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## The Digital Battlefield: Youth Cyberbullying and its Implications for Socio-Political Stability in Makurdi, Nigeria

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**Abstract**

**Background:** The rapid proliferation of digital technology and social media has fundamentally transformed global communication, but it has also introduced significant challenges, such as cyberbullying. In Nigeria, which has over 150 million internet users, cyberbullying has increasingly intersected with political debates and ethnic divisions, yet its specific impact on regional socio-political development remains under-researched.

**Objective:** This study aimed to assess the impact of cyberbullying by youths on the socio-political development of the Makurdi Metropolis in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, it sought to identify the primary causes of cyberbullying among local youth and evaluate its broader effects on civic participation, governance, and democratic values.

**Methodology:** A descriptive research design was employed, using a cross-sectional approach to collect data from 382 respondents via structured questionnaires and five key informant interviews.

Participants were selected from five metropolitan council wards using a simple random sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to address the research questions and chi-square tests to evaluate the relationship between cyberbullying and socio-political development in SPSS.

**Results:** The findings indicate that cyberbullying is prevalent among youth in Makurdi, driven primarily by unemployment ($\bar{x} = 4.61$), ICT proficiency ($\bar{x} = 4.48$), and political loyalty ($\bar{x} = 4.25$). The study revealed that victims often feel embarrassed and hurt, leading to a significant withdrawal from civic participation ($\bar{x} = 4.45$). Furthermore, cyberbullying was found to polarise communities, erode democratic norms ($\bar{x} = 4.34$), and distract leaders from providing effective governance ($\bar{x} = 4.40$). A chi-square test ($x^2 = 227.66$) confirmed a significant relationship between youth cyberbullying and diminished socio-political development.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that cyberbullying poses a serious threat to the socio-political stability and democratic progress of the Makurdi Metropolis. The resulting social withdrawal and political apathy among youth undermine inclusive governance. There is an urgent need for the strict enforcement of cyber laws, the creation of job opportunities to reduce youth idleness, and the implementation of educational programs focused on ethical online behaviour to mitigate these negative effects.

**Keywords:** Cyber-bullying, Development, Internet, Socio-Political, Youth.

**Introduction**

The rapid growth of digital technology and social media has fundamentally transformed global communication, offering unprecedented opportunities for interaction, education, and socio-political engagement. However, this digital revolution has introduced significant challenges, most notably cyberbullying. Cyberbullying refers to the use of digital platforms—such as social media, messaging applications, and online forums—to harass, intimidate, or demean individuals (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020). While bullying has existed for centuries, the digital age has amplified its reach and impact, making it a persistent global issue. Research indicates that cyberbullying severely undermines mental health, academic performance, and self-esteem among youths (Kowalski et al., 2014). Beyond individual harm, its consequences extend to societal structures and political dynamics, particularly in regions where youth engagement is a pillar of socio-political development.

In Africa, rising internet penetration has significantly increased the occurrence of cyberbullying. DataReportal (2023) indicates that over 570 million people on the continent now have internet access, with social media playing a crucial role in shaping public discourse. However, the continent faces unique hurdles regarding digital literacy, regulatory policies, and online safety. In countries such as Kenya and South Africa, cyberbullying has been weaponised as a tool for political intimidation, particularly among youths who actively engage in online discourse (Ndung'u, 2019). The anonymity provided by digital platforms has encouraged the spread of hate speech, harassment, and political propaganda, contributing to social unrest and undermining democratic processes.

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country and a rapidly growing digital economy, has witnessed an alarming increase in cyberbullying cases. With over 150 million internet users (NCC, 2022), the digital space has become a breeding ground for hate speech and online harassment linked to political debates and ethnic divisions. During the 2023 general elections, social media was heavily used for political mobilisation, but it also became a theatre for cyber harassment, with young Nigerians acting as both victims and perpetrators (Olanrewaju & Okafor, 2023). Nigeria currently ranks 8th globally for internet usage, and while these platforms are intended for interaction, they have facilitated addictive and abusive behaviours, including harassment and various forms of intimidation.

Cyberbullying takes diverse forms, including the dissemination of rumours, posting hurtful messages, account hijacking, and the circulation of unflattering or sexually suggestive imagery. Nwufo and Nwoke (2018) further categorise these behaviours into harassment, flaming, denigration, impersonation, outing, and trolling.

