

Judicial Interpretation and Enforcement Challenges in Addressing Cyber Crimes Against Women in India

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Abstract: *The rapid growth of internet use in India has been accompanied by a worrying surge in cyber crimes targeting women. This paper examines how the Indian judiciary has interpreted and applied laws to address online violence against women, and the challenges faced in enforcing those laws. It outlines the legal framework – including key provisions of the Information Technology Act 2000 and the Indian Penal Code – and analyzes landmark judgments such as Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015), which struck down the overbroad Section 66A of the IT Act, Kirti Vashisht v. State (Delhi HC, 2019), which instituted “Zero FIR” for cyber offences, and X v. Union of India (Madras HC, 2025), which established robust takedown mechanisms for intimate images. Despite these legal tools and progressive court interventions, enforcement on the ground remains fraught with technical hurdles, jurisdictional issues, under-reporting, and police apathy. The analysis reveals significant gaps between laws on paper and their implementation. The paper concludes with recommendations for a more gender-sensitive cyber enforcement regime – including legal reforms, specialized investigative units, better inter-agency coordination, and victim-centric procedures – to ensure that women’s rights to safety, privacy, and dignity are better protected online.*

Keywords: Cyber Crimes Against Women; Online Harassment; Information Technology Act 2000; Judicial Activism; Enforcement Challenges; Digital Safety

