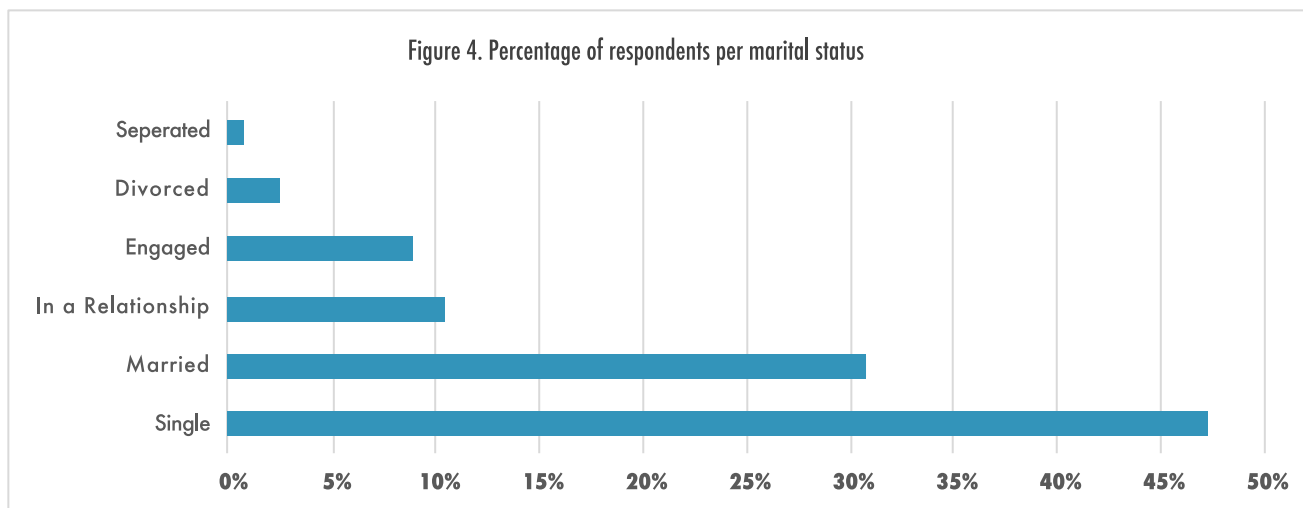


2.2 Marital Status

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents (57.6%) were either single or in a relationship. Regarding the marital status, 118 were single (47.2%), 77 respondents (30.8%) were married, 26 respondents (10.4%) were in a relationship, 22 respondents (8.8%) were engaged, 6 respondents (2.4%) were divorced, and 1 respondent (0.4%) was separated.

Figure 4. Percentage of respondents per marital status



3. Economic Life

3.1 Occupation

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The majority of the respondents had a university degree which is estimated to more than 44% have high educational background, along with 33 respondents with either BT or TS background. When asked about their level of education, 80 respondents stated having a Bachelor's degree, 39 respondents stated completing secondary education, 30 respondents stated completing high school, 25 respondents stated having a Master's degree, 24 respondents stated completing primary education, 18 respondents stated completing BT, 15 respondents stated completing TS, 8 respondents stated completing Baccalaureate, 6 respondents stated having a Doctorate degree, 3 respondents stated being currently enrolled, and 2 respondents did not have any formal education.

Figure 5. Percentage of respondents per occupation

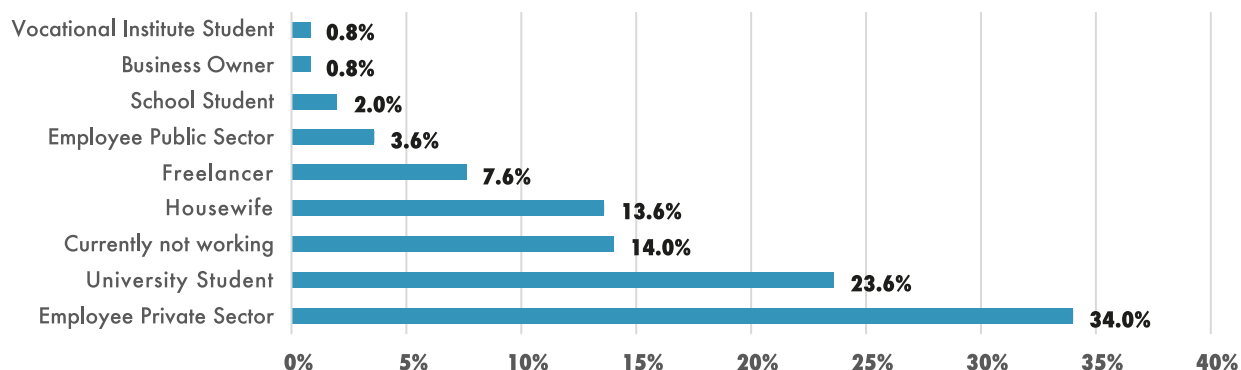


Figure 6. Percentage of respondents per occupation and age

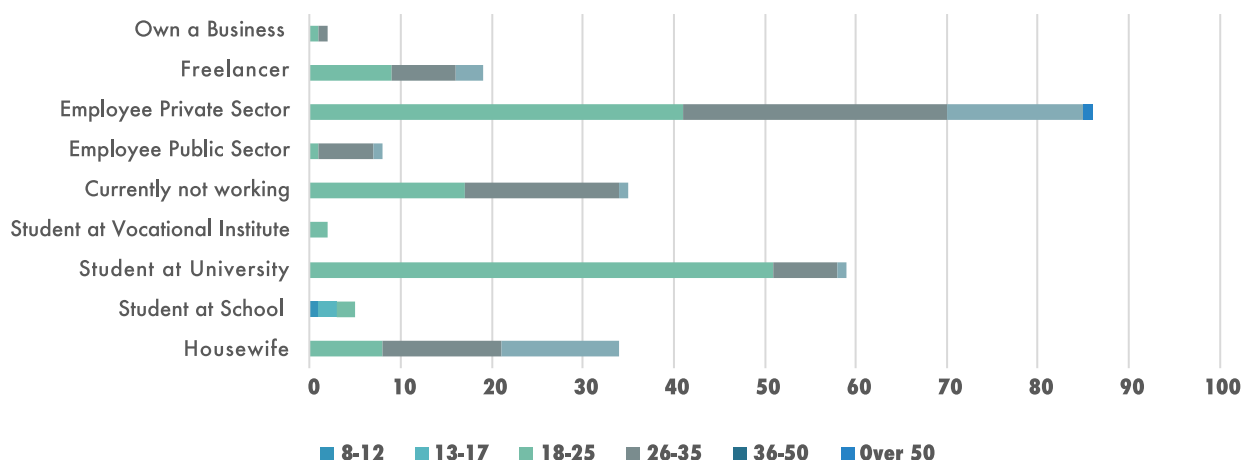
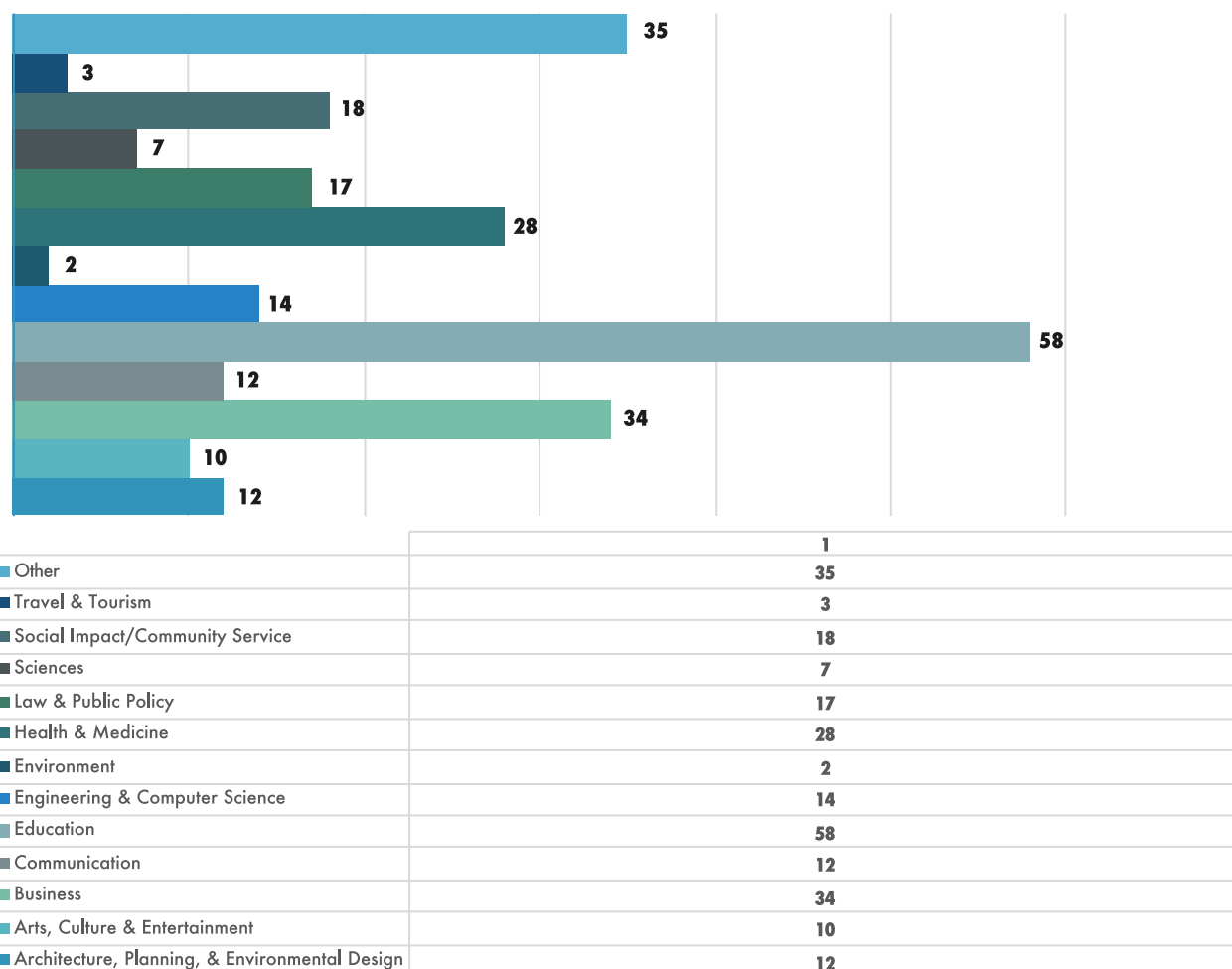


Figure 7. Number of women/girls per field of work



Regarding their field of work, 58 respondents (23.2%) stated working in the educational sector, 34 respondents (13.6%) stated working in the business sector, 28 respondents (11.2%) stated working in health and medicine, 18 respondents (7.2%) stated working in social impact/community service, 17 respondents (6.8%) stated working in law and public policy, 14 respondents (5.6%) stated working in engineering and computer science, 12 respondents (4.8%) stated working in agriculture, planning and environmental design, 12 respondents (4.8%) stated working in communication, 10 respondents (4%) stated working in arts, culture and entertainments, 7 respondents (2.8%) stated working in sciences, 3 respondents (1.2%) stated working in travel and tourism, 2 respondents (0.8%) stated working in environment, and 35 respondents (14%) chose "other."

4. Knowledge of Cyber Extortion

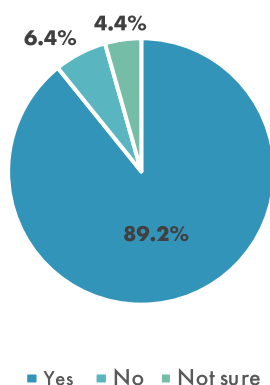
The majority of the respondents have a university background level and use social media. However, the open-ended questions of the survey revealed that the remaining respondents either do not use or have never used social media platforms, and consequently have no knowledge about cyber extortion.

1. Do you know what cyber extortion is?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The vast majority of respondents (89.2%) showed positive knowledge and awareness about cyber extortion. When asked whether or not they know what cyber extortion is, 223 respondents (89.2%) answered "yes," 16 respondents (6.4%) answered "no," and 11 respondents (4.4%) answered "I am not sure."

Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who have knowledge about cyber extortion

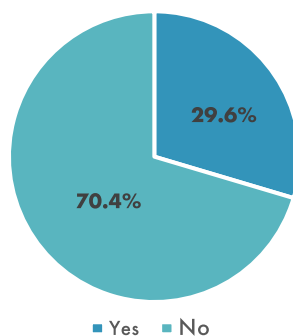


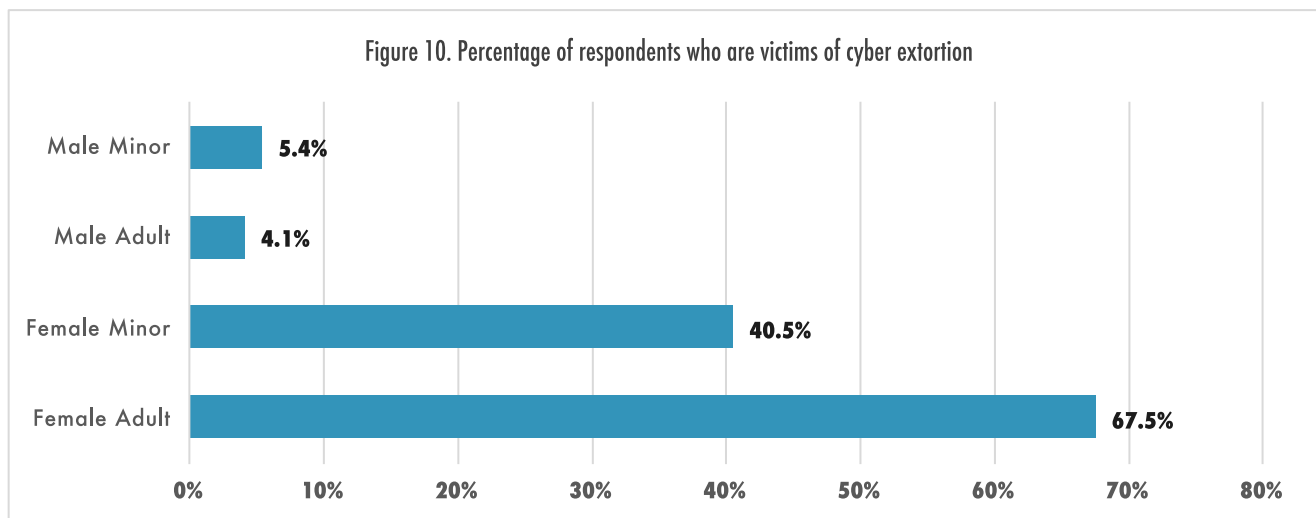
2. Do you know anyone who has suffered from cyber extortion?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Out of 250 respondents, only 74 women and girls witnessed cyber extortion to someone they know. When asked whether they know anyone who has suffered from cyber extortion, 74 respondents (29.6%) answered "yes," and 176 respondents (70.4%) answered "no." For those who answered "yes," since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 50 respondents out of 74 (67.5%) stated that it was a female adult, 30 respondents out of 74 (40.5%) stated that it was a female minor, 4 respondents out of 74 (4.1%) stated that it was a male minor, and 3 respondents out of 74 (5.4%) stated that it was a male adult.

Figure 9. Percentage of women/girls who know someone who suffered from cyber extortion

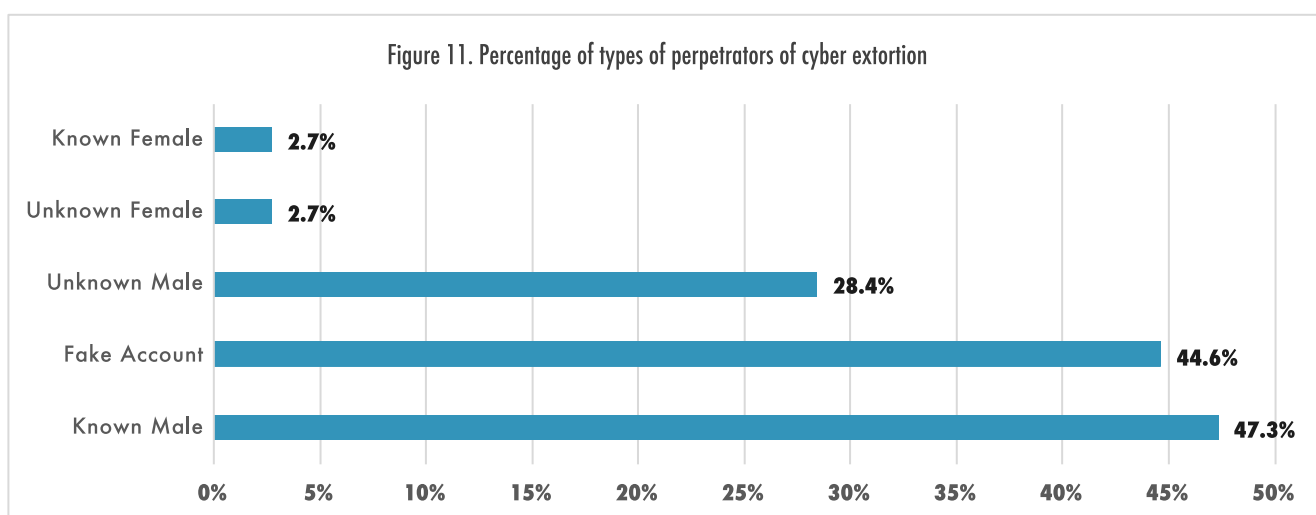




3. Who was the perpetrator?

74 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The 74 respondents were not afraid nor hesitant to answer the question and to share who was the perpetrator of such incident. Response of a known male or fake accounts were significantly high. When asked who the perpetrator was, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 35 respondents out of 74 (47.3%) stated it was a known male, 33 respondents out of 74 (44.6%) stated it was a fake account, 21 respondents out of 74 (28.4%) stated it was an unknown male, 2 respondents out of 74 (2.7%) stated it was an unknown female, and 2 respondents out of 74 (2.7%) stated it was a known female.

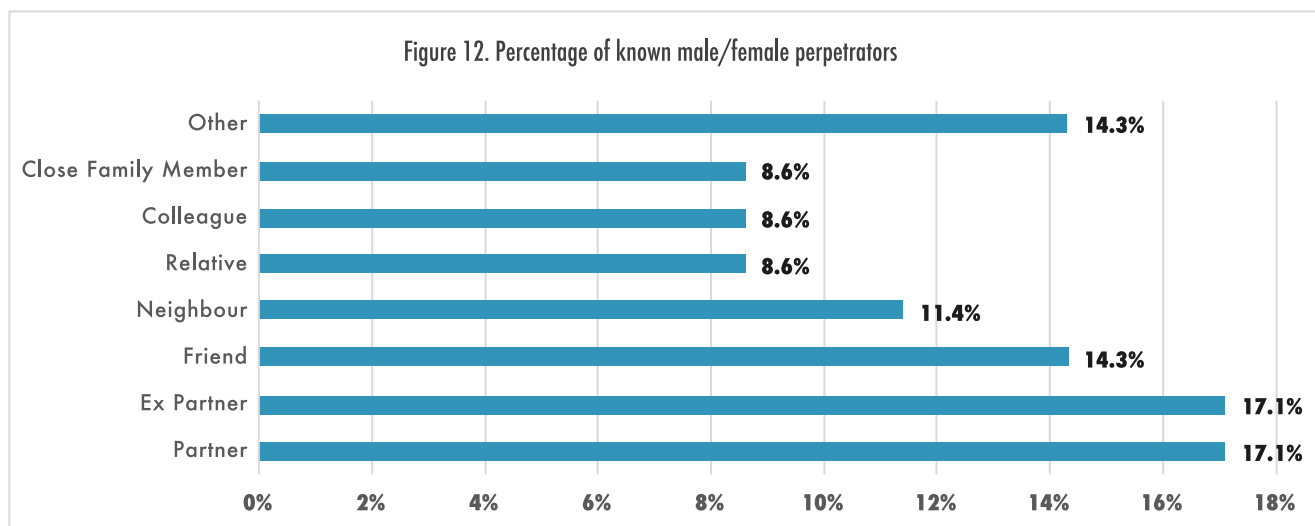


4. How do they know them?

35 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

For those who stated that it was a known male/female, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 6 respondents out of 35 (17.1%) stated that it was a partner, 6 respondents out of 35 (17.1%) stated that

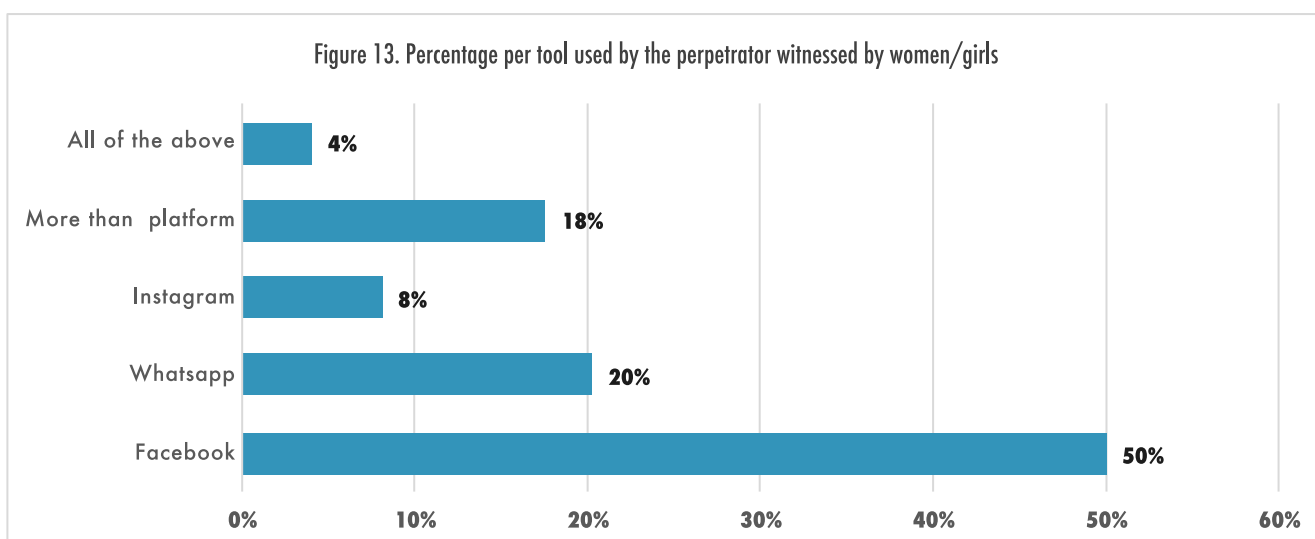
it was an ex-partner, 5 respondents out of 35 (14.3%) stated that it was a friend, 4 respondents out of 35 (11.4%) stated that it was a neighbour, 3 respondents out of 35 (8.6%) stated that it was a relative, 3 respondents out of 35 (8.6%) stated that it was a colleague/co-worker, 3 respondents out of 35 (8.6%) stated that it was a close family member, and 5 respondents out of 35 (14.3%) answered "other."



5. What was the used tool?

74 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

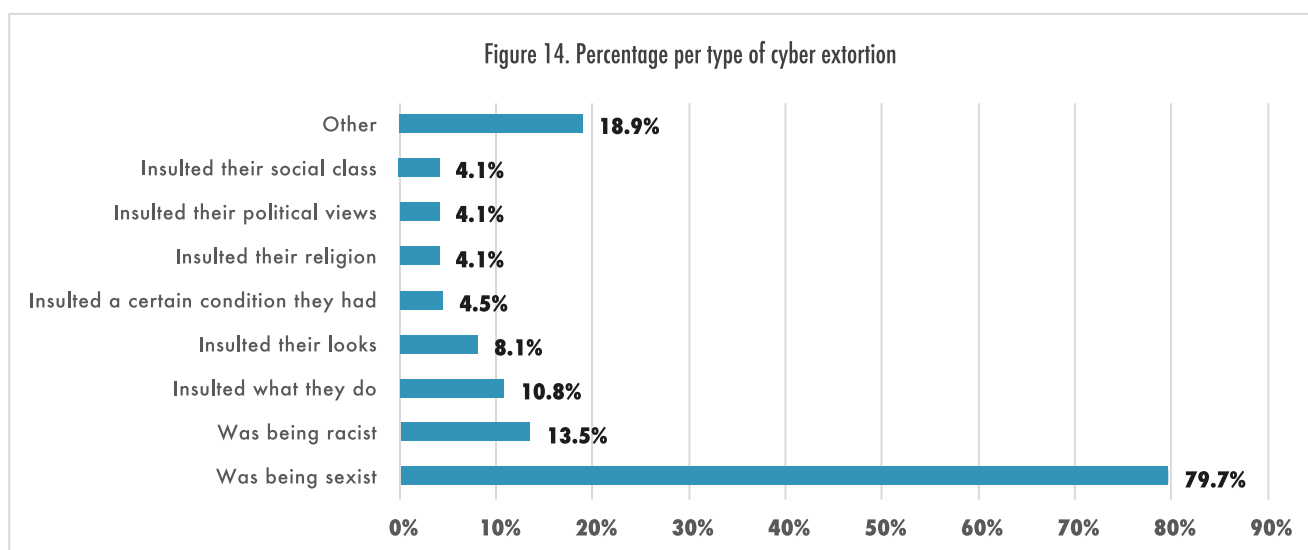
Facebook platform seemed to be the most commonly used by perpetrators with 50% of cyber extortion witnessed on this platform. The reason might be because this sample of women uses Facebook platform more than any other platform. When the 74 respondents were asked what the used tool was, 37 respondents out of 74 (50%) answered "Facebook," 15 respondents out of 74 (20%) answered "WhatsApp," 6 respondents out of 74 (8%) answered "Instagram," 13 respondents out of 74 (18%) answered "more than one platform," and 3 respondents out of 74 (4%) answered "all of the above."