In Nigeria, and Benue State in particular, bullying has transitioned from physical, face-to-face confrontations in schools to the digital sphere. Cyberbullying as a great monster within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Despite the establishment of agencies like the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), and the enactment of the Cybercrimes Prohibition, Prevention and Enactment Act 2015, enforcement remains insufficient. The 2015 Act mandates severe penalties, including ten-year imprisonment and substantial fines, yet these laws have not been fully enforced to checkmate cybercrimes among youth in the Makurdi Metropolis (Nwufo & Nwoke, 2018).

The socio-political implications of this trend are profound. Cyberbullying instigates momentous harm, predisposing victims to suicidal ideation, social isolation, and anxiety. It leads to poor self-concept and low efficacy in environmental relationships (Nwosu et al., 2018). Olasanmi et al. (2020) note that victims in Nigeria frequently exhibit negative outcomes such as anger, embarrassment, and fear due to hurtful messages and rumours. Makurdi, the capital of Benue State, serves as a microcosm for this trend. As a growing urban centre, it has seen an emergence of youths using digital platforms to settle personal disputes, propagate political propaganda, and spread misinformation. Recent high-profile altercations involving local social media activists and artists demonstrate how digital spaces are used to intimidate others, threatening social cohesion and the city's political image.

While existing literature has explored various facets of cyberbullying, a critical gap remains. Nigerian studies such as those by Akeusola (2023) and Ogunkuade and Kenku (2023) have concentrated on students and adolescent demographics. There is a dearth of research examining the specific impact of youth cyberbullying on the socio-political development of a specific urban locale like Makurdi. Akuneme and Nwosu (2023) have specifically stressed the need for research to extend beyond university settings to investigate other age groups and broader societal impacts. This study fills that gap by investigating the causes of cyberbullying and its specific effects on the socio-political stability and development of the Makurdi Metropolis.

## Objectives of the Study

The main objective is to assess the impact of cyberbullying by youths on the socio-political development of Makurdi Metropolis. Specific objectives include:

1. To identify the causes of cyberbullying among youths in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the effects of cyberbullying among youths on the socio-political development of Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.

## Hypothesis

**H0:** There is no significant relationship between cyberbullying among youths and the socio-political development of Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.

## Literature Review

The following literature review provides a structured examination of the intersecting concepts of cyberbullying, youth, and socio-political development. It explores the multifaceted causes and consequences of digital aggression and concludes with a theoretical framework explaining these phenomena in the context of Makurdi Metropolis, Nigeria.

### Conceptual Framework: Cyberbullying, Youth, and Development

*Cyberbullying in the Digital Age*

Cyberbullying is increasingly defined as an aggressive, intentional, and repeated act perpetrated through electronic contact against victims who cannot easily defend themselves (Smith et al., 2008). In the Nigerian context, this digital monster manifests through hurtful messaging, the spreading of online rumours, account hijacking for financial or reputational theft, and the non-consensual distribution of unflattering or sexually suggestive imagery. Within this study, cyberbullying is viewed as a pervasive intervention in the virtual lives of Makurdi's youth, where harmful digital actions intersect with social cohesion and community power dynamics.

*Youth and Socio-Political Development*

The definition of "youth" is fluid, varying by cultural and legislative context. While the United Nations generally identifies youth as those aged 15–24, the Nigerian National Youth Policy (2009) extends this range to 18–35. This demographic is characterised by its transition to adult independence and, increasingly, its high level of digital activity (Furlong, 2013).

Socio-political development represents the collective process by which these individuals acquire the analytical and emotional capacity for civic participation (Pawar, 2014). It encompasses the equitable distribution of resources, broad-based decision-making, and the improvement of the quality of life without intimidation. When digital platforms are weaponised through bullying, they

directly undermine the social integration and freedom of expression necessary for holistic development.

## Etiology of Cyberbullying: Drivers and Catalysts

The causes of cyberbullying are multifaceted, involving psychological, technological, and socio-economic variables.

