Media and Social Change:
Literacy, Representation, the Quest for Social Equity

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Representation Matters: Media Literacy for Inclusive Storytelling Practices

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Abstract:

This article looks back on digital storytelling and collaborative media practices as important resources to reconsider memory, challenge identity discourses, and reveal the cultural diversity of modern societies. The digital era makes possible an incessant re-reading and re-mediation of cultural archives on the part of ordinary citizens, i.e., younger generations, and the creation and diffusion of counter narratives regarding the present. They are key chances for post-colonial communities to break silences over painful memories that bar collective reappropriation of the past, to face some of the issues of ethnical diversity, and discrimination today and to reimagine a more united identity. But seizing this moment means fully acknowledging the function of media technology in constructing memory, social individuation and building networks, so that media literacy and media education become essential dimensions of cultural dialogue. Drawing on the experience of a citizenship project on the post-colonial condition and Afro-European interculturality, this essay discusses digital storytelling, and co-creative practices as useful literacy and education strategies to advance interculturality in today's societies. Media literacy includes other literacies like reading literacy, writing literacy, computer literacy, and information literacy but uses them for the analysis of media in a targeted manner. This research hopes to demonstrate the impact of media literacy on students' critical thinking of current events in a high school government class. Students engaged in a four-

lesson unit on various facets of media literacy as they pertain to current event media sources. The data were triangulated using three kinds of data: pre-test and post-test current event assignment, lesson activities, and informal conversation and observations.

Keywords: Media Education, media literacy, post-colonial societies, storytelling, media literacy, mixed-methods study, current events education, secondary, history, government.

Introduction:

This paper reflects on a set of questions about the literacy enabled by Digital Storytelling emanating from our extended experience as academics and practitioners. It doesn't aim to offer neat answers but does address matters of interest to those who want to know how new media demand, reveal and create new kinds of literacy; this article is a try at defining and then investigating the media literacy of Digital Storytelling. It is composed to initiate a literacy-based discourse on what is much unmapped territory and to take the consideration of the media literacy of Digital Storytelling practice out of the project-based discussion that dominates so many presentations and articles. We wished to apply the particulars of the digital storytelling approach (defined in the following section) to a wider setting in order to answer questions of media literacy for colleagues who would not necessarily be versed in the genre.

2. What do we mean by Digital Storytelling?

As a definition put forward by the Centre for Digital Storytelling, Berkeley, California: brief, first-person video-narrative produced by the integration of recorded voice, still and moving images and music or other sound. (Lambert, 2006).

The Digital Storytelling (DS) our research addresses, however, is the specific media practice, as the Centre for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in Berkeley, California, defines it, 'a short, first-person video-narrative made by bringing together recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds.". This work emerged over twenty years

ago, a product of people activism, its techniques influenced by radical theatre and media arts and its driving impulse a 'response to the exclusion of 'ordinary' people's stories in broadcast media' (Hartley and McWilliam, 2009). It is most concerned with 'story', rather than 'digital' and the approach is heavily based on the facilitation of 'Story Circle', workshop procedure whereby participants can tell (usually) personal stories which will be 'little nuggets of media called Digital Stories'.

Story Circle employs a series of activities and writing prompts to establish trust in the group, develop storytelling skills and visual literacy and, ultimately, 'find' that story (see below for more on the method and genre). Lambert's 'Seven Steps' offer a foundation set of principles and ingredients for story-making which, Lambert acknowledges, 'were never intended to be a prescribed 'catechism' of storytelling, simply rather a structure for the discussion of the aesthetic quality of this specific type.

Seven Steps of Digital Storytelling

1	Owning Your Insights	What is the story you want to tell? What do you think your story means?
2	Owning Your Emotions	How does the story feel?
3	Finding The Moment	Was there a moment when things changed? Were you aware of it at the time? If not, what waste moment you became aware that things had changed?
4	Seeing Your Story	What images come to mind when recalling the moment of change in the story? What images come to mind for other parts Of the story?
5	Hearing Your Story	How will you tell the story – how will you 'Perform' your voice over? Would the story been hanged by additional l a y e r s of sound–ambient sound or music?
6	Assembling Your Story	How will you structure your story? How will the layers of visual and audio narratives work together?

7	Sharing Your Story	Who is your audience? What was your purpose in creating the story? Has the purpose shifted during the process of creating the piece? In what presentation will your digital story be viewed? What life will the story have after its completion?

Source: Lambert (2013:53-70)

3. Literature Review:

With technology more and more integrated into our society, education of media literacy skills is more and more necessary in the classroom. Literature review here is going to define media literacy and give some understanding as to how media literacy skills could influence students' critical thinking and civic participation. The research was accessed through university of Mary Washington's databases such as Educational Research Complete, ERIC, and JSTOR. The studies were limited to high school student or college freshmen government courses. The studies fall into three broad areas: Theoretical Framework of Media Literacy, Measuring Media Literacy Skills, and Current Events in the Classroom. The historical perspective and theoretical framework of media literacy are discussed in the first section. The second part consolidates a few media literacy studies to determine the ways of measuring skills in media literacy. The third section discusses studies about the use of contemporary events in classrooms.

Theoretical Framework of Media Literacy: Media is one of the most highlighted aspects of our society; it is almost impossible to do without its presence in our lives. Thus, media literacy scholarship is categorized into two theoretical frameworks, that of protectionist and empowerment (Hobbes, 2011). Hobbes (2011) makes a distinction between empowerment and protectionist approaches to media literacy, adding that while the protectionist approach focuses on "reducing negative effect of exposure to mass media," the empowerment approach is derived from a constructivist theory where

"media-making can be a means for building self-esteem and forming identity, developing critical thinking skills about media and technology, and promoting intercultural exchange" (Hobbes, 2011, p.422-3). Researchers (Potter, 2004) within the protectionist school of belief favor equipping students with the knowledge to counter the power of media in their lives. Empowerment researchers (Buckingham, 2007; Hobbes, 2011; Mihailidis, 2011) favor the teaching of the art of media manipulation in a bid to bring about social and political change. The following figure shows how both the protectionist and empowerment scholars inform the contemporary definition of media literacy.

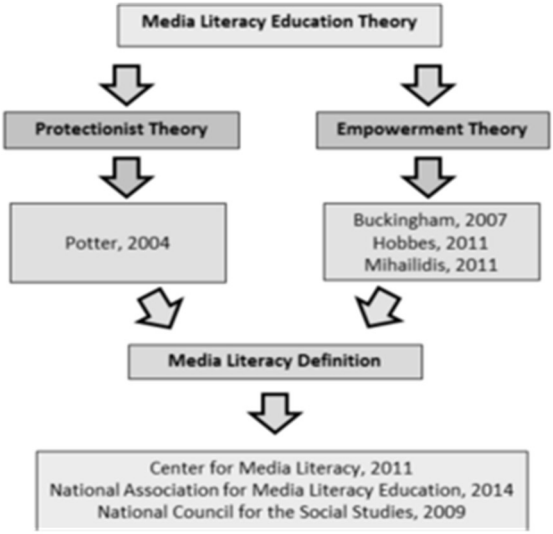


Figure 1: Media Literacy Theory

Potter (2004) is the foremost protectionist theory scholar (Hobbes, 2011). He recommends that academics and researchers tackle media literacy with cognitive theory. Cognitive theory focuses on the individual and holds that through making cognitions or thinking processes of people aware, they can alter their behavior (Potter,2004, p.266). Potter concentrates on how a person makes or matches meaning to the sources being studied. By allowing them to understand the

way they think, Potter (2004) hopes they will be more buffered from media's potential negative influence. Protectionist theorists (Potter, 2004) focus on the agency of people in the interpretations of media. In pointing out the power of the people, Potter says the media reacts to people and that media is, "much more reactive than proactive" (Potter, 2004, p.267). This assertion notwithstanding the individualistic basis of cognitive theory makes reference to possibility that media can be changed by people. Although Potter's (2004) findings are more protectionist in nature, the application of cognitive theory overlaps empowerment theory because they both highlight increasing awareness towards effecting change.

Empowerment scholars (Buckingham, 2007; Hobbes, 2011; Mihailidis, 2011) adopt media literacy as a social phenomenon and not an individualistic technique. These authors are convinced of the need to analyze the social constructs through which media is produced, disseminated, and received. As Buckingham (2007) argues, "digital media represent the world, rather than reflect it," in the sense that media sources deliberately select to emphasize certain values and ideologies (p. 48). These authors are convinced that media producers aim at a specific meaning to portray to people. The advocates of this cultural approach to media literacy education highlight four areas of study: representation, language, production, and audience (Buckingham, 2007).

The representation skills involve recognizing authority, reliability, and bias of a source. Students' meta-cognitive and analytical skills are enhanced in language and production aspects of study. Hence, it is important to make students learn how to access, analyse, and evaluate multiple sources so that they can obtain a better representation of the world (Hobbes, 2011).

4. Defining Media Literacy: In defining media literacy and media literacy skills educational associations the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), Center for Media Literacy (CML, and the National Council for the Social Sciences (NCSS), turn primarily to empowerment theory. At the foundation of all their definitions is the skill to access, analyse, evaluate, and create media. Even more

important than these concrete skills is the ability for students to understand the implications of media on today's society such that

"Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy" (CML, *"*Media Literacy: A Definition and More*",* 2011). The educational system recognizes the power of media to shape public opinion. Media outlets become the centre of social and political change and, therefore, are a source of democratic participation. It becomes necessary for students to have media literacy skills in order to "critically participate as active citizens with the abilities to intelligently and compassionately shape democracy in this new millennium" (NCSS, "Rationale", 2009). Media literacy offers a framework to engage students not only in academia, but also in society.

The NAMLE outlines six guiding principles for media literacy education which include the political, social, and individual levels of media education. By including all three levels, the NAMLE borrows from both the empowerment and the protectionist perspectives. Much like the empowerment definitions set forth by the NCSS and CML, the NAMLE believes that media literacy education is an essential component for creating engaged citizens. Their position statement aligns itself with cultural theorists (Buckingham, 2007; Hobbes, 2011 &Mihailidis, 2011) as they recognized that media is "part of culture and function as agents of socialization" (NAMLE, "Core Principles", 2014). However, the NAMLE incorporates some protectionist perspective, warning that media literacy "affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages" (NAMLE, "Core Principles", 2014). In this instance, the NAMLE aligns itself with cognitive theorists (Potter, 2004) who stress the individual's role in media interpretation. The NAMLE quiets the debate between empowering and protectionist perspective by demonstrating that these theories are not mutually exclusive. The NAMLE believes that by teaching students media literacy skills, students will be more critical of their own personal bias as well as empowered to

use these skills to reconstruct the media for a more culturally aware world.

Understanding stories as individual texts and collections-A major portion of Media Literacy: If Digital Storytelling is to gather its own momentum and to play a significant role in public culture, the next step is to move beyond the focus on production at the local level, however much participants benefit from being part of the workshops, and however much the cultural institutions benefit from engaging members of the community as co-creators. (Hartley 2008: 202) One criticism that Hartley has made consistently is the Digital Storytelling movement's focus on small-scale productions that are rarely shared beyond the specific communities that participated in the digital storytelling intervention i.e. family, friends, interest groups and funders. His view is that despite the term 'digital' in the practice, digital storytelling is only digital in production and not distribution or exhibition; it is not 'native' to the internet. The consequence is that there is in e□ect no significant audience beyond the immediate for many Digital Stories. Texts 'belong' to the storytellers and remain within their possession; they rarely, if ever, go viral. This is not necessarily an entirely new problem, for example, in the UK during the 1980s community media productions made through the Channel Four funded workshop movement rarely attracted an audience.

Digital Storytelling is distinguished from this earlier work in two ways; firstly, the stories are made and told by the storyteller rather than a third party filmmaker and secondly, the potential opened by the internet is radically removed from the world of 1980s TV. Shirky (2010) makes a related point when he argues that because we are increasingly producing and sharing media, we need to reconceptualise media and find ways in which new and different forms of media, such as Digital Storytelling, can reach an audience. Hartley returned to this theme in his article 'A Trojan Horse in the Citadel of Stories' (2013), in which he develops his earlier writings (2008, 2009) about the potential of Digital Storytelling to achieve accessibility and value to a larger group beyond those who have participated in a digital storytelling workshop

and their immediate viewers/listeners. The opposite model to the former mainstream media approach of scaling up audiences, Hartley talks about scaling up stories, grouping them so that they make sense to wider groups of people. He talks about shifting digital storytelling from self-expression, the individual, to something that can appeal to wider communities 'the 'we' communities (or 'demes').

He calls the Digital Storytellers to action: Given that digital media and social networks have already made what constitutes 'our' deme riskier, complex, open, uncertain and multivalent than ever before, it is urgent for progressive innovations like the digital storytelling movement to catch up. (Hartley 2013: 103)

The task now is to find new and different ways and means for digital stories to find and retain an audience. As Matthews and Sutherland (2013: 98) observe: Although personal digital life stories now abound, relatively little attention has been given to the parallel acts of listening across various and many contexts that need to occur if we are to hear, value and respond to people's self-documented lives and experiences.

They point out that there is little or no written evidence or academic research into the use of digital stories themselves. The emphasis has been on reflection and the reflective practitioner, rather than the storyteller(s) and the stories. In the same article, Matthews and Sunderland also highlight the lack of attention that has been given to the 'parallel acts of listening across various and many contexts – that need to occur if we are to hear, value, and respond to people's self-documented lives and experiences. Matthews and Sutherland (2013:98). This act of listening requires space to hear and understand stories individually and collectively. The arguments posed in this article, in a sense, represent the polar opposite of Lambert's focus on 'the movement' of digital storytelling the act itself. Matthews and Sunderland are interested in the each of digital life story narratives as data for academics, policy makers and practitioners. Lambert like many other practitioner accounts of digital storytelling focuses on the unique, the individual, personal experience. Matthews and Sunderland (2013: 97) view the stories as, potentially, 'large-

scale multimedia qualitative datasets', whilst acknowledging the shortcomings of, for example, using large- scale databases to make stories 'listenable' to policy makers.

Listening can often be taken for granted and is often relegated below telling, even though 'Listen Deeply, Tell Stories' is the mantra of the Centre for Digital Storytelling. Yet, as O'Donnell, Lloyd and Dreher (2009) point out, in the analysis of story-based practices within the field of cultural studies, listening is under-discussed in comparison to questions of voice. There is no shortage of observations, such as Rossiter and Garcia's (2010: 49) 'participant produced digital stories constitute a rich and relatively unexplored source of qualitative data'. There are pockets of evidence in the form of project evaluations and reports and localised examples of impact, such as the remarkable e□ect of the work of Patient Voices (www.patientvoices.org.uk), who in a recent project used digital stories they had produced with mental health service users to influence the trustees of Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, who were addressing poor patient and sta□ satisfaction survey scores in relation to dignity, respect and communication. Two years into the project, stories are now shown at the beginning of every Board meeting and in sta□ recruitment and selection interviews 'to remind sta□ and Board why they are there' Hardy (2013).

Conclusions: Deferent forms of literacy are brought into being by deferent cultural forms, so in this way the literacy of digital storytelling is obviously deferent from that of say a feature film, a novel or even an oral history testimony. Not only does the brevity of the form place specific constraints on what can and cannot be said, but both the democratic and therapeutic components of the story circle shape the content in unpredictable ways. The processes involved in story circle provide rich opportunities to develop media literacies. Activities involving reading images, to encourage participants to squeeze the most meaning from the limited number of images the form demands, for example are rooted in classic media education approaches to 'denotation/ connotation' exercises. A word game involving the construction of a short narrative from a shared lexicon that has been constructed by the

group is an elective way to encounter questions of point-of-view. The act of construction within a set of formal constraints can lead to broader questions of form/content and genre. Questions of the authorial voice, the ownership of the story and the audiences for it provide an accessible springboard for opening wider discussions about ownership and control and ethical questions about distribution via the Internet, for example. As a practitioner, it is never possible to know what story is going to be told yet it is possible to envisage how it may be told. This tension between the restricted form and the unpredictable content makes Digital Storytelling an exciting, productive area for both practitioners and academics. The real dificulty is finding the appropriate route to an audience; this is both a question about reaching a larger number of people and about reaching the right audience for particular stories.

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Media Literacy and Democratic Resilience: Countering Misinformation in the Information Age

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Abstract

The wide spread of false information is now becoming an international problem. One proposed remedy is the improvement of peoples' ability to differentiate between correct and incorrect information via appropriate media literacy education measures. Misinformation refers to information that is distributed but is false or untrue, regardless of the intent to deceive. This spectrum contains everything from overt factual errors and mis-communications to mistakes in reporting or transmitting through unintended means. Given how easy it is for content to be shared and propagated in the digital era, misinformation can spread and often originates from various channels-people, media organizations, or social media entities.

Media literacy refers to the knowledge about accessing, interpreting, analyzing, and communicating media in its multiple forms. It includes having a deep understanding of how media works, how messages are transmitted through media, and how media affects society. Through media literacy, therefore, people can distinguish what is fact from fiction or false and critically analyze the motivation and credibility of various media communications. People must be aware of the truthfulness about the information and its related news, this is of utmost importance in today's digital world where information is huge and sometimes distorted. Media literacy builds critical thinking by making a person aware of misinformation and the agenda behind the creation of the media. Further, this empowers the people to interact

with the media in an active and responsible manner, which in turn will allow them to make wise judgments and create a more informed and discerning society.

To sustain long-term, sustainable improvements in well being requires democratic resilience. The tightest definition of democratic resilience would be to prevent democracies from turning into non-democracies. However, it also refers to sustaining excellent institutions that guarantee respect for fundamental rights, representative governance and participation, checks on the government, and the backing of an unbiased administration. Corruption in public institutions is particularly critical to sustain the resilience of democracy. Trust levels are inherently different in democracies. The continuous quest for trust ensures that democratic governments get better and better, permits stable business environments, guards against corruption, and upholds the legitimacy of international legal frameworks, all of which promote innovation and long-term corporate investment.

Key words: Media Literacy, Misinformation, Dis information, democracy with Media, Media role

Media Literacy

Obviously, media literacy is a weapons asset in battling misinformation. By all standards, much more critical, highly technologically literate consumers citizens-citizens and so many other related roles-consumers/ citizens-evaluate information critically, learn to recognize better sources for reliable information that flows from knowing what they've learned-the ability to determine if information came from a certain web site-source. Possessed media literacy make them able to interact with a potentially more entire and imaginative on-, off- line media. It is essential to teach adults and children media literacy. This is not something you learn for a day and forget all about. It is absolutely important to understand and develop practical skills but also knowing and being aware of how the digital world works. Of course, it is not the only solution to the spread of misinformation, and neither is it a panacea to eliminate the need for other laws and programs. Often, policymakers see media literacy as an easy victory but,

in reality, is rather complex, as Professor Sonia Livingstone has often pointed out. Because so much of the online world is unintelligible and ever-evolving, it is imperative that citizens not be burdened with the obligation of comprehending the inexplicable. By saying this, media literacy is an essential step to the regulation of improvement of the public's ability to navigate the online environment. Without proper education and awareness, only regulations will not be so effective to combat with these disinformation and misinformation.

The importance of media literacy in combating misinformation cannot be seen in a vacuum. Media literacy efforts have been going on for decades and have a much greater role to play in citizenship, even if many of the worries about online misinformation have only recently come to light. It is usual to view media literacy as a response to an issue such as disinformation (or online safety, digital inclusion, hate speech, radicalization, etc.). This approach is dangerous since it narrows the focus and allows for short-term thinking to prevail when long-term planning and funding are called for. Such planning should be on at least a ten-year cycle and longer if possible.

Instead of being a catchphrase for media and ISP firms, the practice of media literacy must become a real issue relevant to EVERYONE. That's why "civic competence," which should be somehow aligned with more general concerns such as diversity, ethics, sustainability, and social inclusion, is crucial and should come above technological considerations in and of themselves. Thus, we have to go fast and efficient with really needed initiatives and get out from the kind of morale-boosting rhetoric so widely dominating the profession.

Given these premises, we should perform fact-based research and focus our efforts on lobbying social media companies to produce better-quality content, technical tools, such as report buttons, and to follow global regulations and enable mobility. The inter sectoral development regulatory framework should be more commonly utilized, and cooperation between governmental and quasi-governmental agencies must be increased.

Media literacy is essential for people to acquire cognitive, technological, and social skills and capacities that would enable them to access information in media efficiently and make a critical evaluation of it. Media literacy makes our jobs, lives, and citizenship all dependent because it helps us make wise decisions, understand the moral implication of modern technology and media, and most importantly, how to communicate effectively with others in the digital world. Media literacy is therefore fundamental to the Commission's goals and digital strategy as a requirement for citizens of all ages to successfully navigate the contemporary news landscape and make informed decisions. Lifelong learning in critical and digital abilities is crucial to strengthen our societies' resistance to misinformation.

This story highlights the significance of media literacy in the digital age. Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create a range of media. It equips individuals with the ability to understand the complex media environment, distinguish between reality and fantasy, and make informed choices. In a world where false information and fake news can spread like wildfire on social media and other digital channels, media literacy has become an important factor for both individual and societal empowerment. Media literacy helps shield people and communities from the negative impacts of false information by encouraging critical thinking and media consumption that is informed. Media and educational policy often shifted between development projects and protectionist positions. The concept of media education in India is a bit vague at present. It has multiple disciplinary and political implications-including the idea of being critical media education for radical social transformation, learning through media-based technologies such as ICT, and vocational training for media professionals. The type of questions and contents that have different impacts on the three areas. However, all of them support the normative objectives of participation, empowerment, and progress.

There are many varied forums where media education takes place: such as practice-based learning; governmental efforts; academia; and civil society interaction. It could be argued that

a failure to define it precisely is in itself a virtue in coming up with a multi-faceted, inclusive approach to information and communication literacy. In terms of the hindrances to empowerment as presented by media literacy, which focuses on the relationship between the public sphere, media, and its sociopolitical systems, India has a tradition of citizen involvement, public protests, and seeking information that have developed the public sphere beyond institutional limitations. However, it is divided by different governmental structures, history, languages, educational opportunities, and access to technology.

Misinformation and Disinformation

Quick access to a wide range of online sources, the abundance of information, and the lack of geographical or temporal constraints are some of the biggest advancements in online media in the digital age. However, despite all of its benefits, new media exposes users to a serious risk: exposure to dubious sources like false news and misinformation. Credibility is one of the major features of a journalistic text. Every journalistic work that is supposed to be consumed by the public needs to include certain facts and events from its social reality. We are vulnerable to being exposed to fake news because it is hard to determine the origin and intention of some of the content online in the digital world.

Misinformation is defined as information which is spread as false or inaccurate, regardless of the intent to deceive. It encompasses a wide range of false information, from simple mistakes and misrepresentations to unintentional mistakes in reporting or content sharing. Since people can share information easily and receive it from various sources that range from human channels, mass media stations, or social media sites in this day and age, misinformation quickly disseminated can come from any place and person. Misinformation spreads based on the belief of people sharing this piece of information as real while compared to disinformation, where someone deliberately creates false information just to mislead. At times, even without intention, misinformation can cause dangerous negative effects. These effects include creating confusion, spreading

misconceptions, and influencing public opinion or conduct based on incorrect premises.

Examples of the prototypical kinds of disinformation are government propaganda, doctored versions of Wikipedia entries, faked documents, photos, maps, Internet frauds, phony websites, and misleading ads (in politics as well as in business). Disinformation is such a pervasive and pernicious danger to the quality of information that we need to begin by giving it a sharply focused meaning. This essay reviews the various meanings given to this concept by philosophers and information scientists. It argues that such analyses are either too narrow (excluding things that are disinformation) or too wide (including things that are not disinformation), or both. Several of these assessments do, in fact, overlook significant types of deception, including adaptive, side-effect, visual, and real disinformation.

Disinformation is not a recent phenomenon; it has always been present in the traditional and linear media landscape. However, because of the disruptive effects of the internet and new communications technologies on the digital era, worries about misinformation have grown. Distribution of Information Worldwide. The algorithms of the social media platforms allow for tailoring the information and messages sent to specific segments of the population, rather than broadcasting a single, unified message to the entire population. It is much more likely to have a negative effect on democratic processes and public discussion when messages and information are framed to the recipient in consideration of their gender, social class, location, age, political beliefs, or economic standing.

India is one of the most Misinformation prone country in South-East Asia, Whereas political misinformation is ubiquitous in India, it has oftentimes been relegated to or amplified by health and religious misinformation. Political misinformation arises only ahead of or amid crucial political events. The prevailing political context is accountable for the spread of political and other varieties of misinformation. Generally speaking, there are two political situations that are often favorable for spreading misinformation: the polarization of the society and

populist communication. Both trends are witnessed in present India. Furthermore, little trust in journalism, poor public service media, a more divided audience, and very high social media use can also be responsible cause for misinformation in India. Even though, some digital interventions, like chatbots and AarogyaSetu, have been seen during the pandemic to combat the proliferating misinformation problem, they are creating a crisis of trust among people in different ways. India, as a democracy, has had a mixed and chaotic track record in combating fake news. Some of its politicians have continued to undermine the effectiveness of the government by spreading unproven and inaccurate health information, even though the government has been working with big technology companies to limit the spread of fake news.

Democracy and Media

Media communicates political information, and a society bases its assumptions and decisions on it. Political and economic freedom are basic characteristics of a free media in a real democracy. Mainly, the media serves an information medium and communication in a civil, democratic, and tolerant society. The modern term often used in connection with the media is its referring as the fourth pillar of democracy, and the media power is essential in constructing a democratic culture beyond the political system. Freedom of expression forms the core of democracy, for there are several bases for this argument, though the most basic idea here is that democracy cannot stand unless the citizenry in which the votes in democratic elections and participates with governmental institutions in public processes are cognizant and are accorded the right to share their opinions freely in matters of public discourse. There would be one of the rationalities of the notion of democracy in that people may have a right to vote for their political leaders or make free and informed choices that can hardly exist with a right to freedom of expression. Democracy cannot succeed without the media and free press. In simple words, Democracy is the government of, for, and by the people. In this context, a democratic society requires the free press to be actively and vigilantly involved. It is the people's voice. It is crucial to the development of a robust democracy.

The media is regarded as the beating heart of a democracy. It is an important source of information, creating awareness among people in every nation in the world. The majority of people agree that the media is the fourth pillar of democracy. It makes people aware of different happenings from grounds such as sports, politics, economic, and social, etc. Media sometimes act like a mirror which illustrations the basic reality and sometimes it may be harsh.

In the context of Indian democracy, Citizens were denied access to basic information in the name of state security, and transparency in the government process was a pipe dream in the 20th century. In the independence struggle for India, print media played a crucial role and gained confidence. Many of the freedom fighters were allegedly journalists, and it is commonly known that the majority of them had a solid understanding of journalism. The media had greatly impacted the freedom movement in India. Subsequently after India's independence, the duty and role of the media was improved but during the period of emergency (1975) the activities of media were heavily curtailed. Media independence was totally destroyed, and even harsh commands were given to the media outlets. However, during the post-emergency period, the role of the media grew again and became much more relevant to the masses. Indian newspapers represented the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the country, which finally strengthened democracy and the Indian people's rule. Along with print media, electronic media particularly television programs and the internet has transformed the news reporting and analysis process in the recent past.