6. What did the perpetrator do?

74 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

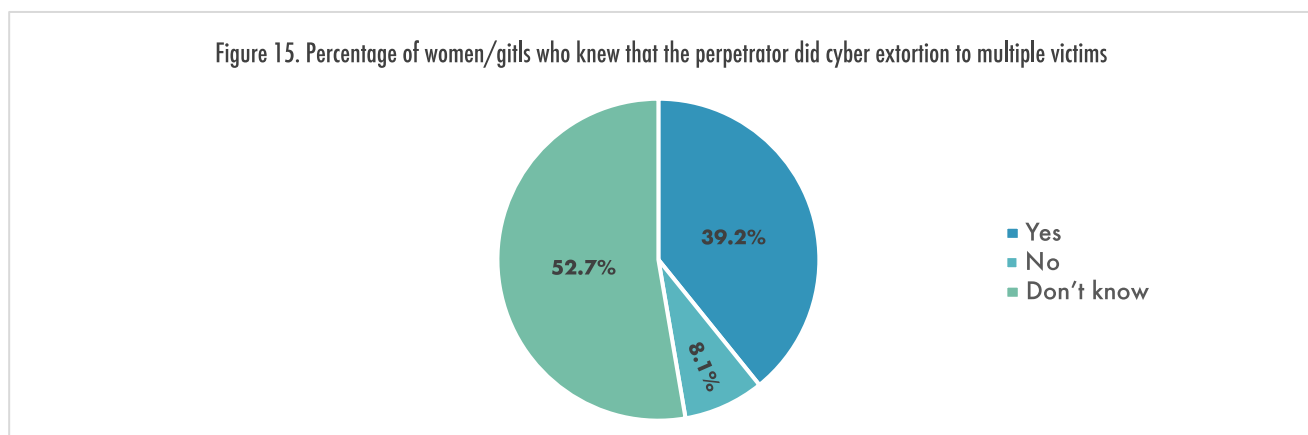
The vast majority of perpetrators approached their woman or girl victims through sex wording or intimating sex needs. The women/girls had been simply blocking the account when facing such an act. Few of the respondents requested help from either their family or their husbands. When asked what the perpetrator did, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 59 respondents out of 74 answered "was being sexist," 10 respondents out of 74 answered "was being racist," 8 respondents out of 74 answered "insulted what they do," 6 respondents out of 74 answered "insulted the way they look," 4 respondents out of 74 answered "insulted a certain condition they had," 3 respondents out of 74 answered "insulted their religion," 3 respondents out of 74 answered "insulted their political views," 3 respondents out of 74 answered "insulted their social class," and 14 respondents out of 74 answered "other."



7. Do you know if the perpetrator did this to multiple victims?

74 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When the 74 respondents were asked whether they knew if the perpetrator did this to multiple victims, 29 respondents (39.2%) answered "yes," 6 respondents (8.1%) answered "no," and 39 respondents (52.7%) answered "I don't know."

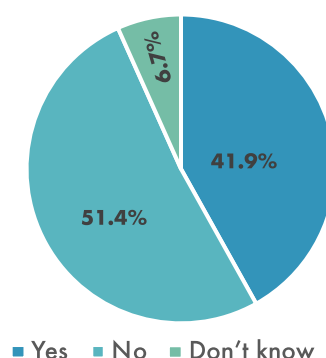


8. Was the victim aware / did they become aware of the cyber extortion?

74 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether the victim was aware of the cyber extortion at the beginning, 31 respondents out of 74 (41.9%) answered "yes," 38 respondents out of 74 (51.4%) answered "no," and 5 respondents out of 74 (6.7%) answered "I don't know." When the 74 respondents were asked whether the victim became aware of the cyber extortion, 69 respondents (93.2%) answered "yes," 2 respondents (2.7%) answered "no," and 3 respondents (4%) answered "I don't know."

Figure 16. Percentage of victims who became aware of the cyber extortion



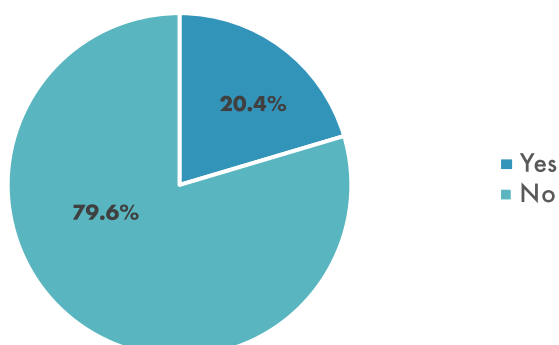
5. Women/Girls' Personal Experience of Cyber Extortion

9. Did you suffer from cyber extortion?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they themselves have suffered from cyber extortion, 51 respondents (20.4%) answered "yes," and 199 respondents (79.6%) answered "no." It was conspicuous through answers to open-ended questions that those women or girls who are raised in a conservative society would be exposed more to such violence. Our society perceives women and girls as sexually impuissant individuals, that is why they endeavour to harass them. However, women and girls who were opportunely raised and of good inculcative background, these would be more vigilant of how to handle such issues. On another positive note, some of the respondents were profoundly intrigued to learn more about the subject and to spread the word about this topic.

Figure 17. Percentage of women/girls who suffered from cyber extortion

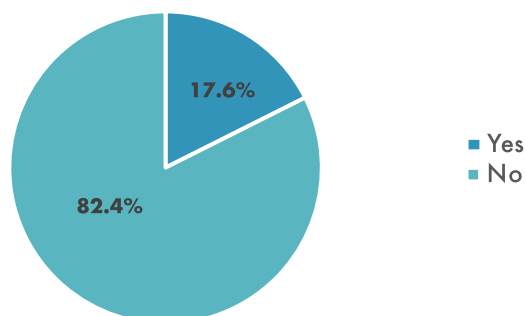


10. Have you ever experienced cyber extortion through fake profiles?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

It was interesting to note that only 17.6% experienced cyber extortion through fake accounts which is less than 20%. That ultimately meant that the perpetrators were known by the victims and not hiding themselves from the woman or girl. When asked whether or not they have ever experienced extortion through fake profiles, 44 respondents (17.6%) answered "yes," and 206 respondents (82.4%) answered "no."

Figure 18. Percentage of women/girls who experienced extortion through fake profiles

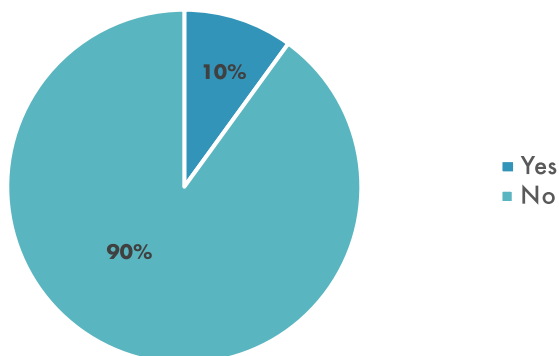


11. Were you threatened over social media?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they have ever been threatened over social media, 25 respondents (10%) answered "yes," and 225 respondents (90%) answered "no."

Figure 19. Percentage of women/girls who were threatened on social media

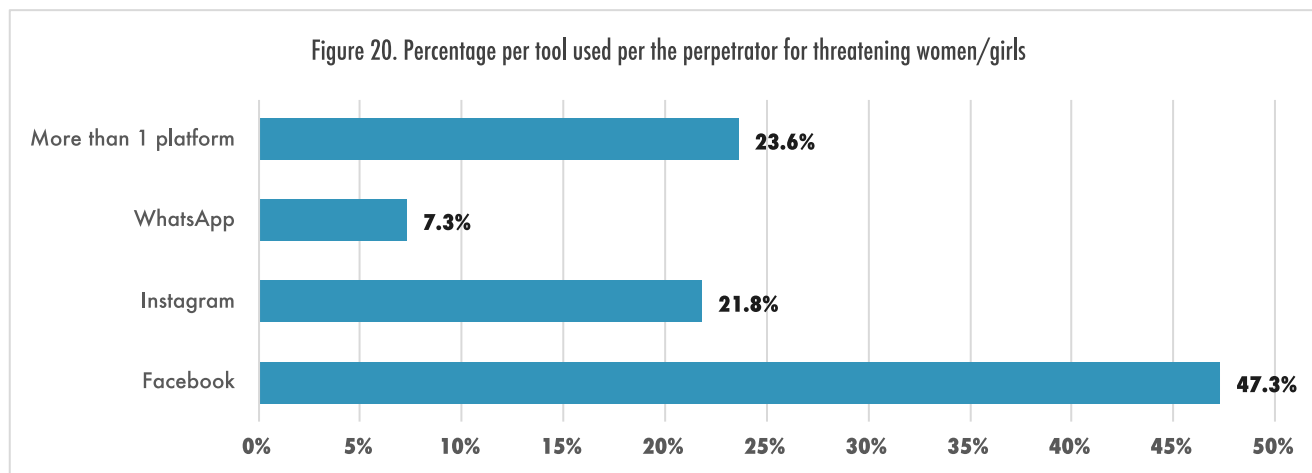


12. On which tool?

55 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

For those who answered "yes" on any of the previous questions, 26 respondents out of 55 (47.3%) stated that the tool used was "Facebook," 12 respondents out of 55 (21.8%) stated "Instagram," 4 respondents out of 55 (7.3%) stated "WhatsApp," and 13 respondents out of 55 (23.6%) stated "more than one platform."

Figure 20. Percentage per tool used per the perpetrator for threatening women/girls

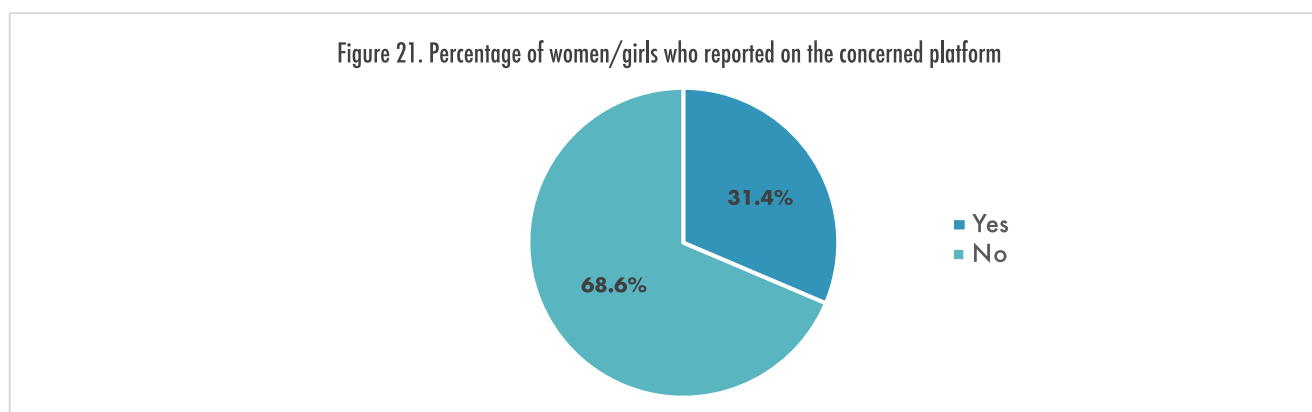


13. Did you report the incident to the concerned platform?

70 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

For those who experienced an incident, when asked whether or not they reported the incident to the concerned platform, 22 respondents out of 70 (31.4%) answered "yes," whereas 48 respondents out of 70 (68.6%) answered "no."

Figure 21. Percentage of women/girls who reported on the concerned platform

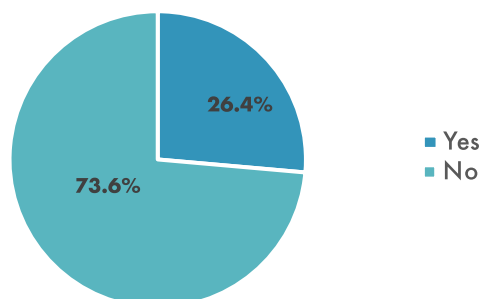


14. Have you witnessed vulgar or indecent communication over social media?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they have witnessed vulgar or indecent communication over social media, 66 respondents (26.4%) answered "yes," and 184 respondents (73.6%) answered "no." Some respondents believed that cyber extortion is a very consequential issue and there should be more spreading of awareness among people as it is increasing as a result of the economic crisis and the unemployment of many.

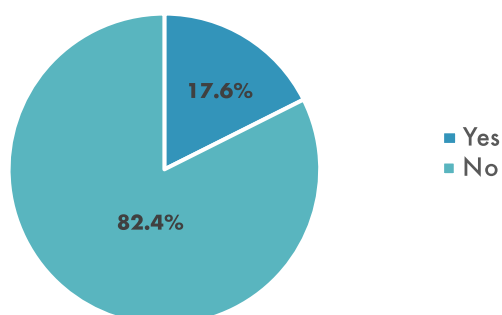
Figure 22. Percentage of women/girls who witnessed vulgar or indecent communication over social media

**15. Have you experienced limits to freedom of speech over social media?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they have experienced limits to freedom of speech over social media, 44 respondents (17.6%) answered "yes," and 206 respondents (82.4%) answered "no."

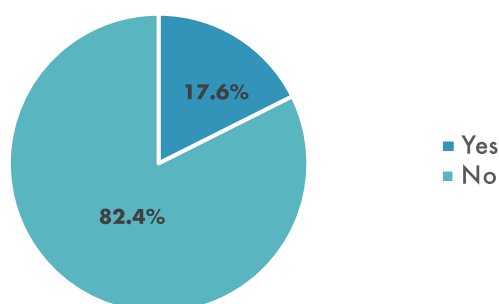
Figure 23. Percentage of women/girls who experienced limits to freedom of speech over social media

**16. Have you experienced humiliation or hate speech over social media?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they have experienced humiliation or hate speech over social media, 44 respondents (17.6%) answered "yes," and 206 respondents (82.4%) answered "no." Several respondents indicated that they received offensive pictures and texts that included curses and hate speech.

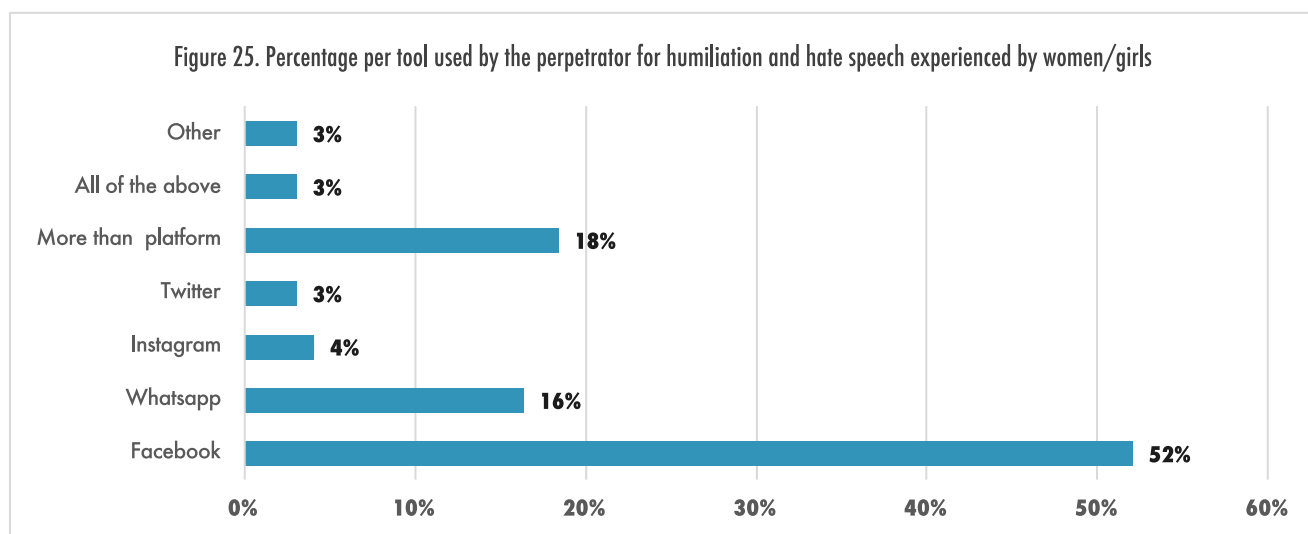
Figure 24. Percentage of women/girls who experienced humiliation or hate speech over social media



17. On which tool?

98 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

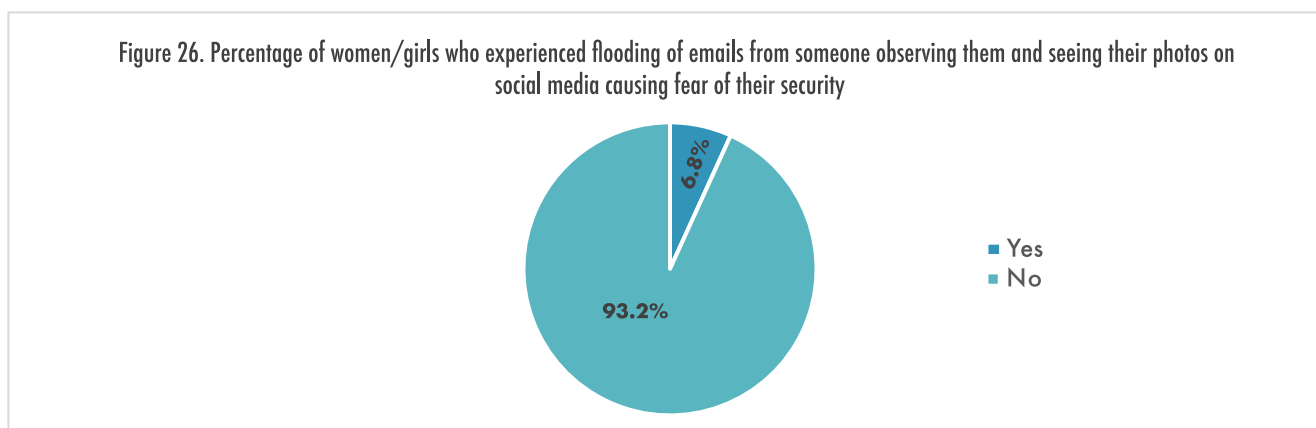
For those who answered "yes" on any of the previous questions, 51 respondents out of 98 (52%) stated that the tool used was "Facebook," 16 respondents out of 98 (16%) stated "Instagram," 4 respondents out of 98 (4%) stated "Twitter," 3 respondents out of 98 (3%) stated "WhatsApp," 18 respondents out of 98 (18%) answered "more than one platform," 3 respondents out of 98 (3%) answered "other," and 3 respondents (3%) answered "all of the above."



18. Have you ever experienced flooding of emails from someone observing you and seeing your photos on social media causing fear of your security?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

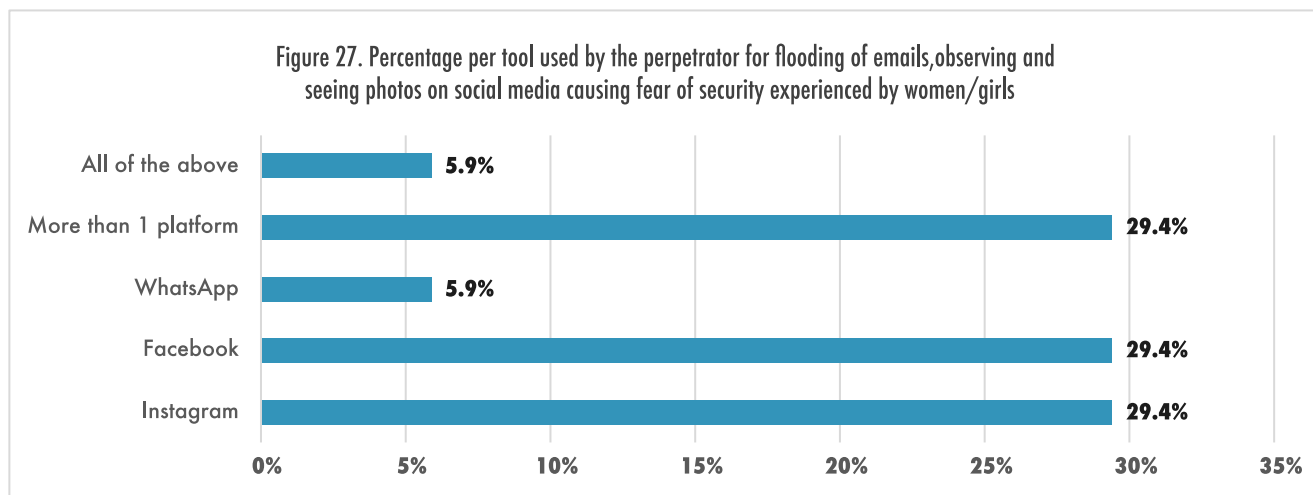
When asked if they have ever experienced flooding of emails from someone observing them, 17 respondents (6.8%) answered "yes," and 233 respondents (93.2%) answered "no."



19. On which tool?

17 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

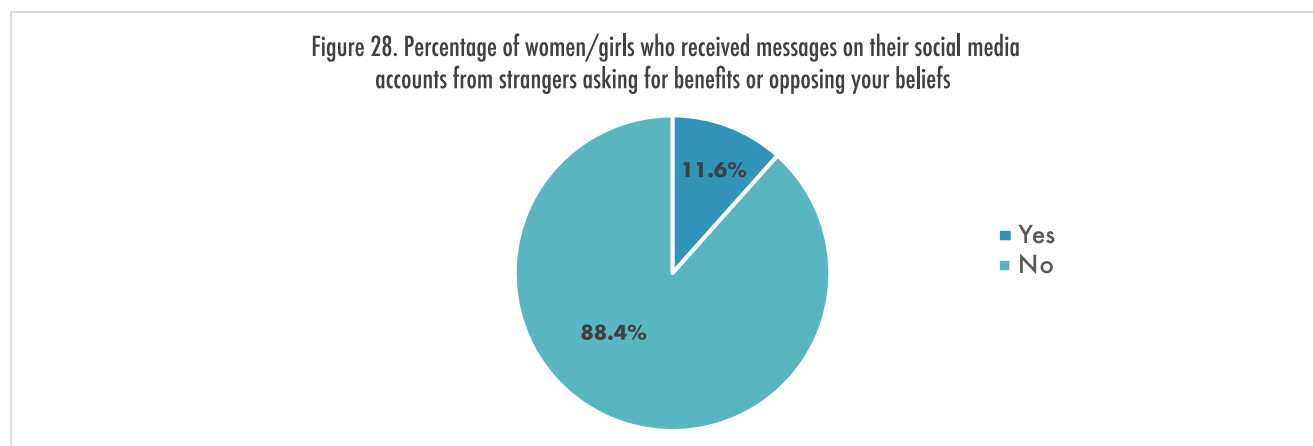
For those who answered "yes," 5 respondents out of 17 (29.4%) stated that it was on "Instagram," 5 respondents out of 17 (29.4%) stated "Facebook," 1 respondent out of 17 (5.9%) stated "WhatsApp," 5 respondents out of 17 (29.4%) answered "more than one platform," and 1 respondent out of 17 (5.9%) answered "all of the above."



