



WOMEN AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

Misogyny: the manosphere and online content Inquiry

June 2025

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWN UK) is the only national Muslim women's charity in Britain (www.mwnuk.co.uk) that has been advancing equality, social justice and promoting women's empowerment since 2003. We want Muslim women and girls to be able to exercise their rights, choices and voices and lead safe and authentic lives. We achieve our aims through the support we provide via our national helpline (www.mwnhelpline.co.uk), education, research, and advocacy. Key issues that we focus on include VAWG, anti-Muslim hatred / discrimination, women's health (including mental health) and women's economic and civic empowerment. We also have a national membership that includes women of other faiths or of no faith and men who support our work.

1. How prevalent are misogynistic views, attitudes, and behaviour among young people today, particularly in educational settings? What examples are there of these views, attitudes and behaviours? In what other settings are such behaviours prevalent?

Misogyny remains a pervasive issue among young people today, including within educational settings. It is deeply embedded in societal structures and continues to be passed down through generations. While some public narratives may disproportionately associate these attitudes with certain ethnic or religious groups, misogyny is a broader societal problem that persists wherever it goes unchallenged—whether due to weak legal protections, inadequate education, or the absence of community accountability. Often, it is normalised and hidden behind cultural expectations or everyday family dynamics.

In schools, misogynistic attitudes manifest in harmful ways. A 2021 Ofsted review revealed that girls in secondary education frequently face sexual harassment, such as being pressured to send explicit images or experiencing unwanted touching—behaviours many students now

see as part of everyday life. This is especially troubling in schools that lack the training, resources, or policies to tackle such issues effectively.

For British Muslim girls, these challenges are often compounded by the intersection of misogyny with racial and cultural stereotyping. When they assert themselves, they are sometimes perceived as problematic or disrespectful. These stereotypes can influence how they are treated by both peers and educators, often resulting in their voices being dismissed, misunderstood, or silenced.

In some families and communities, young people—especially girls—are exposed to misogynistic expectations from an early age. These may include restrictions on dress, behaviour, or social interaction, often justified through cultural norms or distorted religious interpretations. Girls who challenge or push back against these norms may be labelled as disrespectful, rebellious, or a source of shame. These messages are internalised by both boys and girls, shaping how they interact with one another in schools, universities, and social spaces. This creates an environment where boys may feel entitled to control or police girls' behaviour, and where girls are expected to stay silent to maintain family or community "honour." These harmful dynamics follow them into educational settings and reinforce the idea that gender inequality is normal or even divinely sanctioned.

For Muslim girls in particular, this means navigating not only wider societal sexism, but also the specific pressures of being judged through both Islamophobic and patriarchal lenses—expected to represent their faith while being denied agency within it.

Beyond schools, these attitudes are also prevalent in religious and digital spaces. Online influencers and self-styled "street preachers" increasingly use Islamic language to promote patriarchal ideas, presenting male dominance as religiously mandated. These messages have significant influence, particularly among young men, and often spill back into homes, schools, and places of worship, reinforcing harmful gender norms and limiting the rights and freedoms of women and girls.

2. How are social media influencers shaping attitudes towards women and girls?

Social media influencers—especially those with extreme or polarising views—are playing an increasingly powerful role in shaping young people's perceptions of gender. Influencers like Andrew Tate have amassed millions of followers by promoting a version of masculinity

rooted in dominance, aggression, and control. His messages—often disguised as “empowerment”—glorify female submission and reinforce harmful gender norms.

His influence is particularly strong among boys, including many young British Muslim boys, who regularly consume his content. In communities where patriarchal attitudes already exist or go unchallenged, these influencers serve as digital reinforcements of existing gender hierarchies.

MWNUK members have shared examples of how this content is reshaping the behaviour of boys and young men, including within their own families:

“We are noticing a change in how our boys talk about women — including us, their own mothers. They’re becoming more dismissive, more aggressive... These ideas are not coming from us or the mosque — they’re coming from social media.”