- *Psychological and Developmental Factors:* Individual drivers include low self-esteem, a desire for attention or revenge, and poor childhood experiences. Some youths perceive cyberbullying as a form of entertainment, a mindset exacerbated by the lack of parental supervision in digital spaces (Elgar et al., 2014).
- *Technological Affordances:* The inherent nature of the internet acts as a catalyst. The online disinhibition effect occurs because the anonymity of cyberspace emboldens aggressors, who feel unlikely to be caught and lack physical feedback from their victims. This absence of social cues promotes more cruel behaviour than face-to-face interactions.
- *Socio-Cultural and Economic Pressures***:** Peer pressure, stereotypical mindsets regarding diversity, and traditional gender roles influence bullying patterns. In Nigeria, masculinity norms may encourage vocal aggression, while female students might engage more in relational forms like online gossiping (Barlett et al., 2009). Furthermore, high unemployment rates drive some youths toward toxic online behaviours as a outlet for frustration or as a distorted means of "living" in the digital economy (Oputa, 2021).
- *The Digital Environment:* The permanence and 24/7 accessibility of social networking sites (SNS) mean victims have no escape, while aggressors can reach massive audiences with a single action (López-Meneses et al., 2020).

## Socio-Political and Psychological Consequences

Cyberbullying yields severe consequences that ripple from the individual to the broader community.

*Individual and Psychological Impact*

Victims often suffer from psychosomatic symptoms, social anxiety, and Acute Stress Disorder (ASD), including intrusive memories and emotional numbing (Abreu & Kenny, 2018). The impact is profound: adolescents experiencing cyber-victimisation are over twice as likely to develop depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation compared to their peers (Maurya et al., 2022). Dehumanisation and feelings of powerlessness can lead to long-term psychosocial maladjustment that persists into adulthood.

*Socio-Political Erosion*

On a societal level, cyberbullying acts as a vehicle for hate speech, which fuels socio-political instability and incites prejudice (Aduko et al., 2021). In politically charged environments like Makurdi, digital aggression undermines the erosion of social norms and discourages civic engagement. Identity theft and public exposure on social media lead to a loss of confidence in the

digital commons, causing individuals to value security over liberty and withdrawing from the democratic discourse necessary for development.

## Theoretical Framework

This study utilises two complementary theories to explain the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying in Makurdi.

*Routine Activity Theory (RAT)*

Proposed by Cohen and Felson (1979), RAT posits that crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian.

In the context of Makurdi, social media platforms serve as unregulated spaces where youth (suitable targets) interact frequently. The "capable guardian"—ranging from law enforcement to parental control—is often absent, allowing motivated offenders to spread misinformation or intimidate others with little consequence (López-Meneses et al., 2020).

*Triple Criminal Risk (TCR) Model*

The Triple Criminal Risk model (Mesch, 2009) offers a more holistic perspective by integrating internal and external risk factors across three dimensions:

1. *Personal Risk:* Individual personality traits, such as high levels of aggression or low empathy, that predispose a youth to bullying.
2. *Situational Risk:* The specific socio-political environment of Makurdi, where political tensions and online activism provide fertile ground for conflict.
3. *Exposure Risk:* The high frequency of social media usage, which increases the likelihood of a youth either participating in or becoming a victim of digital harassment.

The TCR model is particularly useful for this study because it considers how individuals, societies, and digital contexts interact reciprocally to produce aggressive behaviour in politically charged online spaces.

## Summary of Literature Gap

Existing research has largely focused on the psychological and health-related effects of cyberbullying within university and school settings. There remains a significant academic gap regarding the specific impact of youth-led cyberbullying on the socio-political development of urban centres in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. By focusing on Makurdi Metropolis, this study seeks to unravel how digital aggression hinders social cohesion and political integration, moving beyond individual-level health outcomes to a broader developmental analysis.

## Methodology

*Study Area*

This research was conducted within the Makurdi Metropolis, the administrative capital of Benue State, Nigeria. Established as the state capital in 1976, Makurdi also serves as the headquarters of the Makurdi Local Government Area. Geographically, the metropolis is situated in the Benue Valley within the North Central (Middle Belt) region. The city is strategically located on the banks of the Benue River (The World Gazetteer, 2007).

