Sociological Perspectives on Media, Gender and Cultural Studies

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Acknowledgement

Foreword

This collection of critical essays seems to be splendidly catering to a multidisciplinary audience. It is an intricate tapestry of various pedagogic dissemination striding across disciplines like media studies, cultural studies, film studies, gender studies, feminism, literature etc.

It also inflects on multiple theoretical formations such as, digital/virtual realities that came to be initiated by Baudrillard's concept of the 'hyperreal', neological imagination of 'Afrofuturism' that largely moves beyond the traditional Black American activism and aesthetics, gender questions addressed beyond the post-Butler era, contextual specificities of feminism in Tagore Studies or in American drama, new theoretical perspectives on film studies etc.

This volume negotiates the multidisciplinary subject positions in terms of various theoretical underpinnings. As posited by the New Education Policy 2020, the emphasis on multidisciplinary critical studies has been placed in most Indian universities under the new curricular framework. This collection is therefore a laudable attempt to create a consortium of multidisciplinary ideologies.

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Contents

Unravelling the Oedipal Paradox: Postcolonial and Gender Layers in Denis Villeneuve's Incendies

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Archetypes in literature can be likened to ancient threads intricately woven into the very essence of storytelling, serving as timeless motifs that gracefully transcend the confines of cultural and temporal boundaries. These recurrent symbols, characters, and themes resonate universally, echoing the fundamental facets of the human experience. Whether it takes the form of the hero's transformative journey, the sagacious mentor, or the perpetual clash between good and evil, archetypes offer a profound wellspring of narrative potential and emotional resonance that captivates both authors and readers alike. They act as a profound conduit, linking our conscious understanding with the depths of our collective unconscious, evoking profound emotions, insights, and a sense of profound recognition. These enduring symbols possess the extraordinary ability to transcend linguistic barriers, geographical divides, and epochs in time, thus constructing a shared narrative legacy that unites humanity across the ages. In essence, archetypes beckon us to embark on a journey through the intricate tapestry of our common stories, inviting us to delve into the profound depths of our individual psyches. In the world of literature, these archetypes represent the echoing reverberations of our most primal narratives, acting as the very keystones that unlock the enigmatic secrets of the human soul and lay the robust foundation upon which the most timeless and compelling tales are constructed.

The Greek archetype of Oedipus, an enduring and deeply complex figure in classical literature and mythology, has captivated the human imagination for centuries. Rooted in the tragic narratives of ancient Greece, particularly in Sophocles' masterful play "Oedipus Rex," this archetypal character embodies a confluence of themes that continue to resonate with audiences today. The tale of Oedipus, a man destined to unknowingly fulfill a prophecy of patricide and incest, delves into

profound questions of fate, free will, and the human condition. Beyond its captivating narrative, this archetype serves as a rich wellspring for exploring psychological, sociological, and philosophical dimensions, making it a compelling subject for scholarly inquiry. The multifaceted world of Oedipus, aims to unravel the timeless allure and enduring relevance of this iconic Greek archetype while delving into its impact on literature, psychology, and the broader spectrum of human culture.

Oedipus, the tragic hero of Sophocles' ancient Greek masterpiece "Oedipus Rex," stands as an iconic literary archetype deeply ingrained in the annals of Greek literature and mythology. This character, grappling with the inexorable forces of fate, serves as a quintessential representation of the themes that pervade Greek tragedies. In "Oedipus Rex," Oedipus confronts a prophecy foretelling his patricide and incestuous union, illustrating the complex interplay between human agency and divine preordainment. This archetype encapsulates the timeless Greek fascination with the consequences of hubris, the struggle for self-knowledge, and the inexorable nature of destiny. As a tragic figure, Oedipus embodies the quintessential Greek tragic hero, suffering a downfall resulting from his own actions and flaws. The essence of his tragedy is captured in the following lines,

> Chorus: People of Thebes, my countrymen, look on Oedipus.
>
> He solved the famous riddle with his brilliance,
>
> he rose to power, a man beyond all power.
>
> Who could behold his greatness without envy?
>
> Now what a black sea of terror has overwhelmed him.
>
> Now as we keep our watch and wait the final day,
>
> count no man happy till he dies, free of pain at last (Sophocles 251).

His story has transcended time and culture, making him a foundational character in the realm of literary archetypes, offering a profound lens through which to examine human nature and the enduring allure of Greek drama.

Sigmund Freud's groundbreaking concept of the Oedipus complex, deeply rooted in his psychoanalytic theory, delves into the intricate web of human development and desire. Freud famously stated that he had found within himself a continual love for his mother, coupled with feelings of jealousy toward his father, and he subsequently came to view

this as a universal childhood experience (37). This profound assertion highlights the foundational idea of the Oedipus complex, wherein a child, typically during their early years, experiences conflicting emotions of affection and rivalry toward their parents. The Oedipus complex serves as a pivotal concept in Freudian psychology, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of family relationships, sexual awakening, and the formation of one's psyche. This enduring concept continues to influence the fields of psychology, literature, and cultural analysis, offering a unique lens through which to explore the depths of human experience.

The Greek tragedy "Oedipus Rex" by Sophocles, a timeless masterpiece of dramatic literature, intriguingly foreshadowed Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic concept of the Oedipus complex. In the play, Oedipus unwittingly fulfils a prophecy of patricide and incest, delving into the tragic consequences of his actions. This ancient tale intricately weaves themes of fate, self-discovery, and the struggle against destiny, mirroring the core elements that would later become central to Freud's Oedipus complex theory. Freud's theory posits that during early childhood, individuals experience subconscious desires and conflicts involving affection for the opposite-sex parent and rivalry with the same-sex parent. The play "Oedipus Rex" serves as a poignant precursor to Freud's insights, as it explores the intricate dynamics of family relationships and the complex interplay between conscious choices and preordained destiny. Together, the Greek tragedy and Freud's theory provide a compelling narrative and psychological lens through which to examine the enduring enigma of the Oedipus complex, encapsulating the timeless fascination with the intricacies of human desire and the inexorable forces that shape our lives.

In Denis Villeneuve's emotionally resonant film "Incendies" (2010), the Oedipus trope is seamlessly interwoven into the narrative, offering a profound exploration of themes such as family, identity, and the recurring cycle of violence and trauma. Adapted from Wajdi Mouawad's play, the story follows twins Jeanne and Simon as they embark on a journey into their mother Nawal's enigmatic past in a war-ravaged Middle Eastern country. As they gradually uncover the painful truths of their mother's life, the Oedipal undertones within the narrative become increasingly apparent. Nawal, a character deeply scarred by her own traumatic experiences, inadvertently follows a path reminiscent of the tragic figure of Oedipus from Greek mythology. Her quest for self-discovery

and her unwavering pursuit of justice mirror Oedipus's relentless search for truth and redemption. Within the film's compelling storytelling, themes of motherhood, exile, and the inescapable legacy of violence are skillfully interwoven, all against the backdrop of the Oedipal narrative framework. "Incendies" serves as a poignant exploration of how the Oedipus trope transcends cultural and temporal boundaries, resonating with the timeless human quest for understanding and reconciliation with a complex past. Denis Villeneuve's expert direction and the film's captivating narrative combine to create a cinematic masterpiece that invites viewers to contemplate the intricate layers of the Oedipal complex within its multifaceted storytelling.

"Incendies," under the direction of Denis Villeneuve, adeptly reimagines the Oedipal dynamic, elevating it into a compelling conduit for reframing the colonial experience. As Nawal's profound journey unfolds within an unnamed Middle Eastern nation embroiled in conflict, the conventional Oedipal narrative undergoes a profound metamorphosis. It transcends its traditional boundaries to embody a symbolic struggle for sovereignty and self-determination, mirroring the broader historical and political context of colonialism and resistance. Nawal's relentless pursuit of truth and justice becomes an allegorical representation of a nation's yearning to break free from the constraints of external dominance and chart its own destiny. This profound reinterpretation not only enriches the Oedipal theme but also underscores the universal human aspiration for autonomy and the fundamental right to shape one's own future. Villeneuve's visionary direction adeptly guides this narrative transformation, infusing it with layers of significance that resonate on both personal and societal levels. Consequently, "Incendies" emerges as a poignant exploration of how the Oedipal narrative can transcend its conventional framework, serving as a lens through which we can dissect the intricate interplay of power, identity, and resistance in the intricate tapestry of colonial histories.

"Incendies," helmed by director Denis Villeneuve, intricately navigates the intricate terrain of gender dynamics within the tumultuous backdrop of a war-torn Middle Eastern nation. The film adeptly integrates elements of gender theories into its narrative, providing audiences with a nuanced exploration of how societal expectations and norms profoundly mold the destinies of its characters. At the heart of the story is Nawal, a central figure who boldly challenges established gender roles

as she embarks on a perilous and resolute journey. Her unwavering quest for truth serves as a formidable critique of conventional notions surrounding femininity and motherhood. Moreover, the film shines a spotlight on the experiences of women amidst the chaos of conflict zones, showcasing their remarkable resilience and unwavering strength in the face of dire adversity. An additional layer of complexity emerges through the intricate mother-daughter relationship between Nawal and Jeanne, prompting contemplation on the intergenerational transmission of gendered trauma. "Incendies" emerges as a compelling canvas upon which to explore the multifaceted dimensions of gender theories, revealing how they intersect with broader themes encompassing identity, conflict, and societal evolution.