This is especially troubling in environments where religious or educational institutions have not actively addressed gender equity. In such spaces, women who resist patriarchal norms may be labelled as outsiders or “bad,” while influencers who blend religious symbolism with misogynistic messaging appeal to vulnerable boys searching for identity and belonging.

We are increasingly alarmed by the rise of TikTok “sheikhs” and self-styled religious influencers. These figures often exploit religious illiteracy among young audiences to push simplistic, distorted interpretations of Islam—especially in relation to gender roles, career women, and “Islamic” masculinity.

One prominent example is Andrew Tate, who has publicly embraced Islam and blended his hyper-masculine ideology with religious language. His messaging frames male control and female submission as spiritually sanctioned, normalising abuse and coercion as part of a “righteous” lifestyle.

We saw this dynamic play out when we issued a press release on preacher Mohammed Hoblos. His YouTube lectures contain deeply troubling statements—for instance, that a person who commits murder, rape (including child rape), and other horrific crimes is “better” in the eyes of God than someone who fails to pray. He goes as far as saying that missing a single prayer makes someone worse than a murderer or paedophile.

These views are not just fringe—they are dangerous. They misuse Islamic teachings to justify misogyny and violence, and they are being consumed uncritically by young people who lack the religious education to question them.

The backlash we received from some Muslim men in response to our press release illustrates a wider reluctance to interrogate harmful narratives being framed as religious truth. Rather than engaging with the concerns raised, the focus was on defending the speaker—further highlighting the need to create safe spaces where Muslim women and girls can challenge abuse cloaked in religious authority.

3. How is content on social media and online, such as violent pornography, contributing to sexist and misogynistic attitudes and behaviour and violence against women and girls both online and offline?

Violent pornography, widely available online, plays a major role in reinforcing misogynistic attitudes. It desensitises users to abuse, normalises the objectification of women, and skews perceptions of consent and relationships. This is particularly dangerous in communities—such as some British Muslim ones—where conversations around sex and consent are considered taboo.

In such environments, there exists a “double silence”: sexuality is not openly discussed, and those who experience abuse often feel too ashamed or afraid to speak out. As a result, harmful behaviours are rarely addressed—only endured or concealed behind notions of cultural respectability and shame.

When this silence is combined with the rise of online preachers who promote control over women as a religious duty, the result is a deeply embedded culture of internalised misogyny and fear.

MWNUK members have shared direct testimonies that highlight this disturbing trend. One parent described the shift in her son’s behaviour, despite raising him in a secular and gender-equitable household:

“He told me that feminism is ruining Islam and that women who speak up are going against God. He used to be so gentle. Now he mocks his sisters when they talk about school or their opinions.”

This example illustrates how easily digital misogyny can override even progressive home environments. Online content that distorts Islamic teachings to uphold patriarchal control is having real-world impacts on families and communities.

A secondary school teacher and MWNUK member also raised concerns about the escalating risk to Muslim girls:

“I’m more worried about my Muslim girls than ever before. There’s a normalisation happening—boys are slut-shaming them or threatening to expose them if they express views that challenge what the boys are watching online. It’s like they’ve absorbed this incel movement mindset, and it’s terrifying.”

Male students, influenced by online misogynistic content, are increasingly policing the behaviour of female peers. Girls who speak up—about feminism, faith, or personal autonomy—face threats of exposure, shaming, or being labelled as dishonourable.

This creates a chilling effect: girls become quieter, more cautious, and less likely to participate in class discussions. The fear of being targeted—online or within their communities—silences them before they even have a chance to speak.

One MWNUK member who works closely with young people shared that she has seen a noticeable rise in boys consuming violent pornography of—not just through explicit websites, but also via mainstream social media platforms. She explained that this content is becoming increasingly normalised, with boys boasting and sharing material that degrades women and treats girls as sexual commodities openly.

“ One young boy I work with has openly admitted to not only watching porn since the age 10 on his phone.”

This shift is not just about access to pornography—it’s about a wider cultural change, where violent, dehumanising views of women are seeping into everyday interactions between boys and girls, both online and offline.