20. Did you receive messages on your social media accounts from strangers asking for benefits or opposing your beliefs?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

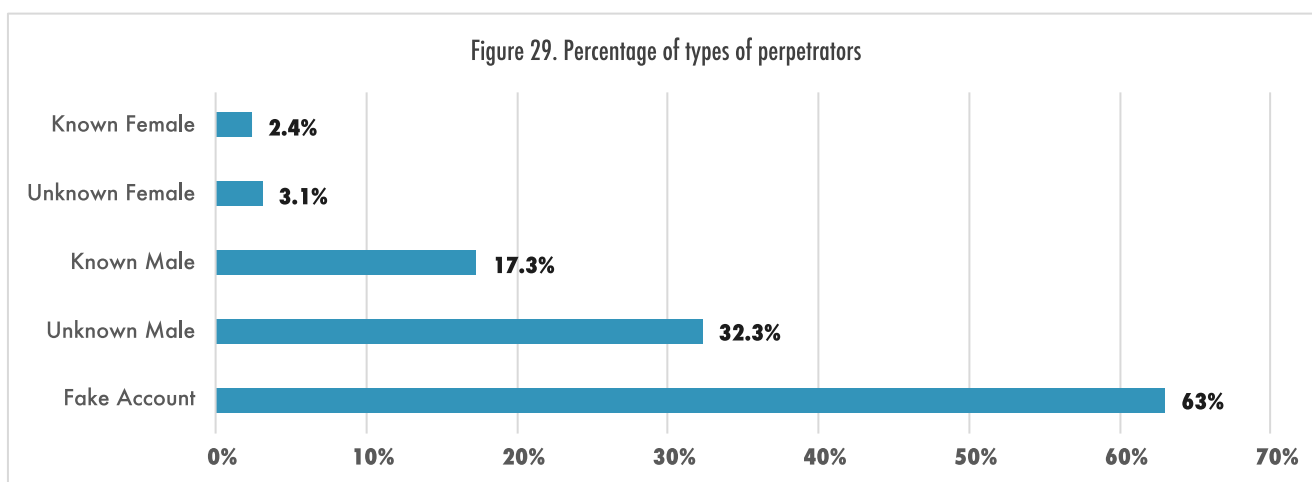
When asked whether they received messages on their social media accounts from strangers asking for benefits or opposing their beliefs, 29 respondents (11.6%) answered "yes," and 221 respondents (88.4%) answered "no." One of the respondents said that she is from Bekaa region where this type of violence happens a lot, but people are scared to talk about it or tell such stories. Most of the respondents told stories of their experiences or their friends. Other respondents were shy and did not share a lot of information, especially those from Bekaa region. They explained that they do not talk about such incidents because they are scared of scandals since society always blames women.



21. Who was/were the perpetrator(s)?

127 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

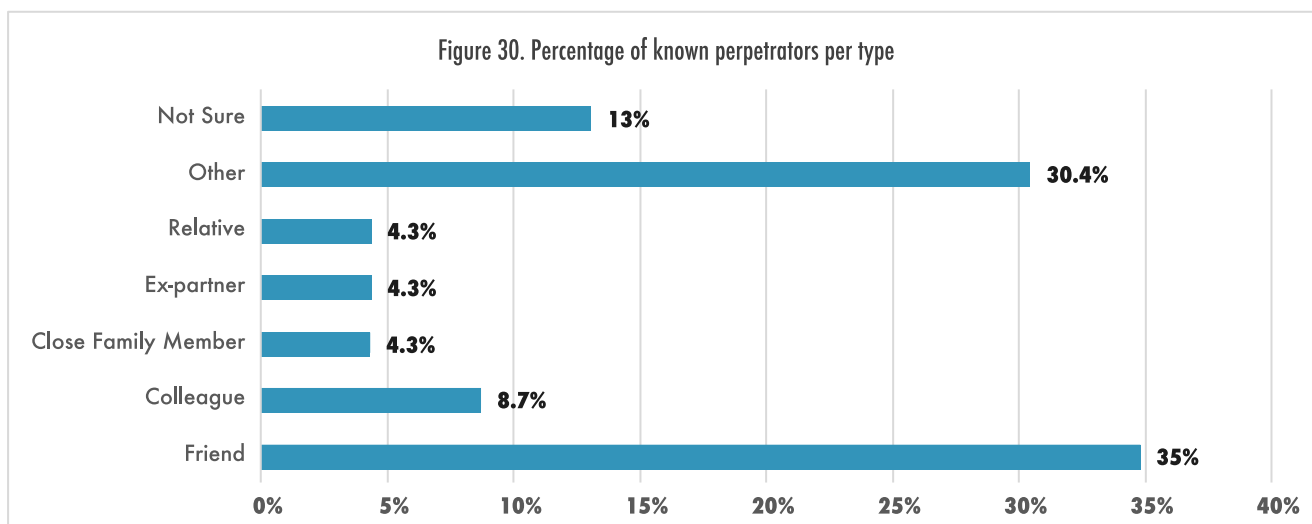
For those who answered “yes” on any of the previous questions, since respondents were able to provide more than one answer, 80 respondents out of 127 stated that the perpetrator was a fake account, 41 respondents out of 127 stated it was an unknown male, 22 respondents out of 127 stated it was a known male, 4 respondents out of 127 stated it was an unknown female, and 3 respondents out of 127 stated it was a known female.



22. How is he/she known?

23 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

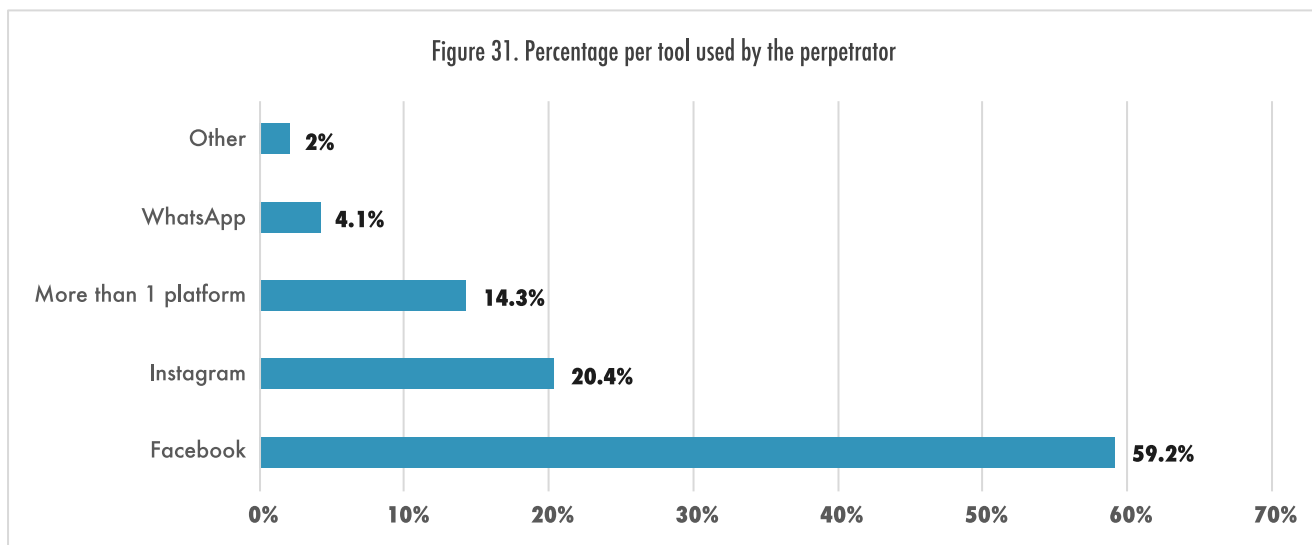
For those who stated it was a known male/female, 8 respondents out of 23 (35%) stated it was a friend, 2 respondents out of 23 (8.7%) stated it was a colleague/coworker, 1 respondent out of 23 (4.3%) stated it was a close family member, 1 respondent out of 23 (4.3%) stated it was an ex-partner, 1 respondent out of 23 (4.3%) stated it was a relative, 7 respondents out of 23 (30.4%) answered “other,” and 3 respondents out of 23 (13%) stated that they do not know/are not sure.



23. What was the used tool?

49 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

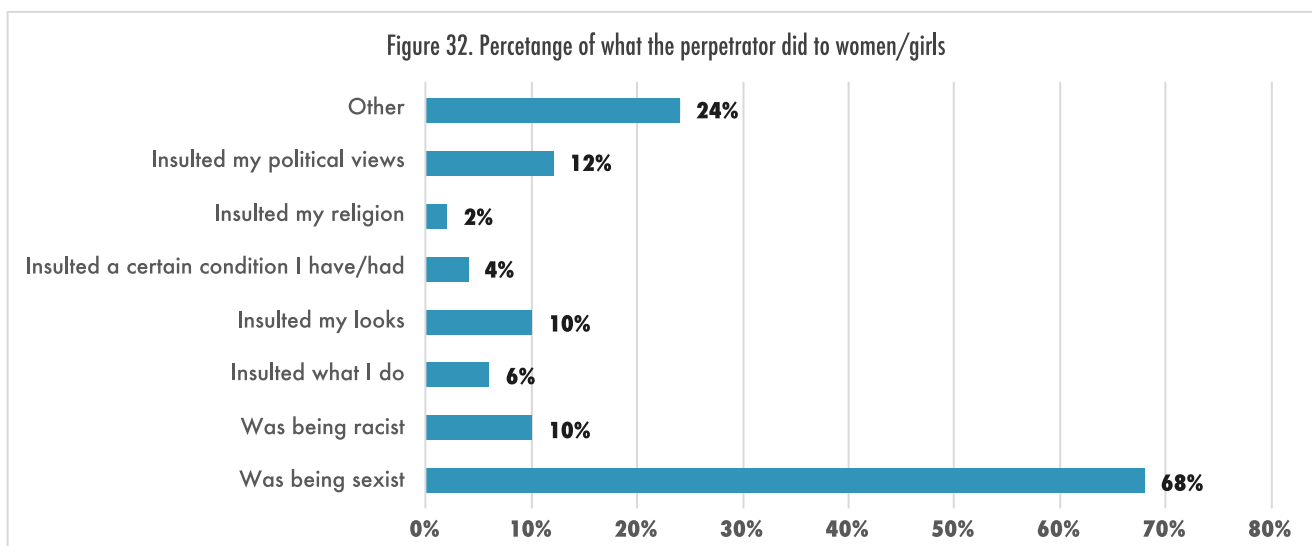
When asked what the used tool was, 29 respondents out of 49 (59.2%) stated it was "Facebook," 10 respondents out of 49 (20.4%) stated it was "Instagram," 2 respondents out of 49 (4.1%) stated "WhatsApp," 7 respondents out of 49 (14.3%) stated "more than one platform," and 1 respondent out of 49 (2%) answered "other."



24. What did the perpetrator do?

50 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked what the perpetrator did, provided that respondents had the option to choose more than one answer, 34 respondents out of 50 (68%) answered "was sexist," 6 respondents out of 50 (12%) answered "insulted my political views," 5 respondents out of 50 (10%) answered "insulted the way I look," 5 respondents out of 50 answered "was racist," 3 respondents out of 50 answered "insulted what I do," 2 respondents out of 50 answered "insulted a certain condition I have/had," 1 respondent out of 50 answered "insulted my religion," and 12 respondents out of 50 answered "other."

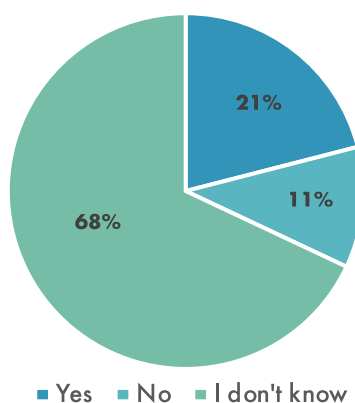


25. Do you know if the perpetrator did this to multiple victims?

91 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked if they know whether the perpetrator did this to multiple victims, 19 respondents out of 91 (21%) answered "yes," 10 respondents out of 91 (11%) answered "no," and 62 respondents out of 91 (68%) answered "I don't know."

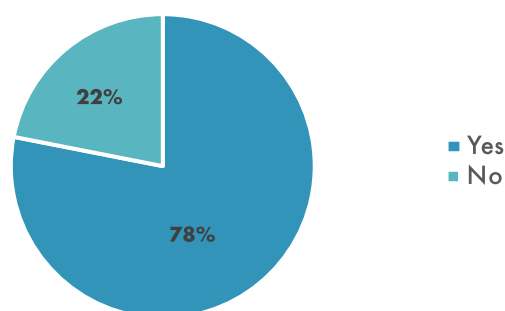
Figure 33. Percentage of women/girls who knew that the perpetrator did this to multiple victims

**26. Were you aware of the cyber extortion in the beginning?**

51 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they were aware of the cyber extortion in the beginning, 40 respondents out of 51 (78%) answered "yes," whereas 11 respondents out of 51 (22%) answered "no."

Figure 34. Percentage of women/girls who were aware of cyber extortion before the act

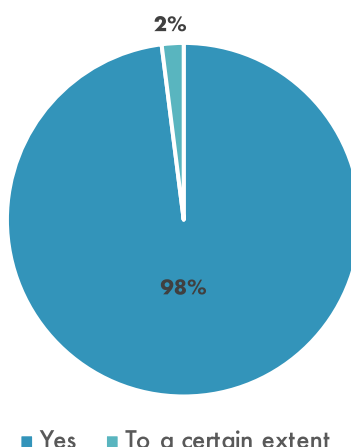
**27. Did you become aware of the cyber extortion?**

49 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

This response highlights a significant increase in the level of awareness – from 22% (50 respondents) prior to women/girls experiencing cyber extortion to only 2% or only 1 respondent who gained knowledge to a certain

extent about this violence as a result of their experience. When asked whether or not they became aware of the cyber extortion, 48 respondents out of 49 (98%) answered "yes," and 1 respondent out of 49 (2%) answered "to a certain extent."

Figure 35. Percentage of women/girls who became aware of cyber extortion after the act

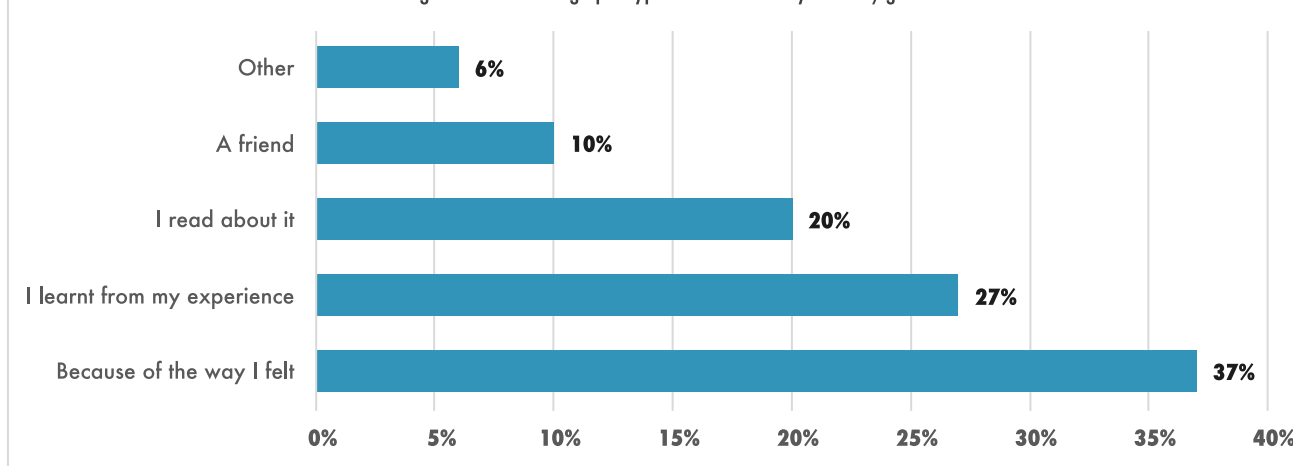


28. How did you become aware?

49 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

While respondents became aware from their experience, from friends or read about it, the way they felt was significantly the highest percentage of 36.7%. Given the stigma of women and girls, they feel less comfortable and very sensitive to any suspicious act, which would effortlessly expose their anger and discomfort to the situation they are in or what they are going through. When asked how they became aware, 18 respondents out of 49 (37%) answered "because of the message/the way I felt," 13 respondents out of 49 (27%) answered "I learnt from my experience," 10 respondents out of 49 (20%) answered "I read about it," 5 respondents out of 49 (10%) answered "a friend," and 3 respondents out of 49 (6%) answered "other."

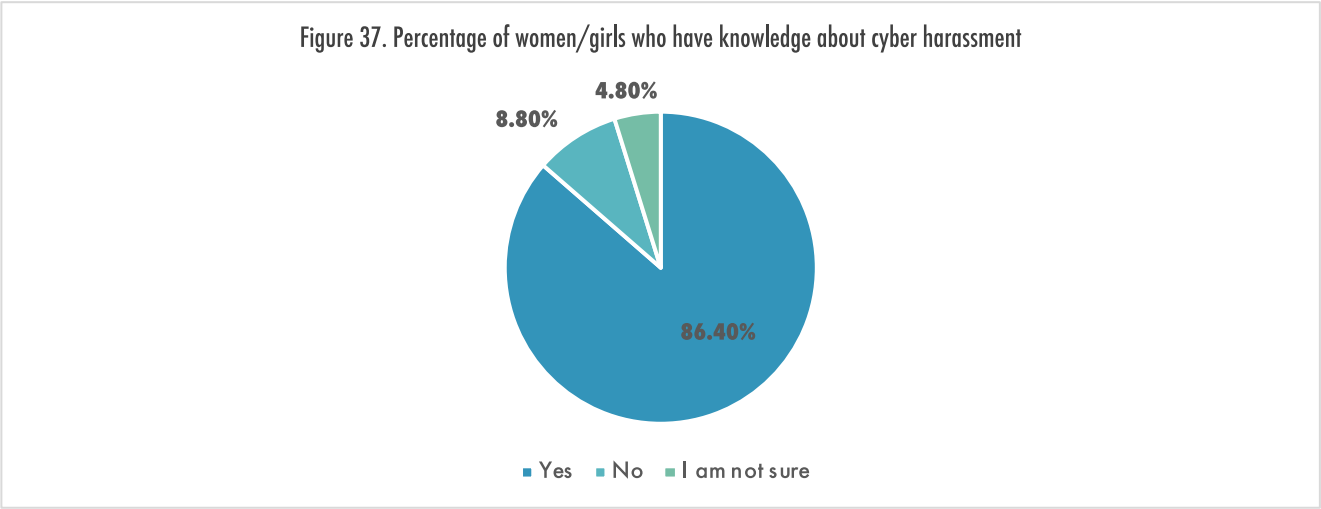
Figure 36. Percentage per type of awareness by women/girls



6. Knowledge of Cyber Harassment

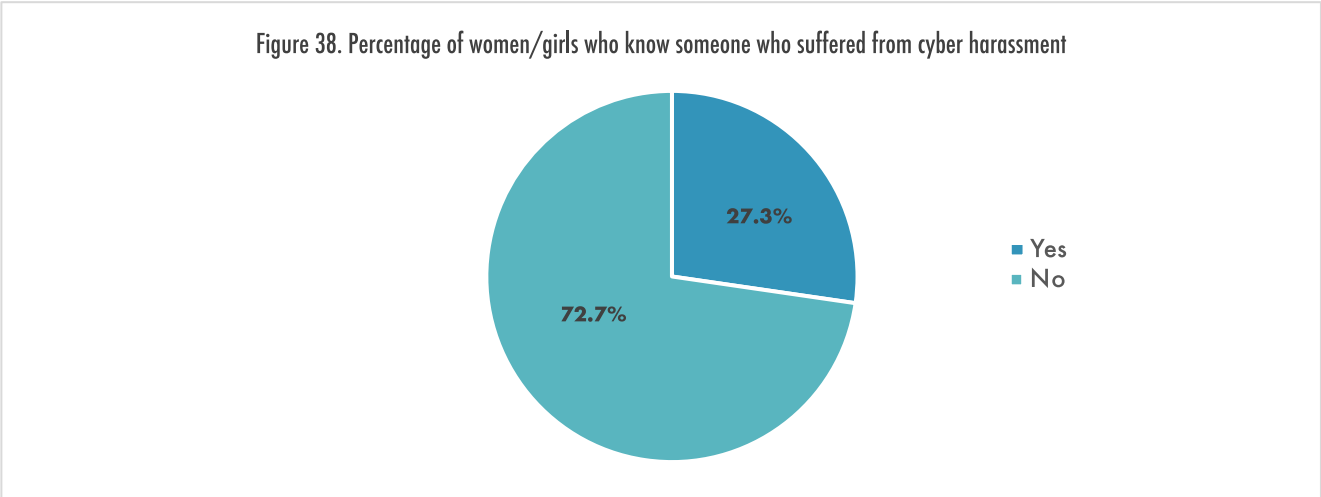
29. Do you know what cyber harassment is?
250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

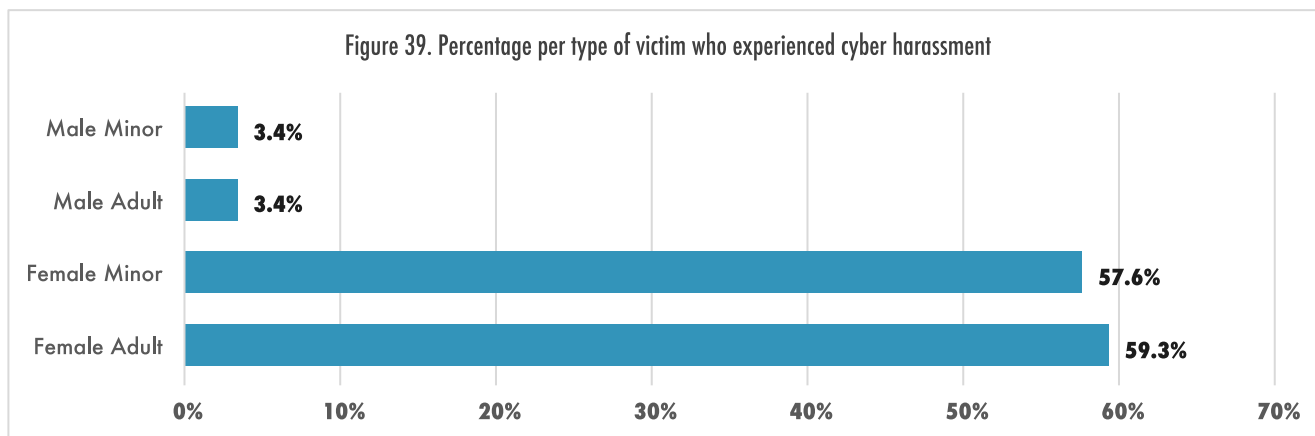
The vast majority of respondents showed a positive knowledge and awareness about cyber harassment. When asked whether or not they know what cyber harassment is, 216 respondents (86.4%) answered “yes,” 22 respondents (8.8%) answered “no,” and 12 respondents (4.8%) answered “I am not sure.”



30. Did you know anyone who suffered from cyber harassment?
216 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

NoYesFigure 38. Percentage of women/girls who know someone who suffered from cyber harassment72.7%27.3%
respondents (27.3%) answered “yes,” and 157 respondents (72.7%) answered “no.” For those who answered “yes,” since respondents were given the choice to provide more than one answer, 35 respondents out of 59 stated that the person was a female adult, 34 respondents out of 59 stated that it was a female minor, whereas 2 respondents out of 59 stated that it was a male adult, and 2 respondents out of 59 stated that it was a male minor.