The area is predominantly inhabited by Tiv-speaking people, with residents primarily engaged in farming, fishing, and commerce. Administratively, the metropolis comprises various council wards, including Agan, Bar, Central/South Mission, Clerk/Market, Fiidi, Mbalagh, Modern Market, North Bank I, North Bank II, and Wailomayo. As the seat of political power in Benue State, Makurdi hosts a significant youth population with high levels of digital connectivity, making it an ideal setting for investigating the socio-political impacts of cyberbullying.

*Research Design and Population*

The study adopted a descriptive research design, employing a cross-sectional mixed-methods approach that integrated quantitative surveys with qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KII). The target population consisted of youths aged between 18 and 40 years. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2019), the population of individuals aged 18 and above in Makurdi is 256,740. This figure was utilised as the base population (N) for the study.

*Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

To ensure statistical representativeness, the sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula (1967) at a 95% confidence level (e = 0.05): In order to determine the sample size for this study, the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination (Yamane, 1967) was employed with the formula represented as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
Where;

$n$ = the sample size required
$N$ = the population size
$e$ = level of confidence (0.05)

Hence:
$$= \frac{256,740}{1 + 256,740\,(0.05)^2}$$
$$= \frac{256,740}{1 + 256,740 \times 0.0025}$$
$$= \frac{256,740}{642.85}$$
$$n = 400$$

The sample size is therefore 400 respondents. Consequently, a sample size of 400 respondents was established. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select participants from the five primary metropolitan council wards: North Bank I, Wailomayo, High Level, Ankpa/Wadata, and Modern Market. To ensure equal representation, 80 participants were initially targeted per ward. Out of the 400 questionnaires administered, 382 were successfully completed and returned, representing a 95.5% response rate.

To complement the quantitative data, five Key Informants were purposively selected—one from each sampled ward—based on their vast experience and specialised knowledge regarding youth affairs and digital security in the metropolis.

*Instrumentation and Data Analysis*

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to capture demographic data and responses to the research questions. Quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts and percentages, were used to analyse demographic variables.

Research questions were evaluated using mean scores and standard deviations based on a four-point Likert scale. A weighted mean score of 2.50 was adopted as the decision point; scores of 2.50 and above were accepted as positive responses, while scores below 2.50 were rejected. Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically to provide context and depth to the quantitative findings.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**
The result of the study is presented thus:

*Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents*

*Table 1: Demographic Attributes of Respondents*

| Demographic Attributes | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Metropolitan Ward | | |
| North Bank I | 34 | 8.9 |
| Wailomayo | 94 | 24.6 |
| High Level | 106 | 27.7 |
| Ankpa/Wadata | 77 | 20.2 |
| Modern Market | 71 | 18.6 |
| Total | 382 | 100 |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 261 | 68.3 |
| Female | 121 | 31.7 |

| Demographic Attributes | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 382 | 100 |
| Age Bracket | | |
| 18–21 years | 57 | 14.9 |
| 22–26 years | 20 | 5.2 |
| 27–31 years | 139 | 36.4 |
| 32 years and above | 166 | 43.5 |
| Total | 382 | 100 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 270 | 70.7 |
| Married | 93 | 24.3 |
| Divorced/Separated | 15 | 3.9 |
| Widowed | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 382 | 100 |
| Educational Attainment | | |
| None | 6 | 1.6 |
| Primary | 20 | 5.2 |
| Secondary | 155 | 40.6 |
| Tertiary | 201 | 52.6 |
| Total | 382 | 100 |
| Occupation | | |
| Students | 139 | 36.4 |
| Farming | 14 | 3.7 |
| Civil Service | 35 | 9.2 |
| Others (Applicants/Artisans) | 194 | 50.8 |
| Total | 382 | 100 |

*Analysis of Demographic Data*

The demographic data indicate that the study is heavily influenced by educated, urban, and single individuals, with 52.6% of respondents holding tertiary qualifications and 70.7% being single. This suggests that the findings reflect the perspectives of a digitally active demographic likely to be frequent users of social media.

Notably, 68.3% of the respondents are male, which may indicate that men are more involved in—or perhaps more willing to report—digital interactions in this context. Furthermore, 79.9% of the respondents fall within the 27–40 age range, confirming that cyberbullying in Makurdi is a phenomenon predominantly involving young adults rather than younger teenagers.