"Incendies" emerges not only as a compelling cinematic narrative but also as a profound meditation on the intricacies of post colonialism, trauma, and the enduring quest for identity. Denis Villeneuve's masterful direction transforms this film into a powerful exploration of how the echoes of colonial histories continue to reverberate through generations, leaving a legacy of pain and conflict. Through the lens of Nawal's journey and the deeply interwoven narratives of its characters, "Incendies" exposes the wounds of the past and the indomitable human spirit's capacity to confront and transcend them. It stands as a testament to the resilience of individuals in the face of profound adversity and the enduring quest to reclaim one's identity, even in the most challenging of circumstances. The film's profound themes resonate long after the credits roll, serving as a compelling reminder of the enduring power of cinema to engage with complex issues and provoke profound introspection. Ultimately, the film serves as a poignant reminder that the pursuit of identity persists, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, transcending both time and cultural confines. It resonates as a universal and enduring human endeavor, prompting introspection about our own quests for understanding and purpose in a complex and constantly evolving world.

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Crimson Uprising: A Study of Gender Roles in the Movie *Bulbbul*

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Bulbbul (2020), an over-the-top presentation of a nineteenth century Bengali society with a tint of horror, deals with numerous issues like, child marriage, marital rape, gender inequality, and marital violence, and many more. Director Anvita Dutt has used folklores associated with *chudail* or a harmful female spirit and *dayan* or a witch and mixed it with the myth of Goddess Kali. Dutt has also used a specific colour tint to present night time scenes, such as, Red and Black. The abundance of these two colours is a striking feature of this film and it is quite evident that the use of those colours were not done arbitrarily, rather they are intentional and deliberate. But the question is what purpose do these color serve to the theme of the movie. This paper intends to discuss the use of the colour motif and the use of folklore related to *chudail* and the myth of Goddess Kali to represent the gender issues in Bengali society. For this the paper shall first look into the story of the movie and then look into the different research works done on the same to get a clear idea of the field. This periodic drama on the Netflix platform intrigues the minds of the readers with a sense of suspense also.

However, the mystery becomes predictable by the middle of the movie. But that does not mar the interest, rather it grows the interest of the viewers into the presentation of it. The grotesque representation of the issues like marital rape, patriarchal violence disturbs the lurking patriarchy in our minds. This paper shall try to look into these matters in detail.

Now the plot of the movie needs to be discussed. As mentioned earlier, the plot is based upon the nineteenth century feudal Bengal, when child marriage was a normal fact. The protagonist of the movie and the titular character as well, Bulbbul, a five years old playful little girl is brought to the scene. She was playing on her own and without her consent or knowledge about marriage, she is dressed in all red and is brought to the

marriage ceremony. At this age, it is normal not to understand any in-law relationship. She was naturally unable to comprehend who her husband was, and considered Satya, a boy of nearly her age as her husband. But this childish belief is soon broken as she reaches her in-laws, and to her shock she finds out that her husband is actually a forty years old *tthakur*, or an aristocrat person of a neighbouring village, named, Indraneel and the boy of her age, Satya, whom she considered her husband is actually her youngest brother-in-law. Bulbbul soon finds out that Indraneel being the elder brother of the family, she is now the *bari bahu* or the elder woman of the family at such a tender age. Although, their is another woman in the family, named, Binodini, who is the wife of younger brother of Indraneel, named Mahendra, she is considered as the *chhoti bahu* or the younger woman of the household. This family equation may sound a little bit tiresome, as many of the audience and readers are not habituated with this complex family structure. But understanding this equation is very important to realise the power politics of the nineteenth century Bengali family. Now in the plot we see that Bulbbul makes peace with the current scenario due to the presence of Satya, her only friend in the entire household, her only solace. But as they grew older, the mere friendship between Bulbbul and Satya grows into love interest. She performed all the 'duties' as a wife of Indraneel, with the solace in mind that she will be able to spend some secret time with Satya. Satya used to tell her stories of *chudail* and all sorts of supernatural beings, which were engraved in her mind. On the other side of the household, Binodini, who was much older than Bulbbul, had to do all the daily chores and being the *choti bahu* of the family she had to respect Bulbbul, even though she was older than the later. Binodini's husband Mahendra was also a psychologically challenged person, which denied her any kind of physical need. This sexually and socially deprived woman was naturally jealous of the position of Bulbbul, who had a normal husband and a lover as well, and she even had a powerful position in the household. Binodini gradually started conspiring against Bulbbul, to make her fall in the eyes of Indraneel. She pointed out the growing intimacy between Bulbbul and Satya to Indraneel, who also became jealous of his brother. Indraneel now decides to send Satya foreign for study, which would separate these two lovers. In the mean time Binodini was able to get physically intimate with Indraneel and thereby gaining control over his decisions. Once Satya was out of equation, Bulbbul became shattered as she was left in a hostile environment. Bulbbul's unhindered affection for

Satya made Indraneel so angry that he assaulted her with a metal rod. As a result, along with numerous bruises all over her body, her feet were severely injured and broken from the ankle. It is at this point when a new and important character, Dr. Sudip is introduced, who treats Bulbbul and realises that Bulbbul's injuries were not normal and were results of domestic violence. After this, Indraneel leaves the house permanently and leaves Bulbbul under the care of Binodini. In the absence of Indraneel, suddenly we see his psychologically underdeveloped twin brother Mahendra molesting Bulbbul, who was bed-ridden due to previous torture. Mahendra's heinous act leaves Bulbbul unconscious. Now we suddenly see the white and blueish theme of the nigh-time scene turn into blood red. The moon turns into a crimson colored moon and Bulbbul regains consciousness and shrieks in pain and anger. At this moment, Binodini comes in the room to cover up the crime and mumbles about her life, which were kind of a statement to Bulbbul also. She says that she belonged to a poor family and although everyone knew about the psychological disability of Mahendra, she was married to him because the family was rich and she was consoled that if Mahendra fails to satisfy her physical needs, Indraneel will take care of her. This informations makes everyone understand that Binodini too was a victim of patriarchy, but she chose to comlply with it and even became a part of it. But Bulbbul's expression at this scene makes it clear that she has left her innocent self behind and has become very cold. The scene moves to five years later, when Satya returns from London and on his way he is informed by his driver that there is a *chudail* in the village now who is killing males of the village. Satya does not believe this. One thing to notice in these night-time scenes that the theme of red and black is used everytime. When Satya meets Bulbbul after these five years he is shocked to find this new Bulbbul, who is outspoken and confident. We also see her holding court sessions where she orders the driver, who had married second time, not to do any harm to his previous wife. Satya becomes very jealous upon finding Bulbbul and Dr. Sudip talking privately. Satya comes to know from Binodini, who is a widow now and lives in a place for widows, that Indraneel does not live there anymore and Mahendra was killed by a *chudail*.

She also informs about inverted footprints soaked in blood found in the room where Mahendra was found dead. Satya decides to find out the truth about this malevolent spirit. He goes to hunt at night with another man named Master Dinkar. But in the midst of the hunt Satya finds

Master Dinkar dead. Notably, Master Dinkar was also a domestic abuser who used to beat his wife. Next Satya comes across another murder where there is a witness— a child, who reports that the man was killed by *Kali maa* or Goddess Kali. Satya blames Dr.

Sudip for these murders due to personal reasons, and when he tries to take Sudip to the police station, their horse-cart suddenly stops in the forest and both Sudip and Satya finds out that their driver is dead. Notably, in this case the driver drove his previous wife out of the house and the woman committed suicide, which was informed to Bulbbul by the woman's son.

Satya sees a female figure in the forest, but the female figure had her feet twisted backwards. Satya shoots the *chudail*. Now she is revealed to be Bulbbul, who had her feet twisted when Indraneel abused her with a metal rod. But, by that time Satya lit the forest with fire, and we see Bulbbul burning in that fire. Finally, one year later when Indraneel returns to that ruined house and spends a night there, we see Bulbbul's spirit materialising and giving a sinister smile to Indraneel. This is how the movie comes to an end. (Dutt, 2020)

Several researchers have contributed their point-of-views on this film. Nayan Sayed in his paper grabs the essence of the movie in very fine words,

> A beautiful woman is a danger. If she smiles to herself, or is self-contained, or dares to express her inner thoughts, or isn't automatically and permanently obedient to the men she is surrounded by, she is doubly dangerous. Therefore she needs to be taken 'under control'.

> And the process of this 'under controlling' is always paired with violence, be it physical, moral, structural, or symbolic. (Sayed, 2020)

Bulbbul too have been presented in the format of a *femme fatale*. However, she was not the same in the beginning, her braided hair, innocent smile and low voice contributed to the idea of the 'angel in the house' or *grihalakshmi* idea. This where the inverted footprint becomes relevant. According to popular belief, Goddess Lakshmi's footprints are drawn on the floor of any household with vermillion or red colour to bring prosperity and wealth. Wifes are also considered equivalent to

Goddess Lakshmi in Hindu households and that is why they are often asked to leave their footprints while entering the in-laws for the first time. (Chowdhury 2013) But here the only footprint that is found is soaked with blood and that too is inverted. This marks the transition of Bulbbul from a *grihalakshmi* to a *chudail*. According to popular folklore, a *chudail* is born when a pregnant woman dies or a woman is tortured by her in-laws. After death the spirit of the woman turns into a vengeful spirit. In various myths she is often depicted as a haggard woman with a swollen belly, who has the power to shapeshift into a beautiful lady, who draws young men to forests and sucks the life force or virility out of their body. But even after shapeshifting, the feet remains inverted, depicting her return from hell. So it is clearly visible that *Bulbbul* uses this myth of *chudail* and redefines it as not a vengeful creature as depicted by patriarchal society. The inversion of feet is metaphorical. The laws set for women by the patriarchal society can be represented as the the footprints of Goddess Lakshmi, but when the woman breaks the code and acts against the norms her feet gets inverted in patriarchal discourse and she becomes the *femme fatale*, the witch. Anvita Dutt thus redefines the ideas. In this regard, the myth of Goddess Kali is also used. Her image has been depicted in popular belief to be the exact opposite of a docile woman. She has long, free flowing, matted hair with clothes of hands cut from male bodies, and a garkand of skulls. Her complexion is dark with marks of crimson blood. She roams around cremation grounds. All these ideas are exactly the opposite of a woman designed by patriarchal society.