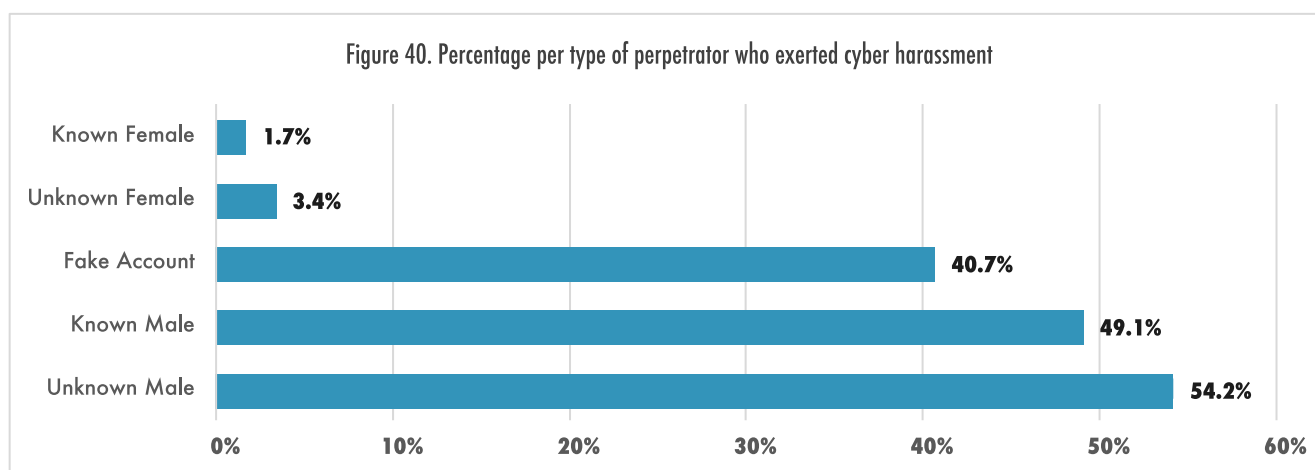




31. Who was/were the perpetrator(s)?

59 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

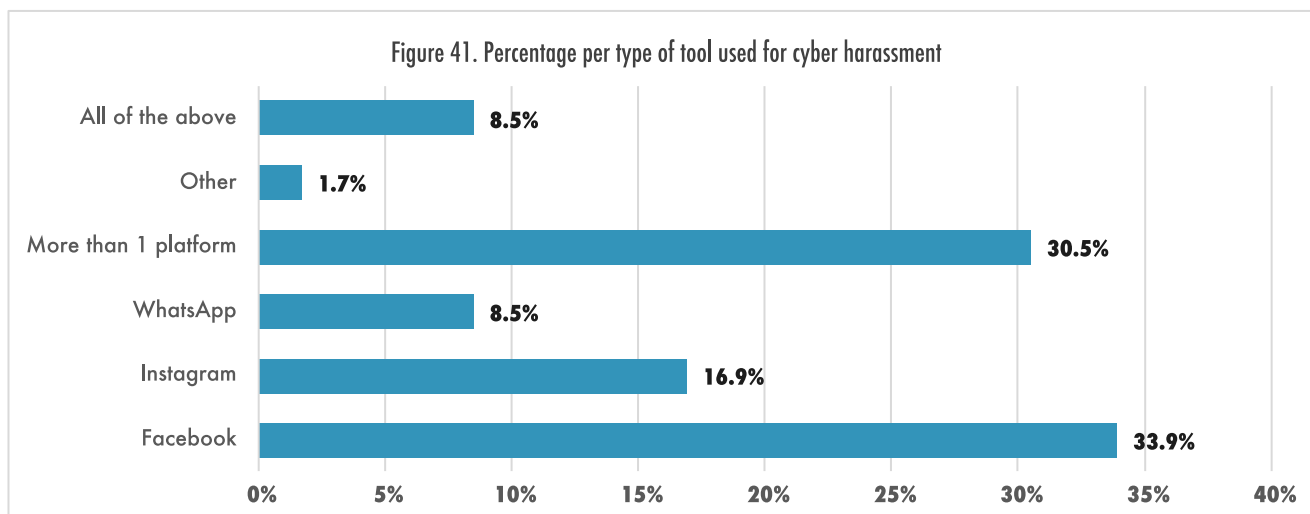
Close to 95% of the respondents said that the perpetrator was either a male (known or unknown) or a fake account, with less than 5% from females. At the rate of 95% as women or girls being the victim, it is more likely that males are perpetrators than females. Respondents were able to choose more than one option when asked who the perpetrator was, 32 respondents out of 59 stated it was an unknown male, 29 respondents out of 59 stated it was a known male, 24 respondents out of 59 stated it was a fake account, whereas 2 respondents out of 59 stated it was an unknown female, and 1 respondent out of 59 stated it was a known female.



32. What was the used tool?

59 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

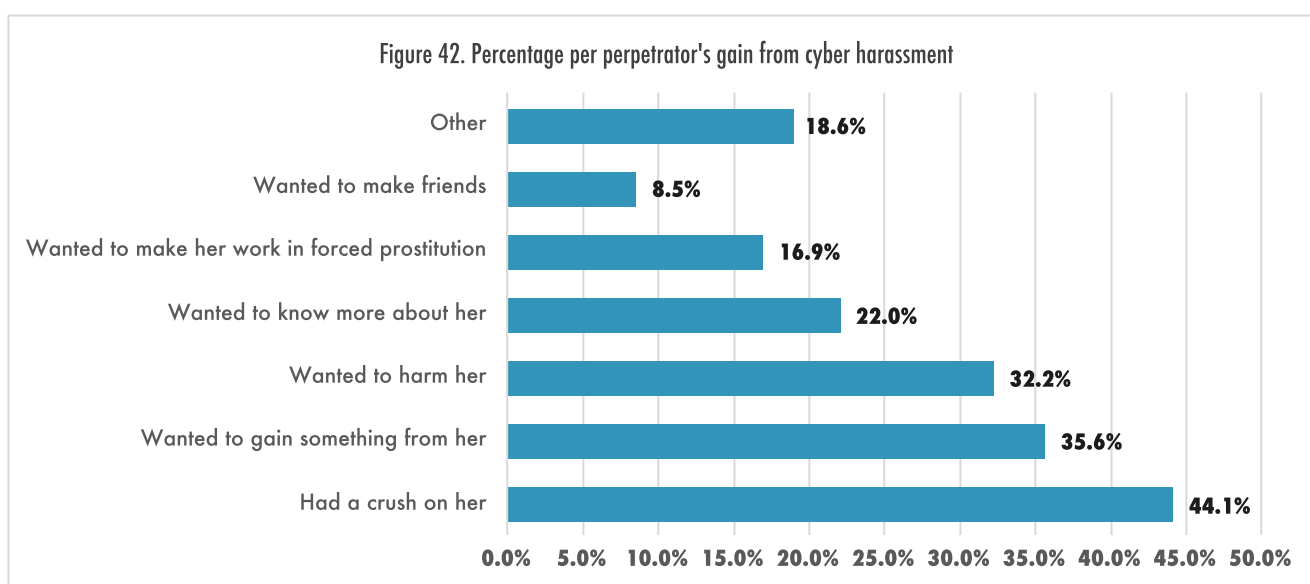
Similar to cyber extortion, the highest percentage of platform commonly used is Facebook for cyber harassment with 33.9%. When asked what the used tool was, 20 respondents out of 59 (33.9%) stated it was "Facebook," 10 respondents out of 59 (16.9%) stated "Instagram," 5 respondents out of 59 (8.5%) stated "WhatsApp," 18 respondents out of 59 (30.5%) stated "more than one platform," 1 respondent out of 59 (1.7%) stated "other," and 5 respondents out of 59 (8.5%) stated "all of the above."



33. What did the perpetrator want in return?

59 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked what the perpetrator wanted in return, the 59 respondents answered as follows choosing more than one option: 26 respondents (44.1%) answered "had a crush on him/her," 21 respondents (35.6%) answered "wanted to gain something from him/her," 19 respondents (32.2%) answered "wanted to harm him/her," 13 respondents (22%) answered "wanted to know more about him/her," 10 respondents (16.9%) answered "wanted to make him/her work in forced prostitution," 5 respondents (8.5%) answered "wanted to be friends," and 11 respondents (18.6%) answered "other."



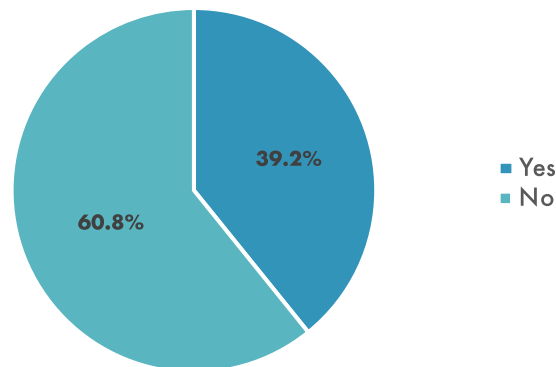
7. Women/Girls' Personal Experience of Cyber Harassment

34. Did you suffer from cyber harassment?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they themselves suffered from cyber harassment, 98 respondents (39.2%) answered "yes," and 152 respondents (60.8%) answered "no."

Figure 43. Percentage of women/girls who suffered from sexual harassment

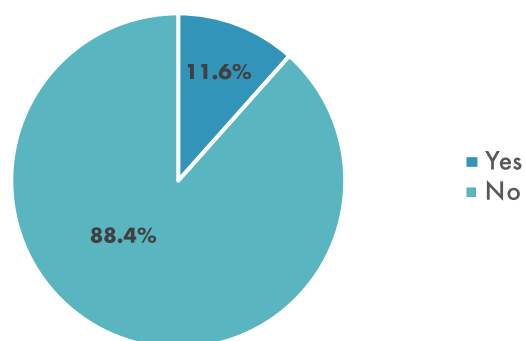


35. Have you experienced aggressive or unethical behaviors over social media?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Only 29 respondents (11.6%) experienced aggressive or unethical behaviours over social media, and 221 respondents (88.4%) did not.

Figure 44. Percentage of women/girls who experienced aggressive or unethical behaviors over social media

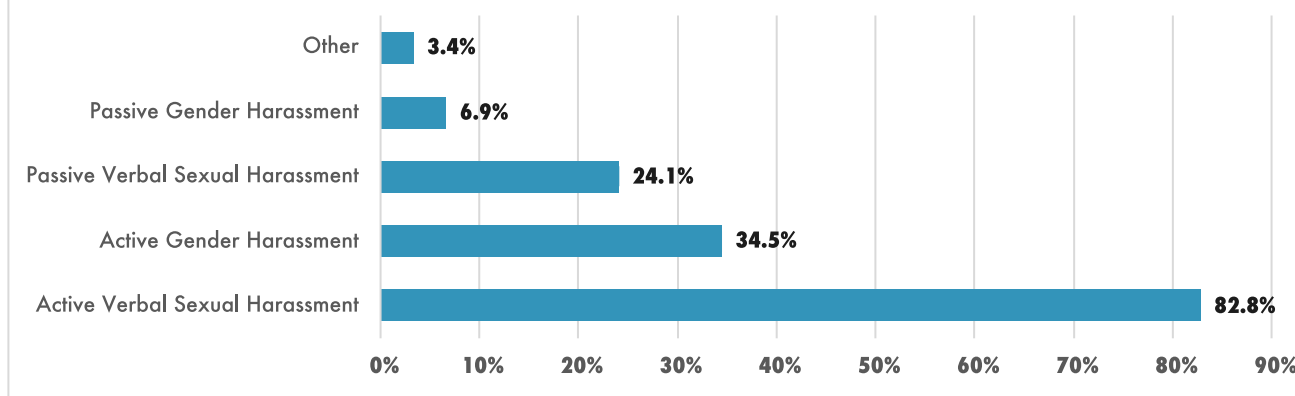


36. What type of behavior?

29 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Of the 29 respondents who stated that they experienced aggressive or unethical behaviours over social media, since respondents were given the chance to provide multiple answers to the question, 24 respondents stated there was "active verbal sexual harassment," 10 respondents stated there was "active gender harassment," 7 respondents stated there was "passive verbal sexual harassment," 2 respondents stated there was "passive gender harassment," and 1 respondent answered "other."

Figure 45. Percentage per type of behaviour exerted towards women and girls

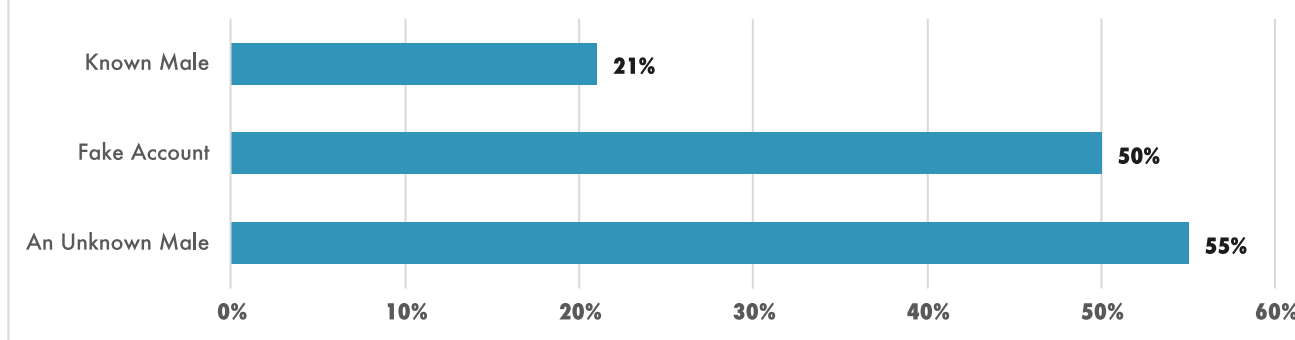


37. Who was the perpetrator?

100 out of 250 respondents answered this question. (150 were without data.)

When asked who the perpetrator was, out of 100 respondents, provided that respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 55 respondents stated that it was an unknown male, 50 respondents stated that it was a fake account, and 21 respondents stated that it was a known male.

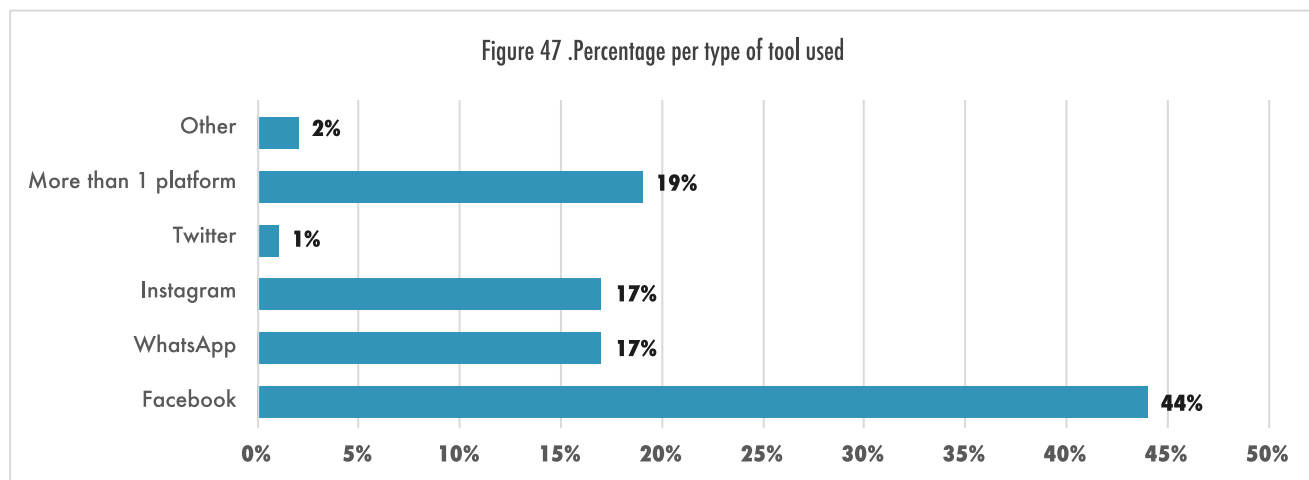
Figure 46 .Percentage per type of perpetrator



38. What was the used tool?

100 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

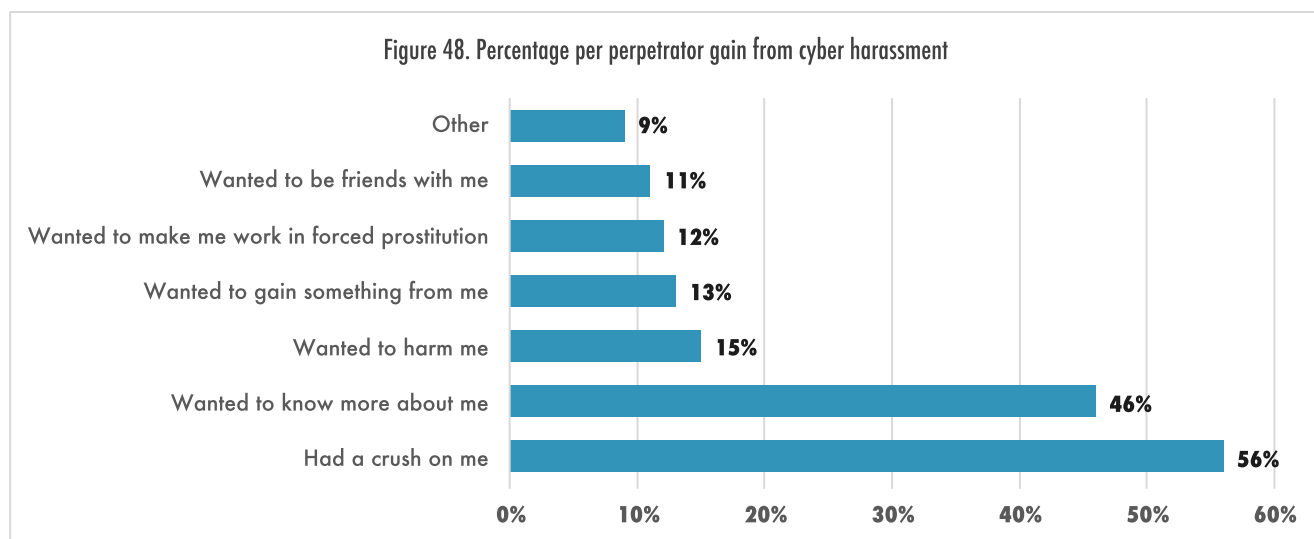
When asked what the used tool was, out of 100 respondents, 44 respondents (44%) answered "Facebook," 17 respondents (17%) answered "WhatsApp," 17 respondents (17%) answered "Instagram," 1 respondent (1%) answered "Twitter," 19 respondents (19%) answered "more than one platform," and 2 respondents (2%) answered "other."



39. What did the perpetrator want in return?

100 out of 250 respondents answered this question. (150 were without data.)

Respondents were able to provide more than one answer when asked what the perpetrator wanted in return, out of 100 respondents, 56 respondents answered "had a crush on me," 46 respondents answered "wanted to know more about me," 15 respondents answered "wanted to harm me," 13 respondents answered "wanted to gain something from me," 12 respondents answered "wanted to make me work in forced prostitution," 11 respondents answered "wanted to be friends with me," and 9 respondents answered "other."

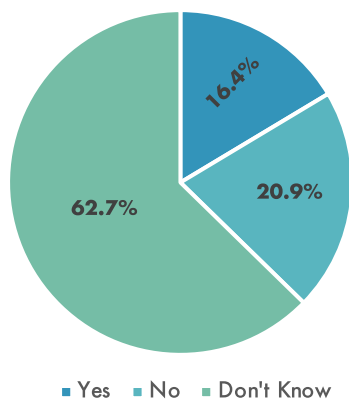


40. Do you know if the perpetrator did this to multiple victims?

225 out of 250 respondents answered this question. (25 were without data.)

When asked whether the perpetrator did this to multiple victims, 37 respondents out of 225 (16.4%) answered "yes," 47 respondents out of 225 (20.9%) answered "no," and 141 respondents out of 225 (62.7%) answered "I don't know."

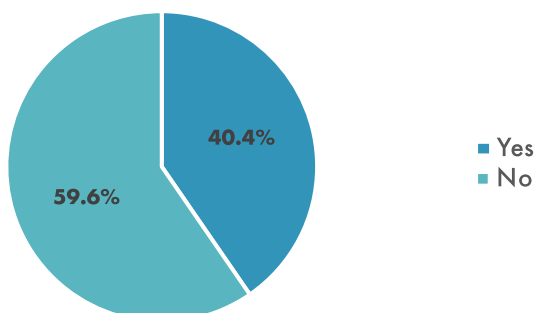
Figure 49. Percentage of women/girls who knew that the perpetrator exerted sexual harassment on multiple victims

**41. Have you experienced inappropriate images on screen over social media?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they have experienced inappropriate images on screen over social media, 101 respondents (40.4%) answered "yes," and 149 respondents (59.6%) answered "no."

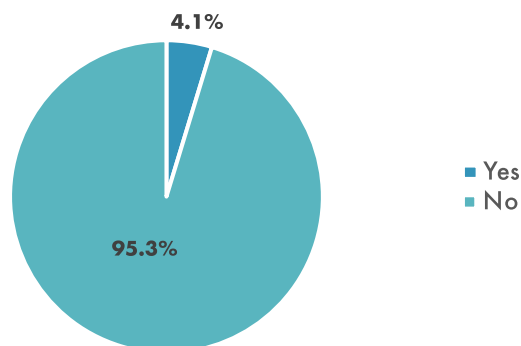
Figure 50. Percentage of women/girls who experienced inappropriate images on screen over social media

**42. Have you witnessed pornographic and/or offensive pictures and videos through emails at the workplace?**

246 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they have witnessed pornographic and/or offensive pictures and videos through emails at the workplace, 10 respondents out of 246 (4.1%) answered "yes," and 236 respondents out of 246 (95.3%) answered "no." It should be noted that those who did not answer do not work.

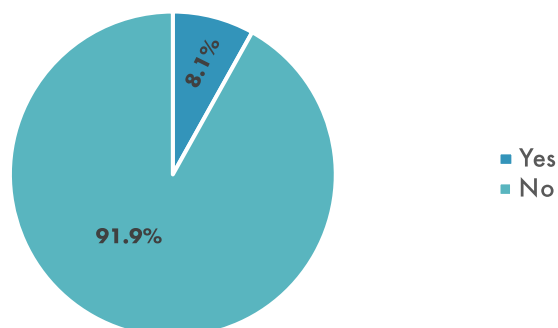
Figure 51. Percentage of women/girls who experienced inappropriate images on screen over social media

**43. Have you experienced sexual jokes at the workplace?**

246 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they have experienced sexual jokes at the workplace, 20 respondents out of 246 (8.1%) answered "yes," and 226 respondents out of 246 (91.9%) answered "no."

Figure 52. Percentage of women/girls who experienced sexual jokes at the workplace

**44. Were you aware of the cyber harassment at the beginning?**

149 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

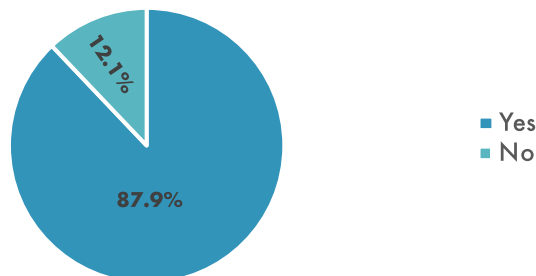
For the 149 respondents who stated that they were exposed to cyber harassment, when asked whether they were aware of the cyber harassment at the beginning, 131 respondents (87.9%) answered "yes," whereas 18 respondents (12.1%) answered "no."



A respondent noted: "We should talk about these situations more and provide awareness sessions in schools, and share laws on social media platforms for all teenagers to reach it easily, and to know how they can get help, or report for any such cases. There should be more awareness sessions and campaigns in schools against cyber extortion and cyber harassment because not all teenagers are conscious of such violence."



Figure 53. Percentage of women/girls who were aware of the cyber harassment at the beginning

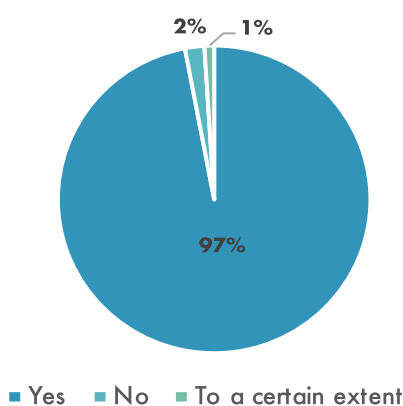


45. Did you become aware of the cyber harassment?

140 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they became aware of the cyber harassment, 136 respondents out of 140 (97%) answered "yes," 3 respondents out of 140 (2%) answered "no," and 1 respondent out of 140 (1%) answered "to a certain extent."