For a democratic nation, access to knowledge is crucial, and the ability to read and write freely is a vital part of exposing and revealing the truth, ensuring citizens' self-actualization and self-development, and assisting in ensuring citizens' involvement in a democracy. In other words, democracy is often considered a system of governance that is subject to popular sovereignty. It ensures that instead of acting out of ignorance or misinformation, citizens make responsible, informed decisions. Further, by ensuring that elected officials honor their oaths of office and carry out the demands of their

constituents, information performs a "checking function."A democratic system can function at its best when there is widespread public engagement, which is impossible without people being informed on a range of topics. The media enters the picture here. People's sovereignty, rule of law, social and political equality, elected government through universal adult suffrage, free and open competition for political office and institutions, periodic elections to legitimize government, civil liberties and fundamental rights, multi-party system, independent judiciary, and free media are some of the fundamental features of democracy.

Conclusion

Media Education should transcend from top-down approaches that treat the media consumer as completely powerless and instead consider them vacillating between passivity and action. The traditional model of media education, which seeks to empower people through information literacy and active action, must be complemented with public and media organizations along with sociopolitical effort. Strong pressures to increase information access "through a combination of (improved literacy, more assertive citizens, the spread of elected government) and supply (technologies that make knowledge more widely and cheaply available)" can help the poor "gain greater access to knowledge and information, regardless of the concentration of media," as has optimistically been noted. Enlightenment occurs when information is available. There are answers when there is discussion. Exploitation, corruption, repression, and annoyance will occur in the absence of power distribution, the rule of law, and accountability. The media does more than just cover the news.

In addition, it watches for management and protects against corruption as well as bad management. Mass media has played an enormous role in popularizing the crusade against corruption. It has evolved as an increasingly responsible and mature organisation over time. Mass media corporations are a high threat. In a country like India, the media must go towards citizen-friendly democracy.

In this digital era of Mass Media, information flooding from different platform of media become a headache as many a times it has been observed that wrong or mis information being served to the mass. Social media is the main source of this wrong interpretation or conception about any news and eventually it creates confusion. Given the lack of a legal framework pertaining to platform governance in India, an outcomes-based self-regulatory framework may be a must for stakeholders to collaborate in the fight against online disinformation. Its execution depends on platforms' cooperation in the absence of enforcement instruments. There may also be difficulties for a prospective oversight body carrying out audits or efficiently keeping an eye on implementation. Nonetheless, this strategy would help close the divide between the government and social media companies and possibly steer clear of prescriptive laws like the Intermediary Liability Rules changes, which represent a greater risk to user rights. Media plays an pivotal role to inform and aware about the socio-economical changes happening around us by disseminating correct information about the news. Transnational media companies have ventured into the Indian market with their own global reach in the fight for sustainability and profit. Interests over truth and accuracy, which were initially thought to be a tool for social change through educational programs aimed at empowering the weaker sections of society and only focus on the truth. However, there have sometimes been communal riots due to excessive coverage or propaganda of sensitive subjects. Apathy and insensitivity are encouraged through the continuous repetition of news, especially sensational news. While the media has been able to monitor government action and encourage participatory communication at times, much work has to be done still. With respect to broadcasting and publishing news like this, the media must exercise very great care. It both stands to protect law enforcement officials' legal power and it mirrors the society in the face. Though there might not exist any direct and particular press freedom in Indian law which defines press freedom, but article 19(1) (a) undoubtedly included it under clause freedom of speech and expression.

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The Power of the Lens: Media Influence on Public Perceptions of Racial Inequality

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Abstract

Information passed on through people, different form of media, technological platforms, and books influences the way different cultures, religions, and ethnic groups are perceived in a way which may sometimes appear to be wrong. As long as we have gained knowledge of the society and world around us, we are bombarded with media. Messages that explain what it means to be a member of a social group, such as a gender, caste, or race. These media portrayals influence how we perceive ourselves and our environment. Content analysis is one of the most important tools for understanding media representations. Stereotypes and preconceived images of others are derivatives of the process. A critical understanding of the functions of digital, media, and information systems is therefore indispensable in countering prejudice and discrimination, and promoting tolerance, social inclusion, and dialogue. While many people get accustomed to a highly digitalized daily routine, various forms of racism burgeon in online spaces. They often take shape in disinformation and hate speech targeting diverse population segments. The root causes are intricate. Whereas, the lack of critical thinking about information, media content, and purposeful use of technology as a key factor is evident. Racism experience sharing (disclosure) can potentially draw attention to the issue of discrimination and kindle meaningful discussions on race. Sharing experiences with racism through social media can incite a diverse reaction in users. Racism is

expressed through discriminatory or exclusionary practices, on the one hand, and prejudiced beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies, on the other. It is a phenomenon expressed at the dimension of society, groups, individuals, and institutions, and is hence not to be analyzed as an attribute of the individual person or agency, but rather as a more complex, structural phenomenon.

Key words: social change, racism in media, Black and White binary system in society, social Discrimination, racial hatred, social media

Introduction

The media play a central role in informing the public about what happens in the world, particularly in those areas in which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience. The media – television, the press and online – are pivotal in communicating to the public what is happening in the world. In those cases in which audiences do not have first-hand knowledge or experience of what is going on, they become particularly reliant upon the media to inform them. It is not, however, that the media tell us what to think – people do not absorb media messages uncritically. But they are key to the setting of agendas and focusing public interest on particular subjects, which operates to limit the range of arguments and perspectives that inform public debate. Drawing on a multidimensional model of the communications process, this article examines the role of the media in the construction of public belief and attitudes and its relationship to social change.

Characters on television and in other media are often simple and stereotyped; this makes it easier for producers to explain their stories and for audiences to understand them, but these images promote and sustain preconceptions. Mass media is no longer traditional; it has crossed time and space, and with the advent of the internet and digital arena, it has reached even the most remote locations through its amorphous and ubiquitous reach. Mass media has become ubiquitous with the advent of the internet and plays a significant role in the socialization process. Although the media exercises a strong

position in society and a large number of researches have revealed that it still perpetuates racial and ethnic stereotypes, sometimes with destructive consequences, it acts as a basic as well as the oldest lens through which people learn about each other. The oldest and most prevalent misconception is that women are undervalued and underrepresented. Ethnic minority communities are also often overlooked by the media, such as news, theater, and video games.

Racism in media and its stereotypes

Mass media has evolved beyond traditional boundaries with the emergence of internet and digital arena that cut across space and time. It has reached out to the remotest corners of places with its omnipresent and amorphous reach. Mass media plays a very important role in the process of socialization. The easiest example of understanding the study is looking at how media influences our view of the world through maintaining and reinforcing stereotypes. Characters on television and in other media are often clichéd and stereotypical. Easy character profiles enable producers to communicate their tales better and for audiences to understand them. But such images foster and perpetuate misconceptions. The study of stereotypes offers a point of confluence between quantitative and qualitative research, between sociological science and humanities perspectives, and between administrative and cultural. Assumptions about stereotyping influence how we view media outcomes, uses, and gratifications as well as how we ideologically evaluate television and movies. while its content was being assessed. In spite of its vast reach in society, several studies show that these media continue to perpetuate racial and ethnic stereotypes, with frequently unfavorable outcomes, and are a basic filter thru which individuals learn about one another. The foremost and the oldest stereotype is the underrated, under-representation of women. Also, the media, including news, theatre, and gaming, regularly ignores and disregards ethnic minority communities.

Stereotypical portrayals are very common in all media formats and types, which can be attributed in part to

complex media production procedures, cultural norms and values, selfish financial interests, and a dearness of ethnic minority media companies. Still, even though very difficult to quantify, their power has tremendous potential. Collective identity and inter group attitudes are determined by mass media, and the perceptions of the audience towards different groups are distorted due to stereotyping of some groups. It has been proven again and again that these biased media representations not only promote racial hatred and animosity in general but also affect the ethnic minority peoples' self-perceptions negatively. Thus, research into ways for challenging stereotypes and creating more positive media portrayals is critical.

It is assumed that racism is communicated through the media in the form of social representations. This means that the image of immigrants and the interpretation of ethnic relations in the media is not deliberately distorted and not by individuals, but rather that media are an influential part of a larger process of (re) production of social representations in the public sphere. Journalists and media institutions often reproduce forms of ethnic inequality 'by default'; i.e. they do not consciously perpetrate, but unknowingly, as an aspect of the professional habit and limitations specific to news work. Racism by the mass media is typically not open or explicit: just the insidiously stereotyped portrayal, generalising or apologizing rhetoric or even just a 'silence' over

the missing 'voices' from ethnic minority group perspectives within stories about themselves lead to the spreading of widespread racist beliefs and validation of discrimination as well as other hostile treatments.

In media reporting on racism, ideologies of right-wing extremism, report on racist acts and practices ranging from racist harassment, physical aggressions and even murder, reporting as an acts of discrimination, either institutional or individual is the practices of 'everyday racism'. The political mobilisation of anti-immigrant sentiment by extreme right or populist parties may, to a certain extent, be acknowledged by

the media as racism and xenophobia in practice. Likewise, popular protests against the presence of migrants or minorities in specific areas can be reported as racist or xenophobic protests. On the level of attitudes and opinions, media report results of surveys or can they themselves conduct phone-in programmes etc. to measure (and shape) the public opinion on ethnic issues.

We now live in a culture where hate crimes and acceptable discrimination amongst people of color have become common but it is the media who does criminalization and stereotyping of African American women and men in United States. Though in U.S. population is now become more diverse than it has ever been, but people there still remain in a white and Black binary society that draws strict social lines. In 2020, some spaces cannot be occupied freely without discrimination and bias by people of color. If people of color start occupying the areas which are surrounded with whiteness, they get judged by the skin color in which people apply some preconceived ideas and racial stereotypes on them. This is why the lack of accurate and diverse representation in media affects how we perceive people of color to be and how we interact with them as a whole. The vast amounts of negative media based around one race-particularly Black people-have divided our society into a predator versus prey society. In U.S. the criminal justice system today is a modern adaptation during the Jim Crow era that aided in the maintenance of racial order keeping Blacks in their place. From slavery and throughout this hierarchical structure of systems has often found Black people judged and presumed guilty of they committed the crimes they were accused of. There was this false common need to know why people of color are living in these spaces and shopping in those places and simply holding onto their autonomy. Under the impression that all black people are common criminals, under such a misconception, white people went about racial profiling that can lead into serious consequences that emerged for the innocent. This type of racism then leads to internalized racism and forces many people of color

This is to feel the need to justify their identity or adjust it in a way that is comfortable or non-threatening to white society.

Understanding how racism in the media creates a fearful and discriminatory society is beneficial in recognizing how media fuels racial profiling and increases internalized racism.

Discrimination and racism through social media platform

A number of psychologists and theorists have tried to describe this relationship between hate crimes and racist behavior across the globe. According to them, the intentional design of social media websites, based on algorithms which adapt to the beliefs and thoughts people currently hold onto, polarize and bias users and drive them into preexisting perceptions. While racist behavior is primarily driven by bias, social media can foster such bias. However, though under the theory of confirmation bias this assertion seems theoretically sound and justifiable; very few studies have attempted to validate it empirically.

The Internet and social media have become very common, leading to a number of positive developmental outcomes in societies around the world. However, these technologies also have negative societal and cultural impacts. The rise of hate crimes and racist behavior as a consequence of the diffusion of these technologies. It is very well documented that several racially motivated crimes around the world have been associated with the use of the Internet and social media. For instance, in 2016, a racist crime occurred in Jordan where the killer and the victim did not know each other personally; instead, social media mediated the crime entirely.

A gunman shot dead a Jordanian writer with a Christian background outside a court where he was facing charges for sharing on Facebook a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam, which had sparked outrage among Muslims. The killer had apparently seen the cartoon on Facebook and other social media, the investigation showed. He had also gathered all the information he needed to carry out his crime over the Internet.

A well-known example comes through Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, who in 1999 committed a shooting spree targeting racial and ethnic groups. The executioner reported that "it wasn't really until [he] got on the Internet, read some literature of these groups that … it really all came together".

In Bangladesh, religious extremists have taken responsibility for the killing of a blogger and the founder of an LGBTI magazine, which has been inspired by a community of online supporters.

Such features as "hate speech," advocacy of national, racial and religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination and violence as well as racism on social media platforms are not issues for Twitter but also for social media giants, such as Meta. Although it claims to forbid hate speech on its platforms, there is an apparent gap between the commitments a company makes in their policies and the actuality of enforcing on social media platforms. This is particularly salient in the approval of inflammatory ads, electoral disinformation on Facebook, and content that talks of conspiracy theories.

Social media has emerged to be among the largest media platforms for keeping the world connected to people, such as family and friends. In 2011, 1.2 billion users worldwide-82 percent of the world's internet population over the age of

fifteen - logged onto a social media site, up from six percent in 2007.

Currently, there are 7.7 billion people in the world, and at least 3.5 billion use online platforms. Facebook is the largest social media platform in the world, with 2.4 billion users. Other social media platforms such as YouTube and Whats app also have more than one billion users each. Major platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snap chat, and Instagram all serve as a world within themselves.

That have their own distinct identities. Every social media platform has a unique way of interaction among its users, and what is allowed and not allowed on the platform. Social media platforms serve as a free speech platform for people to say what they want, when they want.

Although social media was meant for society to connect people virtually, it was never meant to provide a breeding ground for racism. Added to that over the web people have anonymity as a layer of cover, creating an environment where individual writers and large groups of people are abused because of their race or religion.

Racism thrives on social media by presenting itself in subtle re tweets or images that are often seen largely as simple comedy with no ill intent behind it. Subtle racism is often presented as a joke or the questioning of things that are simply understood. For instance, subtle

It will take the shape of racism against social media that involves calling a Black person with a made-up name based on what they perceive it should be. It will keep being represented through trending exploitative news clips of the educational gaps among people who come from poverty

Communities of color. Social media overt racism refers to open racism that finds its roots in the hatred for Black people expressed through posts saying “go back to Africa”, “go rob a bank”, or comparing pictures of Black people with monkeys.

Conclution

The media can play an important role in shaping of public perception on racial inequality, and perhaps it is the only platform which helps to make a difference in the way people think and behave. Media is a mirror that reflects the reality of society and an instrument for transformative action. However, its role is double-edged; media can challenge stereotypes and foster empathy, but it can also perpetuate harmful biases and oversimplify complex issues. The rise of digital platforms and social media has democratized information, allowing underrepresented communities to reclaim their narratives and expose racial inequities globally. Movements like #BlackLivesMatter demonstrate how media can galvanize collective action and hold institutions accountable. Challenges persist: the spread of misinformation, the sensationalization of racial issues, and unequal representation in mainstream media. The perpetuation and promotion of negative racial stereotypes, a tendency towards conflictual and sensationalist reporting on race issues and an insensitivity towards and often ignorance of minority cultures can all contribute to creating a social climate which is tolerant of racist violence. As a significant player in the public arena, it is inevitable that some complaints under the legislation will be directed towards the media. The media therefore, while having a

right and even a mandate to report on race issues, also has a responsibility to exercise impartiality, accuracy, and balance in reporting.

In a nutshell, it can be said that first, that racism, hate speech, and extremist ideologies are spread through social media; second that the media as medium and place for discourse have radically changed; and third, that companies that own or operate social media are inert in regulating and mediating said racism and hate speech or otherwise holding their users accountable, at least partly out of economic and external interests. This fourth and final point is that current laws and regulations do not hold social media companies or users accountable. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a need for some form of regulation in main steam media as well as social media which can create a imaginary line of restrictions and limits.

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The Impact of Brain Drain: Role of New Media and social media in affecting Migration Decision- A Descriptive study

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Abstract

This paper reviews four decades of economics research on the brain drain, with a focus on recent contributions and on development issues. We assess the magnitude, intensity and determinants of the brain drain, showing that brain drain (or high-skill) migration is becoming the dominant pattern of international migration and a major aspect of globalization. We then use a stylized growth model to analyse the various channels through which a brain drain affects the sending countries and review the evidence on these channels. The recent empirical literature shows that high-skill emigration need not deplete a country's human capital stock and can generate positive network externalities. Social media and internet are acknowledged as important growth engines in modern world. Internet and social media have touched political, social, cultural dimensions of a country and also have played a role in connecting people across the globe. Since long, developing countries are facing problem of exodus of workers i.e. people are leaving their home countries due to various reasons. Social connections and easy accessibility of information has influenced migration intensions also. Since social media and internet has penetrated each aspect of our lives it also has influenced intensions and decisions to stay or leave their home country. Internet and social media acts as a major source of information for prospective migrants. This paper highlights various factors through which media and internet can influence or stimulate migration decisions.

Keywords- Mobile, Internet, Globalisation, Cultural Communication, Cultural Shock, Media Marketing

Introduction

Brain drains due to cross border migration of skilled workers has always been a cause of concern for developing nations. There have been various numbers of studies done which have concentrated on cross border people mobility which gives rise to brain drain. Few of the key reasons which can serve as a cause of emigration of human capital include economic, political, social and cultural factors. In the modern world in which internet and social media has reached and influenced political, social, cultural aspects with in a nation it also have contributed to link the people of different countries. Internet and social media are recognized as one of the key growth drivers in the modern world. They have linked the farthest edges of the nation with the modern world. According to a report, India boasts 462.1 million internet users (which account for about 34 percent of population) of whom 430.3 million surf the net via mobile phones (79% of total web traffic). 282 million are active users and spend about 7 hours daily on the net. Active social media penetration in India is 19% of the total population and global average is 42% of the total population (TRAI, 2018).

In this technological era internet and social media have become a vital part of one's life. It has also integrated individuals with the outside world and has become a significant means of communication. The pattern of communication has been modified and developed over time. Human communication began with oral communication and over time it was developed to script, to print, wired electronics, wireless electronics and finally to digital medium. Internet and digital media in early 1990s introduced paradigm shift in channel and communication pattern. Digital technology has shortened the distance between national and international boundaries (Harvey, 1991). Thoughts, opinions and Information provided and exchanged by digital media results in the formation of a network and impacts intercultural relationship of virtual community (Boyd & Ellision, 2007). Internet and social media have changed our thoughts, actions and lives. Thus, internet

and social media have validated their influence on every aspect of humanity (Chen, 2012). The number of international migrants rose from 75 million in 1960 to 190 million in 2005, at roughly the same rate as the world population, so the world migration rate rose only modestly, from 2.5 to 2.9 percent.1 During the same time, the world trade/GDP ratio tripled, rising from 0.1 to 0.2 between 1960 and 1990 and from 0.2 to 0.3 between 1990 and 2000; the ratio of FDI to world output, however, tripled during the 1990s alone.

From such Ögures it would be possible to conclude that globalization is primarily concerning trade and FDI, rather than migration. But the image becomes different after the migration focusing is drawn down to developed nations and specifically its skilled fraction. As can be seen from Figure 1, the proportion of foreign-born within the population of high-income nations has trebled since 1960 (and doubled since 1985). In addition, these immigrants are more skilled: whereas migration into the OECD area grew at the same rate as trade, high-skill migration (or brain drain) from developing to developed nations grew much more rapidly2 and can clearly be seen as one of the key elements of globalization. Why is there this brain drain internationally, and what are the effects on sending countries? This paper covers four decades of economic literature on the subject, concentrating on the latter period. The Örst wave of economics articles on the brain drain was in the late 1960s and primarily comprised welfare analyses within traditional trade-theoretic frameworks (e.g., Grubel and Scott, 1966, Johnson, 1967, Berry and Soligo, 1969). These initial contributions tended to conclude that the effect of the brain drain on source nations was largely neutral and highlighted the advantages of free migration to the world economy. This was attributed to the fact that high-skill emigrants tend to leave behind some of their wealth in their home country, which complements residual highand low-skill labor (Berry and Soligo, 1969), as well as remitting back home. This and other favourable comments offset sending nations for the actual loss brain drain might generate. From a general point of view, such research (particularly Grubel and Scott, 1966) highlights high-skill immigrantsí contribution towards knowledge, which is an

international public good, and ignores "obsolete" assertions regarding the presumable losses for developing nations.

The second wave follows a decade later. Led by Jagdish Bhagwati, in the 1970s a sequence of alternative models was constructed to investigate the welfare implications of the brain drain in different institutional frameworks. Rigidities in domestic labor markets, informational defects, and Öscal and other forms of externalities (Bhagwati and Hamada, 1974, McCulloch and Yellen, 1977) were invoked to bring home the adverse implications of brain drain for the behind group. Emigration of high skills was considered to lead to enhanced inequality at the global level, with rich nations getting richer at the cost of poor nations. The earliest works to examine the brain drain in an endogenous growth model relied on similar assumptions and drew similar results.

2. What is Brain Drain: An Overview

It has been approximated that approximately 3.25 percent of word's population reside abroad (UN, 2016) out of which 58 percent reside in the developed nations. According to International migration report, 2017, the destination country is United States (46.1 million), Germany (11.1 million) and Russia (11.0 million). Shortages of human resource in professional fields such as medical, engineering and sciences etc. have been experienced by both developing and developed nations. There are chances that with growing competition, more talent shall be attracted from the developing countries. As developed nations offer good remuneration, better infrastructure, facilities, lifestyle etc. the professional from developing nations opt to shift to such nations. Consequently, developing nations are plagued with a shortage of human resources and brain drain. Several reasons such as salary, employment, training, improved infrastructure, attributed, quality of life etc. have been established as being among the key causes of brain drain. Nevertheless, technology advancement is also contributing to migration choice (Bhardwaj B, 2017). Availability and access of relevant information re4alted to migration and destination country is one of the important factors influencing migration decisions.

Internet and social media can play an important role behind motivation or strengthening migration decision (Braga, 2007). Previous research related to brain drain and human resource migrations has been highly concentrated on antecedent or consequence of brain drain. But in modern world internet and social media has influenced every phase of life. We cannot neglect their influence on brain drain intensions. This article attempts to contribute towards the studies regarding brain drain through understanding how internet and social media play their roles in impacting brain drain intention. Different studies associated with migration, brain drain, internet, and social media have been referred to understand the potential of internet in impacting brain drain interventions.

3. The Importance of Brain Drain in today's World

What is the "Brain Drain" and why is it significant today? The concept of a "Brain Drain" implies that there exists an uneven division of the pros and cons of international migration. The countries of origin appear to suffer most of the losses and in their reckoning, still have not been sufficiently rewarded for the net input their indigenes have provided to the host nations. The term "Brain Drain" is not controversy-free and there are some authors, e.g., David Hart (2006), who use the term "High Skill Migration" instead of "Brain Drain." High Skill Migration (HSM) is, for Hart, migration of individuals with higher levels of skills and education who, if they remained, would be able to make a meaningful contribution to the country's development. But issues come up when we attempt and distinguish between high skill migration and general/low skill migration. There isn't a single standard in all countries that can be applied to determine who should be regarded as highly skilled. The fact is that not all migrants elicit the same degree of loss of human capital. The sole differentiating factor (and a highly subjective one, at that) between overall migration and HSM or "Brain Drain" is that in the "Brain Drain," there is human capital, skill and expertise accompanying the migrant (Grubel and Scott 1977). In addition, the ones who emigrate are more likely to be from the professional and middle classes and are mostly educators, health care professionals, scientists, engineers, professors and

political activists (Dugger 2005). In the home country, high skilled migrant workers are also differentiated from less skilled migrant workers by the higher wages they earn.

As I mentioned before, the countries of origin require these educated, skilled workers so that they may develop. At the most extreme part of the analysis we can argue that the working class of these nations invests time, energy and resources into educating these individuals who subsequently emigrate and abandon them to survive. Therefore, it is clear that freedom of movement and access to financial prosperity by some individuals is gained at the cost of the freedom of countrymen from hunger, homelessness, poverty and curable diseases. Small, poorer and less developed nations are likely to suffer most from this emigration of human capital. For instance, most of the High Skilled Migrants to the U.S. come from countries that are not members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The National Science Foundation is on record stating that about 70% of the U.S. science and engineering labor force come from non-OEDC developing nations (Hart 1). The nations in the global North that gain the most from the "Brain Drain" do not mind admitting to its existence but do little to remedy it. Let it be said that the "Brain Drain" phenomenon is not so recent. As far back as 1973, the U.N. General Assembly asked the Secretary General to present a report on how the world could address this issue of the exportation of trained or skilled human resources from developing nations to developed nations (Grubel and Scott 1977).

However, the discourse of the "Brain Drain" phenomenon seemed to disappear following the Vietnam War and has only re-emerged in the last two decades, but noticeably on a larger scale. The problem in the past was that this international flow of human capital was often overlooked due to migration that was attributed to voluntary exile, political and religious conflict, or involuntary flight from persecution (Grubel and Scott 1977). In order to comprehend how the "Brain Drain" occurs, we have to take a few minutes discussing migration and why individuals migrate from their native countries in the first place. The reasons Caribbean natives move overseas

and never return home are categorized into two types that are usually mentioned as pull and push factors. Push factors are conditions or incidents that occur in native countries leading to individuals departing. Push factors include the structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on developing nations that raised unemployment and cut government expenditure on social programs in such nations that consequently resulted in heightened migration. Pull factors refer to the attractions in the host countries that motivate individuals to move there for work purposes. Examples of pull factors include the receiving countries' immigration incentive policies that have a tendency to attract more educated, skilled and trained individuals. For instance, the H-1B visa program in the U.S. is commonly utilized as a stepping stone by immigrants seeking to gain employment-based permanent residence there.

The existing immigration policy in the U.S. allows the applicants for the H-1B visa to possess the dual intention of gaining temporary work status but with the intention of applying for permanent residence (Kapur and McHale 2005). Other developed nations have such immigration policies that continue to attract highly skilled professionals from developing nations. Currently, in Australia, employers of foreign workers do not have to prove that domestic staff will be at a disadvantage when foreign employees work, in reality, all employers have to present is that by hiring the foreign worker, Australian interests will in some way or another be best served (Kapur and McHale 2005).

4. The Active & Passive Role of New Media and Social Media in Influencing Brain Drain Intensions-Social Influence Theory

Social network theory concerns the function of social relations in passing information, directing personal or media influence, and facilitating attitudinal or behavioural change (Liu, Sindhu, Beacom and Valente, 2017). Historically, migration choice has been made on the grounds of information gathered from different sources like network overseas, consultants, relatives and friends. But today with the growth of internet and social media in individual lives dependence has mostly switched to

these zones. Use of intern and social media has made their presence globally with about 95 percent population living in a region with a mobile network cover. Use of internet and penetration of smart phones globally is increasing. Rise in the use of internet and diffusion of smart phones globally is increasing and has an impact on every aspect of our life. The number of individuals using internet has grown from 1,024 million in 2005 to 3, 488 million in 2016 (ICT Facts and Figures, 2016). Migration decision and Intensions to a great extent rely on the availability of information which can be obtained from friends, family, relatives, earlier migrants or social network. But with digital revolution internet has become one of the most used and evident sources of information. Because of enormous information, which is accessible on internet and social media it is influencing our social life (Graham, Schroeder and Taylor, 2013; Dutton, 2009). Media have significant influence on thoughts and behaviors of people (McCullagh, 2002, Kohring & Matthes, 2007; UNESCO,2015). Migration choices are guided by information availability and internet and social media drive migration by facilitating easy access to information about destination country. Hence, the data obtained from these sources assists in demystifying unclear concepts of migration and possible destinations.