Therefore, we can see that there is a little difference between the image of a *chudail* and Goddess Kali. Dutt plays with this similarity and presents Bubbul in the light, where the witness little girl sees the *chudail* as Goddess Kali, who saves her from the pedophile man. This idea of transformation from a *chudail* to a goddess is supported by Rajan (2022):

> *Bulbbul* is a story that traces the transformation of a woman into a chudail; at the same time, it is an attempt to rationalise the myth of the chudail and undercut the monstrosity associated with such a figure. The movie underlines Barbara Creed's (2007) claim that the monstrosity of the 'monstrous-feminine' is intricately bound to gender. The monstrous, as Barbara Creed argues in *The Monstrous Feminine* (2007), is defined in terms of the border that it crosses orthreatens to cross. This act of crossing over or

the potential to inhabit a liminal territory without transitioning to the new realm makes the monster an abject figure. *Bulbbul*, however, absolves the monstrous of its abject status and instead, deifies it to critique the patriarchal order. (Rajan, 2022)

The abundance of the colour Red and Black in the night scenes is also very significant as the colour denotes both revenge, which often ends with blood and Goddess Kali, who also has these two colours, Crimson and Black. Even in Bharat's *Natyashashtra*, these two colours are considered as the invocators of the *rasas*, *Raudra* or anger (depicted with red) and *Bhayanaka* or fear (depicted with black). (Sen, 2023) And in this movie too, the feelings of anger and fear is used in abundance. That is why the use of this colour contributes to the mood and the theme of the plot.

Thus, it can be discerned that Anvita Dutt's *Bulbbul*, is a story of revenge that addresses the issues of gender inequality, domestic violence, child marriage, marital rape and pedophilia as well with the help of folklores and myths, which she even redefines with the plot

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Impact of OTT Platforms on Traditional Broadcasting: Challenges and Opportunities in India

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Abstract

Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms have revolutionized the way we consume entertainment today. With the rise of streaming services and on-demand content, OTT platforms have become an integral part of our digital lives. In this research paper I will delve into the world of OTT platforms, exploring their impact on the traditional broadcasting. They do face challenges like low connectivity, internet ban, but overall the industry has boomed due to high consummations across all ages, specially from the time of Covid19in 2020.Thus there has been a shift in the consumer behavior from the traditional media(traditional broadcasting) to the OTT. Local content production has been huge, foreign contents entered the Indian market and vice versa which opened up higher business prospects, performance visibility, content exposure in the age of globalization. India too started investing more in OTT than in traditional broadcasting which resulted in higher success rate in the former one. For the niche overlap, my findings will show that OTT broadcasting has higher visibility and opportunities for use, with little challenges which can easily be overcome through proper planning and marketing. Implications for research and practices are discussed herein in terms of the Indian market.

Keywords: Over The Top, traditional broadcasting, media, content, consummations, Indian Media.

Introduction:

The arrival of video cassette player/recorder (VCP/R) in the 1980s gave the audience the freedom to watch programs, films, etc., at their own pace and convenience. In fact, VCR gave the facility to record news,

live shows, live events, historical moments, etc., as per the needs, which allowed the audience to watch the programs at their convenient time and skip commercials (Matthews, 2003)**.** Consequently, the surfacing of DVR (digital video recorder) technology in the penultimate decade of the twentieth century offered more flexibility and convenience to the audience. The ability to pause live TV, instant replay, skip over advertisement and record programs even if the live TV in pause mode, gave more freedom and new experiences to viewers which instantly conquered the entertainment industry while promoting viewing of digital video content. Finally, the breakthroughs in the computer and Internet technologies after the early **1990s** led to the invention of video streaming over the Internet that enabled media houses to dispense video content directly to the audience via the Internet, bypassing the traditional modes of distribution such as cable television and terrestrial and satellite broadcast.

The arrival of advanced OTT-enabling technologies, tremendous growth in Internet penetration, rise in the number of Internet users and smartphone users and improved network bandwidth led to a increase of entertainment quotient over Internet from the initial days of the new millennium. The OTT platforms such as YouTube and Dailymotion redefined the transmission and distribution of video content from the age-old television broadcasting. The television programs of the leading channels are no longer confined to television sets as they can be viewed from various devices including personal computers and smartphones. OTT opened the floodgate to enjoy video streaming via the Internet. It is another advancement in technology, from digital video viewing to online video viewing.

While starting with a slow migration from feature phones to smartphones, the arrival of affordable smartphones and low-cost mobile data services made a giant leap in terms of the number of smartphone users in India. Almost 502.2 million Indians owned smartphones as of December 2019, which indicates over 77 % of Indians access the Internet through smartphones (News18, 2020)**.** The cheaper mobile data has been observed as one of the reasons for the growing numbers of Internet users in the country. India has the cheapest mobile data in the world with 1GB costing just INR 18.5 (approximately USD 0.25 in 31 December 2019) as compared to the global average of about INR 600 (approximately USD 8.4 in 31 December 2019; News18, 2020). The spike in smartphone

penetration and cheaper rate of Internet triggered the growth of the 4G network across the country in a quick time. The affordable smartphones and cheap 4G Internet connectivity opened the sluice gate for Indians to the world of online activity. It has transformed the information, communication and entertainment doses of Indians to a large extent. According to market information, India emerged as the region with the most data usage reporting 0.4 GB per day per smartphone in 2019 ('India Remains Region with Highest Usage per Smartphone: Study', 2020). In pre-COVID, the OTT platforms with diversified contents were going at a slow pace, but since 2019 there has been a rapid growth in OTT (Over-the-Top) streaming platforms. Audiences use different technologies to watch films, documentaries and web series on their mobile devices. The rising graph of popularity for OTT video platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Video, Hotstar, Voot and Sony LIV has created several opportunities and challenges for the Indian television and film industry. These platforms have already lured a sizeable population in recent times, particularly during the time of COVID-19, with their self-produced episodes of drama, crime, thriller, action, standup comedy, sitcom among other genres of programs with a new and fresh bunch of actors and scripts. The growing acceptance of OTT TV among the diverse cross-sections of Indians, especially among the young Indians, gave enough reasons to the private television channel owners and regulatory bodies to consider upon whether the traditional TV channel are here to stay or to be replaced by OTT video platforms anytime soon.

The rise of OTT platforms has had a number of consequences for the entertainment sector. For starters, the emergence of these platforms has increased rivalry among content creators as well as technology firms. Because of this competition, the cost of content and services has decreased, making it easier for customers to obtain high-quality material (Jose, 2020). Furthermore, increased competition has resulted in the development of more complex technologies, resulting in a better user experience. Second, growing competition has raised the number of original content offers. This has made it possible for content providers to compete more successfully against traditional television networks, resulting in greater quality material.

The number of connected smart televisions is estimated to reach 40-50 million by 2025 (Saha & Prasad, 2021b). Smart TV exports from India climbed by 65% year on year in the second quarter of 2021, due to

expansion strategies undertaken by original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). Short-form video will be consumed by 600-650 million Indians by 2025, with active users spending up to 55 to 60 minutes each day. According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) estimate, Indian internet users would become 900 million by 2025, up from 622 million in 2020, and grow by compounded annual growth rate of 45% by 2025 (Malewar& Bajaj, 2020). BIGFLIX, founded by Reliance Entertainment in 2008, was India's first OTT platform (Laghate, G., & Bureau, E.T. ,2019). Today, there are over 40 streaming sites in India. The OTT market in India was valued 2,150 crores in 2018, and it is expected to be over $15 billion by 2030(Digital Media: Rise of On-Demand Content, BCG,2021; Dutta, 2021).

The Indian OTT market is growing much faster with a CAGR of 14.32% from 2023-27, while the global rate for the OTT segment is 8.4%. Indian OTT platforms revenue poised to double to 3.5bn dollar by 2027(PWC). About 12.2 crore (122 million) people in India watched at least one film in a theatre in the 12 months ended December 2022, against 14.6 crore (146 million) in the January to March 2020 period, just before the onset of the pandemic, according to a report by media consulting firm Ormax. Hence, the Indian film industry has lost an estimated 2.4 crore (24 million) audience to the pandemic, which they hope to rebuild in 2023, Ormax said.

After reopening of the theatres , the South Indian industry is telling a different story. Two weeks after its April 14 release, the *Kannada film KGF: Chapter 2* is inching closer to the Rs 1,000-crore box office mark, a feat achieved by only three other films: *Dangal* (Rs 2,024 crore), *Baahubali: The Conclusion* (Rs 1,810 crore) and *RRR* (over Rs 1,100 crore). The film's Hindi-dubbed version alone has already earned over Rs 300 crore. *KGF: Chapter 2* is the most recent film from South India reporting such a phenomenal pan-Indian run, with *SS Rajamouli's RRR and Pushpa: The Rise (2021),* also reportedly smashing box office records, including ones set by the biggest Bollywood hits.

