

# Gender Violence in Virtual Sexual Harassment on Social Media Telegram

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## **Abstract**

The continuous occurrence of revolution in society will certainly lead to changes and developments in the community. Information and communication factors are one of the drivers of the revolution in society. The more information and communication activities carried out by the community will certainly lead to the development of the community. The development of information and communication in the community does not only have a positive impact on the development of the community's social system, but it turns out that the development of this information and communication can become a tool to take negative actions such as committing acts of gender-based violence. Social media is a media space that is accessed and used to get information and communicate easily by reaching other people passively. But unfortunately, social media is also used as one of the tools used to carry out acts of gender-based violence that are more directed to acts of sexual harassment in virtual form with social media. One of the social media used as a tool to commit sexual harassment is telegram which should be used as a tool to communicate. This research was conducted to find out the factors and reasons that encourage perpetrators to commit acts of virtual sexual harassment and with this research it is hoped that it can increase public awareness and understanding of gender equality so that there are no many acts of gender-based sexual harassment.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Violence, Gender, Information, Communication*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The virtual world and social media are a space that makes it easy for individuals and society to reach more connections and networks with other people out there. The role of social media in the 5.0 era had a very large influence on the community, especially in social activities. It is undeniable that at this time there are a lot of social media users. This is driven by the growing and rapid development of internet connections in all countries, which results in individuals being able to connect with each other even though they are hindered by distance. The public's need for information and communication quickly is the driving force behind the increasing use of social media and the internet throughout the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic which began in early 2020 gave very significant changes to the aspects and habits that exist in the community, especially changes with the shift in people's habits which previously relied more on conventional activities and then shifted to the use of digital facilities, especially social media. Rapid changes as a result of this pandemic which makes changes in habits and culture in the community change rapidly to social media. This certainly provides a positive value for the community, because the increasingly widespread use of social media coupled with the advancement of the internet will certainly make it easier for the community to carry out their activities without having to spend extra energy. The benefits of

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social media to the community can be seen from the form of community activities themselves. For example, from this social media, a woman can open a clothing business without opening a clothing boutique because she uses social media and the internet as a space to make sales transactions, sell food online, find out and register job vacancies through social media without having to go to different places. opening vacancies, and many more positive things that exist on social media and the internet.

From a positive impact, there will always be a negative impact as well. Just like this social media, although this social media has a positive influence and is very helpful for people, basically social media has a negative impact on social media users themselves. One of the impacts of this social media is the increasing and widespread cases of harassment against individual gender on social media. Acts of gender harassment, especially sexual harassment, are usually carried out directly, both in open and closed spaces. However, along with the development of the internet and social media, sexual harassment itself can be found in online networking spaces, namely by using several social media as tools to carry out these immoral acts. This of course gives worries and fears to people who are more dominant in spending their time on social media. Especially for women who are always more victims of sexual harassment by irresponsible and ethical perpetrators. Virtual sexual harassment certainly violates ethics in using social media and the internet.

Based on data (UNHCR) which is the United Nations High Commissioner ([unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html](http://unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html)) it states that acts of gender violence in the form of harassment on social media are forms of violence perpetrated by individuals based on sex and gender because the person has a certain gender orientation and power in the community environment. Sexual harassment that is carried out virtually is also included in the form of violence that has an impact on suffering in the form of physical, mental or into the form of sexuality of the individual's intimate organs. Of course this will make individuals who experience gendered violence in the form of harassment feel not free in carrying out their daily lives because they feel they do not deserve to be in the midst of community life.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Indonesia has experienced a very significant increase in cases of gender violence, especially in the form of sexual harassment. As for the form of sexual harassment that is carried out by individuals on the internet by making obscene and inappropriate comments that tend to lead to a person's body shape. Supposedly, in interacting and using the internet, especially in social media, there must be ethics because every social media user comes from a different country, language, culture, and customs, each of which has different views. perpetrators of Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) carry out acts of harassment on social media driven by the physical appearance possessed by victims of online sexual harassment. Moreover, social media is a place for the community to actualize themselves so that they are comfortable and beautiful to be seen by others (Felita et al., 2016). Where everyone who has just met will tend to see how the individual looks (*personal appearance of attraction*) (Dewi, 13 2013). This view encourages someone to commit acts of gender violence, especially in the form of sexual harassment by commenting on the appearance of social media users with the aim of harassing them based on their gender and sexual orientation.