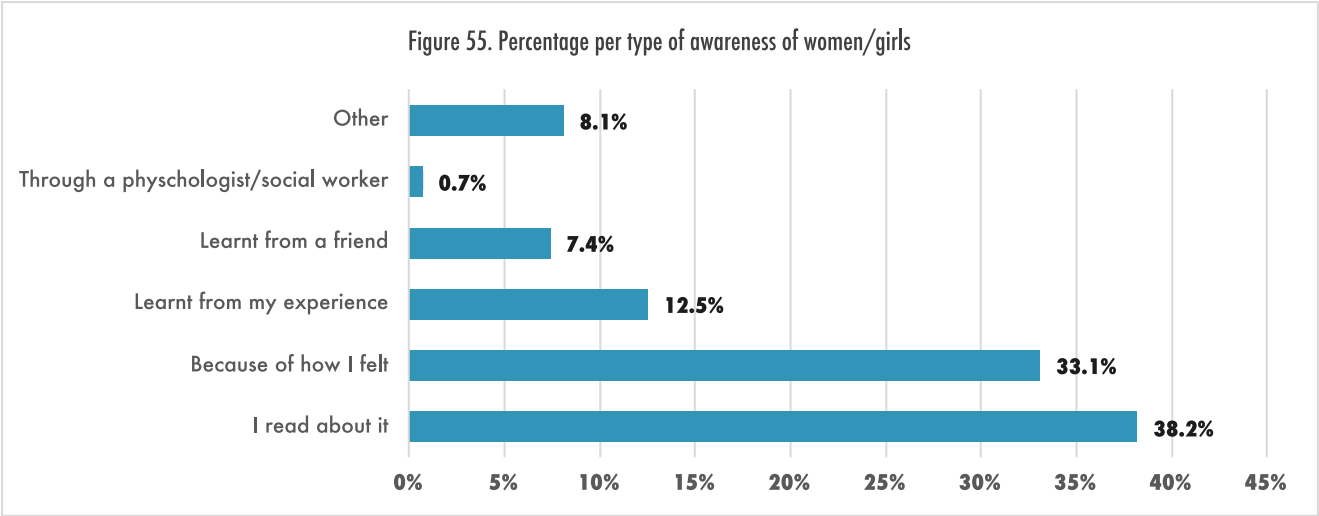
Figure 54. Percentage of women/girls who became aware of the cyber harassment act



46. How did you become aware?

136 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

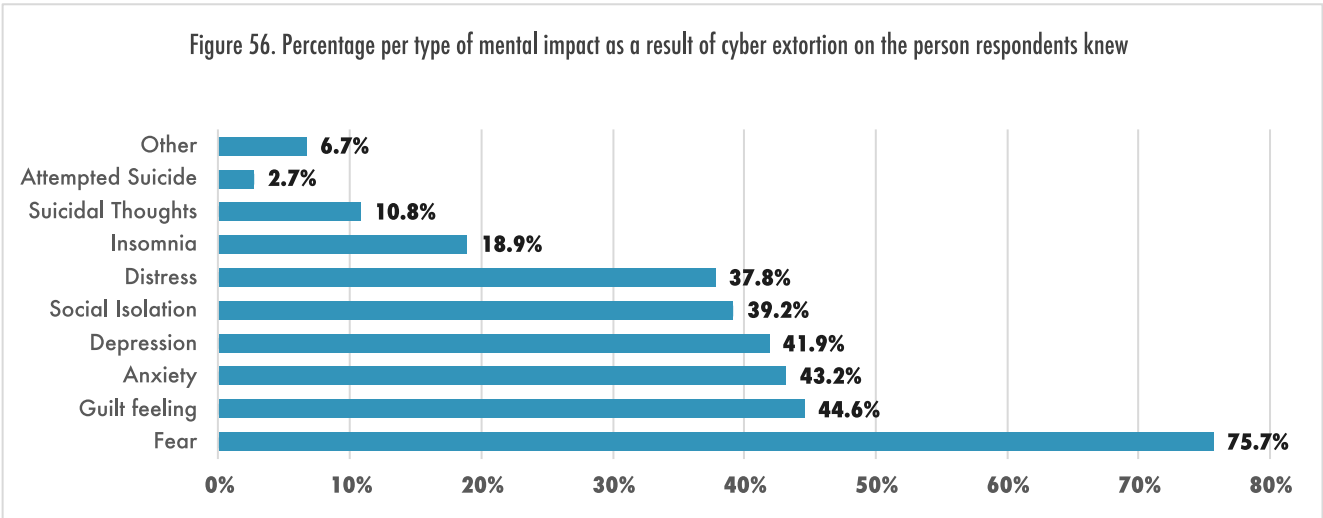
When asked how they became aware, 52 respondents out of 136 (38.2%) answered "I read about it," 45 respondents out of 136 (33.1%) answered "because of the message/how I felt," 17 respondents out of 136 (12.5%) answered "I learnt from my experience," 10 respondents out of 136 (7.4%) answered "a friend," 1 respondent out of 136 (0.7%) answered "through a psychologist/social worker," and 11 respondents out of 136 (8.1%) answered "other."



8. Impact on Mental Health

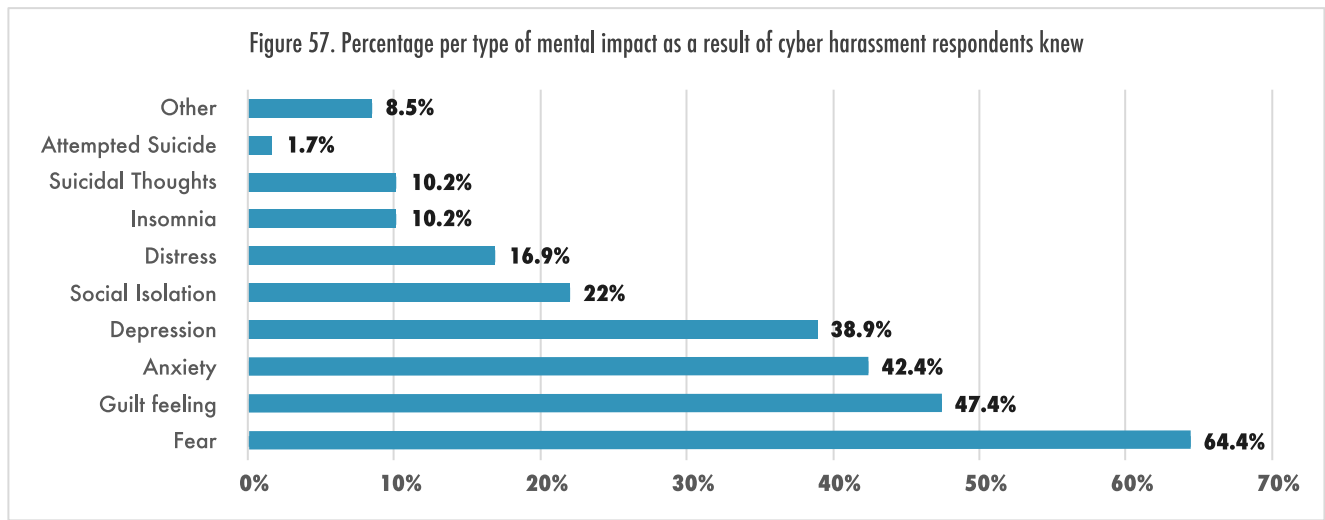
47. What was the impact of cyber extortion on the person you know?
74 out of 250 respondents answered this question. (176 were without data.)

Of the 74 women and girls who stated that they knew a person exposed to cyber extortion, respondents were able to choose more than one answer when asked about the impact on the person they know, of which 56 respondents answered “fear,” 33 respondents answered “guilt feeling,” 32 respondents answered “anxiety,” 31 respondents answered “depression,” 29 respondents answered “social isolation,” 28 respondents answered “distress,” 14 respondents answered “insomnia,” 8 respondents answered “suicidal thoughts,” 2 respondents answered “attempted suicide,” and 5 respondents answered “other.”



48. What was the impact of cyber harassment on the person you know?
59 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

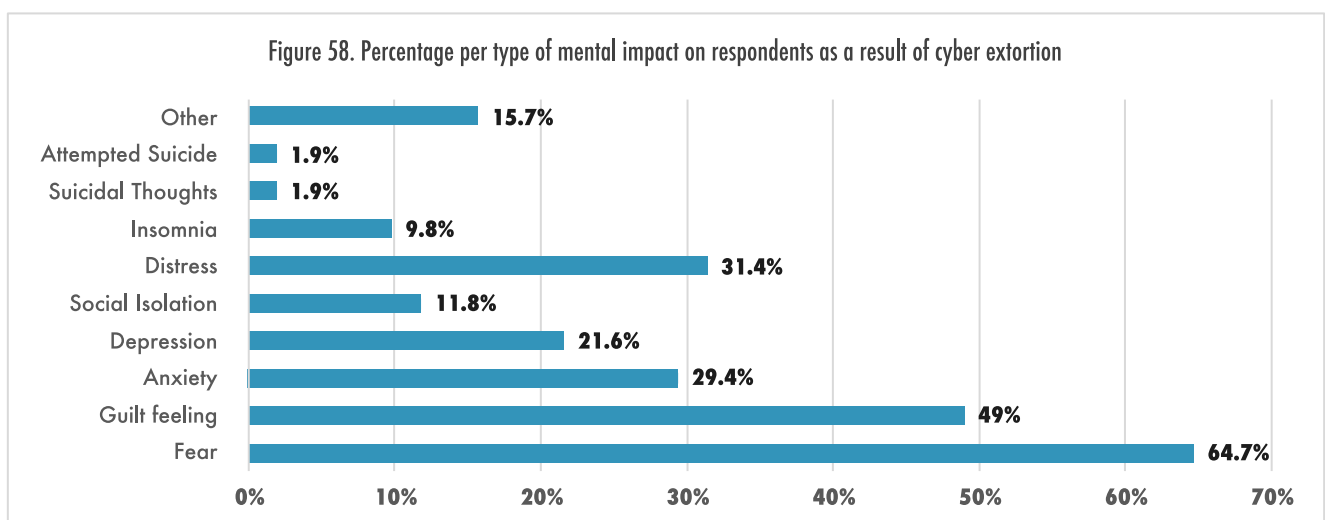
Of the 59 women and girls who stated that they knew a person exposed to cyber harassment, respondents were able to choose more than one answer when asked about the impact on the person they know, 38 respondents answered "fear," 28 respondents answered "guilt feeling," 25 respondents answered "anxiety," 23 respondents answered "depression," 13 respondents answered "social isolation," 10 respondents answered "distress," 6 respondents answered "suicidal thoughts," 6 respondents answered "insomnia," 1 respondent answered "attempted suicide," and 5 respondents answered "other."



49. What was the impact of cyber extortion on you?

51 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

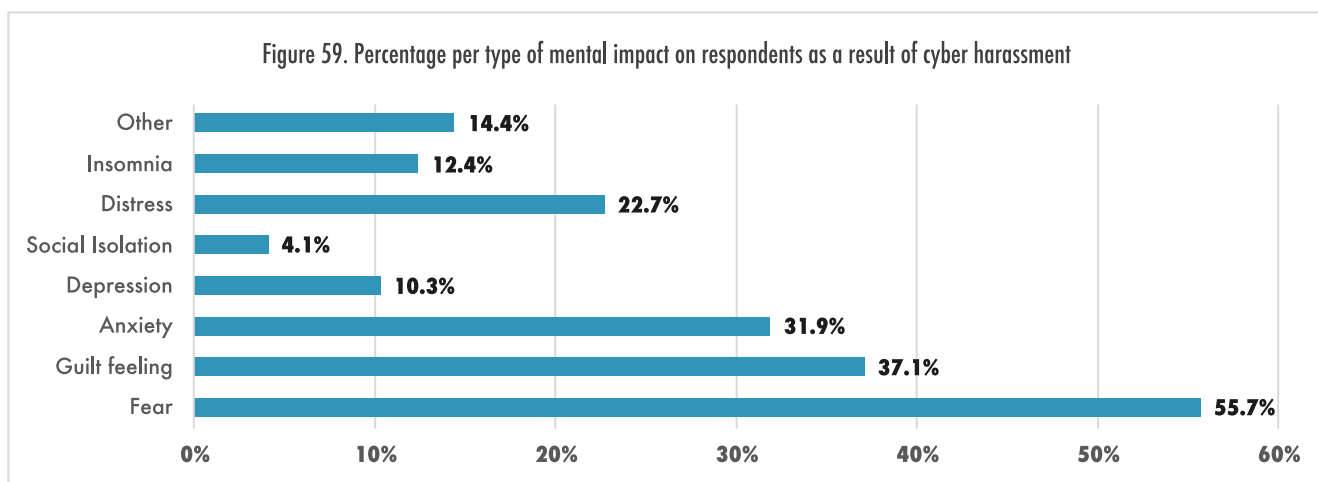
Of the 51 respondents who stated that they were exposed to cyber extortion, when asked about the impact of cyber extortion on them, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 33 respondents answered "fear," 25 respondents answered "guilt feeling," 16 respondents answered "distress," 15 respondents answered "anxiety," 11 respondents answered "depression," 6 respondents answered "social isolation," 5 respondents answered "insomnia," 1 respondent answered "suicidal thoughts," 1 respondent answered "attempted suicide," and 8 respondents answered "other."



50. What was the impact of cyber harassment on you?

97 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

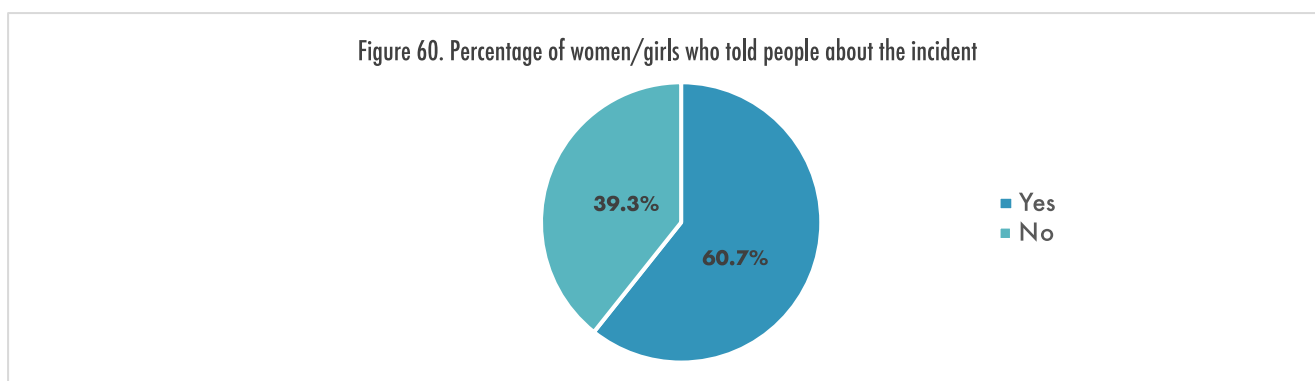
Of the 97 respondents who stated that they were exposed to cyber harassment, when asked about the impact of cyber harassment on them, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 54 respondents answered "fear," 36 respondents answered "anxiety," 31 respondents answered "guilt feeling," 22 respondents answered "distress," 12 respondents answered "insomnia," 10 respondents answered "depression," 4 respondents answered "social isolation," and 14 respondents answered "other."



51. Did you tell anyone about the incident?

112 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

More than half of the 112 respondents who experienced cyber harassment – 68 respondents (60.7%), told someone about the incident, whereas 44 respondents (39.3%) did not.

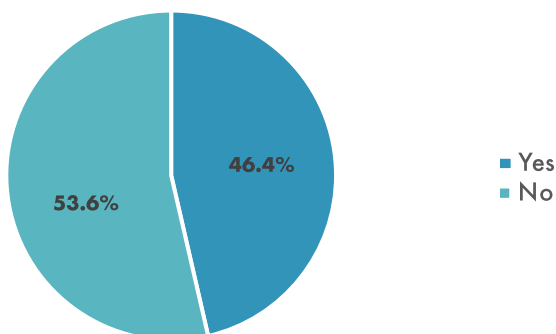


52. Did you report it?

112 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The below figure shows that only 52 respondents out of 112 (46.4%) reported the incident, whereas 60 respondents out of 112 (53.6%) did not. Respondents highlighted several reasons for not reporting, however, the major reasons were related to lack of knowledge on such issues and laws. Other respondents are accustomed to these incidents and blocking accounts when they encounter such issues.

Figure 61. Percentage of women/girls who reported the incident

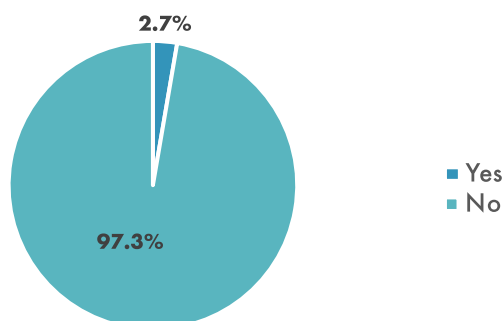


53. Did you see a psychiatrist/psychologist?

113 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

A very low percentage of respondents (only 3 respondents out of 113 (2.7%)) saw a psychiatrist/psychologist, while 110 respondents out of 113 (97.3%) did not seek help from a psychiatrist/psychologist. As reported by the respondents, the main reasons why a high percentage of women do not go to psychologists are: money issues, scared from the community, think they are not crazy, and they do not believe that mental health issues are a real disease. An additional barrier that prevents women from accessing or requesting mental health help is the fear from the partner.

Figure 62. Percentage of women/girls who sought help from a psychiatrist/psychologist



A respondent noted: "I know a female who was extorted on her pictures. The male published these pictures on Facebook. The situation was resolved in the court and caused the girl social isolation after she felt self-guilty."



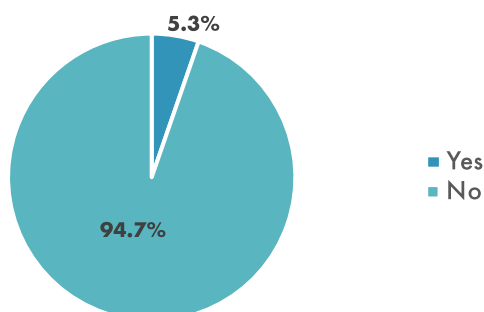
54. Did you need to see a psychiatrist/psychologist?

113 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

A very low percentage thought of seeking help from a psychiatrist/psychologist and this was mostly related to financial constraints, especially within the overwhelming economic crisis on all levels in Lebanon. People in Lebanon pay for mental healthcare services out of their pocket and access the private sector as well as NGOs to get the necessary type of services. The reliance on out-of-pocket expenditure restricts individuals from obtaining the needed mental healthcare. Seeking a psychiatrist/psychologist was not considered as a priority. Given the financial crisis Lebanon is passing through, people are less likely to prioritize their mental health over their daily expenses. When asked if they needed to see a psychiatrist/psychologist, 6 respondents out of 113 (5.3%) answered "yes," and 107 respondents out of 113 (94.7%) answered "no." Nevertheless, when asked whether they needed to see a psychiatrist/psychologist but could not afford to pay, 4 respondents out of 113 (3.5%) answered "yes," and 109 respondents out of 113 (96.5%) answered "no." When asked whether they need to see a psychiatrist/psychologist but are scared to talk about it, 2 respondents out of 113 (1.7%) answered "yes," and 111 respondents out of 113 (98.2%) answered "no."

In extreme cases, cyber extortion and cyber harassment can lead to people taking their own lives. But these can be overcome and people can regain their confidence and health.

Figure 63. Percentage of women/girls who needed to seek help from a psychiatrist/psychologist



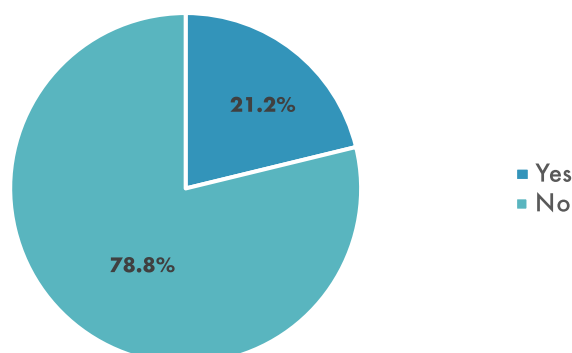
9. Reporting Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment

55. Do you know about the law of Information Technology?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents (78.8%) had stated that they did not know about the "Law of electronic transactions and data protection law" in Lebanon which protects their profiles and personal privacy on social media platforms. When asked whether or not they know about the law of information, 53 respondents (21.2%) answered "yes," whereas 197 respondents (78.8%) answered "no." They stressed that there should be more awareness on existing laws. Another significant reason is that several respondents do not trust the legal system in Lebanon which is biased and would not lead to the punishment of perpetrator.

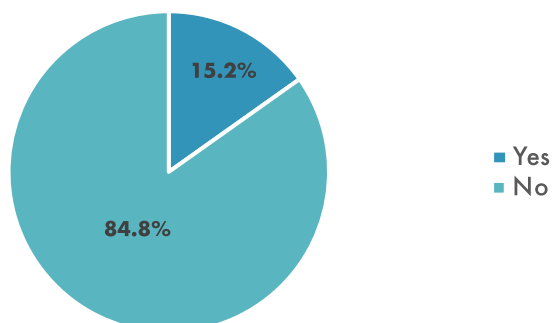
Figure 64. Percentage of women/girls who know about the law of information

**56. Do you know any law in Lebanon related to cyber extortion?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents showed negative awareness of laws related to cyber extortion. A very low percentage of respondents (15.2%) know laws related to cyber extortion, whereas 212 respondents (84.8%) do not know.

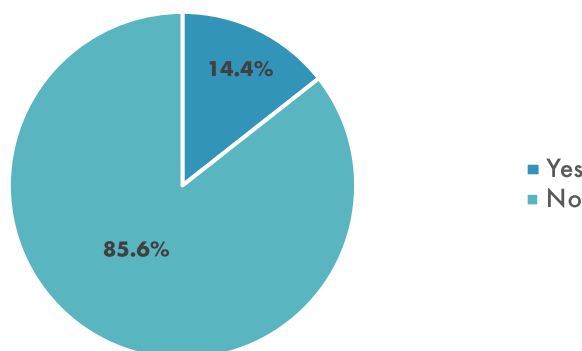
Figure 65. Percentage of women/girls who know any law related to cyber extortion

**57. Do you know any law in Lebanon related to cyber harassment?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Only 14.4% of the respondents knew about laws related to cyber harassment, whereas the majority of respondents (n=214; 85.6%) did not know which emphasized again negative awareness of the existing laws. This is mainly because the law of sexual harassment, that includes online words, actions, or sexual or pornographic references, was still new to some respondents as it was endorsed by the government in late 2020. Generally speaking, knowledge and awareness about laws in Lebanon is still weak, despite efforts of local NGOs in advocacy and awareness campaigns.

Figure 66. Percentage of women/girls who know any law related to cyber harassment



A respondent noted: “Many of the victims do not report cases because they are afraid of the community, and they do not know the laws that protect them.”

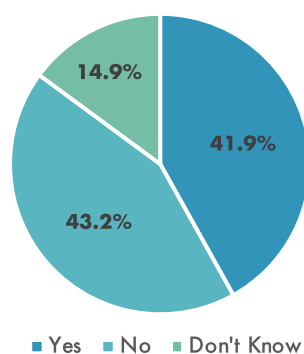


58. Did the person you know report the extortion?

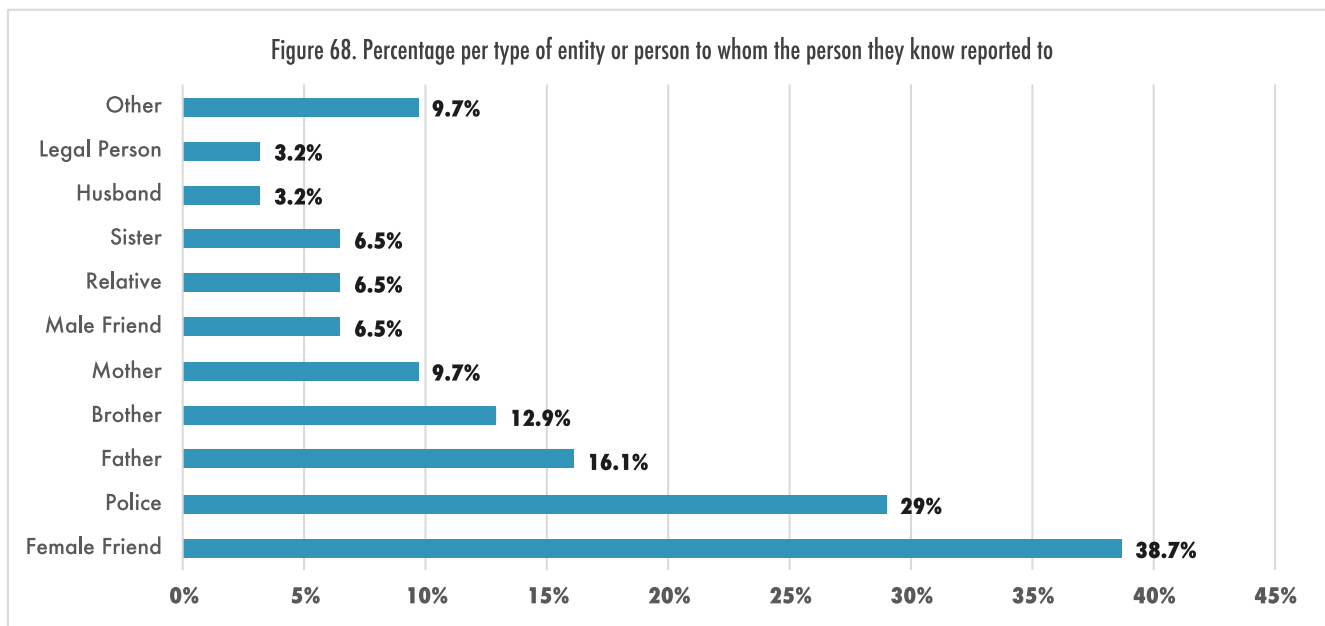
74 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Of the 74 respondents who knew a person exposed to cyber extortion, only 31 respondents (41.9%) stated that the person they know reported the extortion, while 32 respondents (43.2%) stated that they did not, and 11 respondents (14.9%) said that they don't know. Noting that some variables are inevitably unavoidable such as the economic crisis in the country, causing 82% unemployment rate, as per recent World Bank reports. Thus, husbands or fathers, who are the majority of the labour force in Lebanon, might be in the house, preventing women and girls from reporting the complete truth. Another consequential factor is the aspect of social and cultural perceptions, especially in rural areas and within valuable groups, which put females under much pressure, to the extent of fear from blame or harm. Supplementally, women and girls incline to obnubilate such incidents afraid of relating the responsibility to them as parents or partners do not understand such acts, especially males.