According to the March 2022 EY-FICCI report on consumer trends in entertainment, its preeminent position is facing a stiff challenge from the combined might of the South Indian film industries. In 2021, South Indian cinema generated three times the box office revenues of Hindi films, with a total of Rs 2,400 crore. One contributing factor, no doubt, is the sheer number of films released —compare the Telugu industry's

204 and the Tamil industry's 152 releases to the mere 84 produced by the Hindi film industry in 2021. But the real story these numbers reveal is of an audience that is, increasingly, region — or language-agnostic, eager only for high-quality entertainment. Part of this is because OTT platforms have made it easier to access films from across India. Even for films that are not dubbed, the average Indian viewer is now more willing to cross the "one-inch-tall barrier of subtitles", as the South Korean filmmaker Bong Joon-ho described it. But the most important factor in South Indian cinema's success is its production quality. Today, the most ambitious set pieces, the most thrilling action sequences and the most breathtaking cinematography and sound in Indian cinema are found in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam films.

Literature Review :

The increased use of smartphones in India has ushered in a new era of video consumption on personal media devices. In 2023, the penetration rate of smartphone in India reached 71 percent and was estimated to reach 96 percent in 2040. In 2022, the volume of smartphone shipments across India was around 144.3 million.Over the last year, the percentage of Indian consumers who prefer viewing TV shows has decreased from 47% to 10%. According to (ASHITA KOTHARI, 2021, Hiremath, Suvarna; Panda, Dr.Ansumalini ; C, Dr. Prashantha ; Pasumarti, 2022). Prasad, S S(2022) in his article suggests that film income is expected to climb moderately to roughly Rs 19,200 crore. Sony Varghese &Chinnaiah, (2021) in their article say that in India the numberof theaters are way too low and penetration of television and internet is growing.

"We believe that India's theatrical universe is sizeable enough to deserve better quality of data, than what is generally available. In a diverse and multi-lingual country like ours, absence of industry data can be a limiting factor for various stakeholders, such as investors, studios, independent producers, distributors, marketers, exhibitors, and so on," Gautam Jain, partner - Ormax Media, said in a statement.(livemint.com)

Methodology:

This study attempts to understand the competition between OTT media services and traditional broadcasting channels in the Indian media ecosystem and the formers impact, challenges and opportunity over one another through a survey in quantitative method. The sampling

method applied here is random sampling Here the research instrument is the survey which was sent randomly to 100 people via Facebook and Whatsapp, out of which 96 respondents residing all over India answered. The age group of the respondents is from 15 years to 40 years and above, consisting of both male and females coming from different diasporas of life. A total number of 10 questions were asked through random sampling, and based on the answers given are discussed in the "Discussion" chapter of the research paper.

Discussion :

Result & Analysis:

Age group

1. In which age group do you belong?
96 responses

Legend:
- A) 15-19
- B)20-29
- C)30-39
- D)40 and above.

19.8%
64.6%
10.4%
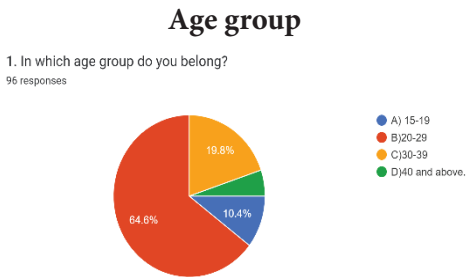
Source: 2023 Figure 1

In response to the above Question 1, in Figure1, asked on the survey,10 persons belonged to the age group(15-19) of option A. It summons 10.4 % of the entire respondents.62 persons belonged to the age group (20-29) of option B. It summons 64.6% of the entire respondents. 19 persons belonged to the age group (30-39) of option C. It summons 19.8% of the entire respondents. 5 persons belonged to the age group (40 and above) of option D. It summons 5.2 % of the remaining respondents.

OTT Usage Preference

2. Do you use any OTT platform ?
96 responses

Legend:
- A) Yes.
- B) No.

9.4%
90.6%
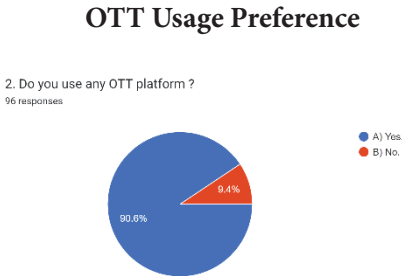
Source: 2023 Figure 2

In response to the above Question 2 in Figure 2, Do you use any OTT platform? asked on the survey, 87 persons chose option A, Yes. It summons 90.6% of the entire respondents. 9 persons chose option B, No. It summons 9.4% of the entire respondents.

Duration of OTT Usage
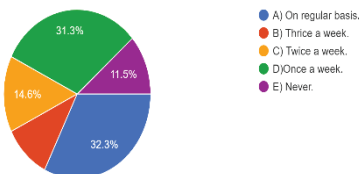
Source: 2023 Figure 3

In response to the above Question 3 in Figure 3,asked on the survey, 31 persons chose option A, On regular basis. It summons 32.3% of the entire respondents.10 persons chose option B, Thrice a week. It summons 10.4% of the entire respondents. 14 persons chose option C, Twice a week. It summons 14.6% of the entire respondents. 30 persons chose option D, Once a week. It summons 31.3% of the entire respondents.11 persons chose option E, Never. It summons 11.5% of the entire respondents.

Content Preference in OTT Platforms

Source: 2023 Figure 4

In response to Question 4, in Figure 4, asked on the survey, 61 persons chose option A, Films.It summons 63.5% of the entire respondents.12 persons chose option B, Sports. It summons 12.5% of the entire respondents.4 persons chose option C, News. It summons 4.2% of the

entire respondents. 19 persons chose option D, TV Shows. It summons 19.8% of the entire respondents.

Most watched OTT Platform

5. Which OTT platform do you watch the most?
96 responses
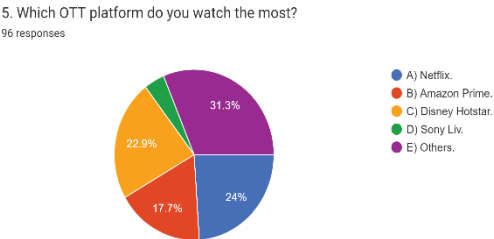
Source: 2023 Figure 5

In response to Question 5, in Figure 5, asked on the survey, 23 persons chose option A, Netflix. It summons 24% of the entire respondents. 17 persons chose option B, Amazon Prime. It summons 17.7% of the entire respondents. 22 persons chose option C, Disney Hotstar. It summons 22.9% of the entire respondents. 4 persons chose option D, Sony Liv. It summons 4.2% of the entire respondents. 30 persons chose option E, Others. It summons 31.3% of the entire respondents.

Affecting Cinema viewing experience on OTT

6. Does watching movies from online platforms affect the cinema viewing experience in you?
96 responses
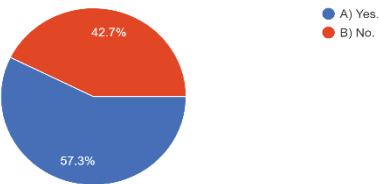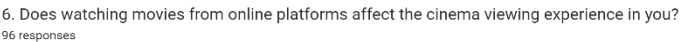
Source: 2023 Figure 6

In response to Question 6 in Figure 6,asked on the survey, 55 persons chose option A, Yes. It summons 57.3% of the entire respondents. 41 persons chose option B, No. It summons 42.7% of the entire respondents.

OTT service provider in Household

7. Which OTT service provider is in use in your house?
96 responses
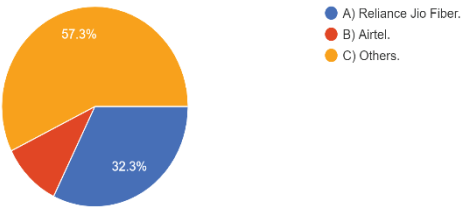
Source: 2023 Figure 7

In response to Question 7, in Figure 7, on the survey, 31 persons chose option A, Reliance Jio Fiber. It summons 32.3% of the entire respondents. 10 persons chose option B, Airtel. It summons 10.4% of the entire respondents. 55 persons chose option C, Others. It summons 57.3% of the entire respondents.

Cinema viewing preference after release

8. Where will you want to watch a cinema after its release?
96 responses
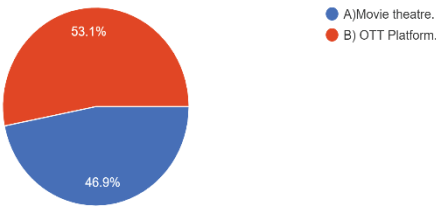
Source 2023 Figure 8

In response to Question 8, in Figure 8, asked on the survey, 45 persons chose option A, Movie theatre. It summons 46.9% of the entire respondents.51 persons chose option B, OTT platform. It summons 53.1% of the entire respondents.

Timeline of Increase in OTT Consumption in Household

9. Since when the OTT consumption in your household increased?
96 responses

- A) Before the pandemic.
- B) During the pandemic.
- C) After the pandemic.

19.8%
67.7%
12.5%
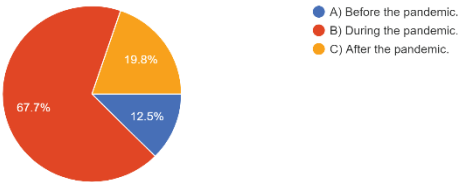
2023 Figure Source 9

In response to Question 9, in Figure 9, asked on the survey, 12 persons chose option A, Before the pandemic. It summons 12.5% of the entire respondents. 65 persons chose option B, During the pandemic. It summons 67.7% of the entire respondents. 19 persons chose option C, After the pandemic. It summons 19.8% of the entire respondents.