Availability of information via internet assist in location discovery and influences virtual emigration plans. Resilient network founded on relationship, kin, community etc. constitute strong relations as a social capital. It has always functioned as an enabling tool in migration. Internet and social media notwithstanding, people with brain drain intention find it easy to obtain information which is an enabler for their movements. Accordingly, as postulated by the social network theory, the decision and intentions of migration could be shaped by human networks that build and enable migrating. It is seen that a robust network among people of the same origin (e.g. same nation) enhances the likelihood of migration flow as well (Massey, 1990 and Polyzos, 2006). Admittance to pertinent information concerning labour market and the risk involved while moving into the foreign nation, lowers the costs of cross border mobility significantly which further

encourage international travel. Some years back, international migration was also known as radical departure which completely severed the social relationship of the emigrants (Faist, 2000). But internet and social media have reversed the trend allowing a close relationship between nonimmigrants and immigrants (Vertovec, 2006; Horst, 2006). Brain drains and emigration choices are not spontaneous but have well defined stages (Brown & More 1970; McHugh 1984; Kley 2011).

Internet and social media are involved in every stage right from the stage of intension to move until the settling downing in foreign nation. Internet and social media support assists in overcoming limitations and assists in discovering new locations (Thulin & Vilhelmson 2016; Schutz, 2011). Internet information flow assists in the adjustment of the expatriates (Hattingh, Matthee and Lotriet, 2014). Personalized, clear and rationalized information about locations, employment, culture, jobs, education, housing, political and social conditions in far away places facilitates adaptation and social interaction. Therefore, it is clearly seen that the interest, planning, and act of migration is shaped by social media and the internet (Stevenson 2009; Hiller & Franz 2004; DaVanzo 1981& Massey 1990, Thulin and Vilhelmson, 2014). Another means in which internet and social media are involved in migration decisions and intensions is web-based place-marketing strategies. Online marketing campaigns draw visitors, tourists, and migrants (Urban 2002; Gertner et al. 2007). This also stimulate migration interest and migration intentions (Vilhelmson & Thulin 2014). Information scarcity increases the likelihood of impulsiveness of a potential migrant (Burrell & Anderson, 2008; Thulin and Vilhelmson, 2016). In this scenario, social media and internet can be utilized for information access as well as for migration prospects (Hiller and Franz, 2004). Internet has scope for other opportunities and therefore strengthens migration decision (Burrell and Anderson, 2008). It also contributes to altering perspective and migration or loving a nation decision (Palm, 2002). Additionally, there has been an identified positive correlation between internet use and migration planning (Vilhelmson & Thulin, 2013).

5. Does the "Brain Drain" truly exist?

One of the first refutations of the theory of the "Brain Drain" was the "Emulation Model" (Grubel and Scott 1977). The model states that the emigration of educated and skilled individuals leads to those left behind in the source country asking for higher pay and improved education. In a way, they desire their nations to emulate the situation in the destination nations. Therefore, trained and educated employees who stay in the source nations will pursue positive and productive work that will help them earn greater wages corresponding to the wages of the advanced countries. Additionally, the hope for migration stimulates those staying in the source nations to acquire higher levels of education as they seek greater pay. Consequently, more individuals access universities and there is increased demand for constructing additional institutions of higher learning. Kapur and McHale (2005) term this as the "Prospect Channel" because the promise of exiting the country alters the prospective emigrants' perception about human, social and financial capital. Regrettably, such models do not consider the over-expectations these individuals develop when accessing higher education. They are not acquiring a university education to help their country's economy; they are acquiring a higher education because, in many cases, they think that this will enhance their probability of migrating. Another argument posits that even if the migrants do not return home, the knowledge they gain usually does.

Those arguing from this perspective sometimes assume that certain source countries will even be more advantaged if the skilled migrants do not return (Hart 2006). This is because within the developed nations, they are able to acquire specialized skills and gain expertise training that they would most likely have foregone if they had stayed in the home country. With the improvement in communication channels, it has been made easier for these migrants to transfer their acquired knowledge back home. The "Brain Drain" is then a kind of legal export business (Sanders 2007). The source nations equip their nationals with the foundational knowledge and facilities and then ship them to developed nations. Then, those who migrated remit money and acquired knowledge

back. Consequently, it could be more of a mutual benefit than a "Brain Drain" since the expansion of knowledge and technology will ultimately spread to the source nations.

6. Brain Drain-Possible Proposed Solutions

It is crucial that the Caribbean nations eliminate or reduce the push factors causing their citizens to leave. The governments now need to become proactive and not continue attempting to control those already departed; they can do nothing about that. It would be advisable for them to instead redirect their effort and begin to find means of making the country better for those who still live there as well as offer incentives for individuals to remain.

Limiting migration is not practical because any stringent limit on migration violates fundamental human rights. In addition, stringent limits on migration will only create more discontent and illegal behavior (Sanders 2007). Economic and social growth should not be relied on to end the "Brain Drain" entirely, but it will make huge gains in curbing the issue. Three of the main reasons people leave their home country are: to receive higher incomes, to capitalize on better career developmental opportunities and to gain a greater degree of freedom (Grubel and Scott 1977). Globalization has highlighted the Caribbean's need for a more competitive and highly skilled labor force. But the problem is that while the nation invests in education and more and more individuals get higher studies then this also acts as a motivation for individuals to move. Source nations must address improving affairs there that will offer more incentives for the highly qualified workers to remain. These could include improved human rights, remuneration, political system adjustments, newer facilities for health and education as well as making an environment more appealing to businesses. Without these changes there can little else be done to make natives remain or encourage migrants to come back. Both developed and developing nations must have a fair distribution of the returns of highly skilled migration. Receiving nations can help develop Caribbean education and training as a form of compensation.

Kapur and McHale (2005) identify a number of compensation alternatives which would make development assistance become part of "human capital recruitment" (Kapur and McHale 2005). For instance, the receiving countries could export skilled employees to serve as replacements in the source countries as workers' exchange. They also proposed that the destination countries grant the source countries benefits from income tax revenue collected from migrant workers as well as share revenue from visa fees obtained. Also, source countries could charge education grants for secondary and tertiary studies in the home country that would become repayable upon migration. But again, there is the issue of determining how much compensation to pay as well as in which country's economy the compensation is to be measured. Still, this is possibly the most suggested solution thus far that benefits the most at the least costs. Ultimately, the intention would be to assist source nations in learning how to best utilize the spillover information and establish improved "absorptive capacity". In most classrooms and kids' libraries across the Caribbean, there are banners proclaiming that "Education is the key to success" and "Reading maketh a successful man." However, there exists a tremendous lack of jobs within the Caribbean. Many university graduates in all fields of study are without work, months and sometimes years after they graduate.

Education is being preached and motivated endlessly but afterward there is scarce space for getting hired and those fortunate enough to find job interviews being given regularly are repeatedly told they are overqualified. Governments should come up with new policies for their educated workforce so that employment opportunities become readily available for them. Reinstatement of nationalism adds to the dismal manner with which migration has been treated by developing nations. Increased nationalism, though, also tends to create more stringent immigration policy in developed nations that wish to recreate barriers (though they frequently fail in this). After the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York, a xenophobia was created in the U.S. that is likely to go on and impact immigration and thus lower the migration of highly

skilled individuals. There are also specific areas of study that have limited the registration of foreign-born students. This is a routine practice particularly in the natural sciences like chemistry and biology which might be useful to terrorists (Hart 2006). If these immigration policies further tighten, then perhaps the issue of the "Brain Drain" will remedy itself. Another suggested solution to reduce the problem is to alter the language employed in the discourse. That is, we must drop the "Brain Drain" terminology because the mere mention of "Brain Drain" elicits an automatic aversive reaction. This is the reason why Hart (2006) recommends that we employ "High Skill Migration" because this is actually the crux of what is happening and provides a better sense of direction of what the problem actually is. The issue of diaspora communities is one that I am keen on and firmly believe that from these diaspora communities, the solution to the problem of the "Brain Drain" is possible. Source country diasporas, particularly in the Caribbean, are growing very fast in the host countries and are comprised of numerous highly educated migrants. Source country governments can take advantage of this and foster linkages and partner relations between the diasporas and institutions in the source countries. Such programs would assist members of the diaspora in becoming more socially and economically integrated into their countries of origin and could potentially act as an incentive to return home. It should not be presumed that when individuals depart they abandon their cultures and values.

Strauss and Quinn (1997) support the argument that cultures are unbounded; the experiences of the people can be shared across time and space. In most instances, the members of the diasporas want to remain with those who remain behind at home. Hart advises that governments of the host countries eliminate part of the obstacles to communication and movement and ease remittances sending and investing by emigrants (2006). They could accomplish this through cutting ticket costs for planes, lowering call fees, subsidizing diaspora expatriates' organizational infrastructure and granting incentives for cooperation at the education, scientific, and commercial level between diaspora communities and host

institutions. The receiving countries can also cooperate with the source countries in establishing networks to help highly skilled migrants establish programs and projects in the source countries with the aim that these programs will be able to expand and become autonomous.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

Digital age has reached every nook and corner of our life. Brain drains and migration research have found several reasons that stimulate brain drain intensions. Internet and social media is also one of the reasons which play a significant role by serving as a main source of information. A study of available research has revealed that there is paucity of research on the role internet and social media's impact on migration research. Brain drain & brain drain intensions related research will be incomplete if we overlook the role of internet and social media. This paper makes contribution in the area of brain drain and migration studies by reviewing the previous researches to find the motivating role of internet and social media. We have found some factors which cause reinforcement of migration intentions. Therefore, we can say that social media and internet triggers brain drain intension by giving information, creating a robust network, reducing down the risk of migration, moderating the effect of obstacles, giving an access to employment opportunities, facilitates adjustment and remain connected with family and friends. The "Brain Drain" is the majority of the emigration of highly trained and educated individuals from poorer, developing and less industrialized nations to wealthier, more industrialized ones. This article investigated the relationship between the new paradigm of globalization and how it is fueling this new interest and re-emergence of discourse regarding the "Brain Drain." The Caribbean region has recently been one of the most profoundly impacted regions in terms of human capital loss. The article had some sobering facts regarding the Caribbean such as the fact that the largest percentage of educated individuals entering the U.S. are from the Caribbean. The Caribbean also receives the most remittances from developed nations, no surprise there. It also glanced over some of the methodological issues with the

statistics on the "Brain Drain" and the importance of being cautious when drawing conclusions.

Internet and media give information on migration area and destinations' quantity. With access to these media foreign locations could be accessed very rapidly via virtual network. Implications of the future migration choice can be viewed to lead towards stimulating to actual migration intentions. Access to related information shortens the interval between migration intentions and ultimate decision (Taylor 1969). This research is clear that social media and internet have a critical role in the formation of intentions towards exodus of individuals. With the expansion of cheap and resourceful means of communication, distant and unreachable territories can be found. With the factors given as reasons to influence migration intensions, further research can be done to test empirically the influence of internet and social media on brain drain intensions. Also, the topic of inhibiting role of media and intensions on brain drain intensions can be undertaken by future researches.

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Amplifying Voices: The Role of Social Media in Accelerating Social Justice Movements

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Abstract

Social media has radically changed the way individuals engage with any social movements, from far-flung efforts into global campaigns. Various social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. serve as catalysts for awareness, and action by amplifying the marginalized voices and bringing the matter to the attention of the public and government. The present paper examines the impactful role of social media in facilitating social justice movements, analysing how it contributes to rapid information dissemination, encourages collective action, and challenges any injustices in the society. The research will follow a qualitative research method where content analysis of #MeToo movement will be employed. The paper will also analyse other social media activism like The Black Lives Matter (BLM)# ,JusticeForManipur, #Global Climate Strikes, farmers' protest (2020-2021), Dalit Women's Activism and LGBTQ+ Rights, The anti-CAA protests. The study further examines the strengths and limitations of digital activism. While social media effectively amplifies voices, eliminates the gap of geographical divides, and disseminates information globally, it is also hindered by some challenges like misinformation, digital divides, digital literacy etc. These limitations underscore the need for ethical and inclusive digital practices to enhance the efficacy of social media activism and hashtag movements. This research evaluates the transformative potential of social media as a tool for social change, offering a platform for marginalized communities to advocate for justice and equality. It emphasizes the

importance of fostering digital literacy, promoting responsible online behavior, and implementing strategies to mitigate the challenges associated with digital activism.

Key words- social media, digital movements, marginalized voices, digital activism, social change.

Introduction

Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate, obtain information, and engage with various activities. The development of the Internet and social media has given a new platform for people to participate in controversial social discussions. In recent years, social media has played a significant role in mobilizing social protests around the globe, such as the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street (Browning, 2013; Castells, 2015; Vatikiotis, 2016).It has significantly changed people's modes of communication with near and dear ones and also with the whole world, and became a critical marketing and communication tool for businesses. In many ways it influences politics and civic participation. Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, have become indispensable tools for maintaining and sharing relationships. Social media is immensely used to raise awareness about social issues and how they impact people and can encourage users to make changes in their own lives too. From buying more sustainable clothing after watching content on the climate crisis to donating to charity or attending marches. We need to replace ignorance with tolerance, unity and inclusion, the greater chance we will have at improving social justice. Businesses nowadays use social media sites to reach out their target market audience and increase their product promotion, give feedback to their customers in real time, and reach global markets. People visit websites like Twitter and Facebook for the breaking news as well as information on what's happening around the world; as such social media has changed the way in which news is relayed. However, there is a reservation regarding spreading false information and influencing public opinion. Social media goes beyond the familiar realms into personal, professional, political, and cultural elements, so it indeed is a very common and formidable force that continues to change how we coexist with the world. Social media has

played a pivotal role in challenging systems of oppression and promoting equity by transcending geographical barriers and democratizing access to information. It has redefined how individuals and communities engage with inequality, discrimination, and social in justice through real-time communication, awareness-building, and mobilization tools. Social media permits citizens to document and share their experiences, breaking with the gatekeeping barriers that once limited the reach and prioritized whose stories could be told. As a part of modern communication, social media is increasingly impacting how news and ideas are disseminated and opinions are formed.

Methodology

The researcher has followed Content analysis of various social media posts, and campaigns associated with prominent social justice movements, #MeToo, The Black Lives Matter (BLM) #, JusticeForManipur, #Global Climate Strikes, farmers' protest (2020-2021), Dalit Women's Activism and LGBTQ+ Rights, The anti-CAA protests.

Objectives

- To study the impact of social media on the public and empowering marginalized communities.
- To analyze the role of social media in facilitating social justice movements in common people.
- To identify the challenges and limitations of using social media for social justice activism, focusing on misinformation, censorship and digital divides.
- To assess the role of hashtags, viral campaigns, and online petitions in driving social change.

Theoretical Framework:

Public Sphere Theory (Jürgen Habermas)

The Public Sphere Theory by Jürgen Habermas states how individuals engage in open, critical discourse about societal issues around the globe. In Habermas's view, the public sphere is an arena where citizens can gather to discuss and influence

public opinion. It emphasizes democratic participation and rational debate in shaping opinion societal progress.

Critical Theory (Frankfurt School)

Critical theory offers a critical investigation of how social media platforms can both challenge and sustain current social institutions. It focuses on power dynamics, social inequities, and the impact of media on society. It is a useful paradigm for examining social media's involvement and impact in social justice and campaigning for more equitable outcomes. "Critical theory" generally refers to the theories that aim at a critique and transformation of society by integrating normative perspectives with empirically informed analysis of society's conflicts, contradictions, and tendencies. This theory refers to the work of several generations of philosophers and social theorists in the Western European Marxist tradition known as the Frankfurt School. Beginning in the 1930s at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, it is best known for interdisciplinary research that combines philosophy and social science with the practical aim of furthering emancipation.

Literature Review

The literature examines much of the features of the MeToo movement in India among employees who have suffered sexual harassment and talks about the same, though due to it being a quite recent movement, a very few numbers of research has been conducted on the topic. The scarcity of the research is more felt in the Indian background as the matter has not acquired much research studies yet. (NareshEshaEskasmayi et al., 2022).

In October 2018, the #MeToo movement was done adequately in India. When the well-known Indian actressTanushree Dutta accused well-known actor and filmmaker Nana Patekar of sexual harassment on a film set in 2008, the Indian film industry took the lead. A few days later, prominent government minister M.J. Akbar was charged with sexual harassment by journalist PriyaRamani. Many other women who work in different sectors like government, public sectors, private companies, actresses, media people have got the chance to come forward with confidence.(Shareen& Joshi, 2019).

Since its inception in October 2017, the #MeToo movement in India, an international expression of the worldwide #MeToo movement has been a part of the empowerment of Indian women. The #MeTooIndia movement is successful in bringing attention to various sexual offenses, harassments, and rapes social media platform like Twitter. It has made use of the digital public sphere to help urban Indian women

feel more comfortable coming out with their own personal stories. Women in India also posted huge number of stories of sexual harassments done by people who are sitting on powerful positions even before the #MeToo movement went viral worldwide (NANDITHA, N. 2021). Like many other global movements, the #MeToo movement in India did not happen overnight. rather , it was the culmination of years of simmering resentment. The 2012 Delhi Nirbhaya rape case marked the beginning of a new wave of feminist activism in India, as the first author has documented elsewhere (Dey, Citation2020a; Molyneux, Dey,Gatto, &Rowden, Citation2020). It was the first movement in India to use digital technologies and social media on this scale to unite people around for social activism (Dey, Adrija, 2021). Over the past few decades,

Gender relations at work have undergone tremendous change in India. The emergence of the multinational call center and IT industries [119] has led to a sharp rise in the number of women working in professional settings since the economic liberalization of the nation in the 1990s [99]. Organizational policies and practices have changed with this, as many have strived to make workplaces gender-neutral. For better or worse,

According to our respondents, the growth of #MeToo has scared men away from working in the workplace. These men are actually afraid that they will be included on the list of sexual harassers. Consequently, it is reported that tensions in the workplace between men and women have increased since the rise of the #MeToo movement due to a lack of clear definition about what constitutes sexual harassment. For instance, a lot of the respondents said that men are not willing to joke around or discuss trivial matters with their female

colleagues. (MOITRA APARNA et al., 2021) It is also claimed that #MeToo has created a broad fear of recruiting women in some sectors, which makes the employers recruit men for the same positions where they used to recruit women. This avoidance strategy stems from the belief that women are the sources of the problem, and not hiring these people will spare employers from issues related to sexual harassment at the workplace.

Women in India who had been discussing sexual abuse and harassment on social media platforms were part of the global #Metoo movement. The main cause of this exclusion is the growing awareness of the elite class in India over sexual abuse issues. This includes journalists, politicians, Bollywood stars, and famous media personalities coming on Twitter to "come-out". Absence of conversation

Another indicator of non-inclusion is that their stories, along with the struggles about sexual abuse and harassment in the lives of Dalit women, trans women, women from lower castes and classes, and other marginalized and gendered communities—experiences of which differ much from the elite urban woman—is completely missing. Lack of personal narratives under the same hashtags shows exclusion in toxic masculine language and the setting of unsafe spaces where the minorities won't feel comfortable sharing their stories (Nanditha,

Narayanamoorthy, 2021). Indian newsrooms gradually stopped covering sexual harassment and other infractions. Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has only made online sexual harassment worse (Ahuja and Padhy 2021, 325), policy-related dialogues have not received much attention, either in newsroom discussions or media coverage (Network of Women in Media India 2021, 27).

The media sector and higher education happened to be initial focus areas when #MeToo started in 2017 and #MeTooIndia when it began in 2018. This movement might, following four years of elections and one pandemic, be refocused more on inclusiveness and policy so that no woman—no caste, class, ability, and geography—remains left back to suffer some form of actual or virtual sexual abuse.

Social Media facilitating Social Justice Movements

Social media activism In India primarily began with online campaign movements like the Greenpeace campaign, Pink Chaddi, Save Tiger,etc. By identifying the need for people to represent, speak freely, and aware the masses through social networking the function of social media is crucial.

By breaking down the geographical and socio-economic barriers, Social media has facilitated mass mobilization, awareness generation, and real-time documentation of injustices in our society. In order to bring the social issues in front of the eyes of the government, the common public, hashtags are used to attract attention.

#MeToo movement, focused on sexual harassment and assault, has gathered a huge global attention all because of social media platforms. Tarana Burke was the movement's creator, who accelerated the movement's quick spread to social media. There are articles like "The #MeToo Movement: A Study of the Media's Role in Transforming Tweets into News" by Nyhan and Reifler [8] were published for the movement. The movement encouraged survivors of sexual harassment and assault to share their stories on social media, thereby providing a safe and supportive environment. It also enabled survivors to identify and bring perpetrators accountable, resulting in global attention on high-profile cases such as Harvey Weinstein. The exposure of the movement resulted in a cultural shift in how society views and confronts sexual harassment and assault, prompting talks about consent, limits, and power relations. Online groups and hashtags like as #BelieveSurvivors helped survivors build support networks, while social workers and advocates used these platforms to provide information, therapy, and guidance. The movement has had an impact on legislation, with social media campaigns urging lawmakers to implement stronger sexual harassment laws and employment regulations. The role of social media in these movements demonstrates its capacity to advance social justice causes and shape social work practice in addressing complicated challenges. which empowered survivors of sexual harassment where they shared their experiences on platforms like Twitter and Instagram. The

movement sparked conversations about gender equality and accountability, leading to policy changes and legal actions against perpetrators around the globe. The **farmers' protest (2020-2021)** is a landmark movement in social media. People used Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to share the struggles of Farmers, counter misinformation, and gain global attention. The hashtag #FarmersProtest trended worldwide, exemplifying the digital solidarity of millions.

Social media platforms played a pivotal role on Dalit Women's Activism and LGBTQ+ Rights Advocacy in Nepal. Dalit women, who were marginalized in Nepal, have endured discrimination and social marginalization for a long time. Social media platforms have raised awareness of their challenges, coined topics for debate about caste-based discrimination which resulted in policy changes and greater government attention to the issue. LGBTQ+ people in Nepal have suffered immense harassment and stigma, but social media has enabled them to raise their voice, tell their part of the story and reach a larger audience, develop public support for legal amendments, and foster an online community. These initiatives have resulted in favourable policy changes, increased public awareness, and the empowerment of the vulnerable populations.

The anti-CAA protests came into existence after the government of India decided to move ahead with the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) that refused to grant Indian citizenship to 'illegal' migrants belonging to Muslim and other communities, Rohingya refugees, Tibetan refugees and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, who migrated to India post-2014. Also people from economically weaker communities not having the legal documents to prove their Indian citizenship faced the threat of being stateless (BBC News, 2019). At that moment people stepped out to protest against the discriminatory nature of the government's move. Social networking sites, especially social media, were used to amplify the voices of the activists. People witnessed that social media was flooded with slogans, poems, posters, images, artworks, protest videos and various comic cartoons, songs made against the CAA-NRC act by the

activists and the people in tandem. Artists got the opportunity to showcase their creativity in the protest and used social media to popularize the concept of using art as a form of resistance during that protest time.

Digital Activism, Strength and Limitations.

Digital activism refers to the use of digital tools and online platforms to advocate for social, political rights, fight for social justice, or environmental causes. It has revolutionized the way individuals and groups mobilize. It creates opportunities for widespread awareness and engagement of common people throughout the geographical boundaries. Digital activism is able to amplify the voices of the marginalized through several media platforms, including social media, blogs, online petitions, crowd funding platforms, etc. Attempting to provide checks against these oppressive systems. Movements like #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, showcase just how easily and rapidly digital activism can spread information and hold to account the powerful and the mightier for their actions, but then a few challenges include misinformation, digital surveillance, and marijuana to add, "slacktivism," where a huge section of the population shows superficial support to a particular cause online disguised silver lining against certain injustices without putting more effort into meaningful offline actions. Digital activism is always vulnerable to misinformation, echo chambers, and polarization, where biased algorithms amplify especially divisive content, undermining any prospects for constructive dialogue. Digital platforms are also vulnerable to surveillance, censorship, and cyber-attacks creating limitations on the expression of free speech also posed by the digital divide, where within the world those in disadvantaged communities or rural settings who have little to no access to the Internet share exclusion from these movements. Digital activism in the end, creates awareness but in putting that awareness to hook or ankle level nothing substantial will happen on policy or any social level change until it is supported by the classical form of mobilization via work with lobbying or grassroots organizing.

Internet blackoutsasa barrier to Social media communication

Internet blackout is also known as virtual curfews, network shutdowns, blackouts or kill switches. Internet shutdowns are issued by the government or non-state actors that can last for a specific time or can run for days and sometimes even for months. According to reports India had 771 blackouts between 2016 and 2023, and 51 so far this year in 2024. On September 10,2024, when Manipur, the northeast Indian state, announced a five-day internet shutdown in response to student-led protests, citizens were disappointed and infuriated but strangely not surprised as they have seen this for a long time. The various reasons for the blackouts in India have included the government's attempts to control agitation of Citizenship Amendment Act, suppress the farmers' protests, and curb cheating during various govt exams. However the majority of shutdowns in India have historically occurred in Jammu and Kashmir, in august 2019, it experienced 552 consecutive days of internet blackout, the world's longest shutdown in history. This blackout is a challenging situation for people to be able to connect with the world in a situation of crisis and when disseminating the information gets important.

Foreign countries like The United Nations consider internet access a basic human right. According to them, blackouts can adversely affect education, employment, and social services in various platforms as they hinder access to food and medical care.

Social Media's Impact on Social Movements

Social media has become a very important tool in amplifying social movements and addressing all kinds of social injustices. It acts as a platform for raising awareness, providing support, and globally disseminating awareness about the critical issues. In the digital age, marginalized voices often don't get space in the mainstream media, but definitely find representation on various social media platforms, which enables them to narrate their stories and demand accountability from the government and justice system. Prominent movements like #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and climate activism

have gained global momentum due to the accessibility and engagements of the people in social media platforms. These social media platforms allow people to circumvent traditional gatekeepers, reaching millions of people instantly through hashtags, live streams, and posts that touch people emotionally and intellectually.

Nowadays as we know that social networks are the tools used to reach and influence the public sphere. According to German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere consists of a group of people who come together to discuss general and various important issues. Platforms that earlier used to be considered as a public sphere for discussion includes cafés, universities, public places, clubs, etc. (Habermas, Burger, & Lawrence, 2001)

The advent of the Internet in the 1990s became a turning phase for the interpersonal communication. The number of people connected to the Internet started increasing in numbers with time. This has resulted in change in the social networking structures, where social media networks replaced the pre-existing networking and socializing structures. Social media has a great influence on social movements. It firstly accelerates mobilisation, communication and dissemination of information which were not present in traditional mobilisation techniques (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011, pp 1209-1210). Social movements can reach millions of people around the globe through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This rapid spread of information immensely helps to validate and expand information.

Conclusion - Social media has been acting as a truly effective force behind the acceleration for social justice movements: a platform to amplify voices with solidarity and demand accountability. Platforms such as #MeToo has shown just how much power digital spaces hold in allowing the exposure of systemic injustices, as this also allows victims to share their stories and gain power over expectations surrounding gender and power dynamics. The same detailed steps were taken by movements like #BlackLivesMatter and climate action groups bringing together peoples from different communities to garner support all over the globe while bridging, at times, vast

geographic and cultural divides to unite in key issues. Even with misinformation, digital censorship, and performative activism, the power of awareness-raising and making action happen through social media cannot be overemphasized. Social media will keep changing the face of activism by promoting live communication, empowering the voice of the marginalized, and creating a ground for global collaboration, while isolated struggles become worldwide movements for equity and justice.