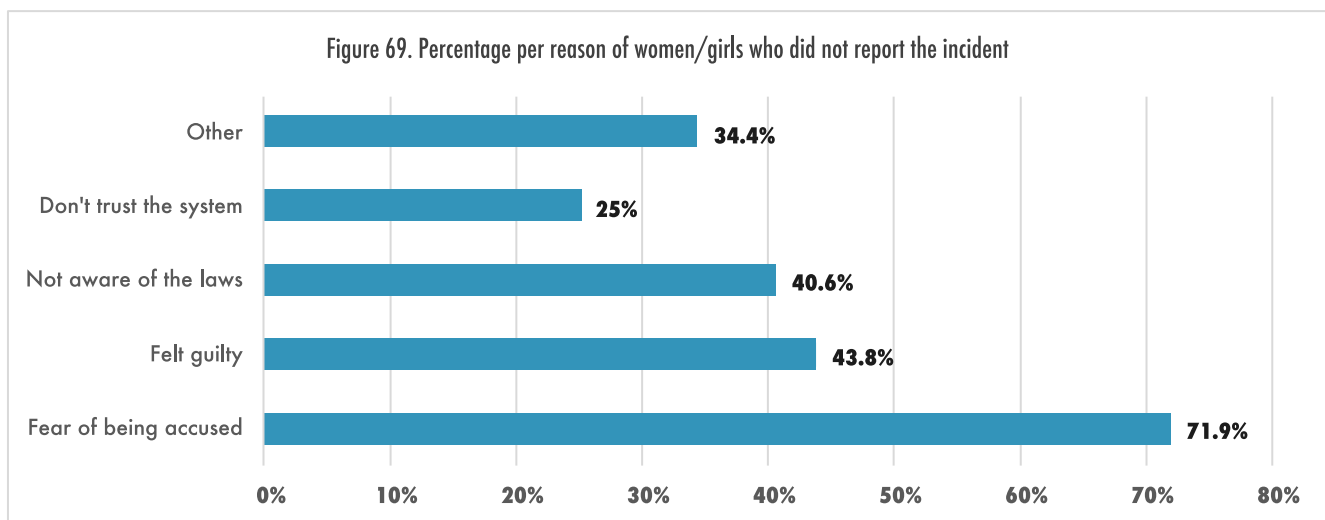
Figure 67. Percentage of women/girls who know a person who reported a cyber extortion incident



The vast majority of respondents did not share their experience of cyber extortion where only 31 respondents reported. Of those who reported, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 12 respondents stated that the person they know reported to a female friend, 9 respondents to the police, 5 respondents to their father, 4 respondents to their brother, 3 respondents to their mother, 2 respondents to a male friend, 2 respondents to a relative, 2 respondents to their sister, 1 respondent to their husband, 1 respondent to a legal person, and 3 respondents answered "other."



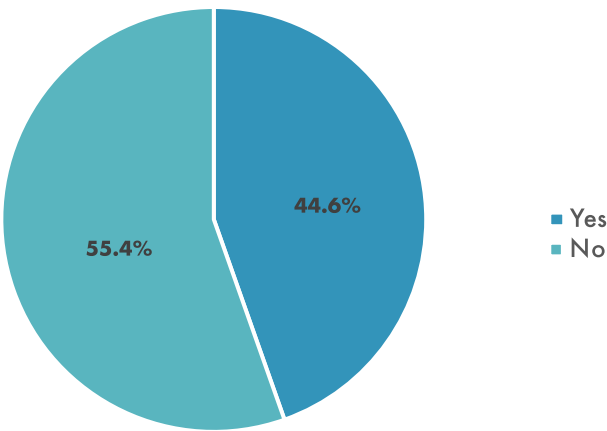
Of the 32 of those who answered that they did not report it, since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 23 respondents stated "fear of being accused," 14 respondents stated "felt guilty," 13 respondents stated "not aware of the laws," 8 respondents stated "don't trust the system," and 11 respondents answered "other."



59. Have you reported the extortion/harassment?
112 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Of the 112 respondents who experienced cyber extortion or cyber harassment, less than half of the respondents (n=50; 44.6%) reported the extortion/harassment, whereas 62 respondents (55.4%) did not report the incident. In some communities, this is mostly related to religious factors. Religious beliefs play an important role in the behaviour and attitudes of people, and indecent acts are considered or referred against religion.

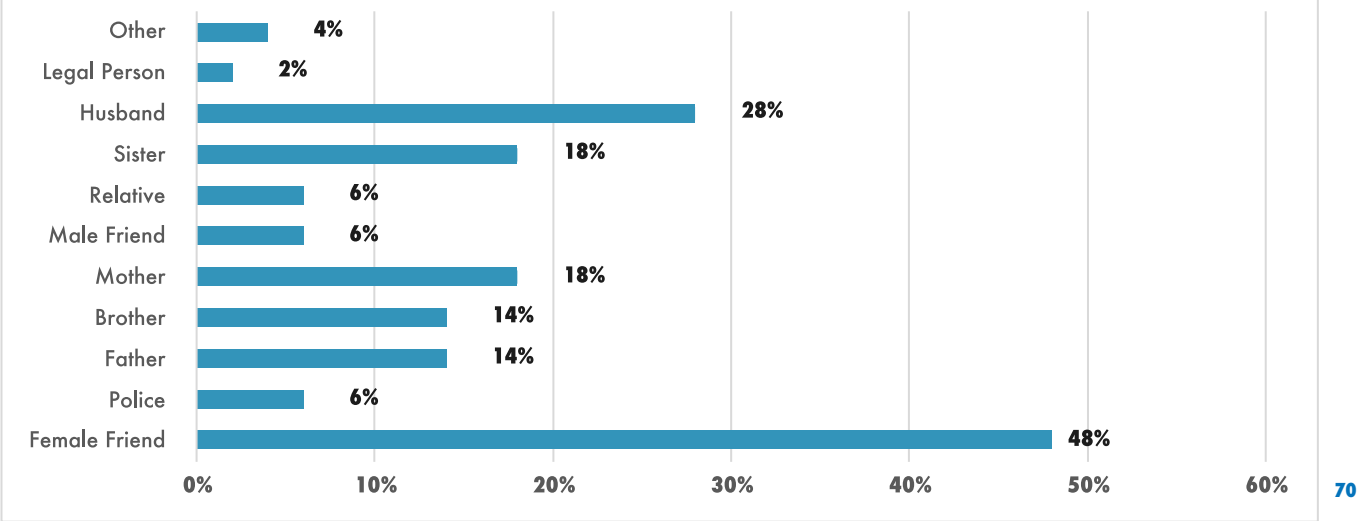
Figure 70. Percentage of women/girls who know a person who reported a cyber harassment incident



60. To whom?
50 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

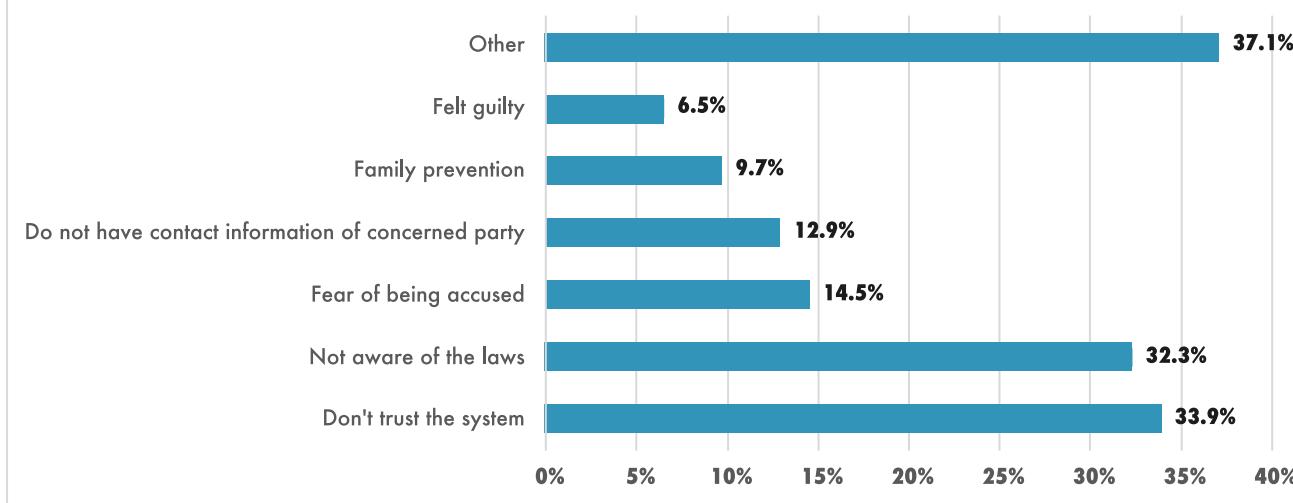
For the 50 respondents who answered “yes,” since respondents were able to choose more than one answer, 24 respondents stated that they reported to a female friend, 14 respondents to their husband, 9 respondents to their mother, 9 respondents to their sister, 7 respondents to their brother, 7 respondents to their father, 3 respondents to the police, 3 respondents to a relative, 3 respondents to a male friend, 1 respondent to a legal person, and 2 respondents answered “other.”

Figure 71. Percentage per type of entity or person to whom the respondent reported to



Of the 62 respondents who did not report the incident, provided that respondents had the chance to provide more than one answer, 21 respondents stated "don't trust the system," 20 respondents stated "not aware of the laws," 9 respondents (14.5%) stated "fear of being accused," 8 respondents stated "do not have contact information of concerned party," 6 respondents stated "family prevention," 4 respondents stated "felt guilty," and 23 respondents answered "other."

Figure 72. Percentage per reason of women/girls who did not report the incident



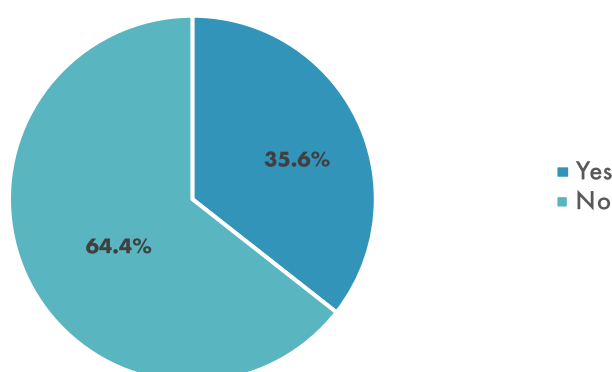
10. Services against Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment

61. Do you know the services provided by the ISF?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether or not they know the services provided by the ISF, 89 respondents (35.6%) answered "yes," whereas 161 respondents (64.4%) answered "no."

Figure 73. Percentage of women/girls who know the services provided by ISF

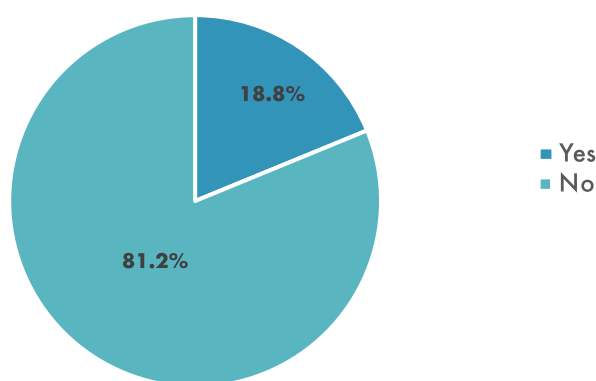


62. Do you know the hotline number of ISF?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Significantly less than 20% of respondents know the ISF hotline number, of which 47 respondents (18.8%) answered “yes,” whereas 203 respondents (81.2%) do not know the number. From those who answered that they know the hotline number of ISF, only few respondents gave the correct number. The higher percentage who reported that they do not know the hotline did not care to have it as they do not rely much on the legal system in Lebanon. Other reported that they would preferably report it to a friend or family member who they trust more.

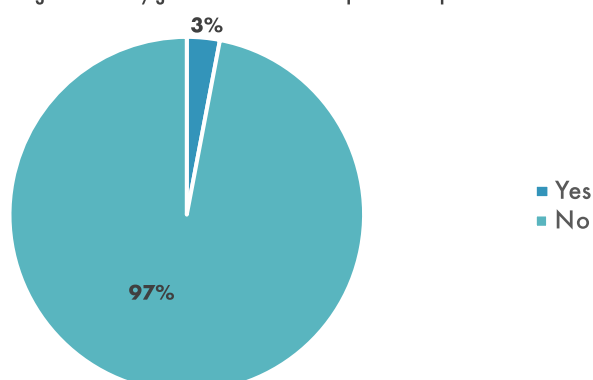
Figure 74. Percentage of women/girls who know the hotline number of ISF

**63. Did you call the hotline number and ask for help in relation to extortion or harassment from the police?**

231 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Of the 231 respondents, a very low number – only 7 respondents (3%) contacted the police and asked for help in relation to extortion or harassment from the police, whereas 224 respondents (97%) did not. As mentioned previously, women and girls are more likely to talk to a friend or family member rather than go through the hassle of the police station, according to several respondents, it might end up in either not knowing who did the violent act or ignoring the issue. Some respondents reacted negatively to the fact that they mistrust the system in Lebanon as a whole. This is certainly a worrying trend if people stay unattached to the legal system and don't call the police in case of issues encountered.

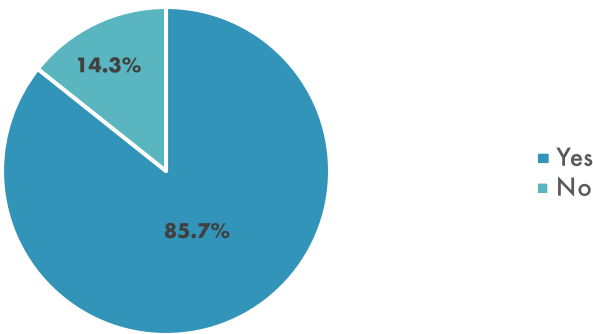
Figure 75. Percentage of women/girls who asked for help from the police



64. Was it effective/efficient?
7 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

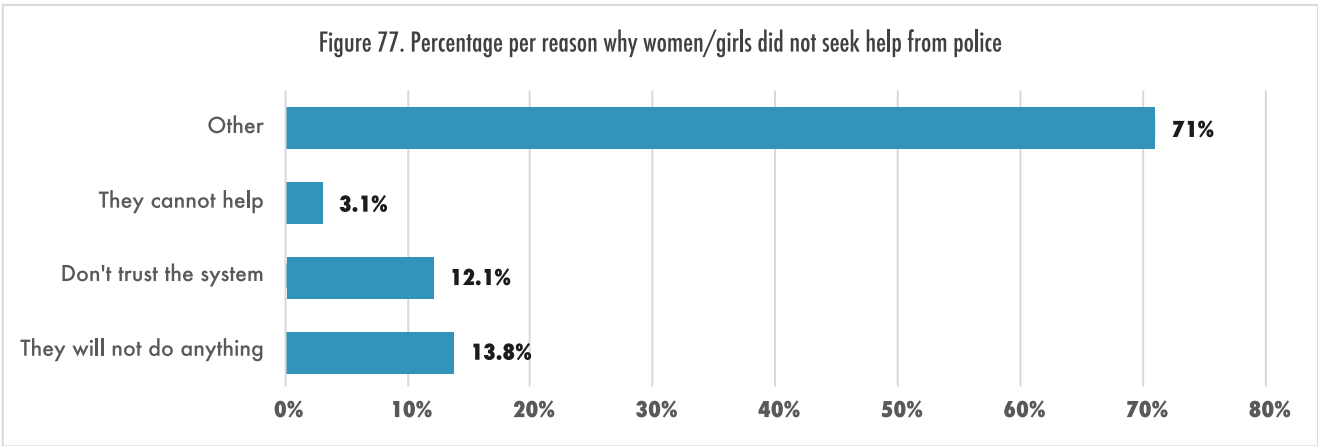
Of those who called the police, 6 respondents (85.7%) out of 7 stated that it was efficient, and 1 respondent (14.3%) stated that it was not efficient. This is a good percentage in relation to the efficiency of the police in which this result might encourage more women and girls to consider asking for the help of the police.

Figure 76. Percentage of women/girls who stated that the police services were efficient



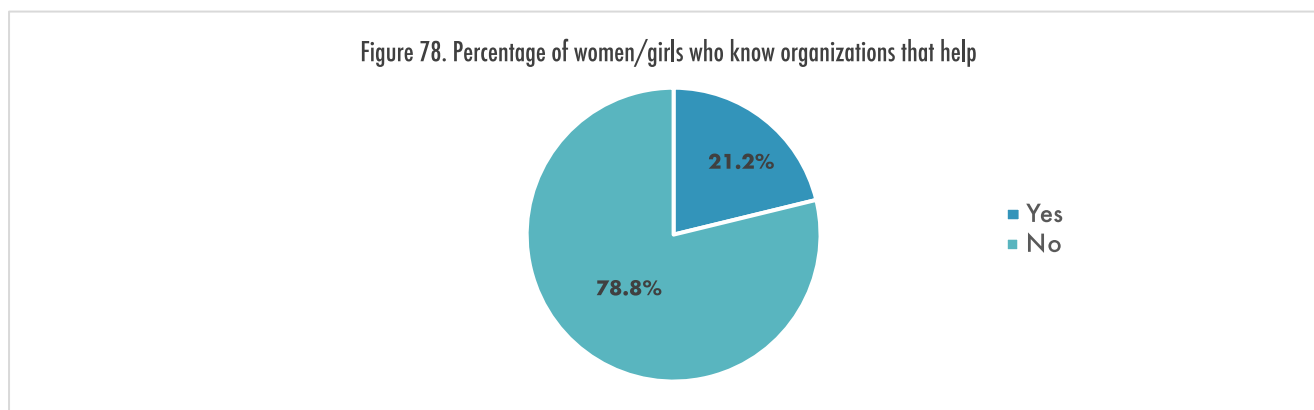
The majority of respondents (224) showed a negative attitude towards calling the police for help. Of those who answered, 31 respondents (13.8%) stated that “they will not do anything,” 27 respondents (12.1%) stated “I don’t trust the system,” 7 respondents (3.1%) stated that “they cannot help,” and 159 respondents (71%) answered “other.”

Figure 77. Percentage per reason why women/girls did not seek help from police



65 .Do you know any organizations that help?
250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Only 53 respondents (21.2%) know an organization that can help, whereas 197 respondents (78.8%) do not know any organizations.

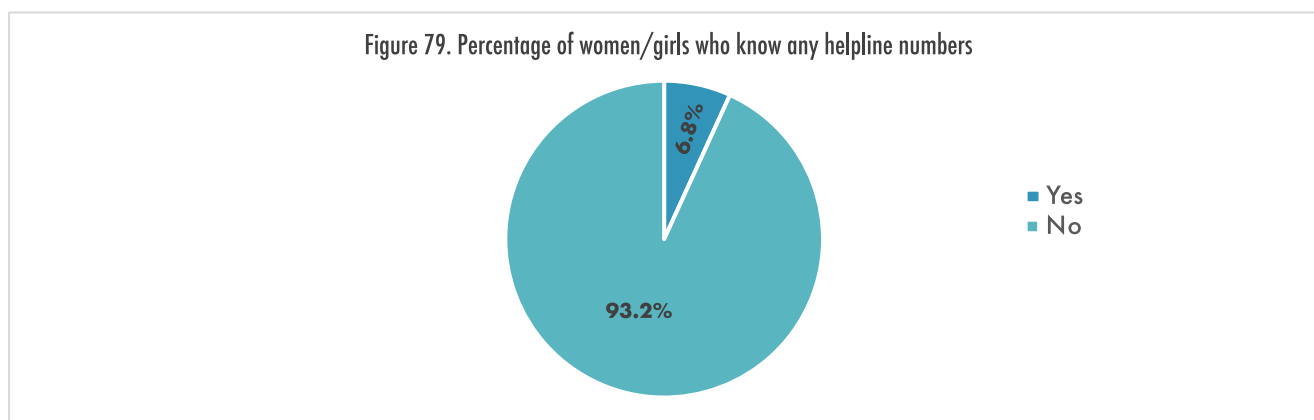


For those who know local organizations that help, the list included: KAFA (Enough Violation and Exploitation) (26 responses), ABAAD (23 responses), Himaya (5 responses), Lebanese Women Rights League, NCLW (1 response), Q Rights (1 response), Legal Action Worldwide (1 response), and Embrace (1 response) among others.

66. Do you know any helpline numbers?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they know any helpline numbers, 17 respondents (6.8%) answered “yes,” whereas 233 respondents (93.2%) answered “no.”

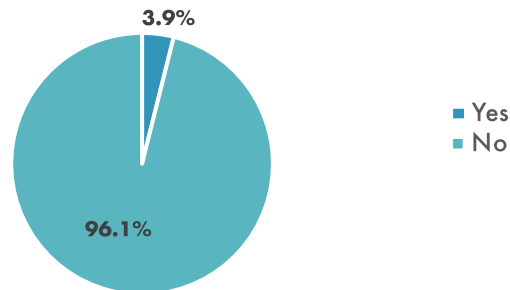


67. Did you ask for the help of any organization when you were exposed to cyber extortion/harassment?

232 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they asked for the help of any organization when they were exposed to cyber extortion/harassment, 9 respondents out of 232 (3.9%) answered “yes,” whereas 223 respondents out of 232 (96.1%) answered “no.”

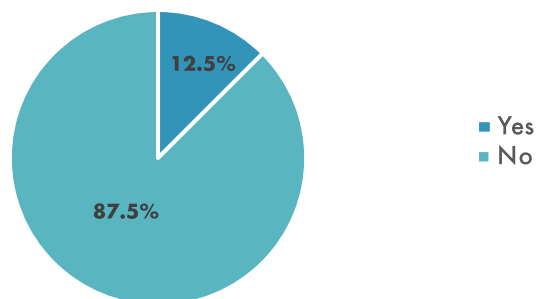
Figure 80. Percentage of women/girls who called for help from an organization

**68. Did you seek mental health services from the organization?**

56 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they sought mental health services from the organization, 7 respondents out of 56 (12.5%) answered "yes," whereas 49 respondents out of 56 (87.5%) answered "no."

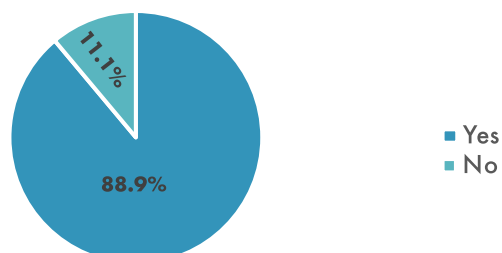
Figure 81. Percentage of women/girls who sought mental health services

**69. Was it efficient/effective?**

9 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

For the 9 respondents who answered "yes" on the previous questions, 8 respondents (88.9%) stated that it was efficient, and 1 respondent (11.1%) stated that it was not efficient.