Based on the description above, the purpose of writing this article is to analyze how the influence of social media on crimes of gender violence, especially on sexual harassment based on gender. The focus of social media which will be the place to conduct an analysis of sexual harassment based on gender is telegram social media and how to overcome gender-based forms of sexual harassment that exist on telegram social media whose function should be as a medium for interaction between individuals with other individuals.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

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This study utilizes descriptive qualitative research methods by using a phenomenological study of the community and all social aspects related to the research. The use of this research method seeks to study how gender violence, especially sexual harassment, can occur in the realm of social media, especially telegrams. The goal is to obtain detailed and in-depth information about social phenomena that exist in society. The data collection technique uses library research techniques and secondary data based on news, journals, books, or media interactions that are related to the issues raised in the research. The use of phenomenological studies carried out in this study aims to obtain detailed information, especially on individual behavior in using social media. Then the author also made observations on the studied social media and reviewed them which then produced detailed and new data and words.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **The Advancement of Social Media in Communication and Information**

Along with the times and the scope of the internet network which is increasingly widespread throughout the world, it certainly leads to the development of social media. At the beginning, before getting to know the internet network, the community interacted and exchanged information only by exchanging messages or using print media such as newspapers and magazines where any information contained in it could not be received directly at the same time. This is because if you want to get information or interact with other people, you have to waste a long time so that information and messages are conveyed.

However, with the internet network that is increasingly expanding to almost all over the world, it will certainly help the community to find the latest information quickly and carry out a conversation remotely with other people in an efficient time without having to wait a few days to be answered. Therefore, in 2022, there are a lot of social media that can be accessed and used by the community for means of conducting long-distance conversations or to get the latest information directly.

Based on research results taken from the Data Report, it was analyzed that social media users in Indonesia in January 2022 reached 191.1 million social media users, where the data in 2022 will certainly increase from the previous year's data in 2021. The difference between social media users in 2022 and 2021 almost 21 million people (12.6%) social media users. This is certainly driven by the number of users who access the internet network. Because based on the data reported by *We Are Social*, internet users in Indonesia as of January 2022, there were as many as 204.7 million internet accesses, an increase of 1.03% from the previous year in 2021.

The social media that are most frequently accessed and used by the Indonesian people are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, WhatsApp, Twitter, Line, Telegram, and other social media. These social media are one of the tools that are widely used by the community to interact remotely and get the latest information or news instantly. Of course, with the many social media that are around the community, it will help all their activities and activities, especially in consuming information that is hot and new.

The increase in users of social media is certainly driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, which makes each individual do more activities and interactions virtually with the aim of preventing massive virus transmission when carrying out activities directly and in crowds. Based on Villanueva's view, social media itself is part of the internet that has the power and function to provide information to all who use it. According to Komnas Perempuan data (8 March 2022) acts of sexual harassment experienced a very significant increase with a total of 3,838 complaints, which increased by 50% from the previous year in 2021.

With the advancement of technology and the internet that can help someone in accessing social media, it turns out to be very impactful as well, which will result in new

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phenomena that cannot be imagined on the flow of information and communication development. Of course, if this continues, social media will become a medium that replaces the existence of conventional mass media in the form of print in conveying information and communication.

### **Telegram as a Media for Gender-Based Sexual Harassment**

Developments in technology and the existence of modernization certainly have an influence on the media used as a tool to find out the latest information and tools to communicate. Telegram itself is a social media that is used as a tool to communicate remotely so that each individual can be connected to each other even in places that are far from each other. Telegram itself is a social media originating from Russia which was released in 2013. However, the arrival of telegram media as a tool that helps the community in communicating has in fact had a negative impact on integrity, especially on rights and gender inequality in the use of social media.

The gender inequality referred to here, namely the use of telegrams themselves at present has turned out to be a tool to satisfy mere lust, especially the lust of men. Virtually sexual harassment behavior on social media is not only on social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and other media. However, telegram itself has also become a medium that has begun to be contaminated with the existence of virtual sex criminals. This makes individuals a little afraid and wary when meeting new people in telegram social media, especially those who are female. This of course aims to prevent them from becoming victims of this virtual sexual harassment act.