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Challenges of Misinformation and Fake News in Influencing Public Opinion: An Analysis

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Abstract:

The present paper discusses the role of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news have been around the world for ages. But they have now gained an entirely new significance in the context of digital platforms. This has grown to critical proportions during elections in India, amid public health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and communal conflicts. The spread of false information through social media usually polarizes opinions and creates a lack of confidence in credible sources. This chapter reports on the findings from a systematic review of 1,261 journal articles published between 2010 and 2021 globally, in terms of the prevalence, dissemination, detection, and characteristics of misinformation. In particular, while most research remains data-driven, it leaves out the unique cultural, linguistic, and socio-political contexts of India. Moreover, inconsistencies in defining and operationalizing misinformation in the Indian context impede effective analysis. Our results indicated that misinformation has a tremendous effect on public behavior but can be mitigated through regionally contextualized communication strategies and localized fact-checking mechanisms. This study points out the urgent need for interdisciplinary research that combines communication, technology, and sociology to address the effects of misinformation on India's diverse audiences. It is through such efforts that informed public discourse can develop robust strategies to counter misinformation and reduce its societal harm.

Keywords: Fake News, Interdisciplinary Research, Social Media, Public Opinion.

Introduction:

Misinformation is a very common social phenomenon that flourishes under the existing digital environment. It is defined as the spreading of information knowingly or unknowingly without facts, verification, or proper explanation. As the internet emerged and social media sites developed at an accelerated pace, the dissemination of misinformation shifted from the classical word-of-mouth to a more interactive, global process with swift diffusion, massive scope, and extensive social impact. The transmission of false information at a mass scale threatens to bring about grave challenges to public health, social stability, and government. Social media sites, although vitally important in the process of communicating and accessing various opinions, have turned into breeding grounds for misinformation. The "infodemic" which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic put this aspect into sharp focus as fake news about cures, vaccines, and prevention fueled public panic and fear. The World Health Organization named as part of its response to international health the need to fight the "information epidemic," bringing attention to the need to quickly adopt methods to fight misinformation. Social media's quick rate of transmission, coupled with its emotional and psychological draw, has heightened the risks of misinformation in times of crisis. The ill effects of misinformation extend past public health to affect decision-making, impose economic costs, and erode the trust of institutions. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp facilitate instant and uncontrolled spreading of disinformation, although the offline media like TV and newspapers, while more controlled, are not entirely immune to this. Moreover, alternative media like independent blogs and citizen reporting further confuse the information landscape by challenging dominant narratives but without editorial control. Such lack of oversight only contributes to opportunities for disseminating misinformation or toxic content. Psychological and social elements are behind the speedy spread of false information. The social behaviors of information-gossiping,

fear of missing out, and social media fatigue render users susceptible to misinformation. The vastness of information provided on social media tends to make individuals believe repeated claims, particularly when supported by popular figures. The fear that goes with lack of certainty and the requirement to prove oneself further increases reliance on non-checked sources, further propagating the problem of misinformation to be more prevalent and threatening. This study embraces the call to find out how misinformation is transmitted throughout social media. By examining big data and comparing false and true information content and emotional attributes, the research examines the underlying processes of misinformation spreading. Social network analysis methods are employed to chart the structural and affective networks that drive the spread of misinformation. To understated the mechanisms is crucial in designing good governance strategies, developing media literacy, and establishing public awareness to alleviate the effects of misinformation. Results from this research add to the broader literature on managing misinformation by providing actionable knowledge regarding its creation and consequences. Focusing on the content-emotion-social network interaction, this research hopes to supply policymakers, technologists, and educators with the right strategies to counter misinformation. Encouraging a culture of wise thinking and well-informed decision among social network users is one step towards reducing the social effect of misinformation.

Navigating the Menace of Misinformation, Disinformation, and Fake News:

Misinformation, fake news, and disinformation have existed all along but have been significantly amplified by the digital world. Misinformation entails unintentional inaccuracy, while disinformation is constructed to mislead on purpose. False news, borrowing a bit from both, is often aimed at provoking heated emotional reactions. Social media has altered the dissemination of such news, allowing unethical actors to spread misinformation at pace and scale. Fake news has immense implications in India, from influencing voters' sentiments towards elections to disrupting communal

harmony. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these issues, with misinformation about untested remedies and vaccine efficacy undermining trust in science and government. Social media and messaging apps, because of their unregulated status, are breeding grounds for viral false stories. The impact of fake news runs deep, polarizing society and undermining trust in authoritative sources of facts. This calls for robust detection mechanisms, reliable fact-checking operations, and mass campaigns of public education. It is additionally crucial to be aware of the socio-political basis on which misinformation thrives so that interventions are contextually valid. Combating these threats necessitates inter-disciplinary response. The blending of technology, strategic communication, and policy-making can complementarily minimize the social impact of fake news. Promoting media literacy and developing the degree of trust in real information would be able to neutralize the harmful social effect of misinformation and disinformation.

1. Algorithm's Role in Amplification

Social media algorithms are programmed to favor content that creates engagement likes, shares, and comments. Regrettably, false information frequently uses powerful emotions such as fear, anger, or surprise to engage people, making it more desirable than accurate information. This engagement-based model inadvertently amplifies falsity, pushing it to a larger audience. Algorithms also generate "filter bubbles," in which users are only shown content that is consistent with their beliefs, further solidifying misinformation. Sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter tend to neglect balancing their algorithmic interests with the demand for correct information. Although some sites have implemented fact-checking, their impact is restricted compared to the viral spread of misinformation. Transparency about how algorithms function and platform accountability are needed. Just as important is educating users on how they individually affect their experience of content online. Knowing the purpose of algorithms enables users to make better decisions regarding sharing and viewing content. Policymakers and technologists need to collaborate in reshaping these algorithms so that they

minimize the spread of toxic content while not diminishing user engagement.

2. Economic and Political Motivations

Spreading misinformation need not be random; it is usually guided by economic or political intentions. Economically, false news websites and authors deploy sensational headlines and made-up stories to draw clicks and ad money. Politically, misinformation is strategically used to shape public perception, especially in elections. In India, for example, false reports of candidates, made-up manifestos, and manipulated videos are standard strategies to sway voters. This has a polarizing impact on society, strengthening divisions and undermining faith in democratic institutions. Social media platforms, frequently under pressure from the lure of advertising payments, unwittingly contribute to this by enabling politically charged advertisements to circulate uncontrolled. These platforms are also resistant to deleting false material, invoking difficulties in the balancing of free speech and content moderation. To counter these incentives, there needs to be strict regulations put in place to police and penalize platforms and individuals benefiting from misinformation. Secondly, encouraging openness in political campaigns and advertising can also prevent the manipulation of public opinion for political ends. Citizens themselves must also be provided with the means to identify and counteract politically driven false news.

3. Challenges in Regulation

Misinformation regulation is a difficult case, especially due to the delicate balance needed between free speech and content moderation. Most nations, such as India, do not have extensive legislation directly dealing with misinformation on online platforms. Current laws tend to address more general cyber offenses or media ethics, which are inadequate to deal with social media's individual challenges. Moreover, the international nature of sites like Twitter, Meta, and YouTube renders it challenging to impose national legislation. The pace at which misinformation is disseminated also exceeds what can be countered by governments and platforms effectively.

While others have enacted legislation mandating platforms to delete content within a certain time limit after it has been flagged, enforcement is patchy. Should the responsibility first and foremost be placed on platforms, users, or governments? It needs a combined effort. Platforms must spend money on good content moderation systems, governments must enact clear and enforceable laws, and users must use their brains. Public-private collaborations, such as collaboration with fact-checking agencies, can also strengthen the regulatory environment. Creating a transparent, accountable, and cooperative regulatory system is the only means to effectively address this emerging menace.

4. Psychological Factors

Psychology of human beings has an important role to play in the dissemination of misinformation. Cognitive biases like confirmation bias led individuals to be more inclined to believe information that confirms their beliefs, even if it is not true. Emotional stimuli, including fear, anxiety, or anger, may override reason, making it more likely for people to spread misinformation. Social processes also play a role; people share content because they want to be well-informed or cutting-edge among their group. "Fear of missing out" (FOMO) also plays a role where users will quickly post unverified information in order to be included in a current conversation. In times of crisis, like the pandemic of COVID-19, increased stress and anxiety further decrease individuals' capacities to engage in critical thinking about information. It is essential to understand these psychological components to develop effective interventions. Media literacy programs not only need to be based on critical thinking education but also emotional decision-making. Behavioral insights can be used by platforms to deter impulsive posting as well, for example, by adding friction points such as prompts to check information before posting. By treating the psychological foundations for misinformation dissemination, society will be well placed to help individuals counteract its effects.

5. Consequences for Democracy

Misinformation undermines democratic processes by distorting citizens' understanding of major issues. During elections, candidate misinformation, manipulated photographs, and manufactured opinion polls can confuse voters, determining their choice. In India, cases of misinformation targeting specific groups have also fueled communal tensions and further polarized the voter. Aside from elections, disinformation undermines trust in institutions of democracy, e.g., the judiciary or the media, by propagating falsehoods concerning their conduct or pronouncements. This contributes to a disenchanted and cynical populace, undermining the pillars of democracy. Counteracting this danger calls for reforms in systems. Electoral commissions and observers need to establish effective means of tracking and countering election fake news. Platforms must be compelled to make the funding and targeting logic of political advertisements public. Civic education campaigns that foster media literacy and promote critical interaction with information are also essential. Democracy depends on knowledgeable citizens; guaranteeing access to correct information must, therefore, be a concern for all stakeholders.

6. Public Health Ramifications

Spreading health-related misinformation has catastrophic effects, as seen with the COVID-19 pandemic. Misinformation regarding vaccines, treatments, and the origin of the virus resulted in public fear, vaccine hesitancy, and non-adherence to health measures. Such results undermined global response efforts to contain the pandemic. Aside from COVID-19, disinformation regarding other health matters, including the advantages of alternative treatments over evidence-based medicine, remains to confuse people, and at times, with deadly outcomes. WhatsApp and Facebook are among the notable platforms facilitating such disinformation, especially in places where access to credible health information is low. Multi-faceted approaches are necessary to address this. Governments must partner with healthcare institutions to develop accessible and evidence-based campaigns on health. Health-related misinformation platforms should

give to top priority in moderation policies, imposing greater punishment for users sharing deleterious content. Furthermore, enabling healthcare practitioners to directly interact with communities using social media can contribute to overturning misinformation. Making publicly verified information available to the public is an imperative action toward securing public health.

7. Digital Literacy Gaps

Digital literacy is still a major hindrance in the fight against misinformation, especially in areas where internet penetration has surpassed education on its proper use. Most users do not have the ability to assess the credibility of information online, and thus they are susceptible to false news. This issue is particularly acute in rural communities and among the elderly, who might not be aware of the subtleties of digital media. Closing the gap requires integrating media literacy into curricula at all levels. Public education campaigns, through medium-independent channels like radio and TV, can reach audiences with limited digital access as well. Platforms need to get their act together, by integrating features that help users decide whether content is credible or not, such as fact-checking reminders or prompts to verify facts before sharing. Effort from governments, NGOs, and technology industry players is needed to bridge the gap in digital literacy so that all users are well placed to critically and responsibly navigate the information environment.

8. Influencer Role

Social media became Celebrities and influencers wield considerable power on because they have huge numbers of followers and high engagement rates. Though their endorsement can help in providing a boost to social causes or public health messages, it can also spread misinformation inadvertently. For example, health cures can have monstrous, negative impacts for an influencer promoting untested. This is because followers trust such influencers and see them as an expert in a specific field even when they are not. Sites need to have stricter control over verified profiles and hold influencers accountable for good behavior. with a mandate to vet content

prior to posting. Influencers need to be taught themselves about the effects of disseminating misinformation, perhaps in collaboration with media literacy professionals. The tools of dissemination of credible information and accountability to burden with their ability can be used towards constructive social change rather than spreading falsehood. Venturing into the nuances of dissecting Disinformation, Misinformation, and Fake News.

Misinformation, disinformation, and fake news are themselves prone to issues because of the mobility of digital media and socio-cultural diversity of audiences. India's multicultural and multilingual nature adds to its complexity, and content targeted at localized communities does not see the light of day by way of scrutiny through national media. The lack of a common definition for "misinformation" and "disinformation" further complicates systematic research and reduces the possibility of international resolutions. Other hindrances to the temporary nature of misinformation to create stories are that they change fast and new trends crop up every day. Data gathering is especially challenging where disinformation circulates through encrypted messaging applications and closed groups, which can restrict access by researchers. While most research centers on AI-based detection structures, they seldom consider the socio-political and psychological reasons behind disinformation production and consumption. Solving these issues needs an interdisciplinary effort where technologists, communications scholars, sociologists, and policymakers collaborate. Detection is something that can be facilitated with AI and machine learning but must be complemented by localized fact-checking infrastructure and culturally situated public education. It will most productively assist people in recognizing and fighting misinformation by developing media literacy and critical thinking. An end-to-end solution to fighting misinformation requires engaging the technical, social, and cultural aspects of the problem. Through public awareness and joint work, policymakers and researchers can promote more efficient and context-adapted interventions in order to alleviate the harm produced by fake news.

1. Encrypted Platforms as Obstacles

Encrypted messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Signal, and Telegram pose a great challenge to researchers researching misinformation. These encrypted platforms limit access to conversation so that it remains private but at the same time facilitates the uncontrolled diffusion of misinformation. Reaching large audiences well before being flagged usually misinformation circulates among private groups in both groups and individual conversations. Consider the COVID-19 pandemic example: unfounded treatment recommendations and vaccination conspiracy theories spread through encrypted apps, presenting far-reaching public health risks. Researchers face challenges due to ethical and legal constraints, as decryption breaches privacy and user trust. To solve this problem, researchers can design interventions targeted to communities. Increasing user participation in reporting misinformation via tools integrated into the platform can help contain its dissemination while protecting users' privacy. Technology firms is another strategy is the partner with to develop AI systems that detect patterns of disinformation without viewing individual user data. Governments and NGOs can also initiate public education campaigns to enable users to critically consider content before posting it. Researchers can be these tactics with the rover come to challenges presented by encrypted platforms while being within the bounds of privacy laws.

2. Rapid Evolution of Narratives

Misinformation narratives change quickly, and it is challenging for scholars to research their lifecycle or long-term effects. Elections, pandemics, and natural disasters tend to trigger new misinformation trends that change on a daily basis. For instance, during the 2020 US elections, misinformation about voter fraud picked up pace, only to be overtaken by misinformation related to Capitol riots. New stories and gather data fast before disinformation becomes irrelevant and such quick evolution poses challenges for longitudinal studies because researchers need to keep up with the stories. This calls for the application of sophisticated tracking tools such as AI systems that track real-time trends

on various platforms. There is also a need for interplay among academia, industry, and governments to exchange ideas and resources for research on emerging narratives. Additionally, developing dynamic models to forecast the development of misinformation can assist scholars in staying abreast of trends. These forecast models can emphasize emotional cues or keywords that are linked with historical misinformation to make predictions on forthcoming narratives. With such creative measures, scholars can better grasp and counter the ever-changing landscape of misinformation.

3. Linguistic and Regional Variations

Linguistic and cultural diversity of India poses a special challenge to the study of misinformation. With more than 22 officially recognized languages and scores of dialects, misinformation that is context-specific to regional and linguistic markets tends to go undetected by mainstream media. For example, a Hindi misinformation campaign may be vastly different from a Tamil or Bengali one, both in terms of content and style. It is challenging to create tools for detecting misinformation that work universally given these differences. Language-specific idioms, cultural allusions, and colloquial expressions make it even more difficult for algorithms to detect using automated methods, which are usually trained on dominant language datasets such as English. The solution to this issue must be localized. Scientists need to create multilingual models of AI and engage with local fact-checking groups in order to provide extensive coverage. Governments can be of help by funding efforts aimed at under-represented languages and areas. Misinformation can be mitigated using the public awareness campaigns in the regional language for the diverse groups of people. By adopting these localized strategies, researchers can offer more precise and effective solutions to the sociolinguistic complexities of India as well as its intervening issues.

4. Technology and Sociology Convergence

While advances in technology like machine learning and artificial intelligence are essential for detecting false information, they usually ignore the sociocultural environments that influence its creation and spread. Misinformation campaigns frequently

utilize societal anxieties, political unrest, or cultural beliefs to gain traction. Such as false information regarding religious celebrations or community rituals in India designed to stir up emotional responses. Purely technical approaches such as natural language processing (NLP) can detect misinformation but cannot tackle the social dynamics that enable them. Interdisciplinary collaboration is needed to fill this gap. Sociologists and cultural specialists can offer insight into the social forces that drive misinformation, and technologists can inject this knowledge into detection algorithms. Policymakers can later utilize the conclusions to develop culturally nuanced interventions, like region-specific fact-checking tools or public education campaigns. By combining sociology and technology, researchers can generate comprehensive solutions that solve both the technical and cultural aspects of misinformation.

5. Behavioral Insights

We need an understanding of human behavior to fight misinformation. Psychological elements like the desire for social validation, fear of missing out (FOMO), and preference for familiar sources spreading information faster are responsible for the quick dissemination of misinformation. Individuals tend to forward content without ascertaining its veracity as it reflects their point of view or causes an intense emotional response. Behavioral studies have shown that misinformation that evokes fear or outrage spreads faster than neutral or positive content. The side effects of vaccines, for instance, have been the subject of fake news during the COVID-19 pandemic because it exploited the public's fears. Counter to this, scientists need to turn their attention to behaviorally focused interventions. Asking users to stop and check information before sharing it can cut down on impulsive spread of misinformation. Examples like pop-up alerts on sites where users are prompted to fact-check have been identified as effective in some research. Additionally, promoting critical and skeptical culture through education can empower individuals to question the validity of information. By combining behavioral insights, researchers can develop schemes that tackle the roots of misinformation diffusion at its essence.

6. Localized Fact-Checking

Fact-checking can be a valuable weapon against disinformation but is useless if it does not get attuned to the culture and region. In India, national fact-checking initiatives concentrate on topics that are trending among urban or English-speaking audiences at any given time, thus leaving rural and regional disinformation mostly unchallenged. For instance, disinformation about regional health protocols or rural politics never gets confronted because there are fewer resources that get localized. Implemented regional fact-checking initiatives, operated by indigenous language-speaking individuals who are aware of local issues, to fill this gap. Such initiatives can work together with citizen groups to discover and rectify disinformation on the ground. Such projects need to be funded and supported by governments and tech firms. Furthermore, integrating fact-checking functionality directly into social media platforms can make them more accessible and shine lighter on them. Prioritizing local fact-checking, policymakers and researchers can achieve greater coverage and cultural relevance in their battle against misinformation.

7. Resource Constraints

Misinformation has substantial resource constraints because numerous researchers working on that such as access to high-quality data sets, sophisticated tools, and funding. Expensive technologies such as AI-based scraping software or subscription to proprietary databases that accessing accurate information on misinformation can entail, which smaller organizations or individual researchers cannot afford. Further, it requires ongoing financial commitment to be able to employ a team with technical and social science skills. Governments and multilateral organizations need to realize the significance of misinformation research and provide proper funding for it. Joint efforts, where institutions share resources and knowledge, can also alleviate individual constraints. Open-access datasets and pooled tools can also make research more democratic and allow more institutions to participate in the field. Through addressing resource limitations, the research world can go a long way in understanding and fighting misinformation.

8. Ethical Dilemmas for Research

Studies on the dissemination of disinformation generally involve studies of user behavior on social media and may involve collecting very personal data. Complicated ethical issues is the study of disinformation is all about confronting that like how to balance requests for open data with individuals' rights to privacy. Researchers must ensure that their approach does not contravene data protection legislation or ethics, such as by collecting informed consent or anonymizing the data. Another ethical concern is the risk of spreading misinformation by unknowingly spreading false narratives while researching them. They do not inadvertently give to researchers need to take caution when presenting their findings so that legitimacy to risky content. Having ethical guidelines for studies on misinformation can aid in solving such problems. Organizations should provide training and facilities to assist researchers in overcoming ethical dilemmas. The research community can be laying much stress on ethics to assist in sustaining people's trust while boosting its knowledge regarding misinformation.

Literature Review: Propagation and diffusion of misinformation, false news, and fake information have been extensively investigated across psychology, communication studies, and computer science fields. Adams et al. (2023) and Aïmeur et al. (2023) bring out the amplification of incorrect narratives by online networks and challenges associated with their dynamic nature. Social media platforms, owing to the reach and accessibility they enjoy, have been targeted here since they enable fast and massive spreading of false information.

With cultural and linguistic heterogeneity poses additional challenges Indian setting, the unique socio-cultural context with cultural and linguistic heterogeneity poses additional challenges. Al-Zaman (2021) and Neyazi et al. (2021) record how the dominant role of misinformation in forming public views during times of high significance such as elections and medical emergencies. The pandemic of COVID-19 is an example, in which misinformation regarding remedies, vaccines, and prophylactic drugs created public anxiety on a

massive level and undermined confidence in well-established agencies. Al-Zaman (2021) and Neyazi et al. (2021) chronicle how the greatest role played by misinformation in forming public views during times of utmost significance such as elections and medical emergencies. With the COVID-19 pandemic is a good example, where disinformation regarding to cures, vaccines, and prophylactic drugs created widespread public anxiety and undermined confidence in revered agencies.

The reports also attribute the "echo chamber" phenomenon and celebrity influence as major drivers that spread the misinformation. Despite recent innovation in detection methods such as AI and NLP, there remain enough gaps yet to be filled. Present studies are more likely to overlook the psychological and emotional elements that could drive consumption of, and dissemination of misinformation. Moreover, the absence of pre-trained datasets renders it region-dependent and culturally insensitive, diminishing the effects of detection tools and mitigation protocols.

Literature calls for cross-disciplinary intervention through technology, media literacy, and culturally adapted methods. These must be embraced to mitigate the social loss resulting from disinformation and restore trust in trusted sources of information.

Methodology: The current study explores the spread and impact of misinformation in online social networks by comparing its pattern of network and dissemination pattern with that of true information. A mixed-methods design is utilized in this study by integrating network analysis, content analysis, and sentiment analysis to examine the path of misinformation and affective influence on online social networks. India is targeted due to its multilingual and culturally diverse social media environment that poses special challenges to the identification and fight against misinformation.

Initial data for misinformation and its corresponding true information datasets were collected from popular social media sites, including Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp,

under special occasions like the COVID-19 pandemic and Indian elections. They included fact-checking organizations' identified misinformation, trending posts, and user interactions such as shares, comments, and likes. Special attention was given to portray regional and linguistic differences in order to provide for the diversity of the population of India. The network analysis method was applied in mapping the misinformation diffusion patterns in social networks. Nodes were used to represent users of social media, while interactions such as shares and comments were used to represent edges. The method provided insights into coverage and composition of misinformation dissemination. The analysis also identified key influencers and solo participants and brought out their participation roles in the dissemination.

Content analysis was also performed to understand thematic contents of misinformation and veritable information. Text data were preprocessed to remove noise, and the TF-IDF method was used to derive keywords embodying substantial themes. Word2vec models were used for word vector generation for semantic understanding of content at a deeper level. Where the topics grouped using the K-means clustering method to identify typical themes in misinformation and contrast with correct information. The Sentiment analysis was performed utilizing a bidirectional long short-term memory (BiLSTM) model for marking emotional tones that are connected with misinformation and correct information. Some of the affective terms employed in the analysis included anger, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. Highlighting the dynamics of the sentiment, the research examined how the emotional hotspots affected the diffusion of misinformation. The affective profiles of misinformation and of verifiable information were then compared to determine their specific impacts on user behavior.

With this holistic framework, the study uncovers India's unique patterns of misinformation dissemination. The findings are intended to inform public opinion management, facilitate media literacy, and inform culture-specific responses to Indian social media misinformation.

Results: The research provides educative insights into how misinformation is disseminated and impacts social media based on an Indian perspective. Trends of misinformation dissemination compared to actual information dissemination showed that misinformation disseminates faster and farther because of its sensational nature and emotional appeal. Network analysis also found that misinformation tends to spread from influential follower nodes users with big followings and propagate through dense clusters, forming echo chambers that amplified false news.

Content analysis identified prevalent themes of disinformation, including unfounded health, political, and community conflict claims. The keywords extracted and clustering reported that the contents of misinformation tend to aim at eliciting fear, anger, or distrust. In contrast, authentic information, although more factual, did not possess emotional hooks that propel virality, thus dissemination was slower. While Sentiment analysis also corroborated to these results by indicating that misinformation most commonly employs negative sentiments like fear and anger to maximize engagement. The As opposed to, factual information was associated with positive or neutral emotions, which limited its extent and impact on social networks. Misinformation render it particularly influential in shaping public perception and fostering polarization to be affective the phenomena. The research also points out how local and linguistic diversity contributes to the dissemination of misinformation in India. Multilingual content addressed to specific audiences increased the prominence of disinformation, and it became more difficult to identify and combat.

The study also found that misinformation spreads well in situations of high stress, like the COVID-19 pandemic, where there is uncertainty and fear leading users to use unverified sources. To be research prioritizes for call of intervention, like culturally responsive fact-checking systems, robust media literacy programs, and better platform regulations. The misinformation has to be emotional and structural addressing the roots, stakeholders are able to counter its social effects more effectively and restore trust in authoritative sources of information.

Discussion:

The complex mechanisms of spread investigate study to misinformation, integrating risk perception, trust relationships, and the effect of celebrity tweets. Through the application of the Truth-Default Theory, the study accounts for why individuals adopt or share misinformation. Unlike earlier work on cognitive biases, this research incorporates emotional and psychological motivations, as it emphasizes the influence of stress and risk perception in avoiding critical thinking, particularly in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. The most insightful findings is the independent contribution to be stress and heightened risk perception in elevating susceptibility to misinformation. In pandemics under duress instance worry brings down the level of critical thinking and therefore the acceptance of misinformation. This supports earlier research that uncertainty aids in the consumption of misinformation. Nevertheless, the study is in disagreement with the orthodox view associating media trust and celebrity influence as they do not play a significant role in the acceptance of fake news. The result of suggests growing unexpected mistrust among users, most likely prompted by adverse experience with disinformation us content in the past.

Extended use of social media during lockdowns maximized belief in disinformation, maximally reinforcing the "echo chamber" effect. Ongoing exposure to the same perspective maximizes existing beliefs, even untruths. The psychological trauma of lockdowns provided fertile ground for disinformation to be quickly disseminated because disinformation tends to travel at a faster pace than confirmed information. This is central to tackling emotional drivers and building resilience to fake news. The social media literacy is at great risk of being unable to distinguish false information to lack of people. Research highlights the need to develop critical media literacy to enable users to differentiate fact from fiction. Media literacy programs can greatly minimize the perpetuation of fake news through the empowerment of people to critically analyze online content.

Celebrities continue to play a central role in influencing public opinion on social media. Endorsements from celebrities

amplify the extent of information spread, with many followers ready to accept and disseminate content without question. Though such influence can help promote positive campaigns, it also threatens to spread misinformation. The research affirms celebrity posts play a role in the quick spread of bogus news, further justifying responsible online behavior from influencers. The trust dynamics has to be stress and risk perception also influence, with those under higher stress likely to desire quick reassurance. The data that appears to be vulnerable the Individuals who lack worry their anxieties but are not verified. The social media is often motivated by social affirmation, self-expression, and relationship-building drives Furthermore, information sharing on. These behaviors in sharing, however, involve privacy risk and perceived value.

In order to successfully combat the spread of fake news, a multifaceted approach is essential. This involves enhancing media literacy, inducing critical thinking, and engaging influencers to post responsibly. By solving the psychological, emotional, and social issues that drive misinformation, stakeholders can craft specialized measures to stem its influence and re-gain faith in authentic sources of information.