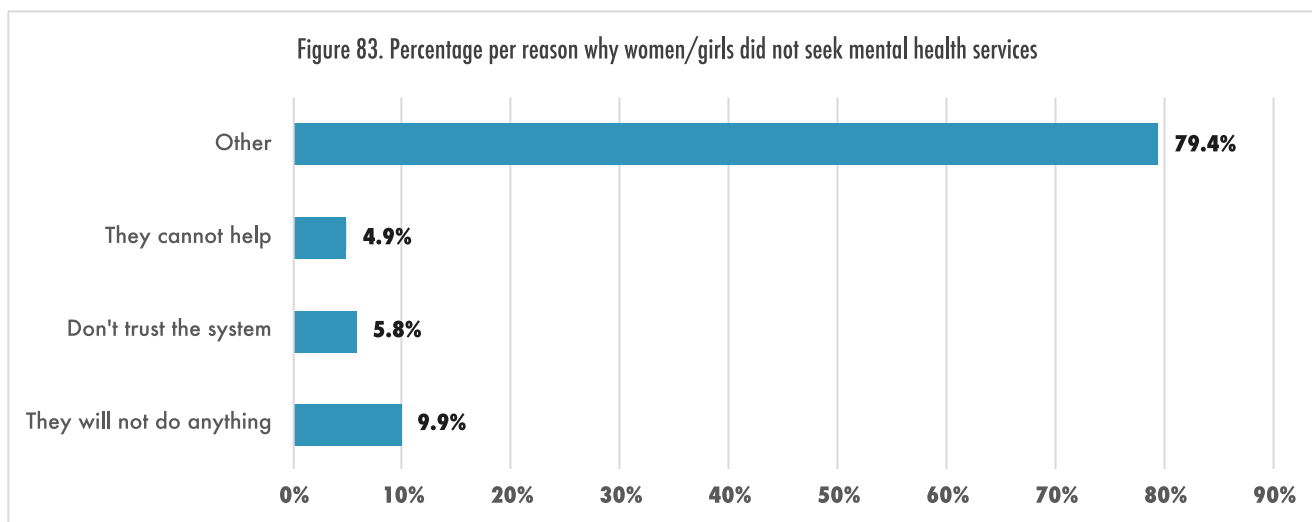
Figure 82. Percentage of women/girls who found mental health services effective



70. Why not?

223 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

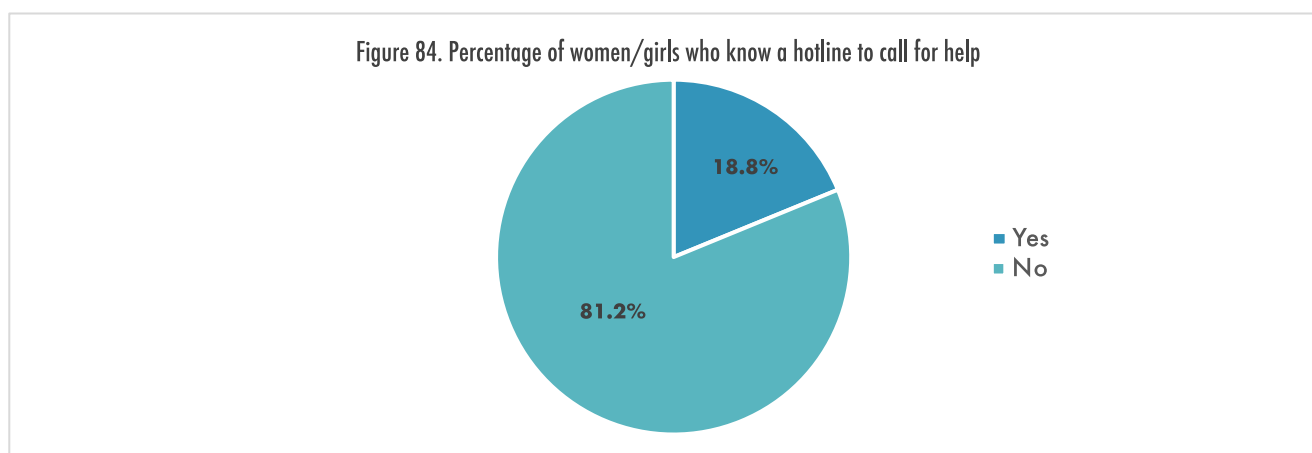
For the 223 respondents who did not ask for the help of any organization, 22 respondents (9.9%) stated that “they will not do anything,” 13 respondents (5.8%) stated “I don’t trust the system,” 11 respondents (4.9%) stated that “they cannot help,” and 177 respondents (79.4%) answered “other.”



71. Do you know any hotlines to call on?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Less than 20% of respondents know hotlines to call on – 47 respondents (18.8%), whereas 203 respondents (81.2%) do not know any hotline.



47 respondents know hotlines to call for help, and the list included: 112, Red Cross, Firefighters, 1745, ISF, 114, ABAAD and KAFA.

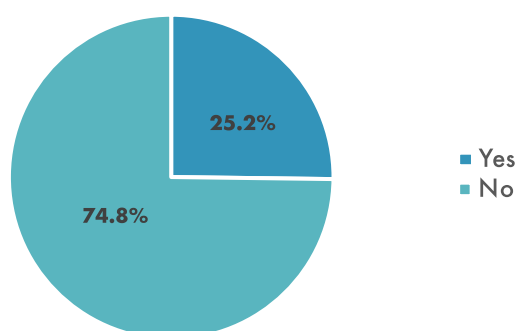
It is worth mentioning that when asked if they know any hotline number to call in case of such incidents, 203 respondents out of 250 refused to have the hotline of ISF or any other. 40 responses (16%) said that they don't need them, 8 responses (3.2%) declared that they were never needed, 8 responses (3.2%) clarified that they resolve the issue by blocking the number or account, 2 responses (0.8%) said that it never came to their minds to call anyone, 2 responses (0.8%) said they did not need to call them, 2 responses (0.8%) indicated that they will never use the hotline number, and 2 responses (0.8%) said they will search the Internet when they need it. Others indicated that they don't trust the ISF and they don't want any number related to the government, highlighting that the system in Lebanon does not trust the person that has been extorted or harassed and, in many cases, does not help. Several other respondents were not aware of such hotlines.

72. Have you attended gender trainings?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked whether they have attended gender trainings, 63 respondents (25.2%) answered "yes," whereas 187 respondents (74.8%) answered "no."

Figure 85. Percentage of women/girls who have attended gender trainings

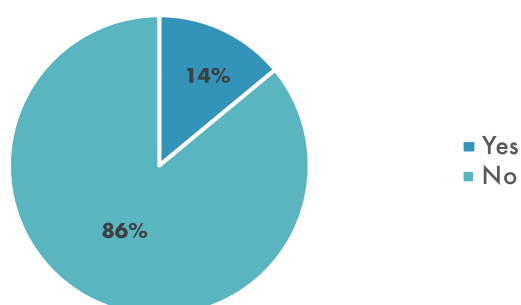


73. Have you attended trainings on cyber extortion?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Only 35 respondents (14%) had attended trainings on cyber extortion, whereas 215 respondents (86%) had not

Figure 86. Percentage of women/girls who have attended trainings on cyber extortion

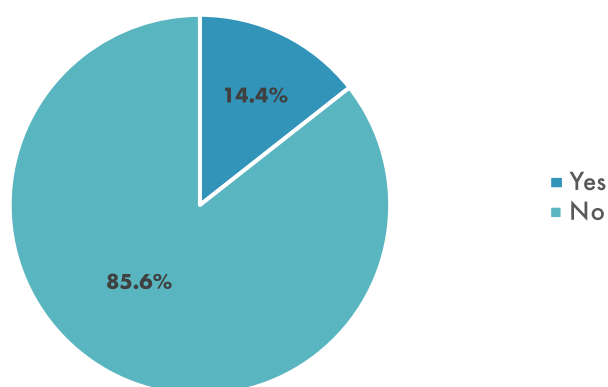


74. Have you attended trainings on cyber harassment?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Similar to training on cyber extortion, 36 respondents (14.4%) had attended trainings on cyber harassment, whereas 214 respondents (85.6%), which is the majority, did not.

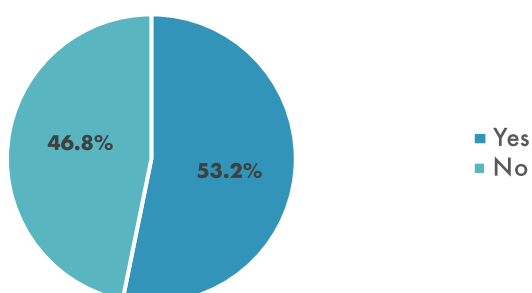
Figure 87. Percentage of women/girls who attended trainings on cyber harassment

**75. Have you seen any campaigns on cyber extortion?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Despite the fact that NCLW launched a campaign on cyber extortion in September 2021, only 133 respondents (53.2%) saw the campaign on TV or social media, whereas 117 respondents (46.8%) had not seen the campaign.

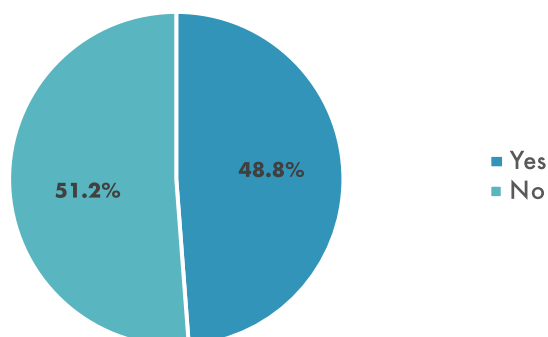
Figure 88. Percentage of women/girls who saw a cyber extortion campaign

**76. Have you seen any campaigns on cyber harassment?**

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

Almost half of the respondents saw campaigns on cyber harassment – 122 respondents (48.8%), whereas 128 respondents (51.2%) had not seen any campaign.

Figure 89. Percentage of women/girls who have seen a cyber harassment campaign



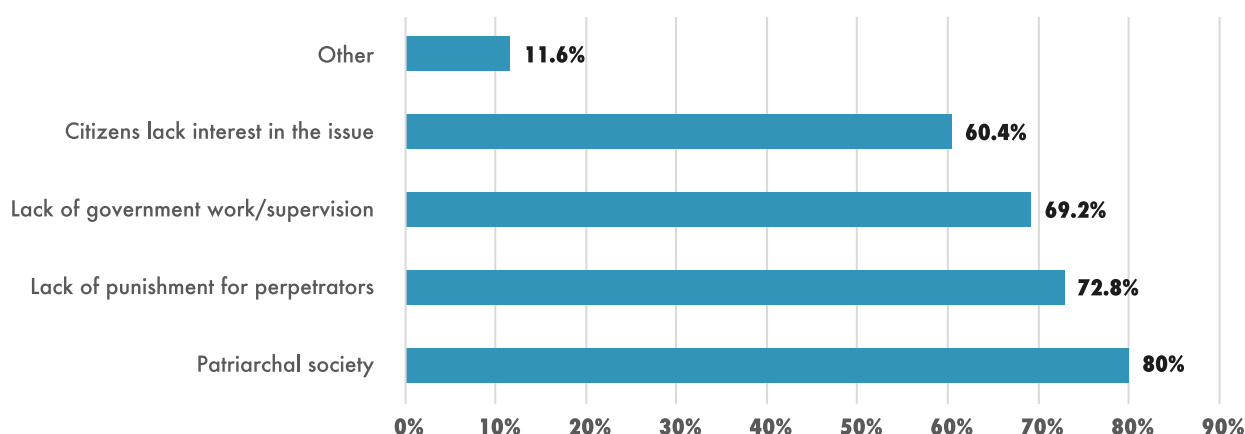
Challenges facing Women and Girls

77. What are the challenges in addressing cyber extortion in Lebanon?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked about the challenges in terms of addressing cyber extortion in Lebanon, since respondents were able to choose multiple challenges, 200 respondents answered "patriarchal society (blaming females)," 182 respondents answered "lack of punishment (for perpetrators)," 173 respondents answered "lack of government work/supervision," 151 respondents answered "citizens' lack of interest in the issue," and 29 respondents answered "other."

Figure 90. Percentage per challenges in addressing cyber extortion in Lebanon



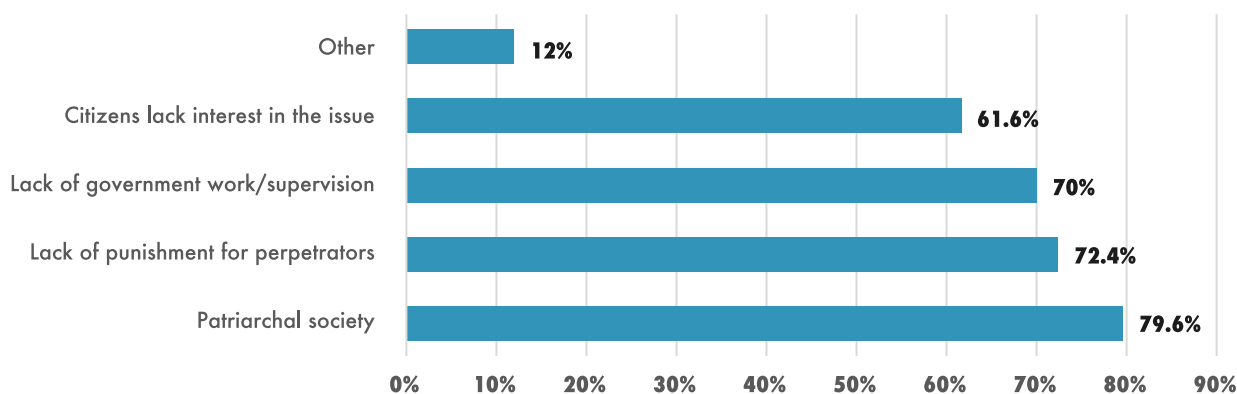
78. What are the challenges in addressing cyber harassment in Lebanon?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked about the challenges in addressing cyber harassment in Lebanon, since respondents were able to

choose multiple challenges, 199 respondents answered "patriarchal society (blaming females)," 181 respondents answered "lack of punishment (for perpetrators)," 175 respondents answered "lack of government work/supervision," 154 respondents answered "citizens' lack of interest in the issue," and 30 respondents answered "other." It's worth noting that the 'patriarchal society' received the most selection of answers by respondents.

Figure 91. Percentage per challenges in addressing cyber harassment in Lebanon



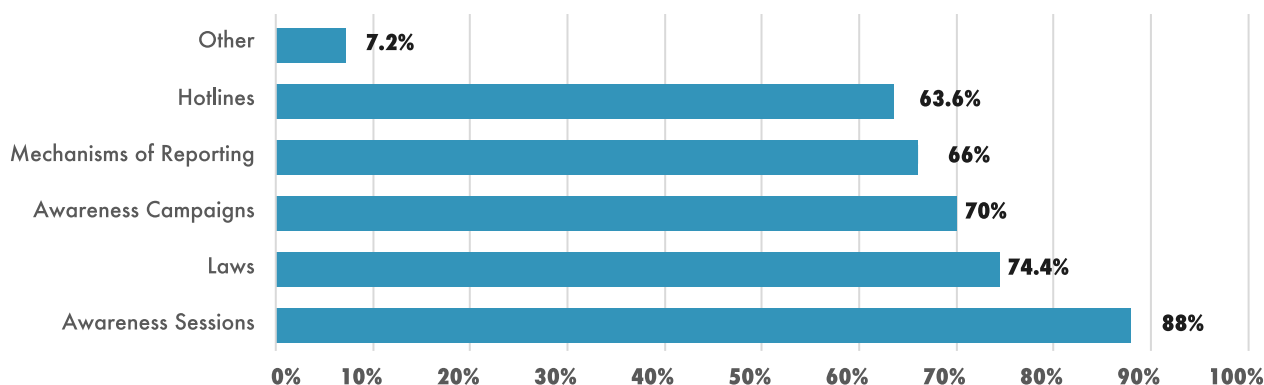
Women/Girls Needs

79. What are the needs regarding cyber extortion?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked about the needs regarding cyber extortion, since respondents were able to choose more than one need, 220 respondents answered "awareness sessions," 186 respondents answered "laws," 175 respondents answered "awareness campaigns," 165 respondents answered "mechanisms of reporting," 159 respondents answered "hotlines," and 18 respondents answered "other." According to results, awareness sessions were the most required by respondents.

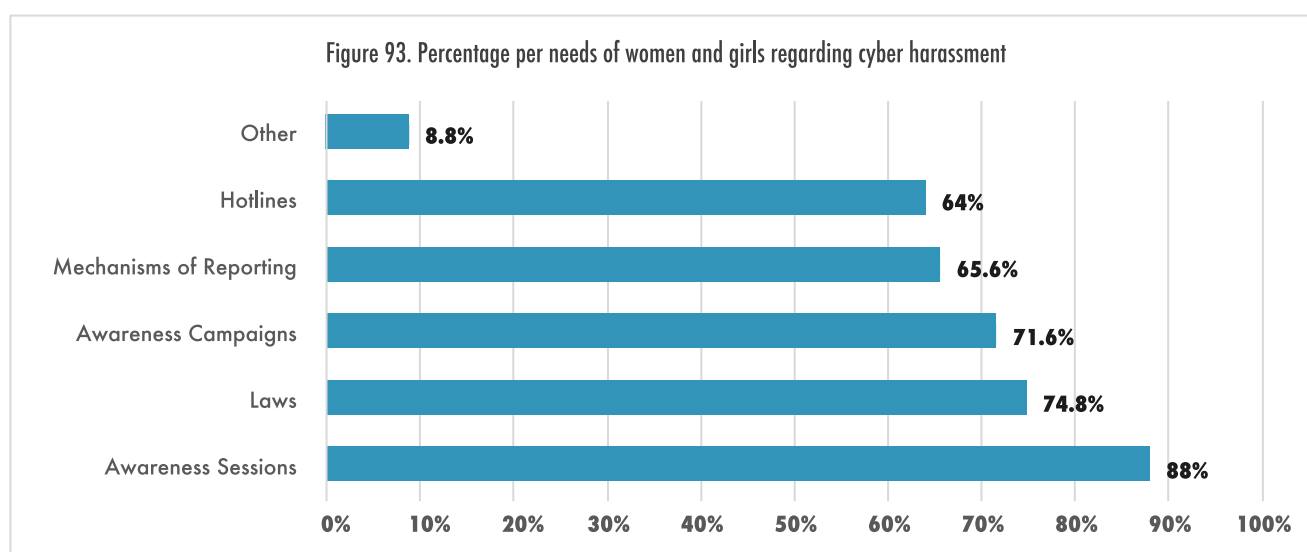
Figure 92. Percentage per needs of women and girls regarding cyber extortion



80. What are the needs regarding cyber harassment?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

When asked about the needs regarding cyber harassment, since respondents were able to choose more than one need, 220 respondents answered "awareness sessions," 187 respondents answered "laws," 179 respondents answered "awareness campaigns," 164 respondents answered "mechanisms of reporting," 160 respondents answered "hotlines," and 22 respondents answered "other." Again, the results showed that awareness sessions were the most needed by respondents.

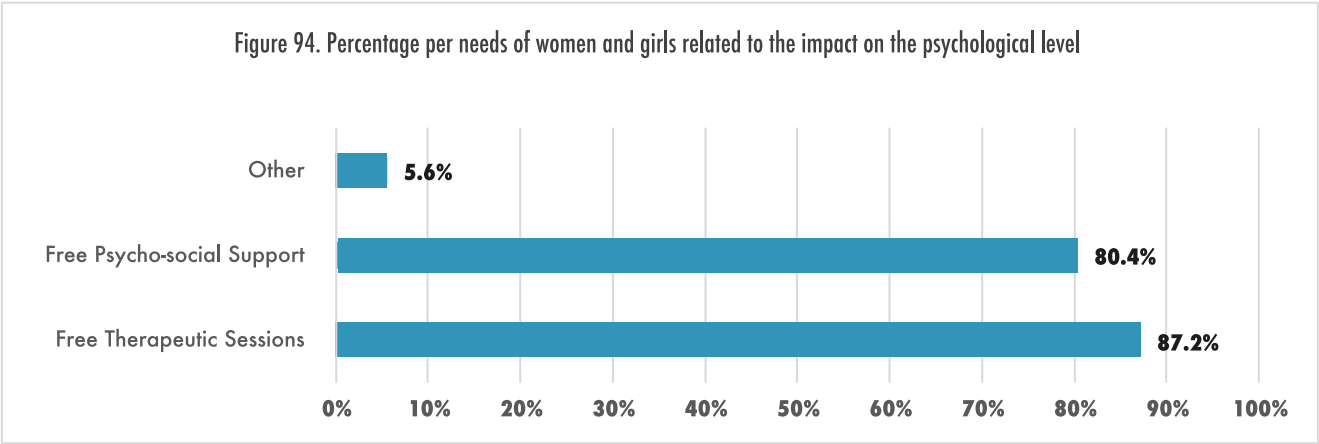


81. What are the needs regarding the impact on the psychological level?

250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

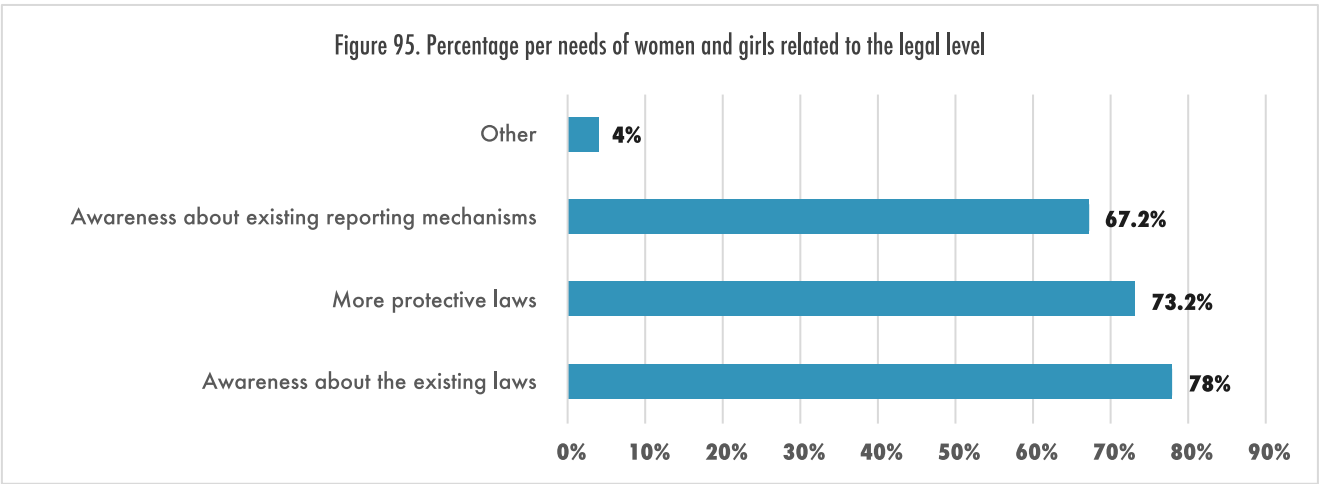
It was significant for respondents to declare that they were impacted on the psychological level and in need of free therapeutic sessions and free psycho-social support, providing more than one answer, 218 respondents requested "free therapeutic sessions" and 201 respondents requested "free psycho-social support". The rest of the 14 respondents requested financial support. According to several studies, data from Lebanon shows severe levels of distress among the people with minimal resources, and the country is most likely going to face a poor mental health spread. Mental health issues are significantly increasing with the high unemployment rate that reached 82% in 2021 according to the World Bank recent report.

Through local NGOs in Lebanon, international support continues to play an important role in mental health-related projects and activities. The government treatment gap is still obvious, and more can be done to improve psychosocial support services, especially mental health services. The World Health Organization (WHO) proposed that the integration of mental health care into primary health care is the most feasible way to reduce the mental health treatment gap in Lebanon. The implementation of this recommendation is still in its early stages due to many reasons, such as the lack of a coherent mental health information system and insufficient coordination between mental health facilities and providers (including national and international NGOs).