Recommendation of Content on OTT to Friends

10. What watching do you recommend your friends on OTT platforms?
96 responses

- A) Movies.
- B) Web Series .

80.2%
19.8%

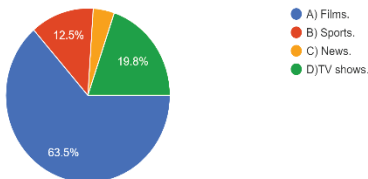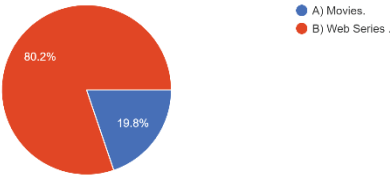Source: 2023 Figure 10

In response to Question 10, in Figure 10, asked on the survey, 19 persons chose option A, Movies. It summons 19.8% of the entire respondents. 77 persons chose option B, Web Series. It summons 80.2% of the entire respondents.

Conclusion :

In OTT platforms quality is the factor which impacts the adaptability of OTT platforms followed by convenience, affordable pricing, content, and features of the OTT platforms. Hence the preference of OTT platforms is much higher than the preference for theater. An OTT platform, on average, every user owns two platforms and spends a minimum of one

to two hours a day watching. Consumers who hues OTT basically for the quality of the picture, the content , features and convenience. OTT platforms have enabled users to access a range of content at their leisure and at a reasonable cost. Viewers choose single-screen and multiplex theatres to watch movies in. When it comes to extremely content-driven films, the majority of consumers prefer to watch them in a theatre. There is a movement of consumers from watching movies in theaters to OTT due to the factors of affordability, quality and convenience. Viewers who choose to watch movies in theatres believe that the theatrical experience, screen size and sound quality, and ambiance are crucial characteristics that give them an advantage over watching on OTT platforms. Users can view a movie in a movie theatre and get an entirely changing experience. According to the study, consumers are of the opinion that OTT platforms pose a major threat to traditional media for entertainment despite the convenience and quality of content customers still prefer watching movies in theaters whenever possible based on the review of the movies. The preference of OTT platforms is much higher than the preference for theater. This will and has already begun to, change the style of films produced by producers. The OTT sector is now an exponential cash source for producers who utilize the money to finance larger and larger pictures for cinema theatres. Although they both deliver the same type of content, they differ significantly in context and consumer-relevant characteristics. According to the consumers, OTT in Indian media is widely adopted due to the factors of convenience, comfort, quality of content, and affordability. The Indian public believes that mobile applications will have a bright future in the country, citing convenience and mobility, content selection, smartphone penetration, and cost-effectiveness as factors. The paper contends that the OTT sector has disrupted traditional media due to its quality, price, convenience, and content. But as the word goes there is still a bit of light under the tunnel. Since 2022, people are slowly moving to the theatres to celebrate the cinematic experience with family and friends. The figures of the films like *RRR* and KGF breaks the norms, and leads people back to the theatres all over India. RRR was released theatrically on 25 March 2022. With ₹240 crore (US$30 million) worldwide on its first day, *RRR* recorded the highest opening-day earned by an Indian film. It emerged as the highest-grossing film in its home market of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, grossing over ₹415 crore (US$52 million). At the worldwide box office, *KGF Chapter 2* went on to earn a humongous total of 1230 crores gross.

And with that, it was ranked the third highest Indian grosser in terms of global collections. *Pathaan ,OMG2, Gadar 2* and *Jawan* too followed the trend in **2023** till now.Box office India declared the film *Pathaan* as the 25th "All-Time Blockbuster" from the Hindi film industry. As of 6 April 2023, the film has grossed ₹654.28 crore (US$82 million) in India and ₹396.02 crore (US$50 million) overseas for a worldwide gross collection of ₹1,050.30 crore (US$130 million). OMG 2 collected ₹220.49 cr. at the worldwide box office. In India, it collected ₹149.67cr.Nett (₹178.18 cr). Following closely is Gadar 2, another all-time blockbuster that has garnered a worldwide collection of ₹675.9 crore and a net collection of ₹519.43 crore in India. According to media reports, the worldwide collection of *Jawan* so far has been Rs 735.80 crore. *Jawan* collection till now has collected *Rs 440.56 crore* at the Indian box office. The above mentioned reports do speak volumes about the hope of the audience coming back to the movie theatres, though all of these films are tied up with leading OTT platforms after their ongoing screenings.

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Asterix and Lessons in Cultural Hegemony and Resistance

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Abstract

Asterix is a celebrated French cartoon character, created by writer René Goscinny and illustrator Albert Uderzo. He is a short-statured wily Gallic warrior who, aided by a strength increasing elixir, defends his village from the Roman legionnaires. He also goes on globe-trotting adventures from where he brings about knowledge that helps his culture flourish. The comic debuted in 1959 in the French comic magazine Pilote.

As we all know Asterix and with his best buddy Obelix holds fort and independence of a tiny Gaul village in the middle of a vast Roman Empire. Though not based on historical fact Asterix over time have become a symbol of self-identity, pride and indomitable spirit of resistance in face of a mighty opponent. This paper will try to analyze Asterix as a symbol of autochthony and an example of retaining local cultures and value-system against the straight jacketing of global culture through a sweeping cultural change that threatens to put in line all indigenous and unique cultural identity.

Asterix despite is short stature is a symbol of diffidence against the world of tall men. Through this paper we will look at fiction and reality coming close through a parallels drawn thereof.

Keywords: Asterix Hegemony Resistance Autochthony Globalisation

Introduction

Asterix was a pint-sized crafty Gallic warrior who with the help of magical strength gained through a druid's elixir defended his village and went on cantankerous yet comic globe-trotting adventures. Created by writer René Goscinny and illustrator Albert Uderzo, Asterix made his debut in 1959 in the French comic magazine Pilote.

Asterix is one of the most beloved characters in French popular culture. He resides in a remote Gaulish village smack at the centre of the Roman Empire along with his best friend Obelix. This diminutive yet daring and wily warrior, that Asterix is, he is ever eager for new adventures. He lives around 50 BC in a fictional village in northwest Armorica (a province of ancient Gaul mostly traced to modern Brittany). This village is celebrated as the only part of Gaul that remained unconquered by the great Julius Caesar and his warmongering Roman legions. The inhabitants of the village gain staggering strength of superhuman proportions by drinking a magic potion prepared by the druid, Getafix. The small yet colourful village is surrounded by, on one side, the ocean, and on the other by four Roman garrisons, Compendium, Aquarium, Laudanum and Totorum, intended to keep a watchful eye on the Gauls and more often than not subjected to their mischiefs making the lives of these Romans and wretched, sandwiched between their Caeser's command and humiliation at the hands of the plucky Gauls. ("Asterix," 2008)

Asterix' parents are former residents of the village who now live in the city of Condatum (Rennes), and he has cousins in Britannia (Britain). He shares his birthday with his clumsy, oversized, but extremely strong and good-hearted best friend, Obelix. Asterix is one of the smartest and sensible members of the village and is often the natural choice to lead dangerous, important or exotic mission.

Asterix, Obelix, and their fellow villagers regularly scuffle with Roman legionnaires, an activity that the Gauls thoroughly enjoy. Asterix's adventures carry him to many locales, including Spain, Greece, Egypt, and (precolonial) America ("Asterix (character)").

The best thing about the comic creation is that it has a satirical eye for everyone. Foreign cultures are portrayed in humorous stereotype, as are the French. Asterix generally responds to their idiosyncrasies and foibles with startled incredulity and unescapably contributes something substantive to the cultures he comes in touch with, such as bringing about the Britons' discovery of tea and the Belgians' creation of French fries. Small yet massy and in sync with popular culture. ("Asterix (character)").

Goscinny and Uderzo began working together in 1951, creating a number of comic book heroes who met with varying degrees of success. The 1959

debut of Asterix was an immediate sensation, and the comic soon became the prime focus of the collaborators. In 1977 Goscinny died suddenly at age 51, in the middle of the production of Asterix's 24th bound "album." But that did not stop the volumes from being churned out as Uderzo continued creating new Asterix stories as both writer and illustrator, though he kept Goscinny's name on the cover of all subsequent volumes.

In addition to more than 30 comic book albums, which have been translated into dozens of languages, Asterix spawned a number of live-action and animated films, a vast array of merchandise, and even an amusement park, Parc Astérix, north of Paris. ("Asterix," 2008)

It is at this point that it would be interesting to look the works done on Asterix as a symbol French Resistance.

Literature Review

At this point it would be interesting to review the paper 'Historicising Asterix and Obelix—A Case for Graphic Literature' by Jyotishman Kalita published in International Journal of Literature, Language and Humanities, in Vol II, Issue VII in 2014 ("IJELLH (International Journal of English language, literature and humanities)," n.d., p. xx).

In this article the author tried to prove that the Asterix and Obelix series, created by French artists Rene Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, besides having a strong hold over popular culture, also indoctrinated deep origins of literary and aesthetic history, or as explained in the theory of T.S Eliot, have a literary "tradition". The author also went on to establish that by virtue of allusive references, this comic series attained sardonic, rebellious and historical sensitivity that could be placed within the larger ambit of historical materialism.

The author in his article established that Asterix was a cumulative effort at combining history, 'tradition', classical culture, and art to produce a literary phenomenon that moved beyond the limitations of simple animation towards a more complex literary unit. And as it moved beyond the private limits of a visual medium, it increasingly attained literary characteristics and could actually be restored according to the multitude of themes as identified from different texts. It also defined a particular moment in literary and artistic history that could blend the word, the image and the text according to the perceptive of an anonymous reader and result in a better cognitive experience.