*Implications for Socio-Political Development*

The concentration of respondents in the Others occupational category (50.8%), many of whom are unemployed applicants, is significant. This aligns with the subsequent findings in Table 2, which identify unemployment as a primary driver of cyberbullying. The high level of education amongst the respondents (93.2% having at least secondary education) suggests that cyberbullying in this region is not a result of illiteracy, but rather a sophisticated misuse of digital proficiency for political or personal ends.

*Causes of Cyberbullying among Youths*

Research objective 1 sought to identify the drivers of cyberbullying in the Makurdi Metropolis.

*Table 2: Respondents' Ratings on the Causes of Cyberbullying*

| S/N | Item Description | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Political loyalty | 4.25 | 0.68 | Accepted |
| 14 | Unemployment | 4.61 | 0.6 | Accepted |
| 15 | Age/youthful exuberance | 4.23 | 0.86 | Accepted |
| 16 | Gender dynamics | 4.39 | 0.8 | Accepted |
| 17 | Poor parental background | 4.36 | 0.72 | Accepted |
| 18 | Educational level | 4.33 | 0.83 | Accepted |
| 19 | Duration of time spent online | 4.34 | 0.87 | Accepted |
| 20 | Proficiency in ICT usage | 4.48 | 0.64 | Accepted |
| 21 | Seeking revenge | 4.17 | 0.91 | Accepted |
| 22 | Anonymity of the internet | 4.1 | 1.05 | Accepted |
| 23 | Emotional triggers (Anger) | 4.32 | 0.86 | Accepted |
| | Cluster Mean and SD | 4.33 | 0.8 | Accepted |

The data in Table 2 show that all listed factors significantly contribute to cyberbullying, with a cluster mean of 4.33. Unemployment ($\bar{x}$= 4.61) emerged as the most influential factor, suggesting that a lack of productive engagement drives youth toward digital aggression. This was corroborated by qualitative evidence. For instance, a police officer in High Level noted during an interview:

Most of these young people nowadays, because of unemployment, derive pleasure in propaganda... they are used by politicians to project images of government even on projects not executed. (KII, 2025).

ICT proficiency ($\bar{x}$ = 4.48) and political loyalty ($\bar{x}$ = 4.25$) were also significant, indicating that technical skill and ideological bias are often weaponised to damage reputations or spread rumours.

*Effects of Cyberbullying on Socio-Political Development*

Research objective 2 examined how these digital behaviours impact the developmental landscape of Makurdi.

*Table 3: Effects of Cyberbullying on Socio-Political Development*

| S/N | Item Description | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | Withdrawal from civic participation due to hurt/embarrassment | 4.45 | 0.73 | Accepted |
| 25 | Erosion of democratic norms (tolerance/respect) | 4.34 | 0.82 | Accepted |
| 26 | Loss of interest in social and community gatherings | 4.25 | 0.7 | Accepted |
| 27 | Increased likelihood of substance abuse | 3.51 | 1.26 | Accepted |
| 28 | Deterrence of credible candidates from political careers | 4.34 | 0.79 | Accepted |
| 29 | Distraction of leaders from providing good governance | 4.4 | 0.7 | Accepted |
| | Cluster Mean and SD | 4.21 | 0.83 | Accepted |

The findings in Table 3 indicate that cyberbullying is a severe threat to socio-political cohesion. The highest-rated effect was the withdrawal from civic participation ($\bar{x}$= 4.45), suggesting that digital harassment silences voices necessary for democratic growth. Respondents also strongly agreed that cyberbullying distracts leaders from governance ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40) and polarises communities ($\bar{x}$= 4.34). Key informants echoed these sentiments, with one cyber café owner noting that hate speech on digital platforms creates "tension, division, and acrimony," which often escalates into physical altercations.

**Test of Hypothesis**

**H1:** There is no significant relationship between cyberbullying among youths and socio-political development in Makurdi Metropolis.