82. What are the needs on the legal level?
250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

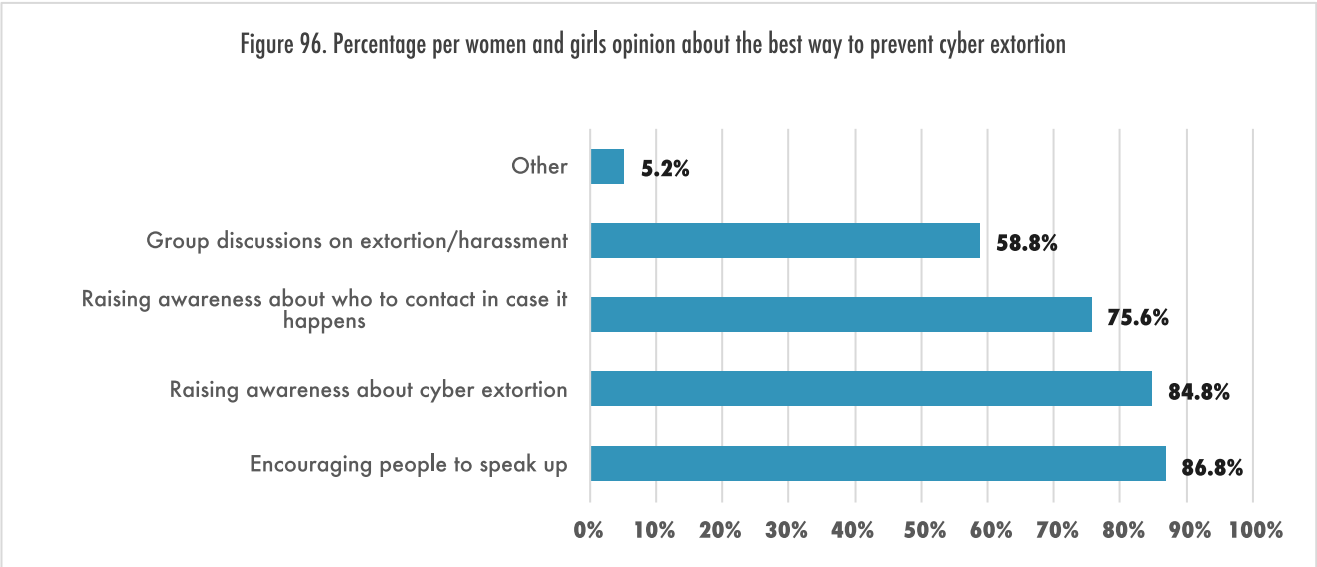
When asked about the needs on the legal level, since respondents were able to choose more than one need, 195 respondents answered “awareness about the existing laws,” 183 respondents answered “more protective laws,” 168 respondents answered “awareness about existing reporting mechanisms,” and 10 respondents answered “other.”



83. In your opinion, what is the best way to prevent cyber extortion?
250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

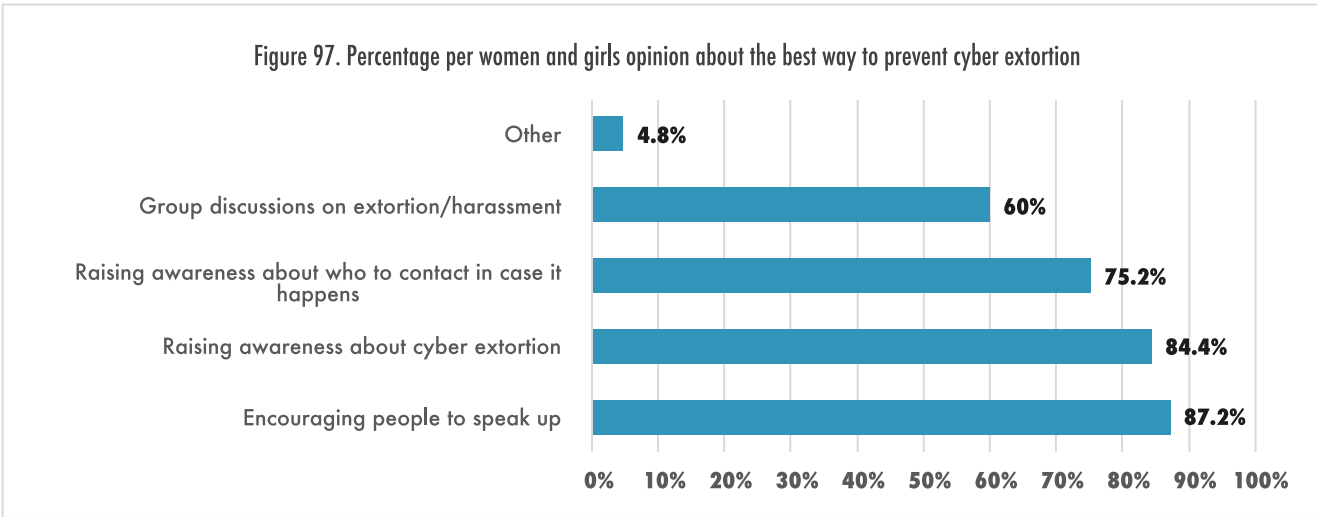
Opinions of women and girls were similar regarding the best way to prevent cyber extortion, provided that respondents had the chance to provide multiple answers to this question, 217 respondents answered “encouraging people to speak up if they are being bullied/harassed,” 212 respondents answered “raising awareness about cyber extortion,” 189 respondents answered “raising awareness about who to contact in case it happens,” 147 respondents answered “group discussions on extortion/harassment,” and 13 respondents answered “other.” With

the highest percentage in encouraging people to speak up, it is important to note that the feeling of being criticized by others, can prevent people from speaking up or trying to deal with the problem. In addition, women and girls were clear that it is essential for raising awareness about such violence as well as hotlines and helplines to use in case of such incidents.



84. In your opinion, what is the best way to prevent cyber harassment?
250 out of 250 respondents answered this question.

The opinions of women and girls regarding best ways to prevent cyber harassment is similar to that of cyber extortion. Provided that respondents had the chance to provide multiple answers to this question, when asked about their opinion regarding the best way to prevent cyber harassment, 218 respondents answered “encouraging people to speak up if they are being bullied/harassed,” 211 respondents answered “raising awareness about extortion/harassment,” 188 respondents answered “raising awareness about who to contact in case it happens,” 150 respondents answered “group discussions on extortion/harassment,” and 12 respondents answered “other.”



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations for the future gender monitoring tool:

1. Maintain and institutionalize efforts for greater impact to reach equality as women continue to consider that men are in a more privileged position in society.
2. Statistical and empirical data about gender equality in various sectors is needed. The barometer demonstrates that achieving gender equality calls for deliberate action to be taken by the main stakeholders working on advancing women's rights on a national level.
3. Maintain a national gender monitoring tool with indicators tailored to the Lebanese context that oversees and informs national gender advancement:

For NCLW:

- The gender monitoring tool is expected to be measured on a yearly basis using the same indicators and data collection tools to monitor progress of gender equality.
- The gender barometer can be conducted with different sampling and based on the needs, national cultural dynamics, projects, or other study levels.
- The barometer must involve advanced assessment of potential prospective topics in the hopes of gaining further insight on gender equality dynamics.
- The questionnaire must be reviewed and tested before conducting a survey for the different topics and from different perspectives.
- The sample of women and men respondents from different regions is advisable to be diversified and expended for the next survey in order to be more inclusive and representative of the society.

For CBOs:

- CBOs should keep training on the data collection tools and data entry. The barometer is key to expanding expertise on data entry and collection.
- CBOs and NGOs can develop programs based on research findings in addition to research data and barometer graphs.
- Interventions should be coordinated across the stakeholders to avoid duplication and should be complementary in terms of activities, programs, and events.

4. Increase cooperation between the state actors and civil society actors through:
 - Developing a unified mechanism to respond and protect against GBV to be disseminated to all public institutions, municipalities, and ministries.
 - Developing a unified Sexual Harassment policy to be disseminated to the private and sectors.
 - Strengthening the collaboration between CSOs/CBOs and governmental institutions so that CSO/CBO services that respond to GBV would complement the government's available services.
5. Emphasize the government's interventions and increase public trust in the government by documenting and disseminating the primary governmental interventions.
6. Ensure free legal assistance to encourage recourse to the judicial system despite the economic crisis.

7. Provide adequate and accessible safeguards and protection mechanisms to prevent violence.
8. Build the capacity of frontliners and service providers to respond to crises, especially in difficult situations.
9. Strengthen the referral systems, improve services, and boost service providers' credibility along with funding increases and institutional guidance at the national level.
10. Improve coordination between all service providers to promote the importance of mental health and encourage seeking mental health services to girls, women, boys, and men.

Recommendations from the Lebanon Gender Equality Barometer on Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment :

- Consolidate the government's prevention policies to combat cyber extortion and cyber harassment on all platforms.
- Raise awareness on cyber extortion and cyber security by:
 - Raising awareness on existing laws that protect from cyber extortion and cyber harassment in Lebanon (Law No. 205/2020 Anti-Sexual Harassment Law 205/2020, E-Transactions and Data Protection Law 81/2018, Penal Code-Legislative Decree No. 340/1943)
 - Raising awareness of minors on how to seek assistance or report suspicious activity.
 - Encouraging the individual at risk or victims to report cyber extortion and cyber harassment.
- Raise awareness on the ISF's services related to cyber extortion and cyber security and focus on organizing awareness sessions in schools.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- 1 UN Women. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/etilainen_slides_ENG.pdf
- 2 <https://womeninleadership.hivos.org/assets/2020/12/Hivos-MENA-Gender-Barometer.pdf>
- 3 Women Economic Forum. Global Gender Gap Report 2021. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf
- 4 Human Rights Watch, Lebanon: Laws Discriminate Against Women, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/19/lebanon-laws-discriminate-against-women>
- 5 United Nations, Lebanon Treaty reservations: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/Declarations.aspx?index=Lebanon&lang=_en&chapter=4&treaty=330
- 6 Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS). 2021. Annual Overview of Incidents of GBV in Relation to Lebanon's Situation 2020. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GBVIMS_Annual%20Overview%20of%20Incidents%20of%20GBV%20in%20Relation%20to%20Lebanons%20Situation_2020.pdf
- 7 Pulling Lebanon out of the Pit, International Crisis Group, 8 JUNE 2020 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/lebanon/214-pulling-lebanon-out-pit>
- 8 Inter-Agency Coordination – Lebanon. 2020. Current operational environment in Lebanon. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LCRP%20IA%20Situation%20Update%20-%20DEC%202020.pdf>
- 9 Cultural Atlas. Lebanese Culture. <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/lebanese-culture/lebanese-culture-family>
- 10 USAID. 2021. Education in Lebanon. <https://www.usaid.gov/lebanon/education>
- 11 Borgen Project. Girls' Education in Lebanon Strives to Reach those most in Need. 2018. <https://borgenproject.org/girls-education-in-lebanon-strives-to-reach-those-most-in-need/>
- 12 UNICEF. 2015. Heavy Burden How the Syria Conflict is Driving More Children into the Workforce.
- 13 Lebanon Education in Crisis: Raising the Alarm. 2021. Save the Children. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lebanon%20Education%20crisis%20spotlight.pdf>
- 14 Ibid
- 15 Ibid
- 16 Ibid
- 17 Wakim, G., Moujabber, J., Rickard, S. (2020). Women's needs and experiences in the context of the economic crisis and the port explosion: Priorities for Recovery. Lebanon National Gender Observatory.
- 18 The World Bank and UN Women. 2021. The Status of Women in Lebanon. https://nclw.gov.lb/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021_The-Status-of-Women-in-Lebanon-Assessing-Womens-Access-to-Economic-Opportunities_Eng.pdf
- 19 ACTED. 2019. Women's Economic Empowerment and Participation in Lebanon. <https://www.acted.org/en/projects/womens-economic-empowerment-and-participation-in-lebanon/>
- 20 Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. 2021. Women's Economic Empowerment in Lebanon. <https://cherieblairfoundation.org/womens-economic-empowerment-in-lebanon/>
- 21 The World Bank. 2019. Labor force participation rate for ages 15-24. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLFACTI.1524.FE.NE.ZS?locations=LB>
- 22 UN Women. 2020. Arab States – Lebanon. <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/countries/lebanon>
- 23 Lebanon Support. 2020. Women's Political Participation in Lebanon and the Limits of Aid-Driven Empowerment. <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/women-s-political-participation-lebanon-and-limits-aid-driven-empowerment-enar>
- 24 Civil Society Knowledge Center. 2019. Women's Movements in Lebanon. https://civilsociety-centre.org/gen/women-movements-timeline/4938#event_1920s-womens-union-established-in-lebanon-and-syria
- 25 UN Women. 2020. Arab States – Lebanon. <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/countries/lebanon>
- 26 Catalyst. 2021. Women in the Workforce: Global (Quick Take). <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-workforce-global/>
- 27 Slim, R. (2021). Testimony | "Lebanon: Assessing Political Paralysis, Economic Crisis, and Challenges for U.S. Policy." Middle East Institute. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/testimony-lebanon-assessing-political-paralysis-economic-crisis-and-challenges-us>
- 28 Hark, N. (2021). Lebanon is in crisis. And it's worse for women. Lutheran World Relief. <https://lwr.org/blog/2021/lebanon-crisis-and-its-worse-women>
- 29 Ibid
- 30 This is what leadership looks like: Meet Caroline Fattal, one the "most powerful Arab women in business" dedicated to supporting Lebanese women entrepreneurs. (2021). UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/3/what-leadership-looks-like-caroline-fattal>
- 31 New York Times. 2021. Collapse: Inside Lebanon's Worse Economic Meltdown in more than a Century. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/04/world/lebanon-crisis.html>
- 32 UNFPA, Cawtar, Situation Analysis of Gender Based Violence in Lebanon, 2012
- 33 ز. ف. (May 8, 2020). "الشاشة ما بتحمي": أرقام صادمة حول العنف الإلكتروني ضد النساء والفتيات وناجيات يرفعن الصوت. شريكة ولكن. <https://www.sharikawalaken.media/2020/05/08/>
- 34 UNHCR, Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), 2019. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/prevention-and-response-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-sgbv-march-2019>
- 35 UNICEF. 2020. Gender Dimensions of Violence Against Children and Adolescents. <https://www.unicef.org/media/92376/file/Child-Protection-Gender-Dimensions-of-VACAG-2021.pdf>
- 36 ILO (2019) Press Release: Conflict and mass displacement increase child labour https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_677550/lang--en/index.htm
- 37 Human Rights Watch. 2020. Lebanon: Broken Promises on Women's Rights. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/04/lebanon-broken-promises-womens-rights>
- 38 Gender-based Violence in Lebanon: Inadequate Framework, Ineffective Remedies. (2019). ICJ. <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Lebanon-Gender-Violence-Publications.pdf>
- 39 Republic of Lebanon. Telecommunications Regulatory authority. Cybersecurity in Lebanon. <http://www.tra.gov.lb/Cybersecurity-in-Lebanon>
- 40 Azhari, T. (2021, June 2). "Test case" for Lebanon's new sexual harassment law. U.S. <https://www.reuters.com/article/lebanon-women-harassment-idUSL5N2NJ41L>

- 41 Penal Code (Legislative Decree No. 340), Article 385. Pub. L. No. 340 (1943). http://ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=89873&p_country=LBN&p_count=117
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid, Article 383.
- 44 Lebanon. (n.d.). UN Women | Arab States. Retrieved from <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/countries/lebanon>
- 45 Lebanon: 5 Steps to Improve Women's Rights. (2020). Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/08/lebanon-5-steps-improve-womens-rights>
- 46 Gender In/Equality and Violence Against Women and Girls in Lebanon. 2020. Lebanon National Gender Observatory.
- 47 Hark, N. (2021). Lebanon is in crisis. And it's worse for women. Lutheran World Relief. <https://lwr.org/blog/2021/lebanon-crisis-and-its-worse-women>
- 48 Philipp, J. (2020). 7 Facts About Women's Rights in Lebanon. The Borgen Project. <https://borgenproject.org/womens-rights-in-lebanon/>
- 49 Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanon Country Gender Profile, <http://iwsaw.lau.edu.lb/publications/documents/Country%20Gender%20Profile%20Lebanon-Online%20.pdf>
- 50 Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA). (2021, November 5). What Is Cyberbullying. StopBullying.Gov. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it>
- 51 Awad, E., Haddad, C., Sacre, H. et al. Correlates of bullying perpetration among Lebanese adolescents: a national study. BMC Pediatr 21, 204 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-021-02678-0>
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Save the Children Lebanon. 2018. Bullying within Schools and Communities in Lebanon: Research Summary
- 54 Pandemic lockdowns fueling rise of sexual extortion crimes in Lebanon. (2020, October 26). Arab News. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1754626/middle-east>
- 55 Griffiths, M. (2000). Internet addiction – Time to be taken seriously? Addiction Research, 8, 413-418.
- 56 Whitty, M. T. (2004). Should filtering software be utilised in the workplace? Internet in the workplace. Surveillance and Society, 2(1), 39-54.
- 57 K. (2020). Cybercrime Module 12 Key Issues: Cyberstalking and Cyberharassment. UNODC. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/cybercrime/module-12/key-issues/cyberstalking-and-cyberharassment.html>
- 58 Lebanon Inter Security Forces, May 2020. <https://twitter.com/LebISF/status/1257215652995182592>
- 59 ز. الدين. ف. (May 8, 2020). "الشائنة ما بتحمي". أرقام صادمة حول العنف الإلكتروني ضد النساء والفتيات وناجيات يرفعن الصوت. شريكة ولكن. <https://www.sharikawalaken.media/2020/05/08/>
- 60 Online Violence Against Women Human Rights Defenders in the MENA: Experiences and Perceptions. (2021). Fe-Male. <https://www.fe-male.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/WHRD-Survey-report-1.pdf>
- 61 Azhari, T. (2021, June 2). "Test case" for Lebanon's new sexual harassment law. U.S. <https://www.reuters.com/article/lebanon-women-harassment-idUSL5N2NJ41L>
- 62 Cybercrime and cyber laws: International Dimension. (2018). Official Website of the Lebanese Army. <https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/cybercrime-and-cyber-laws-international-dimension>
- 63 K. (2020). Cybercrime Module 12 Key Issues: Cyberstalking and Cyberharassment. UNODC. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/cybercrime/module-12/key-issues/cyberstalking-and-cyberharassment.html>
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Authors, T. G. (2019, January 24). What Cyberstalking Is and How to Prevent It. The State of Security. <https://www.tripwire.com/state-of-security/security-awareness/what-cyberstalking-prevent/>
- 66 Hango D, 2016. Cyberbullying and cyberstalking among Internet users aged 15 to 29 in Canada. Catalogue no. 75-006-X ISSN 2291-0840.
- 67 Johnson, N. F.; Leahy, R.; Johnson Restrepo, N.; Velasquez, N.; Zheng, M.; Manrique, P.; Devkota, P.; Wuchty, S. (21 August 2019). "Hidden resilience and adaptive dynamics of the global online hate ecology".
- 68 Gagliardone, Iginio; Gal, Danit; Alves, Thiago; Martinez, Gabriela (2015). Countering Online Hate Speech. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002332/233231e.pdf>
- 69 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High commissioner (OHCHR). Freedom of expression vs incitement to hatred: OHCHR and the Rabat Plan of Action. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/freedomofexpression/articles19-20/pages/index.aspx#:~:text=The%20Rabat%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20the%20prohibition%20of%20advocacy,Bangkok%20and%20Santiago%20de%20Chile>
- 70 Covid-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide. (2020, October 28). Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/covid-19-fueling-anti-asian-racism-and-xenophobia-worldwide>
- 71 <http://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/What-is-online-hate-speech-and-hate-crime.pdf>
- 72 Citron, Danielle Keats; Norton, Helen L. (2011). "Intermediaries and Hate Speech: Fostering Digital Citizenship for Our Information Age"
- 73 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284157227_Countering_Online_Hate_Speech_-_UNESCO
- 74 Phillips, Whitney (2015). This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the Relationship between Online Trolling and Mainstream Culture. MIT Press.
- 75 Marwick, Alice; Lewis, Rebecca (2017). Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online. Data & Society Research Institute.
- 76 Hate Speech on Social Media. (2018). Maharat. http://www.maharatfoundation.org/media/1514/hate-speech-on-social-media-2018-case-study-analysis_eng.pdf
- 77 Cyber extortion. (n.d.). Insureon. <https://www.insureon.com/insurance-glossary/cyber-extortion>
- 78 <https://www.fbi.gov/video-repository/newss-what-is-sexortion/>
- 79 Hendry, Nancy. (2021). Sextortion. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348859165_Sextortion
- 80 Cyber Smile Foundation. Sextortion. <https://www.cybersmile.org/what-we-do/advice-help/sexortion>
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 SMEX. 2018. Online Privacy Threats to Women and LGBTIQ Communities in Lebanon. https://smex.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/OnlinePrivacyThreats_EN.pdf

- 83** Ibid.
- 84** 28 July, 2018 22 رصيف. "عندما تخون المرأة.. يقولون إنها عاهرة." السعدي, فرح. <https://bit.ly/2QY0y8A>
- 85** Ibid.
- 86** SMEX. 2018. Online Privacy Threats to Women and LGBTIQ Communities in Lebanon. https://smex.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/OnlinePrivacyThreats_EN.pdf
- 87** Lebanon Debate. 2018. Blackmail complaints in Lebanon are on the rise ... <https://www.lebanondebate.com/news/376937>
- 88** Daily Star. 2016. Two arrested on charges of assault and blackmail. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2016/Aug-03/365275-two-arrested-on-charges-of-assault-and-blackmail.ashx>
- 89** Fake Profile ARXIV. 2017. A sneak into the Devil's Colony- Fake Profiles in Online Social Networks. <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1705/1705.09929.pdf>
- 90** The Cyber Helpline. Dealing with fake profiles. <https://www.thecyberhelpline.com/guides/fake-profiles>
- 91** Facebook. Quarterly report pursuant to section 13 or 15(d) of the securities exchange act of 1934. http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1326801/000119312512325997/d371464d10q.htm#tx371464_14, 2012
- 92** Fire M, Kagan D, Elyashar A, Elovici. 2013 Y. Friend or Foe? Fake Profile Identification in Online Social Networks.
- 93** Michaelson, R., & Safi, M. (2019, December 16). #Disinformation: the online threat to protest in the Middle East. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/15/disinformation-the-online-threat-to-protest-in-the-middle-east>
- 94** SMEX. 2014. Lebanon Blocks Six Porn Sites, Sparks Fears Of Further Censorship. <https://smex.org/lebanon-blocks-six-porn-sites-sparks-fears-of-further-censorship/>
- 95** Akademie. 2019. Despite a permissive online environment, digital freedom is on the decline. <https://www.dw.com/en/despite-a-permissive-online-environment-digital-freedom-is-on-the-decline/a-48621349>
- 96** Statista. 2017. Psychological impact of women experiencing online abuse or harassment worldwide as of July 2017. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/784838/online-harassment-impact-on-women/>
- 97** SABIS. 2016. SLO® Prefects Go the Extra Mile. <https://newsletter.sabis.net/issue59/slo-prefects-go-the-extra-mile>
- 98** ISF. Internet Security Awareness. <https://www.isf.gov.lb/en/cybersecurity>

ANNEXES:

Annex I – Sample Methodology

Planned interviews with a total of 250 persons from all regions in Lebanon. The sample took into consideration 50 persons in each region. The persons were selected through NCLW and partner organizations of NCLW. The survey conducted among beneficiaries of several CBOs from NCLW's network in Lebanon that includes but not limited to:

- The Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training (LOST)
- Midal Organization
- Makhzoumi Foundation
- Fair Trade Lebanon (FTL) and Agricultural Cooperatives
- Justice without Borders
- Committee of Housewives in Tyr
- Authority for Social Services Association.

Annex II – Human Resources and Field Surveyors

The consultant had to recruit an additional number of surveyors to handle the process. A number of 8 surveyors were recruited to conduct the survey who worked in parallel to speed the process.

Working Team

The team working on the gender barometer included the consultant Dr. Gulnar Wakim, with 1 Senior Analyst, 1 Database Officer, 1 Research Assistant, and 8 Field Surveyors.

Training of the Field Surveyors

Due to the COVID-19 complications, the training of the Field Surveyors was conducted virtually over two days explaining requirements, the 'Do No Harm' principles, the gender concepts, and ethics for conducting a survey. All the surveyors signed consent notes. A pilot survey followed the training sessions by each surveyor and a session of Q&A followed the pilot for all surveyors to be ready. After initiation of the survey, an end of day session with all surveyors followed to discuss challenges and provide recommendations.

Annex III – Data Management

Data Entry and Analysis

The data collected was entered to Kobo Toolbox Online Survey platform to design and gather the data online and to proceed with analysis from a gender lens perspective. Kobo Toolbox software was used for data entry and analysis to be used by NCLW which will build a knowledge database for further development and regular yearly updates.

After finishing the survey, the Database Officer examined the data and cleaned the database before starting the analysis.

COVID-19 Pandemic Adjustments

The global COVID-19 pandemic has caused restrictions on the ability (and safety) of people meeting in public spaces and in-person, with consequences for the conduct of research fieldwork. Additionally, many organizations are working remotely. It was not possible for the researcher to travel to support the fieldwork.

Ethical Considerations

The research will be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for confidentiality of sources, respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. The consultancy team will respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, will ensure that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source and will validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information.



"The Barometer data was collected by a team of experts. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the consultant and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Commission for Lebanese Women. "