Conclusion:

This research highlights the importance of issues surrounding misinformation and fake news in influencing public opinion, especially in India. To findings of the research that misinformation is spread by spreading faster and farther than correct information, employing emotional hooks such as fear and anger to provoke individuals. India's linguistic and cultural diversity, combined with the free-for-all scenario of social media platforms, exacerbate the issue by constructing echo chambers and spreading misinformation. The structural and emotional difference between misinformation and true information emerges through a comparison of their dissemination patterns. The reliance of misinformation on sensationalism renders it more potent in shaping public behavior, especially in times of utmost pressure such as the COVID-19 crisis. These dynamics emphasize the critical need for targeted interventions, including culturally tailored fact-checking systems, improved media literacy programs, and

stricter regulations for social media platforms.

The involving technology that cross-disciplinary to response, communication, and policy-formulation to counter the social impact of misinformation. Through critical thinking and public education, responsible actors can slow down the spread of misinformation and maintain trust in true sources of information. The current research is a starting point for future research and action, providing empirical insights into the building up of misinformation and its balancing approaches in a rapidly digitized world.

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Voices from the Margins: Digital Media Activism and Intersectionality in the Age of Social Justice

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Abstract

Intersectionality is a guiding principle for organizing that calls attention to the fact that one should be reflexive when analyzing social characteristics, lest one form of marginalization displaces another, and personal experiences are recognized as distinct rather than as a homogeneous group. The critics of intersectionality have warned that it will splinter the fight against systemic oppression. We are promoting the possible gains of a sensitive use of intersectionality rather than total rejection as it should be used as a method of research. Personal experiences would therefore be very handy to analyze how intersectionality actually works in practical settings.

Social justice is at its core a belief that everyone in a society has equal rights and opportunities. This central idea is built upon the principles of empowerment and engagement that allows for individuals to influence decisions that will affect them. Social justice advocacy, as a logical extension of these principles, safeguards the marginalized and vulnerable from being oppressed by those with more power.

Contemporary feminism is represented through blogs, hashtags, e-magazines, and digitally organized protests via online communities that address the urgent issues faced by feminists today. This approach to digital activism aims to reclaim technological power, which is often dominated by hegemonic and masculine influences, by creating alternative spaces and methods of protest. Online discussions are

increasingly shaping transnational feminism, with the new digital landscape allowing social movements to foster feminist solidarity and complex identities among netizens.

Keywords: intersectionality, feminism, Dalit, hashtags, Metoo Movement, Online Activism, social Media, Social Justice

Intersectionallity

Black feminist activists in the US during the 1980s and early 1990s are most often credited with coining the term "multiple and compound discrimination and inequality." Kimberle Crenshaw first used the term "intersectionality" to describe how the US's antidiscrimination laws did not adequately reflect the experiences of Black women. Scholars and activists argued that social movements, the state, and the law were more likely to turn a blind eye to the lives of those whose racial identity (marginalized) and sex (Black women) intersected. A broad spectrum of social scientists have pointed out the importance of taking an intersectional perspective in understanding inequality, injustice, and discrimination based on various grounds, such as disability and race, across different parts of the world.

Kimberle Crenshaw first introduced the concept of "intersectionality" in her 1991 article titled 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Colour'. While acknowledging the success of identity politics in recognizing and tackling large-scale systems of oppression, she pointed out that identity politics "often conflates or overlooks intragroup differences." By examining the experiences of black women in instances of domestic violence and sexual assault, she contended that they encounter distinct and heightened forms of discrimination. Their marginalization, discrimination, or violence results not just from their race or gender but from the combined effect of the race factor and the gender factor.

Intersectionallity Indian Context

However, the theory of intersectionality first took pragmatic shape in the discipline of law primarily due to Black feminist critiques of the judiciary. The concept has developed over

time from merely being an academic theory into a "way of being" and has become an important analytical framework in different fields. "Being intersectional" is understood as a methodological tool as well as a theoretical and political stance. Through a wide range of methodological modifications, feminist studies have actively theorized the interaction of multiple identities and their experiences of exclusion and discrimination at multiple intersections. According to feminist literature, it is impossible to describe intersectionality in its broadest sense.

It is not new to understand that the existence of several identities affects a person's lived experience and social standing in the Indian setting.

In India, caste is a pervasive system of inequality and persecution. Those who are at the intersections of caste and other identities, such as sex, gender identity, or handicap, face highly severe forms of discrimination. In Indian tradition, caste and gender inequalities are inextricably intertwined since controlling women's bodies preserves the "purity of caste.". Women are grossly limited since they are viewed as "entry points" or "gateways" of caste mobility for men from lower castes, safeguarding the caste system.

Because of the systemic disregard by the police and other authorities for their claims, those at the intersection of caste and gender are now especially exposed to exacerbated discrimination.13.

The severe marginalization of Dalit women in Indian society, influenced by both patriarchal and Brahmanical ideals, has been observed by leading Dalit activists and academics. To consider the experiences and give more weight to the views of Dalit women, Rege has argued for a "standpoint feminist" approach.14

Apart from theory-based writing, a variety of studies used the intersectional approach to understand how gender and caste interact regarding human rights violations, commercial surrogacy, the devadasi system, gender-based violence, access to education, and livelihoods.

However, the mainstream Indian women's movement did not take on the concept of intersectionality to construct social reality. A monolithic category of the marginalized woman, at best split into the categories of class and rural or urban, was accepted without debate by the movement. The mainstream Indian feminist movement has been a little reflective of these limitations, even though its upper-caste, middle-class, and urban affiliations mark it as elitist. Consequently, the majority of its campaigns on sexual violence and/or livelihood have focused on poor and rural women (John 2005). Poverty has been described as the principal cause of marginalization because caste and religion were collapsed into categories of economic marginalization, as exemplified by the idea of women as "backward classes."

Faminism

However, the mainstream Indian women's movement did not embrace the concept of intersectionality to define social reality. The women's movement accepted a monolithic category of the marginalized woman, at best divided between class and rural/urban categories. The mainstream Indian feminist movement has been somewhat reflective of these constraints, even though its upper-caste, middle-class, and urban affiliations make it elite. As a consequence, most of its campaigns regarding sexual violence and/or livelihood focused on poor and rural women. Poverty has been identified as the primary cause of marginalization as caste and religion became subsumed into categories of economic marginalization, with the idea of women as "backward classes."

Women whose unification is sought on the basis of systematic overlapping patriarchies are divided along caste/class lines and through their consent to patriarchies and their compensatory structures. This has led to the reproduction of those margins and hierarchies within the women's movement, where the power imbalance between the castes has persisted and been rendered invisible. Feminist modes of organization and struggle should "encompass all of the social inequalities that patriarchies are related to, embedded in, and structured by" in order to challenge the materiality of women's marginalities.

This can be seen in how the Dalit feminist perspective emerged as a critique of the savarnization of women (and women/feminist studies) and the masculinization of the Dalit (and Dalit studies). An intersectional perspective like this recognizes the diversity, heterogeneity, and even contradiction that exists in people's and groups' lived experiences as well as the hierarchical, multiple, and shifting power relations of caste, class, race, and ethnicity that shape their social realities. Such an intersectional analysis has recently been used in works to explore caste and gender.

Arguement against understanding the intersectional category of the Dalit woman as a self-standing homogenous category was made by focusing on two case studies. The first case study underlines the necessity of understanding how the category of Dalit women is co-constituted with the category of the upper-caste lady, and thus it becomes important to interpret the two categories together. It attempts to refute the idea that the Partition caused Bengal's traditional caste and gender hierarchies to collapse through an anthropological study of Dalit/Bahujanii women from Partition-migrant households in a non-metropolitan town in West Bengal.

The second case study makes the case against viewing Dalit women as a homogenous group that has been unduly shaped by oppression and violence. It emphasizes how, in spite of discrimination, Dalit women in post-constitutional India have affirmed their agency and sense of self in a variety of ways. It contrasts two instances of caste-based violence in Uttar Pradesh, one in Hathras and one in Shabbirpur. This theory assumes that the resistance levels have varied along with varying mobility in terms of economic and political. The acts of violence conducted by members from the higher castes against them were vigorously opposed by the women of Shabbirpur, and the ground base for such struggles was provided through Ambedkarite politics in the form of Dalit constitutional rights.

Digital media activity and its transformation

One of the key features of digital transformation in activism is the ability to connect and work together across

geographical, cultural, and ideological divides . Social media and online platforms can easily form global networks of supporters and activists. Information, assets, and tactics shared among movements can lead to better-coordinated and successful advocacy campaigns. The internet age has brought about a new era of advocacy strategies. Although they are still valid, traditional modes of campaigning and protest are now frequently improved or supplemented by internet platforms. Virtual protests, crowdsourcing, viral campaigns, and online petitions have all become mainstays of modern activism. Digital transformation has transformed activism, but there are also disadvantages and ethical dilemmas along with it . A few major problems include the spread of misinformation, online harassment, and privacy issues. Moreover, ethical issues regarding hacking and cyber attacks associated with digital activism need proper deliberation. As the digital revolution in activism gradually takes its shape, understanding these issues without losing the integrity of the movement becomes an important matter to talk about.The future of digital activism is bright, but also quite complex. The plans and tactics of activists will change with the technology. Interest in using breakthroughs such as blockchain and artificial intelligence for activism is increasing. There will likely be more debates about digital rights and freedoms in the future and a growing fusion of activities offline and online. To understand activism's lasting influence on politics and society, one must understand how it is changing in the digital age. Future social movement will be defined by the commitment to intersectionality and the presence of diverse voices. Movements will increasingly acknowledge the interconnected nature of social issues, including those of race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. This implies a more egalitarian and holistic approach to advocacy as it addresses root causes of social injustices. Future social activism will also have to grapple with moral and legal concerns. Digital rights and online activism will become more pressing issues in the near future.Activists will be required to walk a tightrope between civil disobedience and criminal activity while pushing for change in a society that is becoming increasingly digitally

connected. Moreover, the laws regulating activity—such as those relating to freedom of expression and surveillance—will keep changing, defining the parameters of what constitutes acceptable activism. In conclusion, it is important for activists and society to understand the consequences for social activism's future. It is a call to action to adapt to these changes and ensure that the activism of tomorrow endures as a reflection of the dynamic forces shaping our world.

Faminism through digital activation

The technological fusion of the digital and the physical has utterly changed the political, social, and economic climate of the world. Technologically, or through the prism of the digital revolution, there is an opportunity to construct a more inclusive future, at least on paper, for decision-makers. By allowing accessibility, promoting diversity, and motivating leadership in a movement that, throughout its history, lacked those very elements, tools such as blogging and social media have helped democratize the feminist movement. Online or cyber feminists make use of social media and blogging as a means for community building and political activism. Transnational feminist networks become possible through social media's facility for the easy flow of information and knowledge across borders.

The term "digital feminism" refers to online activism or engagement with feminism and feminist ideas. It not only refers to discussing diverse women, gender, and sexual issues but also mentions making use of the digital platforms and technology to advance feminist agenda and goals and to offer a new feminist consciousness and sensibility. Like its western counterparts, Indian feminism has experienced several waves or phases, but their feminist activism addresses a range of inequalities, including different kinds of issues and situations and approaches to addressing those problems that emerge in India's contemporary patriarchal society.In the twenty-first century's second decade, virtual feminism conquered virtual space, wherein it appears it first found applications as an engine to move populations behind actions or protests carried in the street like activism, among others. Given this utilization, feminist action would grow and gain

to be very powerful weapon not only against violence but even social and human evil in their societies. Accordingly, it's more than supplement action for demonstrating to the street feminine action versus the issue of misogyny.

An emerging trend in India and across the globe, digital feminism is an avant-garde form of feminist action that is influenced by a number of social, cultural, and political elements. Since it is more intersectional and inclusive, it essentially transcends traditional feminism. Technology was highlighted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) as a means of empowering women and broadening their options, supporting and promoting gender parity. It has been declared that "to ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication, and markets" to improve the advancement and empowerment of women through international collaboration. India's #MeToo movement through the lens of the well-known digital zine Feminism in India (FII) in order to advance research on digital activism, sexual harassment, and structural feminist intersectionality. Indian women authors, editors, journalists, and activists are the creators and curators of FII, a digital safe place and inclusive media platform that is well recognized. Five major perspectives were identified through a thematic analysis of digital pieces regarding #MeTooIndia that were published in FII between 2018 and 2020, a period that corresponded with the social movement's urgency. Themes include the normalization of victim-blaming and shaming, the systemic use and abuse of privilege and power, and the testimonies of survivors of sexual harassment. At the same time, other forms of cultural toxic misogyny and sexual violence that are intersectional and uniquely local to the Indian contexts of #MeToo have also come under the lens, including the role played by Indian media in either raising or suppressing awareness about sexual harassment and by social media in offering support or solutions to victims and survivors. According to our chapter, the digital platforms managed by women, like Feminism in India, can build a mutually beneficial relationship with their connecting audiences and are able to offer all women and

activists the tools they need in order to understand social injustices and carry out culturally aware solutions.

Feminism has traditionally been seen through a narrow Western perspective. An inclusive, international feminist movement is hampered by the perception of "third world women" as a victimized, "powerless" group in contrast to free Western feminists. But as more women of various colors, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural backgrounds get access to the internet, the feminist conversation broadens to incorporate the perspectives of those who were previously marginalized. This supports a postmodernist and postcolonial view of feminism that accepts a variety of facts, roles, and realities as part of its focus and recognizes the movement's diversity. It enables marginalized female groups to rethink feminism in light of their personal convictions and experiences.

Social media platforms are a major component of digital feminist movements in India. In order to protest the 12 percent sanitary napkin tax, the #LahuKaLagaan hashtag took over Twitter in 2017. As a result of the campaign, the "period tax" was eliminated in 2018. Following the death of a 23-year-old Delhi rape victim in 2012, the "Nirbhaya movement" sparked massive demonstrations. The demonstrations also made their way onto social media. Millions of people used hashtags like #Delhibraveheart to support the victim's right to justice. Together with the street demonstrations, this internet outcry attracted international attention and forced the normally indifferent administration to act quickly. Building upon this, rape laws in India were reformed to widen the meaning of rape, enhance punishments for crimes such as acid attacks, stalking, and voyeurism, and enhance the life sentence even to death for rape criminals. It also set up fast-track courts and a special fund toward women's safety and security, which would be maintained by the Indian government.

Conclusion

In order not to view lived experiences as generic and undifferentiated and not to substitute one marginality for another, intersectionality is essentially an organizing

principle that requires reflexivity in the study of social characteristics.

Such constraints imposed the monolithic category of a marginalized woman as, at the least, divided by class and categories of rural versus urban. Again, the Indian women's movement's mainstream has sometimes been reflective of the above constraints while clearly its upper caste middle-class and predominantly urban affiliations render it more than elitist, leading to huge portions of this sexual violence related campaigns and /or livelihood advocacy to be held among the economically impoverished and predominantly rural women of the country.

Social media is a strong space for Dalit activism in the digital era. It has advanced social justice issues, garnered support, and empowered the voices of the voiceless. The more online campaigns and hashtags that surface, along with platforms specifically targeting the problems of the Dalits, the greater awareness and belonging become. Still, there are several issues at stake, including prevention of hate speech online and offline influence. We need to continue efforts at using social media for change in order to combat caste-based prejudice and inequity. The digital age, especially on social media, has brought a significant change to the social justice movements in India and elsewhere. Besides granting the Dalit community a more prominent voice, social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have enabled them to share their stories and issues with a global audience. The increased exposure has led to some major paradigm shifts in the discourse, as it has also led to some much-needed legislative reforms and uprooted several age-old stereotypes. Social media has proven to be a potent tool for advocacy, education, and mobilization because it allows for direct contact and raises awareness about injustices based on caste. The resilience of Dalit activists inspires and propels change despite the digital divide and online persecution.

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The Impact of Social Media Campaigns in Advancing Social Justice Movements

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Abstract

This paper was involved that how social media has transformed social justice movements in South Asia, especially in India. With platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp booming, the activism scene has changed dramatically, particularly for young people and marginalized groups. The power of digital spaces has given individuals express dissent, rally support, and participate in civic life, often bypassing traditional media and institutional barriers. By examining significant campaigns like MeTooIndia, the Right to Information (RTI) movement, and the 2020–2021 Farmers' Protests, this study highlights how digital tools have enabled real-time mobilization, crafted strong counter-narratives, and shaped public policy discussions. Between the Online advocacy and grassroots activism, demonstrating how social media campaigns have redefined India's socio-political conversation are the example showcases the vibrant connection. However, the paper also takes a critical look at the downsides of digital activism. Issues like the digital divide, online surveillance, misinformation, slacktivism, and the exclusion of those without digital access pose serious challenges to inclusivity and lasting impact. Additionally, the growing politicization and algorithmic control of online spaces raise important questions about free speech, data privacy, and digital ethics. Drawing from academic research, field studies, and digital media analysis, the paper offers a well-rounded perspective on social media's role in promoting social justice. It stresses that even as social media can be a powerful activism

tool, its potential is contingent on inclusive access, ethical utilization, and complementarity with traditional activism. The paper concludes with education program and policy recommendations for enhancing digital literacy, safeguarding activist rights, and facilitating democratic use of online spaces to create a more equitable and just India.

Keywords: Social Media Activism, Gender Justice, Social Justice Movements, Digital Democracy, Political Mobilization.

Introduction

The growth of social media has transformed the imagination and practice of activism in South Asia, particularly India. With over 600 million internet users and rising digital literacy, India has become a vibrant hub of digital activity. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have transformed the public sphere, offering user-friendly tools to citizens especially youth and marginalized groups to voice dissent, build solidarity, and call for change. These media have allowed movements for gender justice, caste equality, environmental justice, and democratic accountability to bypass mainstream media channels and address the public directly. From the powerful affidavits of the MeTooIndia campaign to the strategic mobilization of the Right to Information (RTI) movement and the mass-scale digital coordination of the 2020–2021 Farmers' Protests, social media has played a key role in the making of Indian activism today.

However, the added reliance on online platforms also introduces a complicated set of challenges. Digital monitoring, internet shutdowns, web harassment, disinformation, and marginalization of digitally excluded groups have raised the question of equity, security, and legitimacy of online participation. Moreover, the challenge of "slacktivism" where online activism does not necessarily translate to offline influence poses problems to the efficacy of social media campaigns. The paper evaluates the role of social media in facilitating social justice movements in India. The case study evidence, thematic evidence, and literature, it analyzes the mechanism by which digital activism is mobilized, its

empowering potential, and its own constraints. In general, the research strives to present an objective picture of the ways in which digital technologies enable and constrain striving for social justice in one of the world's most populous and plural democracies.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Social Justice and Digital Activism

In India, the pursuit of social justice has been closely linked to historical and structural disparities on the basis of caste, class, gender, religion, and regional identities. Social justice is grounded in the ideals of equity, justice, and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities in society. These multiple axes of oppression make the fight for justice complex, layered, and ongoing. Digital activism, often referred to as "e-activism," refers to the use of internet-based platforms such as social media, email, websites, and digital petitions to promote social or political change. In India, digital activism is a robust method of operation for grassroots movements as well as city-based civil society groups. Digital activism helps activists to bypass the gatekeepers of mass media, make marginal voices louder, and contest prevailing discourses.

As Relly and Pakanati (2020) observe in their analysis of India's Right to Information (RTI) movement, the strength of digital activism lies not in its reach but in its ability to mobilize across socio-economic, geographic, and linguistic divides. Social media platforms enable collective agency through the sharing of narratives, calls to action, and affective identification, converts passive bystanders into active participants in the quest for justice. Additionally, digital activism provides for a space of storytelling and counter-narratives. This is especially important in India, where prevailing narratives have a tendency to exclude or distort minority narratives. With hashtags, short films, and infographics, digital spaces democratize protest, and anyone with a mobile phone and internet connection is a part of social and political causes.

2.2 India's Digital Ecosystem

India's digital space is one of the world's fastest-evolving. The

country has over 600 million internet users, a dynamic but extremely polarized digital space. Penetration of low-priced smartphones and affordable internet data have increased the coverage of digital content. Advantage of this, however, has not been shared equally. Urban youth, middle-class citizens, and English-speaking cyber citizens dominate Twitter and Instagram. Marginal communities of rural areas are likely to employ WhatsApp since it is low-data usage and easy. This stratification of digital space makes social media campaigns inclusiveness and outreach more challenging.

Digital caste and gender divisions are also enduring. Studies have found that Indian women, especially Dalit and rural women, have significantly lower exposure to digital resources. This limits their exposure to digital discourse and continues to deepen entrenched inequalities in public and political life (Sato, 2024). In addition, digital literacy, language, and poor internet infrastructure in rural India make the situation worse. In spite of these obstacles, India's digital universe has opened new avenues for political participation and social transformation. Popularity of local language content, emergence of vernacular influencers, as well as community-based WhatsApp groups, have begun closing some gaps. The challenge now is to ensure the digital spaces become safer, more accessible, and more inclusive.

3. Case Studies of Digital Activism in India

3.1 The #MeTooIndia Movement

Women tweeted, Instagrammed, and Facebooked that they had survived and named their perpetrators who so far had remained safe from punishment due to fear of them, stigmatization, or complicit silence in institutions. MeTooIndia went ballistic in 2018 as part of the global MeToo wave that revealed sexual harassment and assault in media, academic, film, and political institutions.

Impact: Resignations of people are substantial triggered, initiated in-house probes in companies, and led to opening up of a discussion on gender sensitization, office ethics, and due process. This was a watershed moment for India's women's movement, giving victims a platform where they could be heard and believed on the Internet.

Limitations: Nevertheless, the movement was also criticized. Criticism was raised on the absence of legal remedy, trial-free reputational damage, and the possibility of false accusations. Also, it was largely restricted to English-speaking, urban, upper-middle-class societies, which underlined the shortcomings of online accessibility and intersectional inclusion.

3.2 The Right to Information (RTI) Movement

The RTI campaign is a shining illustration of the intersection of offline and online activism. Starting as an offline people's movement in Rajasthan during the 1990s, RTI was enacted into law in 2005 when the RTI Act was enacted. Social media has also been used earlier by activists to defend and uphold this law.

Impact: Activism campaigns like #SaveRTI and #DontAmendRTI on Twitter and Change.org gained over 280,000 signatures and put lawmakers to public pressure. The campaign has fostered democratic engagement, transparency, and public access to scrutinize institutions.

Digital Innovation: The campaign used Facebook to stage protests and disseminate resources, WhatsApp to coordinate region-wide protests, and videos such as the "Kodaikanal Won't" rap revealing environmental neglect using RTI information to engage young people and global communities.

3.3 Farmers' Protests (2020–2021)

One of India's biggest protests in history, Farmers' Protests against the controversial farm laws saw savvy digital activism. Farmers and their supporters utilized social media to organize demonstrations, push back at government misinformation, and gain global visibility.

Mechanisms: The hashtags #Farmers Protest, #Stand With Farmers, and #No Farmers No Food were trending on Twitter. Protesters shared live streams, heart-wrenching stories, and myth-busting graphics on Instagram and YouTube. The world rallied behind the Celebrities and influencers across the globe, further propelling the movement.

Challenges: The government retaliated with internet shutdowns, online surveillance, and cyber character assassination. Protest was trolls' paradise, uninformed, and state-sponsored reporting demonizing them as extremist or anti-national, marking the vulnerabilities of digital activism in an autocratic-biased digital environment.

3.4 Dalit Rights and Dalit Lives Matter

The Dalit Lives Matter movement, following the global Black Lives Matter movement, brought caste atrocities and discrimination to the forefront in India. Social media was the point of origin for Dalits to express themselves, which otherwise remained marginalized in mainstream platforms.

Achievements: Hashtags like #Justice For Rohith, #Dalit Lives Matter, and #Stop Caste Violence emerged as rallying points after sensationalized cases of caste atrocities. These hashtags enabled mobilization among young people, organization of campus protests, and pressured institutions for reform, particularly in universities and civil society groups.

Challenges: Dalit activists are constantly subjected to caste trolling, threats, and censorship online. Most of them don't have safe and equal access to digital platforms because of structural inequalities. Social media, however, has provided a strong platform for resistance and solidarity, especially among educated young Dalits and their allies.

4. 4. Mechanisms of Impact

The social justice is not merely in making noise on the internet but the effectiveness of social media campaigns in advocating for in how they frame public debate, mobilize popular action, and draw institutional attention to issues long obscured from view. In India, where the mainstream media tends to muzzle the voices of the marginalized, digital media has provided alternative spaces for dialogue, opposition, and democratization. This section examines the most important ways in which social media has influenced social justice movements in India.

4.1 Awareness and Agenda Setting

One of the most impactful consequences of social media activism is that it has the ability to set public agenda. Unlike the more entrenched political and business-dominated media, social media allows individuals and communities to bring attention to concerns that would otherwise be ignored. By trending on a particular hashtag, sharing viral content, and posting online debates, activists can make the media and policymakers take notice of specific issues. As Makatlal and Kumar (2022) argue, platforms such as Twitter have turned into "digital public spheres" whereby citizens particularly the youth can access national and global audiences. Hashtag campaigns such as #MeTooIndia, #JusticeForRohith, and #DalitLivesMatter have managed to create space for shared ire and solidarity, sometimes compelling mainstream media to reproduce and emulate. These digital movements not only generate awareness but also reverse mainstream narratives, thereby altering public discourse and exerting pressure on political discourse.

4.2 Mobilization and Collective Action

In addition to raising awareness, social media is important for coordinating collective action. The speed of information dissemination makes it possible for real-time organization of protests, sit-ins, petitions, and flash mobs. In the case of the RTI protests, for instance, organizers utilized Facebook and WhatsApp to alert supporters of protest locations, timing, and logistical requirements. Real-time access to thousands of individuals reduced organizational costs and escalated the extent of mobilization. Similarly, during the Farmers' Protests, protest organizers and social media volunteers have used Twitter and Instagram to mobilize solidarity marches all across cities and even abroad. WhatsApp forwards, online posters, and viral clips kept the movement going for several months. This kind of digital mobilization dissolves the boundaries of online/offline activism and enables more participation from individuals who might not be taking part in more traditional forms of protest.

4.3 Digital Storytelling

Another powerful force by which social media influence social movements is digital storytelling. Targeted, emotional content such as survivor testimonies, citizen-produced videos, and viral memes can provide human faces to complex issues and make them tangible and urgent. Activists and content creators use digital storytelling to frame narratives that connect with people by triggering emotions, solidarity, and action.

A good example is the "Kodaikanal Won't" rap video, produced as a part of a campaign against mercury pollution by Unilever in Tamil Nadu in the name of environmental justice. The video had effectively used narration and music to educate viewers, creating additional pressure on the company and stimulating international solidarity. Similarly, survivor testimonies shared on #MeTooIndia gained a snowball effect with others complaining about being silenced over workplace harassment culture. Activists construct strong narratives in the forms of videos, infographics, threads, and reels that resonate well with broader audiences. Visual and emotive appeal in such forms is more likely than policy reports and news reporting to shape public perceptions and trigger debate.

4.4 Online-Offline Synergy

One of the key Indian social movement lessons is that online activism is not in isolation. All successful campaigns have a tendency to combine online action with mass mobilization off-line. Chadha and Harlow (2015) are right to remind us that Indian digital activism operates most effectively when it draws upon and reinforces networks of local mobilization, student activism, and community engagement in place.

For instance, social media allowed for publicity to the RTI and Dalit rights movements, but it took ground protests, street theatre, campus sit-ins, and legal campaigning to translate cyber support into real-world action. The synergy between online presence and offline activity assures credibility, legitimacy, and long-term momentum for social justice movements. This overall strategy also minimizes the dangers

of "slacktivism" a shallow online behavior in which a user can merely like or share a post without committing to more serious engagement. When online technologies are used as tools of awareness, recruitment, and mobilization of offline activism, they can be powerful facilitators of transformative change.