These examples show that digital misogyny does not remain online. It infiltrates schools, friendships, families, and places of worship. It reinforces harmful power dynamics and demands a serious, urgent response—not only from schools, but also from faith communities and digital platforms themselves.

4. What role are social media companies and online platforms playing in the promotion of misogynistic content?

Social media platforms—such as TikTok, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter)—play a central role in amplifying misogynistic content. Their algorithms often prioritise content that provokes strong emotional reactions, meaning that inflammatory or sexist messages are more likely to go viral. Influencers who package misogyny as “truth-telling” or “empowerment” frequently gain traction, especially among young male users¹¹.

Although these companies claim to enforce community guidelines, enforcement is often inconsistent. Harmful content is frequently reshared by fan accounts or reposted under different names, making it difficult to contain. MWNUK members have observed that this content resonates with young boys for several reasons:

- The speakers present themselves as religious and authoritative.
- They offer a version of masculinity that appears powerful and appealing.
- Their messages tap into feelings of frustration, confusion, or insecurity around identity.

In families and communities where gender equity education is lacking, these digital voices often become the most dominant source of gender socialisation.

5. Who is gaining financially from the marketisation of misogyny online, and how? What policies do social media companies have in place for deplatforming or demonetising this content and are they enforced?

Misogyny has become a lucrative digital enterprise. Influencers like Andrew Tate have monetised their platforms through various revenue streams, including:

- Subscriptions to “alpha male” or “manhood” coaching programmes
- Donations and affiliate marketing schemes
- Monetised livestreams and branded merchandise
- Advertising revenue (prior to bans or demonetisation)

Similarly, some male “street preachers” solicit donations while promoting patriarchal ideologies under the guise of religious teachings. Despite lacking formal scholarly

credentials, their use of religious language lends them an air of authority that resonates with certain audiences.

While social media companies claim to have policies for deplatforming or demonetising harmful content, enforcement remains inconsistent. Many banned individuals reappear under new identities or migrate to alternative platforms. This persistent visibility underscores both the commercial appeal of misogyny and the systemic shortcomings in regulating it effectively.

6. What strategies and interventions are needed to address misogyny among young people?

Addressing misogyny among young people requires a holistic, intersectional, and culturally sensitive approach. Key strategies include:

- Community engagement: Facilitated workshops with families, faith leaders, and youth groups can challenge harmful norms and foster intergenerational dialogue.
- Digital literacy training: Young people must be equipped to critically assess online content. Schools should go beyond core subjects to address all forms of discrimination, including misogyny.
- Positive male role models: Boys need to see examples of masculinity that embrace both strength and empathy.
- Safe spaces for girls: Culturally appropriate, stigma-free environments are essential for girls to express themselves and seek support without fear.

It is also essential to recognise that Muslim women face unique challenges in digital spaces. According to MWNUK's 2024 Hate Crime Report, 42% of Muslims reported experiencing online hostility, yet 80% of those affected did not report these incidents. This silence is not due to apathy, but to fear—fear of retaliation, of not being believed, or of being further marginalised. For Muslim women, who already navigate offline barriers to safety and visibility, the digital world often replicates and amplifies these inequalities.

To address misogyny among young people, we need feminist strategies that centre the experiences of women and girls—particularly those from marginalised communities. This includes challenging harmful gender norms, confronting distorted narratives around culture

and religion, and ensuring that all young people have access to inclusive, rights-based education on gender, consent, and respect.

Digital spaces are a crucial part of this work. Many young people are shaped as much by what they see online as by what they learn at home or in school. We must demand greater accountability from tech platforms that allow misogyny and Islamophobia to spread unchecked. Stronger content moderation, better reporting systems, and meaningful enforcement of policies are essential.

At the same time, we need to amplify the voices of those already doing this work—including Muslim women—who are building online communities, creating alternative narratives, and pushing back against abuse. These efforts are vital to creating safer, more equal spaces—both online and offline—for the next generation.

On behalf of Muslim Women's Network UK,

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