Research Gap

Resistance Theories developed in the last several decade range from neo-Marxist, ne-Gramscian, Post-modern to Post-structural ones each in their own way trying to examine power struggles. Resistance Theorists have tried to explain and justify over a period of time why the opposition of one group on the other is [politically and morally necessary to bring about a parity in thought and actions. It is also an effort to protect ethnic groups from the mainstreaming of ideologies and societal norms that thereafter become dictatorial. Resistance is differentiated from a mere opposition to authority, and is understood to contribute in many ways to the progressive transformation of the general political environment by, many a time, undermining the general reproduction of oppressive social structures and social relations just to maintain civil discipline and exact control over the ruled (Abowitz, 2000, p. xx).

However, the article completely ignored this sub-text of history and the call to keep the identity of a race alive in face unsurmountable dictatorial quest. This is what my paper hopes to question and find an answer to with relation to Asterix.

This brings me back to my research questions:

How does Asterix stand as a symbol of resistance?

How is it a cry for autochthony?

Hypothesis

I will use historical and textual references to do a content analysis of Asterix to establish my focus of the research that Asterix through text, symbol and allusions refers to both my proposals.

Understanding French Resistance

Resistance Theory is a political thought that discusses the premises on which the instituted authority faces the resistance from individuals, groups or a political faction that opposes the philosophy and ideology of the dominant faction. In the early European political context, it rose to prominence as a result of the primary modern religious schism. Resistance theory as a result was an expression of uprising and disobedience to the ruling monarch on grounds that ranged from religious to cultural and political ("Attention required!" n.d.).

The political theories that support resistance also back and rationalize the concept of revolution as we currently understand it. Theories of resistance existed even prior to the natural and legal rights of the general masses were formalized, and these were usually thought of being contemporaneous with the contemplations of natural law. The right of defend one's own culture and identity is often considered part of a legal resistance theory and it had existed long before the development of new theories of resistance in the modern era.

The development of the Theory of Resistance in the initial period modern era was multifaceted and intricate and was based largely on the philosophical, political, and legal arguments made by the French authors during the religious wars in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. These arguments made by the French political thinkers evolved from three earlier theories based on Roman, canon (church), and medieval law: the right to defend oneself and one's property, the contractual relationship between the ruler and the people, and the just war theory ("Attention required!" n.d.).

But no history of French Resistance is complete without the legend and history of Vercingetorix.

Gaul was not just France, rather it included France, Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as parts of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. It was a rather large chunk of Europe. The Romans, led by Julius Caesar, wanted to wrest control over the entire lot. This raw ambition and power hungry conqueror status helped hm rule It helped him back home both politically before the Senate and before the people as the supreme monarch.

He marched with his giant army across Europe, overpowering one village after another. He played a nasty and magnificent game of war in which he set tribes against each other, paying some of them to strike against other tribes. who thought they were on the same side. Some villages surrendered before an arrow was launched.

At this point he faced opposition in the North from a group of tribes united under the name Belgae, which would eventually become Belgium. But they too feel. With the Belgae out of the picture, a tribal chieftain by the name of Vercingetorix united the remaining tribes to rise against Caesar.

Pic: 1.1 Asterix and Chieftain's Shield

For various reasons, it didn't 't work out. Caesar's forces surrounded Vercingetorix's folks and built big walls to strike from above. Vercingetorix called for backups to come in, so the Romans built another set of walls facing outwards. The Romans created a doughnut to fight out of the resistance. The doughnut split the Gauls in half. They could not coordinate their attacks. To cut the long story short, by 52 BC, the Gauls failed. Their leader, Vercingetorix, rode his horse into Caesar's camp and, with a great dramatic flourish, removed his armour and weapons, laid down his sword at Caesar's feet, and surrendered to the Romans (Augie De Blieck Jr., 2020).

Caesar had conquered Gaul, at last. The books of "Asterix" begin two years after Vercingetorix's fall.

In the eleventh volume Asterix and the Chieftain's Shield (Le bouclier arverne, "The Arvernian Shield" in French), we see the fall of Vercingetorix. The book was based on the battle of Alesia, where the Gaulish warrior chief Vercingetorix surrendered to Julius Caesar. However, only the very end of the actual battle appeared in the book. The main plot concerned with what happened after the battle.

Asterix and the spirit of Resistance

Goscinny was born in Paris in 1926, divided his childhood between France and Argentina, and learned the cartoon trade in New York, with the group of artists who went on to found Mad magazine. The growing up years and his training in the proverbial free world created a mindset that was in direct opposition to the preachings of Nazi Germany. The German occupied France and the plight of the French had a profound effect on the French population and French Resistance had a big effect on the creators of Asterix.

Returning to France in 1951, he teamed up with Uderzo, who did the drawings. They made a dry run for Astérix with a short-lived cartoon called Oumpah-pah. Incidentally this also featured a Flatfoot Indian dwelling in a far-flung village in the wild west. It was a strip on how the village bravely held out against the palefaces. But the duo struck luck when they launched the ancient Gaulish version of French Resistance to Roman Imperialism taking Oumpah-pah to Asterix in 1959. The first issue of the comic came out in Pilote, which had the financial backing of Radio Luxembourg. Their first fully-fledged book, Astérix le Gaulois, appeared in 1961. ("Going for Gaul: Mary beard on 40 years of Asterix," 2002)

Another crucial factor is the history that Astérix both recalls and satirises. Astérix takes its French readers back to a moment when French Resistance begun with their early ancestors like Vercingetorix, leader of the Gauls in a notable rebellion against Julius Caesar in the late 50s BC. Vercingetorix is mentioned in 'Caesar's own self-serving account of the Gallic War as a traitor and Gallic nationalist, who was resoundingly outmanoeuvred by Roman tactics at the Battle of Alesia; he surrendered to Caesar and was packed off to Rome, to be killed several years later as part of the celebrations of Caesar's triumph in 46 BC' ("Going for Gaul: Mary beard on 40 years of Asterix," 2002).

In modern French culture, as Anthony King has emphasised (in a recent supplement to the Journal of Roman Archaeology), Vercingetorix has become a national hero for both left and right. In world war two, for example, he did double duty as "the first resistance fighter in our history" and as a symbol for Philippe Pétain and the Vichy Government of how to be noble, and nobly French, in defeat. In the second frame of Astérix le Gaulois, where, in a characteristic twist, Vercingetorix manages to drop the bundle of weapons on Caesar's toe - so prompting not a victory

speech, but a loud 'Ouch'. In fact, throughout the series Astérix himself can be seen as Vercingetorix's double, the fantasy of a Gallic nationalist who managed to escape Caesar's clutches ("Going for Gaul: Mary beard on 40 years of Asterix," 2002).

Across Europe, the story of Astérix encouraged people to think harder about their own history and prehistory that it reflected and the myths it embodied. Roman colonialism was generally seen in unambiguous, definite terms. It offered the natives of these conquered territories a simple choice: Romanisation or Resistance. '…learn Latin, wear togas, build baths or (in the absence of a real-life magic potion) paint yourself with woad, take to the scythed chariots and massacre the nearest detachment of Roman infantry' ("Going for Gaul: Mary beard on 40 years of Asterix," 2002).

This choice or rather no-choice has been hilariously captured and satirised in Le Combat des chefs (Asterix and the Big Fight), which put to contrast Astérix's village with a neighbouring Gallic settlement. If Astérix and his friends have opted for resistance to Rome, the other village would equally and enthusiastically embrace Romanisation. We see their native huts embellished with classical-style columns, their chief honoured with a Roman portrait in what must pass for the village's forum, and their children going through the 'grammar-grind'. In contrast Asterix and his village folks led a free life, devoid of the bondage of Roman dictum. A resistance to Romanisation much like a resistance to the Nazis by the French in recent past or to a decadent empire before the French revolution.

Approaches to Roman imperialism are now more realistic. Romans' priorities were money and a quiet life. Provided the natives paid their taxes, did not openly rebel and, where necessary, made a few gestures to Roman cultural norms, their lives could - if they wished - continue much as before. This new version of Roman provincial life has been immortalised in Asterix.

"Archaeologist Simon James drew a single comic vignette, which has become famous among classicists for encapsulating the new approach to the history of Roman imperialism in the northern provinces. It shows a small native homestead, with a traditional round Iron Age hut and an obviously native family. Next to it runs a Roman road, and just disappearing on their march past the homestead is a party of

Roman legionaries (messily dropping behind them the kind of Roman bric-a-brac that archaeologists will eagerly dig up in two thousand years' time). Between the homestead and the road, the canny natives have constructed a huge cardboard cut-out of a classical facade with pediment and columns, which they are gamely holding up to impress the soldiers and temporarily disguise the native life blithely going on behind." ("Going for Gaul: Mary beard on 40 years of Asterix," 2002). This is not Asterix. Asterix was a direct no-show to Roman dominance and a direct satirising of their way of life.

In 1978 an analysis of the Asterix stories was made by De Kerckhove who gave the following assessment: "On the surface, the figures of this essential drama are not very sophisticated. Among the Gauls, nobody, apart from the wise old druid, is exceptionally bright. Astérix himself, for all his cleverness, will resort more often to the magic potion which gives him superhuman strength, than to a real strategy. The Romans, on the contrary, are always subtle, crafty, calculating, well prepared, and they always lose. The Gauls are carefree and totally unpremeditated; their behaviour and their social attitudes are depicted so as to present an image of freedom and spontaneity unfettered by the constraints of civilization." (Clark Andrews/Belphegor, n.d.).