5. Challenges and Limitations

Though social media has transformed how social justice activism is carried out in India, its emancipatory power comes with deep-set challenges and institutional constraints. In digital exclusion, surveillance, and slacktivism, to rising misinformation, digital activism is consistently limited by its political, technologic, as well as societal constraints. Below are four imperative challenges that serve to reduce the scope and size of social media campaigns to a limited scale as far as forwarding social justice goes.

5.1 Digital Divide

Despite the fact that the internet population has expanded manifold in India, availability is highly skewed. The digital divide characterized by disparities between smartphone access, internet usage, and e-literacy is continuing to exclude substantial segments of the population. Rural communities, women, Dalits, Adivasis, and economically marginalized groups are hugely underrepresented among the online population (Sato, 2024).

Only 33% of Indian women are reached by mobile internet, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), while 57% of men enjoy this amenity. The gap is even greater in rural India. In addition, non-support for local languages and the lack of local content exclude non-English speakers from online debates. This gap has a direct implication for the inclusivity and representativeness of social justice movements. Those campaigns that are rooted heavily in platforms like Twitter and Instagram risk isolating the very constituencies they claim to represent. Without intentional means through which digitally marginalized groups are engaged, digital activism has the potential to reenact existing society's inequalities in the virtual space.

5.2 Surveillance and Censorship

The second major drawback of online activism in India is increasing state surveillance and censorship. The Indian state has employed a range of mechanisms legal, technical, and rhetorical to police, silence, and prosecute online protest. Legislation like the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, grants the government wide-ranging authority over controlling content removals, determining users, and punishing sites. The legislation has been decried as trampling over freedom of expression and right to privacy.

During politically charged times like the anti-CAA protests, Article 370 abrogation in Kashmir, and the Farmers' Protests, the government used selective shutdowns of the internet, surveillance, and trolling online to silence dissent. Activists and reporters have reported being spied on, trolled, and even arrested for their online activities. Such an atmosphere of fear stifles digital expression and discourages free engagement in social movements. It particularly targets young activists, women, and minorities who are already structurally exposed.

5.3 Slacktivism

Perhaps the most commonly cited criticism of social media activism is slacktivism a phrase that describes low-effort online participation that doesn't result in sufficient change. Liking, sharing, or clicking a hashtag is just some of the things that seem to be doing something but don't result in impact in the real world. Makatlal and Kumar (2022) say that performative activism is a replacement for more substantial political action. Individuals can shift profile pictures or adopt hashtags as symbolic actions but not channel offline mobilization or structural change. Although such an action might raise awareness, it can dilute the objectives of the movement and render activism appear as a fleeting trend.

This is especially so in movements such as #MeTooIndia, wherein digital solidarity did not necessarily meaningfully translate to institutional transformation or sustained legal processes. Slacktivism also enables virtue signaling, where individuals join to build their personal brand rather than

giving out of real solidarity. To counter this, movements must concentrate on online-offline convergence, leveraging digital platforms as a stepping stone to greater participation, learning, and collective action.

5.4 Misinformation

The propagation of disinformation and propaganda through social media threatens the credibility and cohesion of social justice movements. Misinformation, manipulated images, and conspiracy theories can lead to confusion, exacerbate polarization, and erode trust in real activism. In the Farmers' Protests, for instance, disinformation campaigns sought to delegitimize protesters as terrorists or foreign agents. Spurious videos and spurious quotes were shared far and wide on WhatsApp and Facebook, creating uncertainty among the public and polarizing supporters (Mukherjee, 2019).

The decentralized structure of social media platforms and algorithmic bias complicate control or verification of the content's legitimacy. Although activists have pushed back with fact-checking efforts and media literacy, the volume of disinformation compels such remediation to the periphery. When institutions' reputation is already under question, unrestricted dissemination of lies can be capable of dismantling social justice campaigns and diverting focus from essential causes.

6. Comparative Analysis: India and Bangladesh

The social media potential of transforming youth-driven social justice movements is a recent trend in South Asia. Bangladesh and India have seen increasing digital activism, particularly among young people, utilizing social media platforms to oppose state power, rally public support, and highlight issues of immediate socio-political importance. In Bangladesh, the 2018 Road Safety Movement began after two students were killed in a road accident. The movement picked up momentum, fueled by the anger of students, and soon spiraled into countrywide protests. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter played a crucial role in mobilizing demonstrations, posting live information, and coordinating national and global support. As Sato (2024) has noted, despite

internet shutdowns and digital surveillance imposed by the government, Bangladeshi youth were very resilient digitally through the use of VPNs, encrypted messaging applications, and other networks to stay on course and avoid censorship.

Similarly, the same bifurcation can also be employed for India's anti-CAA and NRC agitation, where decentralized protests across the country were networked on social media. Schedules of protests, countering disinformation, and amplifying voices of protest, particularly among student activists and civil society groups, were tweeted and posted on Instagram. As in Bangladesh, internet shutdowns also faced Indian protesters, mainly in locations like Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, but continued mobilizing via encrypted messaging and creative offline mobilization. Leveraging social media to circumvent gatekeeping by mainstream media and the strongest similarities digital dexterity under surveillance, student mobilization. These images verify the authenticity of cyber activism in oppressive settings and forecast the potential of online freedom and cyber literacy to ensure democratic activism in South Asia.

7. Policy Implications and Recommendations to Increase Social Media Campaigns for Social Justice

Social media has come to play as a significant source of strength for social justice causes, providing the marginalized a forum to speak up and challenge intractable injustices. For social media's full potential for social justice, however, various policy initiatives have to be launched. These involve empowering the marginalized, making virtual spaces answerable, and instilling meaningful offline participation.

7.1. Digital Literacy Programs: Enabling Marginalized Communities

One of the fundamental barriers preventing marginalized communities from being able to use social media successfully for social justice is a digital illiteracy. In order to ensure that all people can participate effectively in online activism, comprehensive digital literacy initiatives need to be implemented. These programs must not only address the fundamentals of using digital platforms but also critical

thinking, media literacy, and ethical technology use. By empowering citizens with the proper skills, marginalized groups will be in a stronger position to use social media as a tool of empowerment, build awareness of their plights, and mobilize for change.

7.2. Regulatory Reforms: Safeguarding Activists' Rights

While social media can be used to mobilize social justice movements, it can also endanger activists through extreme forms of threats like online harassment, surveillance, and censorship. The authorities must implement regulative reforms that guarantee the rights of online activists while preventing digital technologies from being misused for surveillance. The reforms must ensure that activists are unshackled from undue restriction or intimidation, and their freedom of expression right is guaranteed. At the same time, regulatory structures must balance between guaranteeing security needs and privacy rights so that surveillance activity is not converted into an instrument of repression for the voices of the marginalized.

7.3. Platform Accountability: Transparency in Content Moderation

Because social media platforms are the focal points for the construction of the public sphere, the platforms need to be made responsible for their content moderation and disinformation policies. It is becoming increasingly concerning that the algorithms running on these platforms may stifle social justice-oriented content and facilitate disinformation capable of inflicting harm and its spread. Because of this, social media platforms must embrace transparent content policies that are openly applied and open to public scrutiny. This is done to promote trust between users and to ensure that social justice campaigns are not deterred by algorithmic discrimination or political censorship.

7.4. Offline Integration: Closing the Digital Divide

As much as social media has proven to be a powerful tool for advocacy, its potency is rendered useless if it is left on the cyber space. For social justice campaigns to bring about

sustainable effects, there must be an effort to marry online activism with offline organizing. Policy-makers can contribute to advocacy for programs that harmonize online and real-world activism to enable activists to mobilize people beyond the virtual space. Protests, and conversations bridging the virtual campaign divide that entails linking community events to present a stronger and more unified movement towards concrete change.

7.5. Inclusive Campaigning: Closing the Digital Divide

Finally, inclusive campaigning is essential to ensure social media is made accessible for everyone, especially the marginalized or rural populations. Utilizing local influencers and vernacular languages is able to close the digital divide to allow such communities to join social justice campaigns. Campaigns should not only address urban residents but also contain content that is sensitive to the language and cultural needs of various groups. Interaction with local activists and opinion leaders can also help to build trust and better communication with digital platforms, making the digital platform more equitable and inclusive for all.

Conclusion

Social media has radically reshaped social justice movements in India as a strong tool for marginalised communities to raise their voices and mobilise effectively. The fact that they can by-pass mainstream media and directly communicate with the public has been crucial in movements such as MeTooIndia, the RTI movement, and the 2020–2021 Farmers' Protests, pointing towards the pivotal position of social media in activism. These networks have opened up unprecedented possibilities for democratic engagement, enabling mass mobilization and live organization of demonstrations and campaigns for advocacy. However, the use of social media in activism is not without challenges. Digital disparity remains a significant challenge, with many people, particularly those located in rural areas as well as under-resourced communities, lacking the necessary access to the internet or digital literacy. Additionally, the spread of disinformation, cyberbullying, and surveillance by the state are concerns with regards to the legitimacy

and safety of online activism. "Slacktivism," or how online activism rarely translates to concrete offline action, further constrains the scope of the campaigns' potential.

With increasing numbers of Indian citizens going online, the future of social justice will be determined by how digital platforms are utilized. Social media activism will only be effective if it becomes more intersectional, strategically oriented, and grounded in grassroots realities. Ethical use, inclusivity, and integration with offline efforts are essential for sustaining social justice movements in the digital age, ensuring that social media serves as a positive force for change in India and beyond.

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Media Portrayal of Brain Drain: Examining Trends, Biases, and Public Perception

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Abstract

Brain drain, a globally significant issue with far-reaching implications for politics, society, and the economy. Focusing specifically on skilled professionals' migration in pursuit of enhanced opportunities, the research scrutinizes how media influences their decisions to emigrate, analyzing news coverage and perspectives on migration as factors influencing economic status and quality of life. The research is highlighting the media's substantial influence on public perceptions and attitudes toward migration, this study contributes by delving into the intricate relationship between media narratives and brain drain perceptions. It examines news coverage and occupation trends, paying special attention to potential stereotypes reinforcing the dichotomy of "skilled leaving" versus "unskilled staying." The analytical framework integrates concepts from framing, agenda-setting, social constructiveness, and critical discourse on globalization perspectives.

In this era of high speed internet service, the social media has touched almost all aspect of human daily activity. It has has touched area like political, social, cultural dimensions of a country and also have played a role in connecting people across the globe. Since long, developing countries are facing problem of exodus of workers i.e. people are leaving their home countries due to various reasons. Social connections and easy accessibility of information has influenced migration intensions also. It has influenced intensions and decisions to stay or leave their home country. Internet

and social media acts as a major source of information for prospective migrants.

Key Words: Brain Drain, Social Media, Smart Phone, Media, Agenda Setting, Public Perception, Cognitive Performance.

Introduction

The term "Brain Drain" implies that there is an imbalance in the share of the advantages and disadvantages of international migration. Most of the loss is borne by the source countries that, in their estimation, have yet to be adequately compensated for the net contributions their natives have made to the receiving countries. Actually, problems arise when the differentiation made between high skill migration and general migration or low skill migration. There is no such universal standard applicable to every country to categorized who will be highly skilled or unskilled migrants. The reality is that not all migrants provoke an equal level of loss of human capital. Also, those who depart are likely from the middle and professional classes, hence tend to include educators, health care workers, scientists, engineers, professors, and political reformers. In the home country, these high skilled migrants are also contrasted with migrant laborers for receiving higher incomes as compared to low skilled migrant labourers. It is these skilled educated workers that these countries require to begin to develop. After detailed analysis it could be found that the working classes in these countries spend time, energy and resources into educating these people who in turn migrate and leave them to fend for themselves. In this sense, some people's freedom to travel and gain financial well-being is obtained at the expense of their countrymen's freedom from hunger, homelessness, poverty and preventable diseases.

This flight of human capital is most likely to occur in smaller, less developed, and poorer countries. For instance, most of the High Skilled Migrants going to the U.S. are not from countries affiliated with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to the National Science Foundation, approximately 70% of the U.S. science and engineering workforce are from non-OEDC developing countries. The countries in the global North

that benefit the most from the "Brain Drain" do not have a problem acknowledging that it exists, but they do very little to correct it.

Push factors are the situations or events in the home countries that make the people leave. Examples of push factors are the structural adjustment programs implemented by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on developing countries that increased unemployment and reduced government funding on social programs in these countries which then led to increased migration. Pull factors are the incentives in the receiving countries that encourage persons to look for job opportunities there. Examples of pull factors are the immigration incentive policies of the receiving countries that tend to attract higher educated, skilled and trained personnel. For example, the H-1B visa system in the U.S. is often used as a stepping stone by immigrants who want to acquire employment-based permanent residence there. The current immigration policy in the U.S. enables those Applying for the H-1B visa to have the dual intent of attaining temporary work status but with the intention of applying for permanent residency.

This paper looks at the profound influence of media on the perceptions of brain drain, an issue of global significance that has political and social ramifications. The paper specifically focuses on skilled professionals who are emigrating for better opportunities. It investigates the impact of media on the emigration decision, analyzing the coverage of news and perspectives of migration as elements of economic status and quality of life. In this regard, this paper is of relevance because it delves into the relationship between media narratives and brain drain perceptions in the backdrop of a burgeoning body of scholarly research highlighting the media's substantial influence on public perceptions and attitudes toward migration. Analyzing news coverage and occupation trends with a special eye on potential stereotypes feeding into the dichotomy of "skilled leaving" and "unskilled staying," this analysis integrates concepts from framing, agenda-setting, social constructiveness, and critical discourse studies on globalization perspectives.

Influence of Digital Media on Brain Drain

Brain drain due to cross border migration of skilled professionals has always been a matter of concern for developing countries. Numbers of studies have focused on cross border mobility of people which leads to brain drain. Some of the major factors that can act as a reason for emigration of human capital are economic, political, social and cultural factors. In the present day, with internet and social media touching and influencing political, social, cultural factors within a country, it also played a role in connecting people across the countries. Social media and internet are recognized as one of the significant growth engines in the modern world. They have connected the remotest corners of the nation with the modern world. According to a report, India has around 462.1 million internet users (which makes approx 34 percent of population) out of which 430.3 million use the internet from mobile phones (79% of the total web traffic). 282 million are active users spending almost 7 hours per day on the internet.

An era of unparalleled connection has been brought about by the widespread use of smartphones. Today's consumers worldwide have access to nearly limitless information, limitless entertainment, and distant friends at all times. With smartphones in hand, people browse possible romantic partners in between appointments, trade stocks—and gossip—while stopped in traffic, check the weather from bed, make online purchases while standing in a store, and live-stream one other's experiences in real time from different parts of the world. This state of perpetual connectivity would have been unthinkable just ten years ago; now, it appears to be essential.One On average, smartphone owners use their devices 85 times a day, including right before bed, right after waking up, and even in the middle of the night.

Smartphones spread in international markets and in people's daily lives very fast. A phenomenon of "meaning and mattering" to a high degree by billions of worldwide consumers may affect their welfare. The more people depend on smartphone displays to organize and improve their everyday life, the more we have to study how dependence on these devices affects one's ability to think and act in the

real world. While cell phones promise abundance in terms of time and resources, they also bring unseen deficiencies. For a long time, research has focused on aspects that involve the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones regarding how interactions with the phone can be performance enhancers and inhibitors off screen.

Impact of Social Platforms

In social network theory, social ties are considered a medium through which information flows, influence flows from media or personal sources, and change in behaviors or attitudes occurs. Historically, decisions to migrate were based on information coming from a source of consultants, friends, family, and even networks outside the country. However, with the growth of social media and the internet, people increasingly used these avenues to communicate. As a result, with 95 percent of people residing in areas covered by mobile networks, social media and interns have been able to spread all over the world. Social capital represents a strong network of enduring relationships founded on community, kinship, friendship, and other grounds. The network has, for so long, shown to support the movement. On the other hand, it has been quite simple for those people who want to have brain drain intentions to gather information via the internet and social media. Therefore, human networks that promote and facilitate movement might influence migratory tendencies and choices according to the social network theory. It has been established that the existence of strong ties between people of the same origin increases the likelihood of migration. Access to pertinent information about the labor market and the dangers of visiting a foreign nation greatly reduces cross-border mobility costs, thereby encouraging international travel.

It is evident that social media and the internet have an influence on interest, intentions, and action regarding migration. The internet and social media supporting abilities help overcome barriers and discover new locations. The flow of information on the internet aids expatriates in adjusting. Customized, simple, and rationalized information about locations, education, culture, jobs, education, housing, social,

political, and social environments in distant places facilitates easy socializing and adaptation. Thus, internet and social media play a role in every phase, from the intention to move to the settling down in a foreign country.

Another way internet and social media plays a role in migration decisions and intentions is web-based place-marketing strategies. Online marketing campaigns attract visitors, tourists, and migrants. This further instigates migration interest and migration intentions. Lack of information enhances chances of impulsiveness of a prospective migrant. In such a situation, internet and social media can be used for accessing information and migration opportunities. Internet offers scope for new opportunities and thus strengthens the decision to move. It also contributes to changing perception and a decision to leave or love a country. Additionally, a positive relation has been found between migration planning and internet usage.

The other major way in which social media and the internet contribute to migration intentions is that they are the very tools for networking and communication. It has been observed that the size of the network of potential migrants increases with an increase in internet usage. For this reason, migration flows are also being predicted using these virtual networks. This is one of the factors that also determines the destination country. Besides, it makes the target country's culture and way of life more accessible and understandable. This increase in exposure and openness increases the chances of migration. The internet and social network have been known to have motivational effects on the potential migrants, supported by many studies.

Public perception through media

The media, which include the press, television, and internet, are the ones that inform people about what happens in the rest of the world. In situations where people lack direct information or experience of what is happening, the media become dependent on them for information. Of course, it does not mean that the media dictate our thoughts; people do not take information from the media without questioning.

However, they do so crucially as agenda-setters in focusing mass public attention to specific topics thereby limiting the sorts of views and arguments that actually enter the public consciousness. It is in these ways that media works to shape people's opinions and sentiments-which is well demonstrated in a multidimensional model of communications process.

We argue that it is not the journalists or any one interest group but rather multiple privileged groups: political and social institutions, interest groups, lobbies, public relations, that are shaping media content. This heterogeneity interacts to shape which subjects can be addressed, and the outcomes may also radically limit what can be known by the audience. Therefore, one of the main concerns is the examination of media content, or what we are taught and not told. However, audiences and media content have a complex and multifaceted connection that might be difficult to dissect.

For instance, the policymakers can provide information to the various media outlets and try to predict how the public will react to the way policies are formulated and communicated. They also anticipate how their words will be "mediated" and replicated across other media platforms. Thus, the fact that every component of the communications circuit intersects and is dynamic is very important. Because each part-like in media content or effects, separate to one another-has often received significant attention individually in past research, we show here why it is important to look at what relationship each of these different parts plays in any discussion of the role of the media for social change.

Discussions about media reporting on migration are therefore closely connected to some arguments and the assumptions that they veil: namely, that the target is, for instance, to frighten a 'substantial number' of migrants. This is the manner in which the story is structured and all other parts of the story from interviewees to the use of information that was quoted and choice of images used and the editorial comment elaborate and legitimate it as a major theme. News can look like a sometimes chaotic flow of information and debate but it is also underpinned by key assumptions about social relationships and how they are to be understood. At the heart of these are

beliefs about motivations, cause and effect, responsibility and consequence. So a newspaper report on people seeking asylum might make assumptions on each of these. One 'real' reason why people have migrated might be surmised: seeking a better life or getting economic advantages.

Conclusion

In this sense, the media plays a fundamental role in the way people perceive brain drain and in the dispersion of opinions as it covers the news, a factor that necessitates thorough scrutiny. The critical question is the one that involves the way media influences public perceptions of brain drain and the different opinions that compel news coverage about this phenomenon. A number of things highlight the importance of media to this end. The framing of the issue of brain drain mainly lies with the media as language, headlines, and image used would create perception among the masses. For instance, it might highlight negative aspects like the country of origin loses talent and skill, or emphasize positive factors that portray benefits and opportunities for migrants.

In the case of brain drain, the media typically focuses on human-interest and personal stories that reflect the success of professionals who have left their home countries and achieved great things in their adopted ones. Such stories create a positive perception of brain drain as an opportunity for people to improve their lives and move up the socio-economic ladder. Political and economic factors may also influence media reportage on brain drain according to the interests of advertisers, target audiences, or political affiliations. Thus, brain drain stories have potential to become biased through the particular agenda or dominant political and economic beliefs held by the media.

The proliferation of smartphones reflects a profound change in consumer-to-technology relations. For the most part, throughout human history, innovations have fit within an explicitly defined space in the consumer's world; they have been bounded by their purposes and contexts. Smartphones do not. They are constant companions for consumers, affording access to information, entertainment, and much more in ways

that, until very recently, were utterly impossible. evidence that merely having consumers' smartphones present interferes with two measures of cognitive capacity—available working memory capacity and functional fluid intelligence—without disrupting sustained attention or increasing phone-related thoughts' frequency. Engaged consumers managed to keep their phones out of their hands but also out of their conscious minds while performing continuing cognitive tasks.

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Bridging The Digital Divide: Addressing Inequality and Importance Of Digital Media Literacy in Rural India

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Abstract:

The "digital divide" refers to the disparity between people who have access to technology and the internet and people who do not have the access to these tools for participating in the digital economy, resulting in unequal prospects for socio-economic advancement. Because of deep rooted historical legacies of uneven infrastructure development, socio-economic differences, and educational access, the digital divide in India is pronounced with rural residents in particular. While India is racing forward with the pace of digital expansion and applications, the vast majority of rural residents remain isolated from accessing the digital economy because they do not have access to an affordable digital device (smart phones), trustworthy network availability, or digital literacy skills. This isolation leads inequity in access to education, jobs, health information, and civic engagement adding to marginalizing rural residents. In such a situation, digital media literacy offers robust empowerment for rural communities by supporting them in learning to engage with digital platforms and in a safe and effective way to consume digital media. Media literacy includes the ability to think critically, evaluate credible information from misinformation, and engage more fully in the digital economy. This research article provides an examination of the historical roots of the digital divide, the role of digital inequality in education, employment, health information, and civic engagement, the potential role of media literacy in combatting the digital divide, and the need and potential for further strategies to

combat digital inequality. In promoting media literacy, this paper advocates for sustainable policies of digital inclusion to create awareness, and knowledge for rural populations, not just provide access, so rural citizens can leverage the digital world. Bridging this divide will be necessary for India to actualize a fair digital future that benefits all levels of society.

Keywords: digital divide, rural India, inequality, media literacy, digital inclusion

Introduction

The digital divide is a widespread global challenge caused by disparate access to and use of digital technologies across different demographics. In India, the divide is most visible between urban and rural populations because they do not have the necessary infrastructure, economic means, and level of education to enable rural communities to engage with the digital revolution. India has experienced great, fast-paced growth in information and communication technologies that have increased internet access and smartphone use across the country. However, this increase in access has not been uniform across all communities, with large portions of rural India lacking access to digital tools and/or regular access to a high-speed wireless internet connection.

Historically, uneven development of systems infrastructure and socio-economic inequalities have resulted in this access gap. Rural India experiences challenges such as unreliable electricity, lacking telecommunications infrastructure and lower literacy, which all negatively affect technology adoption. The digital divide compounds social and economic inequalities felt in access to quality education, health information, government services, as well as better economic opportunities. The lack of access to digital means not only hinders rural community's engagement, participation, and voice during social and economic processes, but also creates greater marginalization.

In addition to access, the capability to appropriately and effectively use digital media—termed digital media literacy—has become a critical component in bridging this divide. Media literacy gives people through a specific set of skills

that first enable users to navigate through content available on digital platforms, secondly, understand and evaluate information, and lastly, ensure that their engagement in a digital space is done responsibly. Without media literacy, an individual who acquires access to technology will remain open to misinformation, and cyber or federal threats, and ultimately will be excluded from meaningful engagement in the online space. In rural India, promoting digital media literacy becomes a necessary component in empowering their citizens, creating social inclusion, and overall, supporting sustainable development.

This paper examines both the historical foundations of the digital divide, as well as current issues around the digital divide in rural India, by portraying the ways in which this divide perpetuates inequality - inequity in education and society, as well as the lack of self-determination that has kept rural India from benefiting equitably from India's digital future. Ideally, these issues need to be addressed if we are actively seeking to ensure equitable digital growth and provide rural communities with the ability for quiet, grassroots, self-determined growth and benefit from India's digital future.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the historical context and factors contributing to the digital divide in rural India.

2. To assess the impact of the digital divide on socio-economic inequalities in rural communities.

3. To examine the role of digital media literacy in empowering rural populations to utilize digital technologies effectively.

4. To evaluate existing initiatives and challenges in promoting digital access and media literacy in rural India.

5. To propose policy recommendations for bridging the digital divide and enhancing digital media literacy for inclusive rural development.

Understanding the Digital Divide

The term digital divide is described as the gap of different

levels of access to an information and communication technology (ICT), which can include the internet, computers, and smartphones, between individuals, communities, and regions. The digital divide directly influences how individuals engage with the socio-economic opportunities of the digital age. The divide exists between developed and developing countries, urban and rural communities, and within socio-economic groups globally. In India, the digital divide is a multifaceted category that is influenced by accessibility, affordability, digital skills, and cultural factors.

India has experienced substantial digital transformation over the past two decades, with noteworthy government efforts such as Digital India and new advances in mobile networks that have allowed more individuals to come online. The process, however, has not been equitable, with urban areas and semi-urban centers more benefitting from developments. Given that nearly 65% of the population lives in rural areas, India is still lacking in terms of connectivity, device ownership, and digital literacy for this population. The digital divide is not just about technology disparity, it is about systemic socio-economic disparities and an unequal built environment compounded by years, if not centuries of inequitable and unequal access to technology.

In this chapter, we will examine a variety of dimensions of the digital divide; access, use, and skills- and their contribution to producing unequal opportunities- for example; access refers to availability of devices and internet; use is about the frequency and purpose for which users engage; skills refer to an individual's capacity to navigate, evaluate, and/or produces digital content. Reflecting on these dimensions can indicate why bridging the divide goes beyond investing in infrastructure, it requires a multi-pronged set of social policies concerned with inclusion and empowerment.

Historical Context of Digital Inequality in Rural India

One context of digital inequality in India is related to the country's wider development trajectory. Colonial legacies, uneven economic growth, and governance challenges produced the social and infrastructural conditions that have led to the digital divide. Post-independence, rural India

remained underdeveloped in terms of education, health, and connectivity however the telecom revolution in the 1990s and 2000s saw urban India benefit from private-public sector investment in telecommunication infrastructure, causing an initial lapse in internet access between rural and urban areas.

Rural infrastructure to enable the sustainability of electricity, broadband networks and services were not prioritized, thus denying rural residents the opportunity to have any early experience with digital inclusion. Socioeconomically, other barriers also existed related to poverty, low literacy and gender that caused challenges to rural residents adopting digital practices. However, additional barriers of exclusion were faced by women and other marginalized groups based on their culture imposed views of technology and access to education.

Government programs such as the National Optical Fiber Network and BharatNet have focused on providing connectivity to gram panchayats (or village councils), however, the success of these initiatives has been variable. Digital devices stay out of reach for many households in rural areas and digital literacy programs are uncommon. Historical and structural differences have maintained the gap in digital access, and social inequity in access to digital technology is entrenched in broader processes of rural marginalization.

