Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance
Annual Report
2018-2019

Gender, bodies, data, and surveillance

The Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance (DC GIG) has been working on the broader thematic of data, surveillance, gender, bodies, facial recognition and policies in various spaces and with different demographics through the year. As one of the key emerging issues in the digital rights and technology policies and policy spaces in recent years, it's imperative to look at data, bodies, facial recognition and surveillance through a gender and sexuality lens and ensure that this is addressed in the context of internet governance. This is particularly relevant and urgent with an increasing number of cities and countries looking for digital solutions to safety concerns by proposing smart city initiatives, and allocating millions of dollars for the same, especially in the name of women's safety.

1. The DC GIG session at the 2019 IGF was an essential step in taking this conversation to the global level. We used the session to make it a learning space where research on bodies, data, surveillance, gender, and facial recognition through a feminist lens was shared, and then discussed by discussants and participants from different parts of the world belonging to different stakeholder groups from the perspective of national, regional, and global internet governance and digital rights policies. The response to the session and the degree of engagement showed us that this was not just a national or regional concern but a global one.

2. We did two day-long convenings, Let's Face It, in Mumbai and Kolkata, India in December 2019 and February 2020 respectively. In each city, activists, researchers, and lawyers working on gender-based violence, sexuality rights, or digital rights, or with communities of women, came together to:

   - deep dive into researches on the technologies of facial recognition and mass data collection that are being proposed, and the concerns surrounding them
   - start to evolve a position on what could be a nuanced response to the use of such technologies in the context of women's safety and safe city initiatives, which will feed into policies around the same, and into the larger conversations and policy discussions on right to privacy and digital rights.

3. Future Unclear (12-13 December 2019) was a two-day national learning lab where the participants dove into the tangled web of relationships between our (physical) and our (digital) devices, and the unclear future around things that are part of our daily digital lives: data, privacy, expression, surveillance, artificial intelligence etc. The lab showcased ground-breaking research and knowledge in the Indian context on the

following issues - and brought up new ways of looking at and thinking about these:

- **Bodies, Data and Protection**: Data protection policies and regulations typically aim to protect data. But are bodies adequately represented in these discourses?
- **Online Pornography and Sexual Expression**: How can we redefine online pornography, which is always seen – and used – as an excuse to curtail expression?
- **Hate Speech and Misinformation**: While new evidence shows how hate speech insidiously courses through platforms from TikTok to WhatsApp, what is the role of platforms in preventing this?
- **Facial Recognition and Women's Safety**: Eight cities in India will soon launch facial recognition programs as part of safe city programs. But are these technologies themselves 'safe'?

The lab approached these issues conceptually and critically, to unpack the narratives, interests, and values shaping conversations around these issues, and to surface the invisible or marginalised narratives and perspectives, often of women, those belonging to marginalised genders and sexualities, and other oppressed communities, with an aim to identify policy pathways to centre the user's rights and interests above all.

We will be taking this thematic forward in the DC's work in the coming year as well. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments and companies are developing apps to track and control the spread of the disease without sufficient policies around the same to ensure user privacy and data protection. This, among other things, needs to be addressed under the larger gamut of bodies, data, and surveillance.

Research and Capacity Building

DC GIG has also produced research on the mechanism of Gender Report Cards. Gender Report Cards are a mechanism introduced by the Association for Progressive Communications 8 years ago. The Gender Report Cards are to be filled in by session organisers, answering four questions:

- Number of female participants
- Number of female speakers in the session
- Number of female moderators in the session
- Relevance of gender as a topic to the session and was it addressed in the session.

Having data from these report cards would give us an estimate of female participation at the IGF, and can be used to monitor this year after year, and take steps to make the space and discussions more diverse and inclusive.

This research on the Gender Report Cards was done with the aim of identifying the gaps in the mechanism, and recommend steps to improve on the Gender Report Cards to close these gaps

and expand the purview of gender in the report cards as well as the internet governance spaces and conversations. This research has been peer-reviewed. We are in the process of incorporating the feedback from the reviews.

We also contributed to a module on Internet Governance and Sexuality. This module examined the intersection of internet governance and sexuality through an intersectional, feminist, and multistakeholder lens with the aim of capacity building. It brings sexuality into the domains of change and dialogue of internet governance, and ultimately ties to the core idea of putting bodies back into the core of our discussions of the next generation of the internet and technology. This is in keeping with DC GIG's larger theme mentioned above.

The module was then tested and used in the Internet Governance and Sexuality workshops at the 2019 Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum in Vladivostok. A similar workshop was done in Berlin on Day 0 of the 2019 IGF (25 November 2019) at an external venue close to the IGF venue. This was followed up with a feminist internet pop-up event (27 November 2019) which was widely attended by participants from the IGF. The pop-up event served as a safe space for discussions around gender, internet governance, sexuality, and policies.

Gender Report Cards

DC GIG has been analysing the Gender Report Cards submitted by session organisers and producing reports on the same. These report cards and the analysis report help us track the gender distribution of participants, speakers, and moderators at the sessions, and relevance of gender as a topic from year to year at the IGF. This has been produced for the 2018 Paris IGF.

Sexual Harassment Policy (draft)

We have also created a draft sexual harassment policy for the internet governance spaces, both online and offline. The discussions on the next steps on implementing this policy are still taking place. This will be part of the DC GIG work in the coming year. It is essential that we have a robust sexual harassment policy and the mechanisms necessary to implement the same in place to ensure that the internet governance space are safe for all.

Expanding the purview of 'gender'

Finally, in keeping with the paper submitted by DC GIG on the Sustainable Development Goals and the internet governance, we are advocating to expand the understanding of gender in the internet governance spaces and conversations. As of now, it's been restricted to men, women, or 'other' with no provision for self-identification. There is also a need to ensure that the process of coming to the IGF and the space itself is conducive for increasing diversity at the policy discussion tables. This is a much more long term process, but one that is essential to meet Goal 5 on gender equality.