In the Asterix volumes the intrigues and conspiracies hatched by the Romans are often the reason behind the adventures that take place. The stories reflect the French dislike for authority figures and is a direct reflection of the era evidenced by the French willingness to go on strike against the regimes. The reality of rising against unjust authoritarian systems of the times. Similarly, the Gauls will not take orders from the Romans. The Gauls' spirited resistance is set against Roman discipline before an imperialist system. For e.g. in 'Astérix Le Gaulois' the legionnaire Caligula Minus does not want to go to the Gallic village: "I will not go to the Gauls!". But he is forced to change his mind when his commanding officer tells him the alternative - "I'll skewer you like a chicken if you don't go to the Gauls!!" (Astérix: The Gallic War p. 10.)

   It is this free spirit of the Gauls that has made the resistance more prominent, In fact the regimentation of the Romans does not spare Caesar himself. He was under the compulsion of winning wars and that meant going to any extent to establish the Roman vanguard: "Julius Caesar had major financial problems. To equip his armies which were to leave for new conquests, he used tax money which was intended to

pay the salaries of his garrisons in Gaul." (Asterix and the Banquet p 10). This is in direct contrast with the fact that the Gauls relied on a system of barter and did not need large sums of money to fulfil their needs.
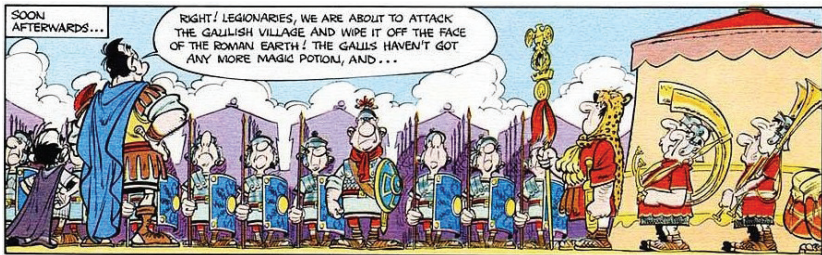
Pic: 1.2 Asterix and the Chieftain's Shield

At this point it would be interesting to make a note that the world in which these stories took place was one that had recently seen the rise of one of the most hated imperialist Adolf Hitler. Thus, the idea of a Roman Empire, with Julius Caesar at its centre, becomes a key to the stories as it gives the Gauls, and through them the French population, something to fight against, constructing a political opposition between autocracy and consensual freedom, which is the moot point and established feature of French self-representation. The Gauls are being portrayed as ones holding their identity in face of the Romanisation of the way of life. (Pic: 1.2) The Gauls are concerned by the way in which Roman influence permeates Gaul. In La Serpe d'Or, on seeing an aqueduct, Asterix remarks to Obelix: "With their modern constructions, the Romans spoil the landscape!" (Asterix and the Golden Sickle p. 10.) This further has been expanded in a later book when Caesar himself declares: ""I have decided to force them to accept this civilization! The forest will be destroyed to make way for a natural park! ...the village [will] be condemned to adapt or disappear!"

This inevitably leads to the next question that has been proposed in the paper. How much is Asterix about cultural identity and the fight for autochthony?

Saving the Identity

The basic context of the Asterix series is fairly candid as established with an opening page that is reproduced in each volume. This page informs us: "the year is 50 B.C. Gaul is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well, not entirely … One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders."

But before we delve further into it, let us understand the concept of autochthony. "Autochthony has a long conceptual history, from the ancient Athenians to the work of Martin Heidegger. While the present study concerns itself with the Romans portrayed in Asterix, it is worth noting the vital role the notion played in Greek antiquity." For the Athenians it was important that a son of soil led the army and sat on the throne to maintain their ethnic pride and cultural integrity. Autochthony literally means born of the earth or soil and it was considered crucial to the self-understanding of the Athenians. For the Athenians it was important that a son of soil led the army and sat on the throne to maintain their ethnic pride and cultural integrity. The very same vocabulary and row associated with the term autochthony are in evidence in contemporary political struggles, particularly in Africa (notably in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Ivory Coast) (Barnett Stewart, n.d.).

Pic: 1.3 Asterix and the Big Fight

One of the basic reason for the great appeal of Asterix is the notion of a small group being able to resist the domination and the ambition of by an extremely powerful foreign people. Asterix engages with the origin of the pure native. By this I mean a point in the past win several adventures just to maintain their uniqueness of the Gaulish people. In other words, the point of origin of an autochthonous people. he desire to make distinctions, to demarcate one people from another, has been

in full evidence in Europe since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The more there are mechanisms such as the European Union to create such transnational entities as "the European," the more there will be counter-reactions insisting on the pure native. Indeed, the greater the perceived threat of the nonnative, the stronger the recourse to the concept of the pure native. (Barnett Stewart, n.d.).

Asterix holds forth the dream—despite the opposition of an overwhelming might—of an autochthonous people. Asterix can function as the model of resistance to anything with perceived imperial and ambitions be it Romans then or USA and the European Union now. (Pic: 1.3)

And hence permits the certainty in native purity untainted by what it denounces as nonnative.

Since its debut in Pilote magazine in 1959, the Asterix comics series has frequently been related to the French Resistance during the Second World War. In the volumes, a small but nameless village inhabited by Gauls resisted the Roman occupation and ambition relentlessly, symbolizing WWII and the Axis occupation during the war and the French resistance to it. Nicolas Rouvière at the Joseph-Fourier University in Grenoble suggested that the publication of this first Asterix could be identified as a remembrance of Charles de Gaulle, who was the leading figure of the Resistance.

It is important that we do not forget that during de Gaulle's time, the political stance of his followers was called Gaullism, which further re-establishes the analogy between Gauls and de Gaulle. Also noteworthy is the fact that the central character of the volumes, Asterix imbibed a certain image of this Gaullism that was reflected in his pugnacious nature and socialist nature.

A Gaul has often been described in the French school books as a robust man with large pants, a helmet, a braid, and a blond moustache. This description fit perfectly for Vercingetorix, the heroic chieftain of the Gallic tribes. The Gaul village in Asterix seemed to represent the democratic values of the Third Republic of France. For example, the druid Getafix resembles the secular teachers of that time with ideas that liberated mind much like the elixir that built the otherwise ordinary Gauls into a fighting machine. It is at this point that we should take a closer look at the immigrant background of both the creators. The

duo certainly had to face racism and difficulties in integrating into the French mainstream. Goscinny was a Jew, son of a Polish father and a Ukrainian mother, and Uderzo had Italian parents. These immigrant backgrounds inspired them to create the comic series that could present their view of Frenchness, an identity they created for themselves giving them a sense of individual in a collective.

While still on the topic of identity and uniqueness, the comic volumes have stacked up various symbols worth understanding. For example, The Roman Empire was a primarily polytheistic civilization, which meant that people recognized and worshiped multiple gods and goddesses. Despite the presence of monotheistic religions within the empire, such as Judaism and early Christianity, Romans honoured multiple deities. As other pagan peoples of Europe, the Gauls were polytheistic. But contrary to the Greek and the Roman they had no organized pantheon of gods. Most of their divinities were associated with a tribe or with a place.

As their neighbours, they adored natural elements: rivers, sources, forests. Certain divinities however enjoyed a wider worship. They would appeal to the gods by offerings precious objects, but also animal and human sacrifices. The two most characteristic features of the Celtic, Gallic religion, were the priestly and learned class.

Finally, in Asterix and the Picts, the first in the series to be drawn/ written without the involvement of either of the original creators, has also led reviewers to wonder whether it can be seen as commentary on Scottish nationalism. It is quite natural that Asterix, Obelix and their friends are plucky enemies of colonialism. They conduct lop-sided contest against the Roman soldiers who inhabit the camps of Totorum, Compendium, Aquarium, and Laudanum. And much in Che Guevara style, they export their revolution throughout the ancient world, helping out their oppressed brethren in Britain, Spain and Corsica. Thus, the Gauls were battling against an empire that outclassed them in technology and cultural sophistication, and yet could not match them in cunning, bravery, and (druidically-inspired) know-how. Thus, maintaining the identity storyline of Asterix.

This moustached crusader has bravely defended the customs of ancient Gaul from stereotyped foreigners - from Brits who drink hot water with a swag of milk to the militaristic Germans over-engrossed in their racial superiority and the short Portuguese with their pomposity. He has ribbed

the Corsicans for being lazy, ferocious and producing pungent smelly cheese, and Normandy villagers for soaping their food with cream.

Pic: 1.4 Asterix and the Banquet

Talking of food, it can be a close affiliate of expressing identity and the Asterix does not make an exception. As early as the first album Asterix the Gaul, Asterix' culinary preferences are revealed. Obelix's gluttony is already legendary. He just cannot resist a luscious plate of roast boar, a staple at the village table. Besides boar, steaks make a fleeting appearance in The Golden Sickle. Even in Gaulish times, fruit was an important part of a balanced diet as shown by Vitalstatistix, the good Gaulish chief, who picked apples from on top of his shield in Asterix and the Gladiator, with the assistance of his two shield bearers. In the same adventure, Asterix and Obelix take advantage of a journey to Rome to treat themselves to boars in a Gaulish inn! With the seeds of a gastronomic passion already sown in Asterix and the Banquet where the Gaulish heroes' vast curiosity for exotic cuisine, the volumes ramp up a grand gourmet tour that included Camaracum Humbugs sweets, the fine wines of Durucortorum, fish stew from Massilia, Nicaean salad, prunes from Aginum, oysters and wine from Burdigala, that make Asterix so very Gaulish. ("Asterix, the Gaulish gourmet," 2011).