The number of gender-based sexual harassment acts on Telegram is increasing due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Because the pandemic itself turns out to make people who stay at home spend more of their free time in the internet network room to find out something new or get new people from existing social media such as telegram social media. But unfortunately, not everyone has a positive view on the use of this telegram because there are definitely people who use the telegram media as a tool to satisfy their lusts without thinking about how the impact will result from these actions, especially to victims of virtual crimes, namely sexual harassment in the community telegram.

On Telegram social media itself there is a channel and group that can be used by all Telegram users. However, these channels and groups are used by perpetrators of virtual sexual harassment as a means to carry out acts of harassment. The channel in question is an anonymous bot. Anonymous chat is a room that is managed by bots automatically. Anonymous has a function to search for relationships or friends widely and randomly without having to know the real identity of the user. Of course, with the privacy of the identity data of the perpetrator, it makes the perpetrator arbitrarily use the telegram as a tool to carry out his actions because he feels that the real identity of the perpetrator will not be known. Of course, with acts of harassment like this it will make users of Telegram unable to calm down in carrying out a communication with other people, especially to people who have just been known.

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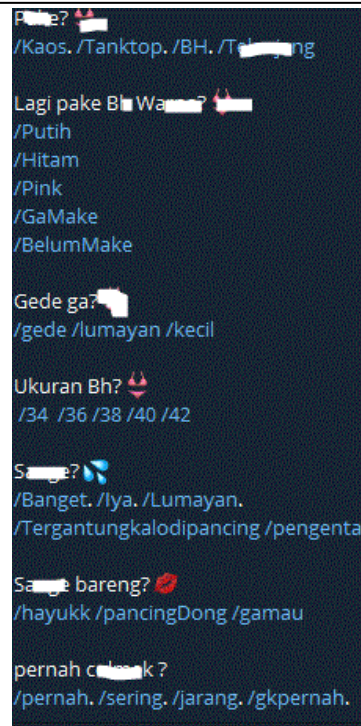


Figure 1. Privacy questions to victims on Telegram  
(Source: Anonymous bot)

Figure 1 shows actions that are included in violence and harassment using anonymous chat to a woman. Because in this interaction the perpetrator asks how the victim's privacy is included in the unethical part, such as asking the victim's underwear and asking how the victim's desire was at that time. From this it can be understood that the telegram social media, whose basic function is as a tool to communicate and interact remotely, must be tainted with security by the virtual presence of perpetrators of sexual harassment.

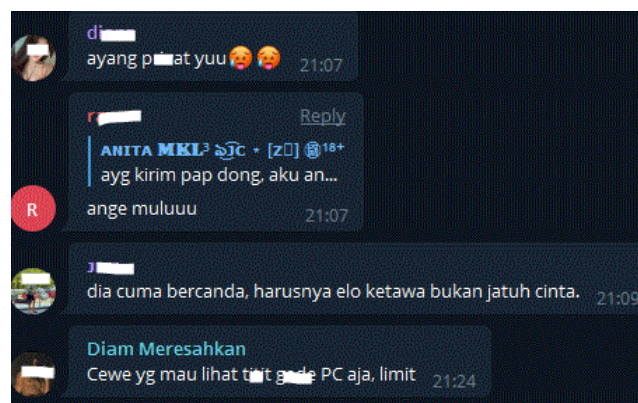


Figure 2. Male perpetrators who wish to show their genitals  
(Source: PT Preman Michat Group (telegram))

Apart from asking about the underwear used by the victims, the perpetrators of sexual harassment sometimes also offered to show their body parts, especially the genitals. In Figure 2, it explains how a man offers his body part, namely his genitals, to women who want to see it. Of course this is something that is unethical and unsightly in carrying out an act of communication.



Figure 3. Perpetrators who want to offer & hear sighs from victims  
(Source: Oh Saturnur Group (telegram))

Not only that, the perpetrators of acts of sexual harassment committed on social media telegrams often also offer to give their voices to the victims, which is a very inappropriate act when interacting, especially with strangers. Apart from these things, sometimes the perpetrators of acts of sexual harassment on Instagram often ask their victims to send their sighs or body parts, especially parts that are very private for victims who tend to be women.