Impact of the Digital Divide on Rural Inequality

The digital divide has significant implications for socio-economic inequality in rural India. Limited access to digital technologies means rural residents cannot use the technology to access education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and government services. Education is among the most affected areas, as students and educators in rural areas are disadvantaged because of a lack of devices, connectivity, and digital literacy. Digital exclusion has also further widened educational inequality, particularly during a crisis point such as COVID-19, when schools shifted to online learning platforms.

Health information and telemedicine–two of the most valuable aspects of digital technology–are, for the most part, inaccessible for many rural residents, limiting their access to

timely health information, for prevention or a health initiative, or urgent/emergency healthcare, all of which will further exacerbate health inequalities. Lastly, exclusion from the digital economy curtails access to markets, digital payment systems, and resources for entrepreneurship, and overall income-generating opportunities and financial inclusion.

In addition, constrained digital connectivity limits access for rural citizens to public services, such as government scheme and benefits registration, documentation, and grievance resolution systems, limiting democratic participation and accountability. Gender inequities increase as rural women's access to technologies is, in general, lower than their rural male counterparts, increasing their social marginalization.

This chapter introduces specific case studies and data points to evidence digital disconnection's specific co-linearity with access to services and development outcomes of rural citizens; drawing attention to the critical need for future programming and investment on behalf of rural citizens.

The Role and Importance of Digital Media Literacy

Digital media literacy is described as the capability to confidently use digital tools and assess the credibility of everything someone consumes online, to navigate digital spaces safely and responsibly. Media literacy is especially important in rural India for users to discern reliable sources of information from misinformation and fake news which plague digital spaces. Media literacy fosters critical thinking, ethical use of the resources available in a digital space, and a conversation about privacy and security risks requires serious thought. Heightened awareness of literacy will better enable rural residents, especially youth and women, to access safe education, government services, health-promoting programs, and economic opportunities.

Governments, NGOs, and education institutions are realizing that literacy programs must be supported by access to technology. This chapter will highlight media literacy initiatives designed specifically for rural populations which include mobile training, community information centers, and the inclusion of digital media literacy in school programming.

This will also discuss how digital media literacy can support social inclusion by supporting engaging citizens and groups marginalized by circumstance to lift their voices. Media literacy is the bridge that moves people from access to technology to engaged empowerment.

Case Studies of Digital Inclusion Initiatives in India

This study presents a variety of successful and continuing digital inclusion programs across India that address the digital divide in rural communities. It looks into initiatives such as Digital India, the Common Service Centres (CSCs), and mobile connectivity initiatives by design, delivery, and impact. For instance, the Digital India program is aimed at making government services available online but varies effectiveness based on the social and local conditions in which it is implemented. There's the CSC scheme to provide community access points for digital services; however, challenges arise in low digital literacy and physical infrastructure needs that limit its success. The chapter provided case studies from Kerala, Gujarat, and Rajasthan in which local levels of government and NGOs experiences successes in promoting digital literacy, digital payments, and e-governance. The lessons learned from these case studies suggest the importance of flexible approaches that best suit the contextualized barriers in a particular place. The chapter also presents examples of innovative models such as solar-powered digital kiosks, mobile-based learning platforms, and gender-sensitive programs that were successful in promoting inclusivity. In light of the regional differences in socio-economic conditions, this chapter offers examples of scalable and adaptable approaches that are relevant for other districts, states, and potentially, nationally.

Challenges and Barriers to Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural India

This chapter explores the myriad obstacles and challenges that impede development initiatives aimed at closing the digital divide in rural India. It considers infrastructure issues, especially the unpredictable nature of service delivery associated within the energy supply, poor internet

connectivity, and the price of digital equipment, which restrict access for rural users. It also examines socio-cultural factors such as educational and literacy levels, language differences, gender roles, and prior experience or comfort with new technologies, which complicate digital engagement. It also identifies economic issues, such as poverty and economic disparity which limit access for rural users to purchase and then continually use digital devices.

In addition, it will examine the lack of localized content and services in English and India-based languages, which might dampen rural users' motivations to engage with technology in useful or meaningful ways. Moreover, rural users face risks associated with digital insecurity, privacy-related sanctions, and exposure to misinformation - and these risks are magnified by limited experience or exposure of using the internet. Political and administrative barriers such as fragmented governance, uncoordinated efforts across stakeholders, and inefficient interfaces with policy frameworks contribute to the barriers described above.

This paper seeks to clarify the complicated and nuanced context and experiences in rural India by unpacking these barriers in sufficient detail. It underscores that responsive solutions to the challenge of illiteracy, lack of roads, and distrust of data can only come from a more integrative response to infrastructure, sociocultural context, user-friendly design, and institutional support. It is important to attend to and offer solutions for these challenges for future work to become an issue of digital inclusion and media literacy pedagogies for rural India.

Policy Recommendations and Future Directions

To address the rural digital gap and improve digital media literacy, policies must be multi-faceted and implemented collaboratively. Policymakers must achieve meaningful digital inclusion by combining infrastructure improvement, affordability, and digital literacy initiatives.

First, physical infrastructure must be expanded with affordable broadband, reliable electricity, and subsidies for devices for rural low-income households. In many rural areas, renewable energy options may supplement any grid

inadequacies. Public-private partnerships may facilitate equitable implementation and allow for innovation and faster rollout of existing solutions.

Secondly, there must be an effort to embed digital media literacy into rural education systems, adult education systems, or participation in community engagement campaigns. Digital media literacy is most effectively done through education that teaches how to critically evaluate information or that relates to assuring cybersecurity, gender-sensitive practices, or practical skills or concepts in the ICT field. Digital inclusion plans also need to consider rural development strategy documentation and policy reforms at the governance level, including whether users could exercise forms of social accountability in relation to e-governance accessibility and information access more broadly.

Fourthly, empowering and developing localized content in consideration of local language and culturally sensitive digital services will enhance usability and uptake of services for rural users.

Finally, ongoing systematic monitoring and research is critical to track progress and amend policies as necessary. Partnerships across academic institutions, government, civil society and the private sector will help to develop inclusive innovation.

If India takes a holistic approach to bridging the digital divide and considers digital media literacy, the country will be able to realize the potential of its rural population and move toward an equitable digital future.

Conclusion

The digital divide in India, especially in rural areas, continues to be one of the greatest barriers in realizing inclusive sustainable development in the country. While significant strides have been made in digital infrastructure, digital connectivity, and governmental efforts to support digital access, a considerable portion of rural Indians continues to experience a lack of access to digital technologies and the internet, if not the absence of it. The digital divide is more than

a technological issue but reflects and reinforces entrenched social, economic, educational, and cultural inequalities that have persistently marginalized the rural poor in India. A holistic approach to bridging the digital divide does not simply mean building physical infrastructure; empowering lives using digital media literacy, and an inclusive policy and support measures that can be afforded, and that is anchored in the values and norms of rural Indians all factor in to any long-standing solution, should there be one at all, to closing the digital divide, in rural contexts, in India, and at scale.

A key finding of this research is that while access to digital technology is important, it is only the first step in closing the digital divide. Access to cost-effective devices, internet connectivity and electricity provide the necessary starting point. However, without sufficient digital media literacy—the knowledge, skills and dispositions to appropriately navigate, evaluate and use digital content—people using digital technology in rural areas may be disadvantaged by misinformation, cybersecurity risks, and a lack of capitalizing on the possible uses of digital technology. Media literacy, then, serves as an important mechanism that turns access into empowerment. With the increased skills, rural users approaching media literacy will feel more empowered to be involved in educational, professional, governance, health, and social opportunities, creating change that builds respect and reduces historically and structurally created inequities.

The historical structural developmental deficits of India have deep roots in colonial and post-colonial development policies that have elevated urban and industrial development over rural infrastructure development and delayed versus improved infrastructure. The delayed arrival of communications infrastructure, low literacy levels, rural poverty, targeted gender inequalities have hindered the growing digital adoption in rural communities. Thus, addressing some of these historical issues will not only require technical interventions but also interventions to reshape social norms, and address economic barriers, while focusing on improving access for women, lower caste, and tribal communities to transcend structural exclusion.

The disparities resulting from the digital divide can be observed in critical areas such as education, health, work, and government. Students living in rural areas are often unable to access digital learning resources. The shift to online schooling during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted this lack of digital access. Telehealth services and health education/awareness programs were often unable to reach the real citizens living in these remote village settings, creating additional health inequities. Unable to access online marketplaces or e-financial transactions due to limited access or unstable connectivity stifles rural entrepreneurs and contributes to economic stagnation. Further, limited access to e-governance platforms undermines democratic participation and transparency, limiting the voices and involvement of rural citizens in the decision-making process. Such inequalities turn into a vicious cycle by perpetuating both poverty and social exclusion through a lack of digital access.

Digital media literacy offers a deliberate approach to address a number of these challenges. By equipping rural users with critical thinking skills, media literacy skills, and cybersecurity knowledge,a less vulnerable user to digital disinformation and fraud-depen dence in technology as they face a context of their leaders and experts. In forme dliteracy programs developed in rural context—attention to language and culture, local content—can help users overcome knowledge gaps and know how to use digital resources in practice in everyday life. Rural programming in India has demonstrated that, community-based training, mobile learning platforms, and public-private partnerships can create significant engagement and an increased sustainable campus. Gender equity, which is implicated in women's digital literacy, has the potential to elevate the economic and social status of an entire family.

Despite this, closing the Digital Divide requires a comprehensive policy and implementation approach with an inclusive and sustainable base. The development of the infrastructure space must be centered not only on connection, but also continuous supply of energy, and affordability of devices. Increasing affordability through subsidies, innovative financing arrangements, and locally-based solutions such as

solar paneled digital kiosks are all possible. Policies require the incorporation of digital media literacy in the formal school system and non-formal adult learning schemes for continuous development. Additionally, digital services and content need to be user-friendly, culturally relevant, and in languages that support adoption.

It is essential to maintain a focus on gender and social equity in all efforts to achieve digital inclusion for the purpose of overcoming persistent inequalities. Specific focus may be needed to include women, tribal people, or people belonging to scheduled castes in initiatives with specially tailored support and training. This requires ensuring that rural entrepreneurship is supported through digital access and digital literacy, which may facilitate job creation and greater economic diversification in rural India. Similarly, e-governance reforms intended to streamline digital services will enhance digital transparency, accountability, and participation.

The study underscored the necessity of collaboration across diverse stakeholders, including or involving governments, private sector actors, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and the communities of rural residents themselves. The most relevant and effective approaches will have participatory and inclusive governance models that incorporate these voices in developing and implementing public policy. Continuous monitoring, researching, and data collection on digital access and literacy in rural contexts will be important to find priorities and advancing responsive strategies to help ensure adaptation, inclusion, and equity in constantly changing technology and user needs.

The requirement of bridging the digital divide for rural India is both a developmental necessity and a moral responsibility. Equity of access must guarantee that no citizen is left behind in the digital future of the country. This process involves correcting unjustifiable infrastructure and affordability cost issues, building digital media literacy, and implementing inclusive policy and services, particularly for historically marginalized populations. By using digital technologies equitably and inclusively, India can enhance rural

development, uplift individuals and communities, and create a more just and inclusive society. Indeed, digital inclusion is about technology, but it is about the expansion of human opportunity and dignity.

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The Role of Community Media in Preserving Indigenous Languages and Traditions in Uttarakhand

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Abstract:

This paper examines the urgent need to conserve and restore the endangered Himalayan languages of Kumauni and Garhwali, spoken largely in the Indian state of Uttarakhand. Both languages, though having millions of native speakers, do not have constitutional recognition, are experiencing a decline in use among younger generations, and are rated as endangered by UNESCO. The study investigates the issues brought about by modernization, education language policies, and socio-political exclusion. It finds successful grass-root interventions such as the role of monthly Kumauni-language magazine 'Pahru', documentation and digitalization of folktales, and grass-root movement building linguistic pride. National education reforms, particularly the New Education Policy (NEP 2020), on mother-tongue integration in early education that also evaluates the effect. In a transdisciplinary framework of field research, policy analysis, and computer-based humanities, the paper presents pragmatic directions towards linguistic sustainability as well as the improvement of intergenerational cultural continuity in the Himalayan realm.

Keywords: Language revitalization, Kumauni, Garhwali, 'Pahru' magazine, folk tales, education policy, digital preservation, endangered languages, Uttarakhand, linguistic diversity.

Introduction:

Language not only functions as a means of communication but as a repository for cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, historical memory, and collective identity. There could be no other place where it is so patently clear as in the India Himalayan zone, where such languages as Garhwali and Kumauni contain centuries-long oral traditions of storytelling, religion, ecology, and indigenous outlook. Even though spoken by millions of people in Uttarakhand, both languages are underrepresented in national policy and discourse. Neither language has been added to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which means they have no institutional support such as educational implementation, official recognition, and linguistic development programs.

The 2011 India Census states that more than 2.3 million people speak Garhwali and Kumauni, which is the mother tongue of approximately 2 million. Yet, both are considered endangered by the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger because their transmission from one generation to the next is on the decline. The growing preference for Hindi and English, spurred by hopes for improved educational and economic prospects of their children, is nudging indigenous languages to the periphery. Urbanization, modernity, tourism, and globalization have also hastened the linguistic transition, undermining the intergenerational ties that had otherwise guaranteed survival of the languages in daily life. Also, education and language policies in the past privileged Hindi as the state language, thus supporting monolingual teaching and reducing the incorporation of regional languages in official contexts. But language is not an instrument used for practical purposes but also a cultural heritage. The loss of a language also means that centuries of inherited knowledge stories, songs, proverbs, rituals, and landscape practices cannot be transferred in entirety to some other system of language.

In the context of all this, various institutional and community initiatives have sprung up to stem the decline. Media like 'Pahru' magazine a monthly Kumauni-language magazine have been instrumental in promoting linguistic pride and

literary interest amongst locals. New media initiatives, like the recording and circulation of Garhwali folktales on social media and mobile apps, are bringing back the younger generation to their roots through contemporary means. In addition, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a policy-level window of opportunity, advocating for mother tongue primary education and promoting multilingualism as an educational asset.

This paper seeks to discuss the interweaving roles of policy intervention, digital technology, educational reform, and people's activism in maintaining and reanimating the endangered languages of Uttarakhand. It explores case studies like the influence of 'Pahru', the folkloric digitalization, and the consequences of NEP 2020, to outline a holistic model of language sustainability. By equally considering community voice and institutional initiatives, this research advances the discourse of linguistic justice and cultural protection in an evolving global world.

2. Linguistic Landscape of Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand, a northern Himalayan state of India, is known not only for its scenic beauty but also for its remarkably diverse linguistic heritage. The region is home to over 13 indigenous languages and dialects, including Kumauni, Garhwali, Jaunsari, Raji, Tharu, Jad, Marchha, Bhotia, and others. These languages belong predominantly to the Indo-Aryan language family and are collectively part of what is often referred to as the Pahari group. Despite their widespread use in everyday communication, especially in rural and hilly areas, these languages face neglect in formal institutions and state policies.

According to the People's Linguistic Survey of India, nearly 44% of Uttarakhand's population communicates in local languages. However, Hindi, designated as the official state language, dominates public life, education, media, and government communication. As a result, regional languages have been relegated to private and informal domains. The UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger classifies both Kumauni and Garhwali as "definitely endangered,"

indicating a serious risk of these languages fading away unless intergenerational transmission is reinforced.

One of the primary challenges is the lack of standardization and script-based teaching resources. Most of these languages, especially in their traditional oral form, are rarely taught in schools and are absent from mainstream curricula. Furthermore, regional literature remains scattered and under-published, leading to low visibility in digital and print spaces.

The linguistic richness of Uttarakhand is not just a matter of identity but a living expression of the region's history, values, and worldview. Each dialect carries within it a unique cultural and ecological knowledge system. However, without robust efforts to integrate these languages into education, administration, and media, the rich multilingual heritage of Uttarakhand risks falling into irreversible decline.

3. The Language Preservation Challenges

Language conservation of the regional languages such as Kumauni and Garhwali in Uttarakhand is plagued with several interconnected issues, which find their origin in the state of socio-cultural, political, and educational deprivation. Despite having millions of speakers, they were traditionally discounted in terms of Hindi and English, which are considered to be more "prestigious" and economically relevant. This belief has led to a steady erosion in the usage of indigenous languages, particularly among the young generation, who view fluency in Hindi and English as a passport to quality education and jobs. One of the most pressing problems is political neglect. Neither Garhwali nor Kumauni has been included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which would ensure government patronage for their development and use in education, administration, and broadcasting. In the absence of constitutional backing, policy-level efforts to advance these languages are piecemeal and under-funded. Intergenerational transmission of these languages are Urbanization and modernization have also done much to destroy. Urban migration for education and employment has broken the traditional family household patterns, reducing opportunities for younger generations to learn and use their

mother language in customary contexts. Also, the absence of school formal instruction has denied children the ability to learn their indigenous languages formally.

The education system as a whole has not made any significant inclusion of the region's languages in the curriculum. Even with the introduction of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, its implementation is sporadic and in small pockets. Without proper teacher training, curriculum development, and institutional support, language preservation initiatives fail to get traction. These issues, if unresolved, risk obliterating centuries of linguistic, cultural, and ecological lore contained in these languages lore that is specific to the Himalayan heritage and precious to its future.

4. Role of 'Pahru' Magazine

The game-changer in building Kumauni identity through literature, education, and media outreach that is monthly published under the banner of the NGO Kumauni Bhasha, Sahitya Evam Sanskriti Prachar Samiti. The 'Pahru' magazine has been a catalyst of linguistic and cultural activism is an effort at preserving and revitalizing the Kumauni language. Established in 2008 by renowned linguist, writer, and social activist Dr. Hayat Singh Rawat, 'Pahru' is India's longest- running Kumauni-language magazine.

'Pahru' is a publication, but also a movement of culture. It contains a broad variety of literary works such as poetry, short fiction, folktales, proverbs, essays, and children's literature, all in Kumauni. It has also led the efforts to standardize the Kumauni alphabet and grammar so that it is simple for readers and writers to work with the language uniformly. Notably, the editorial board makes an effort to balance standardization with dialectal diversity so that the inclusiveness is maintained across the linguistic areas of Kumaun. Aside from its literary function, 'Pahru' is also an advocacy platform with a strategy. It spearheads the issue of having the Kumauni language included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and incorporated into school curricula across Uttarakhand. The magazine periodically publishes articles highlighting the importance of teaching in mother tongues, and the editorials by Dr.Rawat language-identity-development activism place

the vision of nexus front and center. In defiance of economic adversity, 'Pahru' is funded through novel models like custodian memberships and reader-supported finances. Its reach transcends print to inform digital translations, cultural celebrations, and children's creative writing in Kumauni. Through an unwavering devotion to linguistic justice, 'Pahru' has emerged as a tool of empowerment, providing a reproducible model for the preservation of regional languages in the Himalayas and beyond.

5. Digital Documentation and Media Interventions

In the era of quick technological development, digital documentation has become an effective means for the revival of threatened languages like Garhwali and Kumauni. With traditional oral cultures eroding under the impact of mass media, digital media provide a dynamic space for the preservation, dissemination, and celebration of regional languages in interesting formats appealing to the youth of the day. The Garhwali folk tales' digitalization, which not only safeguards the region's these attempts has been toral culture but also makes them available to global readerships. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and digital libraries are becoming popular vehicles to upload spoken folk tales, songs, proverbs, and oral histories.

These tales, hitherto heard merely in village gatherings and household circles, are currently being heard by young generations via mobile phones and social media and are attracting a renewed interest in their cultural heritage. Young people's participation is greatly enhanced when local language content is presented in multimedia, interactive, and visual forms. People relate to their heritage in a modern setting in podcasts, animations, audio-visual storytelling, and mobile learning apps enable. The intergenerational gap is closed with these materials as well, since the older generation can provide their linguistic expertise while the youth use digital skills to further enhance it.

In addition, community media initiatives like language blogs, cultural podcasts, local radio shows, and online storytelling contests are mobilizing language activists and content

creators to re-take space for local voices. These web-based initiatives are further complemented by the creation of digital dictionaries, grammars, and language-learning materials, which are critical to long-term educational integration and documentation. Ultimately, the use of digital technologies presents a cost-saving, scalable, and sustainable language preservation model. Coupled with community engagement and institutional support, these interventions can provide for the voices of Kumauni and Garhwali speakers to not only be preserved but championed on local and international spaces.

7. Community and NGO Involvement

In areas such as Uttarakhand, where language preservation institutional mechanisms are still in the making, community-based initiatives and NGO efforts are central to the maintenance of endangered languages like Kumauni and Garhwali. These local movements not only supplement the shortcomings of formal mechanisms but also create a sense of pride and ownership among indigenous speakers. Kumauni Bhasha, Sahitya Evam Sanskriti Prachar Samiti Institutions are established by Dr. Hayat Singh Rawat are now cultural trendsetters and have been hard at work raising awareness about and advocating for native languages through books, campaigns, and policy initiative. Their tireless efforts towards publishing magazines like Pahru, conducting tell-tale performances, and the regional language workshops have fostered a thriving language environment.

Community initiatives go beyond publishing. Villages have taken initiatives to stage folk festivals, language days, and youth camps at which traditional songs, tales, and rituals are sung and taped. Such events not only encourage inter-generational transmission but also continue to have on record oral traditions that would otherwise go undocumented. Local libraries and language clubs are also being set up to facilitate regular access to Kumauni- and Garhwali-language literature. In rural and under-served areas, WhatsApp groups and community radio are emerging as feasible channels of spreading linguistic content. Through these media, storytellers, poets, and teachers have access to reach a broad audience, commonly in dialects other than mainstream

Kumauni or Garhwali, thus maintaining linguistic diversity for the region.

Language revitalization spearheaded these efforts is an example of bottom-up approach to the speakers of, dwellers in, and living the language. In the absence of strong state involvement, NGOs and communities at the base are custodians of cultural memory. They have, with their long-term efforts, provided templates for equitable models of linguistic revitalization that remind us of the fact that language preservation is not just an issue of policy but a social responsibility and duty of culture.

7. Educational Integration and NEP 2020

Education is at the heart of transmitting and sustaining any language. Noting this fact, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes the usage of mother languages and regional languages as the instructional medium, specifically in the formative years of schooling (Grades 1–5). This forward-looking change recognizes the fact that children learn best during early learning stages when they learn in a familiar language, and this develops concept clarity and affective connection to the subject.".

In the case of Uttarakhand, the NEP has also created a promising avenue for the incorporation of Kumauni and Garhwali languages in the school system. Pilot projects have already commenced in districts like Pauri, where Garhwali is being incorporated as an obligatory subject in almost 80 primary schools. Not only is the language being taught in written form with the Devanagari script, but students are also reading books such as Dhaguli, Jhumki, and Paijbi, which are designed to incorporate local topics and themes. Additionally, morning prayer at the majority of schools now features Kumauni and Garhwali songs so that students are able to relate to their linguistic heritage daily. These small, symbolic gestures create feelings of pride and familiarity among young students, making language an experiential, living part of their identity.

Universities like Doon University and Kumaun University have also established language centers and provide local

language certificate programs. These endeavors help establish a formal academic basis for regional languages, allowing educators to be trained, teaching resources to be prepared, and research to be enhanced in these languages. While the full-scale roll-out is still in progress, NEP 2020 represents a revolutionary policy turn towards inclusive, multilingual education that holds out new hope for reviving and conserving the state's vibrant linguistic diversity.

8. Comparative Case: Himachal Pradesh's Kullui Language

In Himachal Pradesh Kullui language, that is predominantly spoken in the district of Kullu, provides a helpful comparative example for assessing language endangerment and revitalization possibilities that can be extended to Kumauni and Garhwali in Uttarakhand. Like its Uttarakhand equivalents, Kullui belongs to the Western Pahari sub-branch of Indo-Aryan languages and is an oral language with no standardized written tradition. It is classified as vulnerable to extinction, according to field studies and the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. Kullui also experiences most of the same issues as Kumauni and Garhwali Hindi and English dominance, low intergenerational transmission, and lack in school education. But active documentation by international linguists, especially Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences researchers, has succeeded in documenting and analyzingKullui to a large extent. Audio and video recordings, transcription of spoken stories, lexicon building, and the collection of grammatical materials their work included large-scale in the fieldwork.

One of the strengths of the Kullui documentation project is its sociolinguistic scope, which analyzes how language use changes according to age, gender, education, and geography. Social pressures has been change the languages to provide customized solutions for revitalization to be observations in a better picture. For example, the documentation emphasized the need to engage elders in the learning process and mapped out areas where local dialects were still strong. Such programs illustrate the potential of field-based, collaborative documentation methodologies that link linguistic science and community outreach. Such projects replicated in Uttarakhand

have the potential to be made central to the mapping of dialect diversity, the creation of language learning resources, and pedagogical resource generation. This Kullui example is therefore an outstanding, replicable model of language maintenance and revitalization in other Himalayan environments.

9. Recommendations

In order to support the survival and revitalization of vulnerable languages such as Kumauni and Garhwali, there is a need for an overarching strategy incorporating digital innovation, education reform, cultural activism, and policy advocacy. The following suggestions outline a plan for sustainable language preservation and intergenerational transmission in Uttarakhand.

Digital Language Learning Tools: Create easy-to-use mobile apps, YouTube channels, podcasts, and game-based language-learning websites in Kumauni and Garhwali. These sites may provide vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and reading targeted in a special way toward younger generations already online. Integration at the policy and curriculum level: Push for including Kumauni and Garhwali in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to offer institutional push. Simultaneously, develop holistic curricula in local languages, develop textbooks, and prepare teachers through regional universities and teacher training institutions.

Bilingual Education Promotion: Promote multilingual or bilingual learning models for primary education. The children have to be taught the mother language along with the state/official language, allowing further intellectual growth and strong roots of culture. Community Media and Broadcast: Boost community radio, local media, blog sites, and WhatsApp groups in regional languages to spread folklore, poetry, news, and education programs. Use of the media in a regional language builds pride and brings acceptance of use thereof in public communications. Youth Participation through Cultural Events: Conduct folk festivals, story-telling competition, poetry recitation, and drama competition in Kumauni and Garhwali. These activities must be included

in school calendars and promoted by local government departments. Documentation and Archiving: Create people's archives of oral tradition, songs, and literature in audio, video, and print media. Work with linguistic experts to make them of high quality and accessible. With these interconnected suggestions put into practice, Uttarakhand can establish a robust system of protecting its heritage language richness in favor of its future generations.

Conclusion

It is not merely a social obligation but a cultural imperative too that the linguistic diversities of the Himalayan range and particularly that of Uttarakhand are safeguarded. Such languages as Kumauni and Garhwali are not simply tools of communication but storehouses of collective memory, indigenous lore, folklore, and identity. Natural world knowledge, and inter-generational principles embedded in local culture loss warns of not merely the disappearance of words, but of the attenuation of distinctive weltanschauung. Reviving these languages requires collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts that bring together traditional knowledge systems and modern tools. Ranging from policy-level integration and curriculum transformation to digital narrative, community-led publications such as Pahru, and utilization of technology-based language learning platforms, every activity is crucial. Platform to re-prioritize education the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a timely in the mother tongue and empower local voices within the formal system of education.