*Table 4: Chi-Square Test of Goodness-of-Fit*

| Variable | $\chi^2_{cal}$ | $\chi^2_{tab}$ | df | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cyberbullying & Development | 227.66 | 21.03 | 12 | 0 | Rejected H0 |
| Significant at p<0.05 | | | | | |

The calculated Chi-square value $X^2$_cal = 227.66) is significantly greater than the critical value $X^2$ tab = 21.03 at 12 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms a statistically significant relationship between youth cyberbullying and the socio-political development of Makurdi.

## Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

### Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide a critical window into the digital landscape of Makurdi Metropolis, revealing that cyberbullying is not merely a personal grievance but a systemic issue that hampers the region's growth. In addressing the first objective—investigating the causes of cyberbullying—the findings indicate a complex interplay of socioeconomic conditions, technological habits, and personal traits. Specifically, unemployment ($x^2$=4.61) and ICT proficiency ($x^2$=4.48) emerged as the most dominant drivers. This suggests that a significant portion of the youth population possesses the technical capability to navigate digital spaces but lacks the productive economic outlets to apply these skills positively. This aligns with López-Meneses et al. (2020), who argued that socio-economic disparities, including unemployment and family background, serve as primary catalysts for digital aggression. In the context of Makurdi, the "online disinhibition effect" is clearly amplified by economic frustration, where the anonymity of the internet allows displaced energy to be channeled into political propaganda and personal vendettas.

The second objective evaluated the effects of this digital aggression on socio-political development. The study confirms that cyberbullying represents a profound threat to democratic health in Benue State. The high mean scores for withdrawal from civic participation ($x^2$=4.45) and the distraction of leaders from governance ($x^2$=4.40) illustrate that digital harassment creates a chilling effect on public discourse. When credible individuals fear for their social image due to trolling or hate campaigns, the quality of political engagement suffers. This mirrors the findings of Akeusola (2023), who noted that the diverse manifestations of cyberbullying—ranging from impersonation to hate speech—systematically undermine the social capital necessary for community development. The qualitative evidence from local informants further supports this, highlighting how political actors weaponise digital platforms to foster acrimony and division, thereby eroding the democratic values of tolerance and mutual respect.

### Conclusion

This study assessed the impact of youth-led cyberbullying on the socio-political development of the Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. By investigating the root causes and resultant effects, the research has established that cyberbullying is prevalent and deeply rooted in socio-economic, political, and technological factors. The study concludes that the phenomenon is driven primarily by the high rate of youth unemployment, a misplaced sense of political loyalty, and the perceived safety of digital anonymity.

Furthermore, the research establishes a statistically significant relationship between digital harassment and developmental stagnation. Cyberbullying does not only inflict psychological trauma on individuals; it actively reduces civic participation, weakens democratic values, discourages political ambitions among credible candidates, and distracts administrative leadership from providing essential social services. Consequently, cyberbullying is concluded to be a significant barrier to the holistic socio-political progress of the Makurdi Metropolis, requiring urgent and multi-dimensional intervention.

*Recommendations*

Based on the validated findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate the impact of cyberbullying and enhance socio-political stability in the Makurdi Metropolis:

1. Economic Empowerment and Job Creation: The Benue State Government and the private sector should prioritise the creation of sustainable employment opportunities and technical skill acquisition programmes. By engaging the youth in productive economic activities, the state can reduce the idleness and frustration that frequently drive individuals toward digital harassment and political propaganda.
2. Implementation of Digital Ethics and Literacy Programmes: Given that ICT proficiency is often misused, there is an urgent need for Digital Citizenship campaigns within Makurdi's educational institutions. These programmes should focus on ethical online behaviour, the psychological dangers of bullying, and the legal ramifications of digital harassment to ensure technology is used as a tool for development rather than destruction.
3. Active Monitoring and Support Systems: Security agencies and regulatory bodies should improve their oversight of digital service providers to mitigate unwarranted comments and hate speech. Additionally, civil society organisations should establish support frameworks for victims to help them regain the confidence needed for active socio-political participation.
4. Strict Enforcement of Legal Frameworks: There must be a robust and visible enforcement of the Cybercrimes Prohibition, Prevention and Enactment Act 2015 within Benue State. Publicising the prosecution of cyber-stalkers and digital agitators will serve as a deterrent. Furthermore, local political organisations must adopt codes of conduct that prohibit the use of digital thugs for political gain, thereby protecting the integrity of the regional democratic process.

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