Basically, the perpetrators who have the urge to commit acts of sexual harassment on telegram social media are due to the existence of several telegram groups that focus on discussions that lead to adult or pornographic matters. In such groups, telegrams can certainly form an individual character who is curious about things related to pornography. This is what drives them to want to commit acts of virtual sexual harassment. Because by doing these actions, they feel that the feelings that are driven by lust can be paid off, although of course it is very detrimental to others.

According to Chazizah Gusnita, who is a criminologist at Budi Luhur University, the existence and circulation of pornographic groups or discussion rooms which are places for perpetrators of sexual violence on social media is a form of negative implication of the existence of the internet. Because it can be used as a ground to carry out sexual crime transactions that both provide benefits. The advantage they get from this act of sexual violence is a form of fear for the victims and the trauma that becomes a delicious meal for those who are perpetrators of virtual sexual violence.

The presence of perpetrators of sexual harassment based on gender and acts of terror, whose victims are relatively women, certainly has a negative impact on the media platforms used. the negative impact is that it reduces users of the telegram media itself. Because these users feel that their security and privacy in using telegram social media for interaction and communication is very vulnerable to being used as a tool to satisfy perpetrators of sexual harassment, which makes the interaction process in social media disrupted due to unsafe interaction spaces.

### **The Government's Response to Sexual Crimes on Social Media, Especially Telegram**

In order to prevent the spread of acts of violence against sexual harassment virtually on social media, especially telegrams, an anticipation or policy is needed by state officials. The Indonesian government certainly has aspirations to eliminate all acts of violence, especially acts of sexual harassment committed on social media. Therefore, to overcome the problem of sexual

harassment that occurs on social media, the government issues a regulation or policy to protect the community, especially women and children from acts of sexual harassment.

The government itself issued a constitution that stipulates protection against acts of sexual harassment, one of which is the Criminal Code Law which is contained in article 284 of the Criminal Code which is the legal basis for acts of rape. In addition, the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 35 of 2014 is a law that is used as a bulwark of security against acts of sexual violence, especially to children. Law Number 35 of 2014 is an amendment to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning child protection.

Femmy Eka Kartika Putri herself, who is the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture, deeply regrets all acts of violence, especially acts of sexual harassment that occur in the community. Femmy herself wants all perpetrators of sexual violence to be given a commensurate and severe punishment by giving a prison sentence of 15-20 years. Because based on Perpu 1/2016 which has been ratified and stipulated as Law 17 of 2016 it states that all acts of sexual violence with more than one victim, causing serious injuries, mental disorders, trauma, loss of reproductive organs, and even death, must be treated as criminal acts. punishable by death and life imprisonment.

Policies and rules that are given to anti-sexual harassment, especially on social media, are certainly a very important basis. However, providing education to the family is also very important because the family itself is a group that is very close to the child or individual who acts as a bulwark to protect children from unwanted things, especially sexual violence. Not only for family groups, but the government must also provide socialization to the community on how to overcome and prevent acts of violence from occurring around the community. The socialization must be carried out thoroughly and evenly to all elements of society and every existing gender.

The role of the school is also in overcoming acts of sexual harassment, because the school itself is a place for children to take examples and knowledge about what is right and wrong in taking an action. Schools can also provide education to all children about how to use social media and the internet in accordance with their functions so that they do not become boomerangs that harm others and themselves.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The development of technology and knowledge, especially in social media, does not only have a positive impact on society, but in this development it has a negative impact based on the use and misuse of the function of any social media that is not used properly. Social media that should be used as a means for interaction and communication can be used as a platform that harms other people, especially female users. Because social media platforms can be used as a tool to commit acts of sexual harassment, such as what happened on telegram social media.

Acts of violence that occur on social media platforms are indeed still a job for the government and the Indonesian people, which cannot be easily eliminated in the midst of society. However, if the government and the community have a concern and work together to achieve integrity in the community, the aspiration to eliminate or reduce acts of sexual harassment in the community and social media will run easily because of the unity of the elements.

The existence of education and outreach supported by government regulations will certainly make the public understand the importance of maintaining state stability, especially on gender equality. Awareness of men is also needed so that it is not easy to become perpetrators of virtual sexual harassment on social media, especially social media used to interact with each other. Because as is known, men tend to be perpetrators of virtual sexual harassment based on gender violence.

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