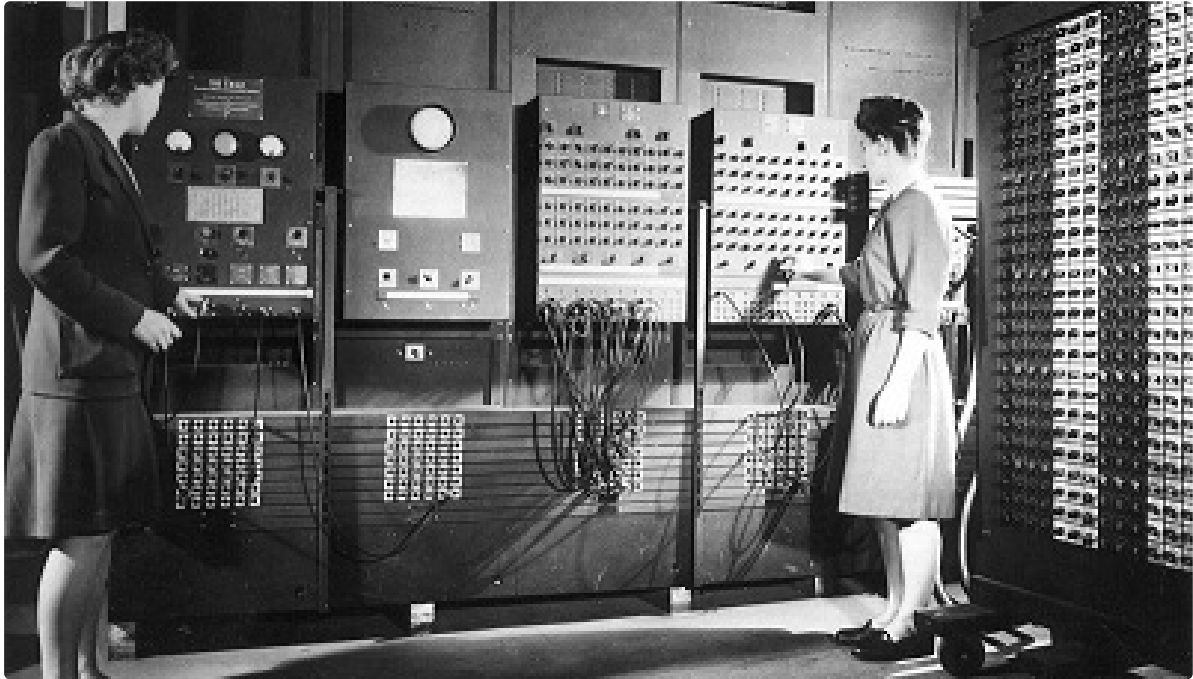


Technology, Violence, Vendetta



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Samhita Barooah 19 May 2017 10558 views

During a recent [workshop](#) on violence [against](#) women I participated in a discussion around technology [as](#) a cause of violence [against](#) women. Our growing dependency on technology within private and public spaces has enabled numerous choices for women but it has also paralysed their freedom of choice, movement and decision-making. [Social](#) media is a great connecting force but the same platform is breaking relationships, creating huge expectations and enslaving people to perform something which they are not meant for.

[Technology](#) is a boon for saving time, energy and resources but in recent years such [technology](#) is only trapping people with time consuming activities, draining their mental energy and shrinking their resources. [Technology](#) is the new tool of control for patriarchy. Whether it is used to expose somebody or it is used to protect and paralyse someone, [technology](#) plays a huge role. It is easier to frame someone through the media, it is easier to take pictures of people without their knowledge in both public and sometimes within private spaces and use such pictures to blackmail for ransom.

Knowledge of technology is also a privilege of patriarchy. There are very few producers of technology who are women and also almost 90 percent of the maintenance personnel are men when it comes to any form of technological equipment meant for household, public or [community](#) use. Women are the soft targets through which technology is promoted, projected and produced. Women have access to mobile phones not just for their own communication practices but it is also a tool of surveillance which tracks a woman's mobility constantly. She has to keep on informing about her whereabouts through the phone. There are very common incidences, when working women do not respond to the phone calls of their families and intimate partners they have to face severe consequences at their respective homes. Such consequences invariably restrict them from working outside their homes. The access, availability and outreach of technology are becoming so widespread that people are still mesmerised by its glory and glamour in both urban and rural spaces. But in reality technology is indeed the new weapon of slavery, [war](#), destruction and demobilisation.

When we discuss violence it permeates down to personal and public spaces. Women are both at receiving end of being part of perpetrating violence and also surviving such violence. Now commenting on women's choice of words, dress, habits, food and choice of partners is not new in today's digitised world. Recently a renowned human [rights](#) activist Bondita [Acharya](#) was abused through the internet for raising her voice [against](#) religious fundamentalism getting high handed on personal food choices. Any woman who raises her head [against](#) the normative regimes becomes a misfit in the so-called educated, evolving and electronically advanced society. Bondita's fault was that she critiqued the [community](#) from within and managed to question the cultural vigilantism which affected religious minority communities from the same society where she worked. Any woman and for that matter even men who have stood up for the choices of women, equal [rights](#) of women, trans persons, non-conforming women or men have always faced ruthless resistance from different directions. Comments get nastier, character gets assassinated, attitudes get deflated, personalities get crushed and even essence of being sensitive gets seriously distorted. Such factors [lead](#) to severe trauma, memory loss, skill distortion and have severe mental health conditions.

[As](#) a woman it becomes even more suffocating when women are used [as](#) vehicles of patriarchal domination and masculine chauvinism. Gender inclusive policies, practices and processes are largely used [as](#) a namesake parameter to ensure the politically correct disposition for institutions and individuals within positions of power and privilege. Recently I got a call from a so-called well-wisher who told me very subtly to be a vegan rather than being otherwise. She justified how it is important to be in the ruling majority and elitist [policy](#) decisions are fair. She also said that ‘what is the harm in a one-God nation’ when all other countries are doing the same. She said that if I was a [Muslim](#) woman in a [Muslim](#) fundamentalist nation will I have the same freedom of expression [as](#) I have now in [India](#). I argued is it a competition of showing how fundamentalist [as](#) a nation we are? We closed the conversation with discontent and major disagreements. But such issues are looming large in our personal and virtually social lives quite often. It becomes very easy to communicate through phones and get away with the violent thoughts. Vendetta is also being spread through technology constantly. It is a world of differences and diversity but when people are homogenised to [fight against](#) the differences then the consequences are violent. Most of the social media platforms are these days spreading virtual vendetta [against](#) the intricate intersections of class, caste, tribe, race, gender, disability, linguistic and geographical vulnerabilities. They collectivise people on one ground but also alienates one from the other in most of the instances.

We are constantly struggling to find space within our own comfort zones and at times away from such zones. In such a struggle women's dilemmas to negotiate increases manifold. Her existence gets enslaved within the contours of modern [technology](#), acts of violence and manifestations of ruthless vendetta. Somewhere they are either part of such dynamic force to survive and in most cases they perish while resisting such forces. [Technology](#) becomes problematic when it caters to the needs of a privileged few and leads to violent effects on women specifically. In a progressive era of enormous possibilities through [technology](#), women's own understanding, use and practice of [technology](#) is far more impactful than women being used [as](#) the object of technological experiments.

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