However, policy changes from the top must be complemented by bottom-up grassroots action. Local NGOs, scholars, youth organizations, and cultural practitioners are key stakeholders in the fight for linguistic heritage preservation. When communities are organized as custodians of their culture and language, preservation is not just a desire, but a collective everyday practice. In conclusion, the culture of Kumauni and Garhwali can be nurtured and maintained by a converging approach that brings together education, creative digitality, grassroots mobilization, and pride in culture. The time is now before the irreplaceable voices are muted and the cultural heritage of the region is irretrievably lost to the ages.

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The Invisible Voice: A Study on Representation of Minorities in Mass Media Content

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Abstract

This research study investigates the depiction of minorities in Indian mainstream media, with a particular emphasis on religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. The purpose of this paper is to examine how these minority groups are portrayed in various types of media, such as television, cinema, print, and digital media. This study intends to provide light on the problems, possibilities, and potential methods for fostering accurate and inclusive portrayalof minorities in Indian mass media by reviewing current literature, media content, and socio- political situations. The literature review section gives an overview of extant study on minority media representation in India. It looks at the patterns, trends, biases, and preconceptions that have been observed in media depictions of religious, ethnic, and linguisti cminorities. Fur ther more, there view investigates the in fluence of media coverageon minority populations. It also analyses and evaluates India's current media laws andregulations in terms of their efficacy in fostering diversity and inclusion. The research methodology section describes the procedures used in this study for data collecting and analysis. It explains the methods used to collect and analyse data, such as media content analysis, surveys, interviews, and a review of prior research. To acquire valid insights on minority representation in Indian mainstream media, the section emphasises the significance of adopting rigorous and extensive research methodologies. The paper's ensuing parts go into particular topics of minority representation. The

section on religious minorities looks at how Hindu-Muslim relations are portrayed in Indian media, as well as how Sikh, Christian, and other religious minority population sareport rayed.It identifies and analyses the prevalence of stereo types, biases, and misrepresentations in media narratives, as well as their influence on social cohesion and conflict. Policy implications and recommendations are provided at the end of the study report. It emphasises the importance of media regulations and diversity standards that ensure accurate and inclusive minority portrayal. The section also emphasises the significance of fostering minority involvement in media creation as well as pushing for education and sensitization programmes to raise knowledge and understanding among media professionals and the general public. This research paper adds to our understanding of minority representation in Indian mainstream media. The study analyses gaps, obstacles, and potential measures for encouraging more accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible media represent ationin India by studying the portrayal ofreligious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities.

Introduction:

Mass media plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing cultural narratives. In India, with its vast and diverse population, media has the power to reflect the country's rich tapestry of identities. However, the representation of minorities—including religious groups, caste-based communities, gender minorities, and ethnic groups—has remained inadequate and often problematic. The marginalization of these communities in mainstream media has led to an unbalanced portrayal that affects societal attitudes and deepens existing biases.

The media has a significant impact on moulding cultural perspectives, influencing public debate, and representing a country's variety. Minority representation in the media has been a topic of intellectual and social debate on a national and worldwide scale. Religious communities (e.g., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs), ethnic communities (e.g., Dalits, tribal populations), and linguistic communities (e.g., speakers of regional languages) and also the Geographical communities

(The Northesterns) have all struggled to achieve accurate and fair representation in the media landscape. Stereotypes, prejudices, underrepresentation, and misrepresentation have been widespread, leading to minority populations' marginalisation and exclusion.

The lack of minority representation in Indian mass media content is a significant issue, reflecting deeper societal inequalities and systemic biases. Here are some key aspects of the problem:

Minority Representation in Indian Cinema

Indian cinema, particularly Bollywood, has had a profound influence on public perception. However, the representation of minorities has been largely skewed, either through negative stereotypes or complete omission.

1. Religious Minorities

Muslims

Muslims constitute approximately 15% of India's population but are severely underrepresented in Indian films. When depicted, they often fall into predictable archetypes:

- Villains: Many Bollywood films, particularly post-9/11, have portrayed Muslims as terrorists (Phantom, Holiday).
- Stereotyped Characters: Muslim men are often shown as orthodox Maulvis, gangsters, or backward individuals (Gangs of Wasseypur, Raees), while Muslim women are portrayed as oppressed and in need of liberation.
- Romanticized Nostalgia: When shown in a positive light, Muslims are usually depicted as symbols of lost cultural grandeur (Mughal-e-Azam, Jodhaa Akbar).

Christians and Sikhs

- Christians are often reduced to stereotypes such as nuns, priests, or individuals with Westernized morals, depicted in comic relief roles (Josh, Karan Arjun).

- Sikhs have largely been represented in exaggerated forms, often as jovial, loud, and hyper-masculine characters (Singh is Kinng, Udta Punjab), reducing them to a monolithic identity.

2. Caste-Based Representation

Dalits and Adivasis

Dalits (Scheduled Castes) and Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes) have been historically marginalized in Indian cinema. Their stories are either erased or told from an upper-caste perspective.

- Films like Article 15 and Jai Bhim have attempted to highlight caste-based atrocities, but they are often directed and written by dominant-caste individuals, leading to a savior-complex narrative.

- Dalits are frequently portrayed as either victims of oppression or criminals, rather than as multi-dimensional individuals.

- Adivasi representation is almost non-existent, except in films that portray them as primitive or mystical figures (Eklavya, Newton).

Minority Representation in Indian Television

Television in India, dominated by soap operas and reality shows, has done little to improve minority representation.

- Muslim characters are rarely seen in lead roles, and when present, they are depicted in traditional, outdated ways.

- Caste realities are seldom acknowledged in TV serials, which continue to propagate an upper-caste Hindu worldview.

- LGBTQ+ characters have historically been misrepresented, either shown as comic relief or as tragic figures (JassiJaissi Koi Nahin).

Minority Representation in Indian News Media

The news media is another crucial area where minority voices are underrepresented and misrepresented.

1. Underrepresentation in Newsrooms

- Studies show that most Indian newsrooms are dominated by upper-caste Hindus. A 2019 Oxfam report found that only 5% of top leadership positions in news media were held by Dalits or Adivasis.

- Muslim journalists face systemic biases and are rarely given leadership roles.

2. Stereotyping in News Coverage

- Muslims are disproportionately portrayed in negative contexts, such as crime and terrorism.

- Dalit and Adivasi issues are underreported, and when covered, they are often framed in a way that reinforces stereotypes.

- Protests or movements led by minority communities are frequently depicted as anti- national or disruptive.

Digital Media and Changing Trends

With the rise of digital platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and independent YouTube channels, there has been a shift towards more inclusive storytelling. Shows like Made in Heaven, Sacred Games, and Delhi Crime have featured more diverse characters and perspectives.

- However, despite this progress, dominant narratives still prevail, and many minority- led projects struggle for funding and visibility.

Understanding the dynamics of minority representation in Indian mass media is critical for grasping the intricate interplay of media, society, and minority groups. The purpose of this research paper is to look at how minorities are portrayed in Indian media and how it affects societal views and inclusion. This research intends to shed light on the issues encountered by minority populations in media representation by reviewing current literature, media content, and socio-political settings. The study will emphasise on the importance of media regulations and diversity standards that ensure accurate and inclusive minority portrayal. The

section also emphasises the significance of fostering minority involvement in media creation as well as pushing for education and sensitization programmes to raise knowledge and understanding among media professionals and the general public. This research paper adds to our understanding of minority representation in Indian mainstream media. The study analyses gaps, obstacles, and potential measures for encouraging more accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible media representation in India by studying the portrayal of religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. It also seeks to suggest ways for ensuring accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible media depictions.

Research Problem:

Mass media have huge reach in society and are a key filter through which people learn about each other, yet countless studies demonstrate that these media continue to reproduce ethnic and racial stereotypes, with often harmful effects.

Consequences of Poor Minority Representation

The lack of meaningful representation has significant social and political consequences:

1. Reinforcement of Stereotypes: Biased media representation perpetuates harmful stereotypes that influence public perception and policy decisions.

2. Alienation and Marginalization: Minority communities feel excluded from mainstream culture, impacting their sense of identity and belonging.

3. Normalization of Discrimination: Media bias normalizes systemic discrimination against minorities, affecting their social and economic opportunities.

4. Polarization and Misinformation: Selective portrayal of minorities can contribute to communal tensions and deepen societal divisions.

In various mediums – news, drama, and gaming – ethnic minority groups are typically marginalized and overlooked. Very often, when they are represented, they are shown only in narrowly stereotyped roles, such as the model Asian migrant

or the exotic Latina, or depicted negatively as the problematic "other," disproportionately represented as violent or criminal, and "less than" dominant groups (i.e., less intelligent, less wealthy, less powerful). Ethnic minority media – that is, media produced by and for ethnic minority groups – generally offer more positive representations and a counter narrative to mainstream stereotypes but can also be prone to narrow typecasting and stereotype. The resulting pervasiveness of stereotyped representations across media formats and type is partly the outcome of complex media production processes, norms and values, commercial drivers, and a lack of ethnic minority media representatives. Nonetheless, their impact, though hard to measure, is potentially significant. Mass media play a role in shaping collective identities and intergroup attitudes and, by typecasting certain groups, distort the picture that audiences see of different groups. There is evidence to suggest these skewed media representations can not only promote public hostility toward other ethnic groups but also lower ethnic minority individuals' self-esteem. As a result, research into ways to combat stereotypes and promote more positive representations in the media is critical.

Objectives:

Primary Objectives

1. To examine the extent of representation of minorities in Indian mass media: Analyze the presence, portrayal, and representation of minorities in various media platforms, including news, films, and television shows.

2. To identify patterns and trends of underrepresentation and misrepresentation: Investigate how minorities are represented, including stereotypes, biases, and inaccuracies.

3. To understand the impact of lack of representation on minority communities: Explore how the absence or inaccurate representation of minorities in media affects their self-perception, social status, and overall well-being.

Secondary Objectives

1. To analyze the role of media ownership and editorial control in shaping representation: Investigate how media

ownership and editorial control influence the representation of minorities.

2. To examine the interconnection of minority representation with other social factors: Analyze how factors like caste, class, gender, and region intersect with minority representation in media.

3. To identify potential solutions and strategies for improving minority representation: Offer recommendations for media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society organizations to promote more inclusive and accurate representation of minorities.

Research Questions

1. How are religious minorities represented in Indian mass media, and what are the prevalent stereotypes and biases associated with these communities?

2. What is the portrayal of ethnic minorities in Indian media, and how do these portrayals affect social recognition and inclusion?

3. How are linguistic minorities represented in regional media platforms across India, and what role does language-based media play in promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity?

4. What is the impact of media representation on societal perceptions of minorities and the overall social fabric of the country?

5. How effective are the existing media policies and regulations in India in promoting diversity, inclusion, and accurate representation of minority communities?

6. How do intersectional factors influence minority representation?

By exploring these objectives, research questions, and themes, your study can provide valuable insights into the lack of representation of minorities in Indian mass media and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable media landscape.

Research Question:

The study include analysing how religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities are portrayed in Indian mass media, investigating the impact of media representation on social perceptions, and investigating the policies and regulations that shape minority representation in media platforms. By addressing these goals, this research article hopes to contribute to scholarly knowledge of minority representation in Indian mass media as well as give insights that can guide policy and advocacy initiatives aimed at building more inclusive and equitable media landscapes.

The research questions guiding this study include:

1. How are religious minorities represented in Indian mass media, and what are the prevalent stereotypes and biases associated with these communities?

2. What is the portrayal of ethnic minorities in Indian media, and how do these portrayals affect social recognition and inclusion?

3. How are linguistic minorities represented in regional media platforms across India, and what role does language-based media play in promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity?

4. What is the impact of media representation on societal perceptions of minorities and the overall social fabric of the country?

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6. How do intersectional factors influence minority representation?

This study article attempts to give a thorough knowledge of minorities' representation in Indian mass media by an examination of literature, media content, and empirical data. This study's results will aid in identifying gaps, obstacles, and possibilities for ensuring accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible depiction of minority populations. Finally, our study adds to the larger objective of creating a more inclusive

and fair media environment that values the diversity and cultural richness of India's minority people.

1. How are religious minorities represented in Indian mass media, and what are the prevalent stereotypes and biases associated with these communities?

Religious minorities' depiction in Indian public media is a complicated and multidimensional topic. Despite efforts to promote diversity and accuracy, problems and prejudices exist in media narratives.

The representation of Hindu-Muslim relations in Indian popular media is one famous example. Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims have been sensationalised, contributing to the marginalisation and stigmatisation of both populations. Stereotypes can have a negative impact on societal cohesion and interreligious peace.

As a religious minority, Muslims have frequently experienced misconceptions and biases in media depictions. They are sometimes presented as monolithic, with only bad imagery linked with them, such as terrorism or religious conservatism. Such depictions ignore the different identities, accomplishments, and goals of individual Muslims and the Muslim community as a whole. Not only do these stereotypes lead to the marginalisation of Muslims, but they also promote social biases.

Other religious minority populations, such as Sikhs, Christians, and others, have also encountered difficulties in media portrayal. Sikh characters are frequently reduced to caricatures centred on their outward features, notably their turbans and beards, perpetuating prejudices and distortion. Christian communities have also been stereotyped, with many seeing them as exoticized or only in the context of conversions or foreigners/ foreign influence.

Religious minority prejudices and preconceptions prevalent in Indian popular media can contribute to social stigmatisation, exclusion, and discrimination. These depictions not only perpetuate misunderstandings, but also impede attempts to develop a more inclusive and pluralistic society.

Through accurate and honest depictions, media practitioners, content creators, and industry stakeholders should seek to challenge stereotypes, prejudices, and misrepresentations. Diverse viewpoints, outlets for minority voices, and intercommunity engagement may all contribute to more inclusive media depictions. Furthermore, media literacy programmes and awareness campaigns may assist consumers in critically engaging with media information, challenging prejudices, and promoting empathy and understanding.

Advocating for rules and norms that support fair and inclusive depiction of religious minorities in Indian public media is essential. This involves encouraging diversity in newsrooms, giving equitable chances for religious minority performers and professionals, and establishing an environment that fosters truthful and courteous depiction of all groups.

Indian mainstream media may play a critical role in encouraging social cohesiveness, promoting interreligious understanding, and establishing a more inclusive society that respects and celebrates the uniqueness of religious minority cultures by aggressively confronting preconceptions, prejudices, and misrepresentations.

2. What is the portrayal of ethnic minorities in Indian media, and how do these portrayals affect social recognition and inclusion?

The representation of ethnic minorities in Indian media is a complex and diverse environment that reflects the sociopolitical dynamics and problems that these populations experience. In mainstream media narratives, ethnic minorities like as Dalits (Scheduled Castes), tribes (Scheduled Tribes), and other marginalised groups have frequently suffered stereotyping, misrepresentation, and underrepresentation.

Dalits have long endured social and economic marginalisation in Indian society as an ethnic minority group. They are frequently portrayed via restricted lenses in the media, perpetuating stereotypes connected with poverty, physical labour, and vulnerability. Such portrayals not only promote stigma, but also limit the visibility of Dalits in many jobs and professions. Media depictions can add to social recognition

issues and impede the overall inclusion and empowerment of Dalit people by offering a narrow and biased image.

Similarly, tribes have encountered difficulties in media depiction as ethnic minority. Tribal cultures are frequently exoticized in media narratives, limiting them to superficial characteristics such as traditional costume, ceremonies, and music. This simplistic representation has the potential to perpetuate stereotypes and devalue the depth and diversity of tribal identities, as well as their difficulties and contributions to society. Furthermore, tribes' underrepresentation in mainstream media marginalises their views and restricts prospects for social acknowledgment and understanding.

Other ethnic minority groups, such as migrants and communities in the Northeast, have also experienced distortion and prejudice in Indian media. Migrants are frequently seen negatively, as being connected with crime, congestion, and cultural difficulties. Northeastern communities have faced stereotyping and prejudice as a result of their physical features and different cultural practises, leading to a sense of isolation and marginalisation.

These depictions have a tremendous influence on social recognition and inclusion. Biassed or restricted media depictions can amplify existing prejudices and stymie attempts to build a more inclusive and fair society. When ethnic minority populations are stereotyped or marginalised, it can perpetuate prejudice, impede social mobility, and diminish their feeling of belonging.

Accurate and inclusive media depictions of ethnic minorities, on the other hand, have the ability to challenge preconceptions, raise exposure, and encourage societal recognition and understanding. By emphasising the variety, accomplishments, and contributions of various communities, the media may help to dismantle prejudices and create social cohesiveness.

Efforts are being made to enhance the representation of ethnic minorities in Indian media. There have been examples of media efforts, independent filmmakers, and content creators attempting to give more realistic and inclusive storylines

that challenge prejudices and present nuanced depictions. However, the reach and impact of these programmes are frequently limited, and more ongoing efforts are required to promote broad and significant change. It is critical to encourage diversity and representation across media channels in order to improve social recognition and inclusion. This includes boosting ethnic minorities' engagement and representation in media production, promoting material that represents their lived experiences, and giving channels for their views to be heard. Media literacy programmes that teach viewers the value of accurate portrayal and challenge preconceptions can also help to create a more inclusive media landscape. To develop social recognition and inclusion, media practitioners, industry stakeholders, governments, and society as a whole must work together. We may contribute to a society that accepts and cherishes the variety and contributions of all ethnic minority populations by actively advocating fair and inclusive media depictions.

3. How are linguistic minorities represented in regional media platforms across India, and what role does language-based media play in promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity?

Linguistic minorities are frequently represented in material created in their native languages on regional media platforms. These forums enable linguistic minorities to share their cultural heritage, tales, and opinions. They are vital conduits via which linguistic groups may interact, engage, and preserve their language and cultural heritage.

Language-based media plays an important role in encouraging linguistic variety by allowing minority languages to thrive. It provides linguistic communities who have been marginalised or eclipsed by dominant languages a voice. These platforms help to preserve and revitalise languages while also allowing linguistic minority to declare their linguistic and cultural identity. Furthermore, language-based media contributes to diversity by meeting the linguistic demands of various populations.

4. What is the impact of media representation on societal perceptions of minorities and the overall social fabric of the country?

Media coverage has a significant influence on society attitudes of minorities and helps to shape a country's overall social fabric. Minority representation in the media can impact public opinions, reinforce stereotypes, and either contribute to social cohesion or prolong societal differences. For starters, media exposure is critical in moulding public opinions of minority populations. Images, narratives, and storylines offered through media platforms have the potential to affect viewers' perceptions and opinions about various minority groups. Positive and realistic portrayals can build empathy, understanding, and respect for the diversity of minority experiences, but negative or stereotyped depictions can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and marginalisation.

When the media portrays minorities in stereotypical ways, it reinforces social prejudices and promotes unfavourable opinions. Stereotypes can oversimplify complicated identities and propagate negative generalisations, resulting to minority populations' marginalisation and exclusion. For example, portraying specific religious or ethnic groups as dangers or criminals on a frequent basis might fuel prejudice and lead to social tensions. Furthermore, media depictions affect a country's entire social fabric through moulding intergroup relations and supporting or inhibiting social cohesiveness. Accurate and inclusive media depictions help develop intercommunity understanding, empathy, and respect in varied cultures such as India. They can help to develop social relationships by recognising shared ideals, sharing experiences, and celebrating cultural variety. Media depictions that promote prejudices and biases, on the other hand, can cause or worsen societal tensions and divisions. Furthermore, minority community members' self-perception and identity development are influenced by media coverage. When minorities are frequently underrepresented or depicted in unfavourable stereotypes, it can have a detrimental impact on their self-esteem, feeling of belonging, and social mobility. Positive and empowering media images, on the other hand,

may inspire and uplift individuals, promoting a sense of pride and cultural affirmation.

Media practitioners, content creators, and legislators must provide accurate, fair, and inclusive depictions of minority populations in order to limit negative effect and encourage good change. Promoting diversity in media production teams, participating in discussions with minority populations, challenging stereotypes, and giving forums for minority perspectives to be heard are all part of this. Media literacy programmes may also teach consumers how to engage with media information critically, identify biases, and challenge prejudicial narratives.

5. How effective are the existing media policies and regulations in India in promoting diversity, inclusion, and accurate representation of minority communities?

The media industry in India is governed by many regulatory authorities, including the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), the Press Council of India (PCI), and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). These organisations are in charge of developing policies, providing recommendations, and monitoring media practises. Furthermore, special legislation such as the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act and the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) Code help to regulate media content.

Affirmative action policies, such as reservations for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in government jobs and educational institutions, are one of India's key policy achievements. These regulations seek to promote opportunities for underrepresented groups, particularly those in the media. However, it is questionable whether these measures have effectively addressed the media representation gap.

India's media rules and regulations have recognised the necessity of diversified representation in terms of encouraging diversity and inclusion. For example, the PCI has produced recommendations emphasising the need of media organisations respecting and reflecting the country's diversity. It promotes accurate depiction of various socioeconomic, cultural, and religious groups in media production.

However, these regulations and principles have been inconsistently implemented and enforced. There are no standardised monitoring methods or accountability procedures in place to guarantee compliance. As a result, media organisations adhere to diversity and inclusion policies to varied degrees, and minority populations are frequently underrepresented.

The concentration of media ownership and influence, which can limit varied representation, is one of the issues. Many media sources are owned by a few powerful companies, and their editorial decisions can have a significant impact on how minority populations are portrayed. This concentration of ownership has the potential to limit the voices and perspectives of marginalised people while strengthening the influence of dominant narratives.

Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive data on representation across various media channels makes assessing the impact of existing rules challenging. There is a lack of openness in data gathering and reporting on minority community representation. It is difficult to monitor progress and hold media organisations responsible for their representation practises without reliable and accessible data.

Several efforts may be done to improve the effectiveness of media rules and laws in encouraging diversity, inclusiveness, and truthful depiction.

These include:

A. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms: Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure compliance with diversity and inclusion guidelines and taking action against violators.

B. Promoting media literacy: Enhancing media literacy programs that educate individuals about media biases, stereotypes, and the importance of diverse representation. This can empower audiences to critically engage with media content and demand more accurate and inclusive representations.

C. Enhancing diversity in media organizations: Encouraging media organizations to actively diversify their workforce, particularly in decision-making roles, by promoting equal opportunities for individuals from minority communities.

D. Encouraging self-regulation: Encouraging media organizations to adopt self- regulatory measures that prioritize diversity, inclusion, and accurate representation. This can involve adopting voluntary codes of conduct and best practices.

E. Facilitating data collection: Establishing a comprehensive and transparent system for data collection on representation across different media platforms. This can provide a baseline for measuring progress and identifying gaps in representation.

Policymakers, regulatory entities, media organisations, and civil society must work together to create an inclusive media environment that respects and correctly depicts India's minority populations. Greater progress in encouraging diversity, inclusiveness, and accurate portrayal may be accomplished by resolving current issues and increasing the execution of media rules and regulations.

6. How do intersectional factors influence minority representation?

In Indian mass media, intersectional factors such as caste, gender, religion, class, and regional identity significantly influence minority representation. These overlapping identities shape who gets visibility, how they are portrayed, and the kinds of stories that are told. Here's how intersectionality affects representation in Indian media:

- **Caste and Class Representation**

A. Dominance of Upper Castes: Mainstream media, including Bollywood and news outlets, is largely dominated by upper-caste individuals, both in front of and behind the camera. Dalits, Adivasis, and OBCs are often underrepresented or misrepresented.

B. Stereotyping of Lower Castes: When Dalits and Adivasis are portrayed, they are often shown as victims, criminals,

or in subservient roles rather than as complex, multifaceted individuals.

C. Limited Access to Media Production: Due to economic and social barriers, individuals from marginalized castes have fewer opportunities to enter media industries, leading to a lack of diverse voices.

- **Gender and Minority Women's Representation**

A. Hypervisibility vs. Erasure: Upper-caste Hindu women often have greater representation, but women from Dalit, Muslim, and tribal communities are either stereotyped or completely absent.

B. Stereotyping of Minority Women: Muslim women are often depicted as oppressed and voiceless, while Dalit and Adivasi women are either portrayed as victims of violence or hypersexualized.

C. Lack of Women in Media Leadership: Women, particularly from marginalized backgrounds, rarely occupy leadership roles in Indian journalism, film, or television production.

- **Religious Representation**

A. Hindu-Centric Narratives: Indian media, particularly Bollywood, often reflects a Hindu majoritarian perspective, marginalizing religious minorities like Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and Jains.

B. Islamophobia & Muslim Stereotypes: Muslims are frequently depicted as terrorists, regressive, or hypermasculine, reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Positive Muslim representation is rare.

C. Sikh and Christian Erasure: Sikhs are often limited to comedic relief roles, while Christians are portrayed as missionaries, nuns, or token Westernized figures.

- **Regional and Linguistic Bias**

A. North-Centric Dominance: Hindi-language media, particularly Bollywood, dominates Indian mass media, often sidelining South Indian, Northeast Indian, and tribal stories.

B. Misrepresentation of Northeast India: People from the Northeast are often either exoticized, erased, or depicted with stereotypes, reinforcing their marginalization in mainstream Indian identity.

- **Accessibility and Economic Factors**

A. Elite vs. Grassroots Media: Mainstream media largely caters to urban, English- speaking elites, whereas grassroots and digital platforms (e.g., Dalit Camera, The Wire, and Newslaundry) have become spaces for marginalized voices.

B. Digital Media as an Equalizer? Social media and independent platforms are challenging traditional gatekeeping, allowing Dalit, Adivasi, and minority voices to create their own narratives.

Indian mass media continues to reflect dominant caste, religious, and class hierarchies, often marginalizing intersectional identities. While alternative and digital platforms have begun to challenge these narratives, structural changes in mainstream media are needed to ensure fair and authentic representation. The media has a powerful influence on shaping India's collective consciousness. By promoting inclusive, accurate, and diverse representations, it can help bridge social divides rather than deepen them. However, when driven by commercial or political interests, it can reinforce discrimination and hinder social progress. Encouraging ethical journalism, diverse storytelling, and greater representation of minorities in media creation is essential for a more just and unified society.

Conclusion:

This paper investigated the depiction of minorities in Indian mainstream media, with an emphasis on religious, ethnic, and linguistic minority populations. The findings offer insight on the common misconceptions, prejudices, and issues that these populations confront in media depictions. The representation of religious minorities, such as Dalits and tribes, frequently promotes prejudices and marginalisation. Similarly, ethnic minorities, migrants, and communities in the Northeast face distortion and prejudice in media narratives. Linguistic

minorities confront distinct obstacles, yet language-based media platforms can help promote linguistic diversity and inclusiveness. The influence of media coverage on society opinions of minorities and the country\'s broader social fabric is substantial. Biassed portrayals can strengthen preconceptions, obstruct social recognition, and maintain societal differences. Accurate and inclusive depictions, on the other hand, can develop understanding, empathy, and social cohesiveness. In India, existing media norms and regulations have made some strides in promoting diversity, inclusion, and truthful depiction. Affirmative action policies and regulatory requirements emphasise the necessity of diversity representation. However, implementation, enforcement, and data openness remain issues. Various methods may be made to improve the efficacy of media policy. These include improving enforcement procedures, developing media literacy, increasing diversity in media organisations, supporting self-regulation, and making extensive data collecting easier. A more inclusive media environment may be developed by addressing these difficulties and increasing the execution of media rules and regulations. This will assure truthful depiction, combat prejudices, and improve minority populations\' social acknowledgment and inclusion. Finally, promoting diversity, inclusiveness, and correct representation in the media needs a collaborative effort on the part of media practitioners, industry stakeholders, legislators, and society as a whole. We may contribute to a more equal and cohesive society that respects and celebrates the variety and contributions of all minority populations by actively working towards these ideals.

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