The resistance and identity factor also had a counter point. This youthful [Gaulish] civilisation is of little account beside the brilliant civilisation imported by the Romans and Greeks said F. Correard in his prize essay Vercingetorix. (Anthony King, n.d.). He said "the Gauls did not have the spirit of discipline, they did not know how to obey, nor to subordinate their personal or partisan interests to the general good. Gaul, by its

divisions and its anarchy, was condemned to become the prey of a more united and organized nation. The triumph of Rome over Gaul was definitely that of civilisation over barbarism". (Anthony King, n.d.)

A series of oppositions in life and lifestyle showcased the difference between the Gauls and Romans as expressed by the created duo:

Gaul	Rome
Impenetrable forest	Fertile plain
Marsh	Ploughed fields
Trackways	Paved roads
Villages	Cities
Dolmens	Public monuments
Huts	Stone-built villas
Animal furs	Togas
Long hair	Well-kempt 'coiffure'

There will always be a debate on how much of self-actualisation of native culture was possible through the adventures of the pint-sized Asterix and his gang of Gauls, but the fact that an effort to dig to the roots is a certainty.

Conclusion

Two-thirds of the French population is estimated to have read one or more volumes of this famous strip-cartoon books. Across the world a sizeable per centage has read the same. It is a veritable 'phénomène Astérix' in sociological terms. Asterix cartoons were mainly produced in the 1960s and 1970s, at a time when French archaeological resources in a major part of the country was badly damaged by the two major wars, making way for 19th century views of the Gauls to linger on in popular imagination. Asterix is a pastiche of these views.

The duo through a light-hearted version of them, makes them resistance heroes who are capable of forever worsting the Romans. It is significant that the cartoon is set in 50 BC, after the Romans have completed their conquest and established Julius Caeser as the unquestioned monarch and therein places Asterix in the lead role of throwing off the Roman yoke and creating a cultural identity that is Gaulish and a resistance that takes on unsurmountable opposition. (Pic: 1.5)
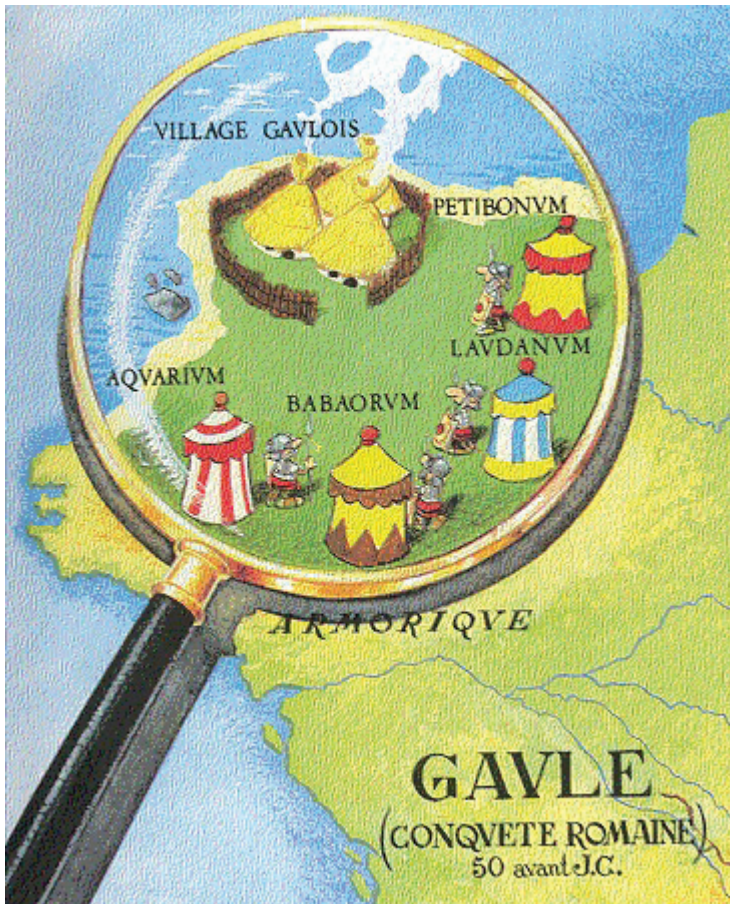
Pic 1.5 The imaginary map of the Gaulish Village (Asterix Vol 1)

Asterix is actually better than his historic predecessor. Unlike Vercingetorix, he always defeats his foes, thus giving the signature of an optimistic happy ending, rather than the image of the decorous but vanquished hero. After Asterix' global acceptance the French national hero appears to have been defeated, again, and eclipsed by his cartoon alter ego.

There are several forms of imperialism at work in the Asterix books. The interview with Uderzo cited above contains a significant quote – "it showed that Disney hadn't invented funny story animals..." (Clark Andrews/Belphegor, n.d.) At the modern level French society is characterised by a desire to resist what is seen as an imposition of

American culture, perceived as a form of imperialism detrimental to French society. The image of a small guy standing up to the imperialists and rejecting its attempts to impose a cultural blanket is essential to French identity.

Clearly the Roman attempts to impose their culture on the Gauls was doomed as was their unrestrained quest to control the small insignificant nameless Gaul village that stuck out like a sore nail on the Roman caliga (shoes).

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Screens that Keep Screaming: An Urban Exploration of Mutated Digital Display

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The appeal for tv shows/soaps/operas apart from the culture of big screens theatre reflect a paradigmatic change in the nature of experiencing modes of entertainment. One that reflects a departure from the collective, communal entertainment to more personalised forms of engagement as espoused in the age of late techno-capitalism.

The screen culture has significantly mutated in the 21st century from that of the 20th. Screens have become much smaller, compressed, portable and flexible in both their dimensions and functionalities. In today's age we are surrounded by screens of all sorts and shapes, from cellphones to billboards, digital displays on public transport and infrastructure to smart watches. The nature of screens have not only mutated in size but also morphed in their functionality. A screen is an apparatus that has the ability to illuminate pixels with the desired light frequency that is usually driven by electric power and usually serves us images or text as their pixelated content.

The aesthetics of portable screens that surround us have ushered in the information age in a vehement manner. Digital displays have the ability to portray infinite content within finite forms of matter, thereby championing the paradigm of the aesthetics of excess, as is the norm in the age of information. Screens have become an omnipotent accessory adoring all the urban spaces throughout the world, except perhaps those that follow some tenets of brutalist architecture. The over-abundance of screens not only significantly affects the socio-political dynamics of society at large but heavily influences the individual psyche. For those born in the age of digital displays or 'digitods' (2008 onwards), research suggests that they possess "divergent patterns of digital behaviour" in comparison to the offsprings from a decade ago (Leathers et al., 2013; Holloway et al., 2015). However, if one compares the effects of those

born in the digital age "research studies have extensively investigated the effects of screen media overuse on sleep disturbances, there continues to be conflicting data with regard to internalising mechanisms, such as psychological and emotional wellbeing, as well as potential bidirectional relationships shared with the adverse outcomes" (Limone & Toto, 2021).

The ontology of screens are based on the shifting frame apparatus of the visual mechanism of creatures like humans themselves; wherein eyes capture the dynamic frames with either the linear progression of time or by physical locomotion of the body or rolling of the eyes themselves. The digital display or generally the nature of any 'screen' seems to emulate the very dynamicity of such frames onto a fixed medium itself. If one looks closer at the prevalence of digital displays in today's age, one can easily associate how digital displays pave the avenue for instantaneous shifts in discourse paradigms, for they could be displaying one type of content now and in the next moment, portray a directly contradictory content with respect to the first. Thus screens are enabled with an ensuing sense of power that significantly affects the propagation and dissemination of information and in turn discourses in our society. The more screens per square area, the more efficient the means of information propagation. The question however that significantly affects the nature of our study is the impact of such variegated screens on the individual's cognitive processes wherein they start to constantly rely on digital displays as more than just objects of perception.

Digital Display itself is too broad a term to be categorised into components, for its very ontic is dependent on the dynamic of techno-social advancement themselves. As technologies advance, so does the idea of what 'screens' are and are not. One can easily envision a sci-fi plot wherein one is surrounded by a panel of screens and screens, often blank, just existing, existing at the brink of popping up, rupturing the otherwise 'static' and stable state of affairs (at least in the visual domain).

However, the presence and proliferation of such 'mutated' digital forms points to the ever pervading digi-cultural changes. Research has shown the declining effects in early developmental psychology of toddlers/infants right up to adults having access to devices with digital screens, providing "experimental evidence that limiting recreational digital screen use positively affects mental well-being and mood in adults" (Pedersen et al., 2022) . Perhaps the over-abundance of information

one is stimulated with from a digital display source (especially that of social media content) causes an overload of information than the brain is naturally used to in terms of evolutionary development, thereby opening up new avenues of exploitation and in turn influence, control and regulation.

It is interesting to note however the idea that the presence of screens is often equated with economical proliferation in a capitalist sense. The functional aspect of screens is undoubtedly one of the biggest facets of modern societies, bringing to us a wide plethora of information in a convenient and efficient manner. Screens easily communicate what traditional modes of representation struggle to even portray or represent.

Digital display domains in today's age are often equated with a sense of escapism. With the advent of advanced technology like VR and 3D, screens have stepped up on their ontological implications unto the human psyche. The accessibility to entertainment and information on a visual scale as this (the one we encounter in the 21st century) has been an unprecedented phenomenon ever since the start of human history itself. Newer forms of 'screens' have opened up newer avenues of discourse that were previously inaccessible due to technological non-advancements. Thereby, it becomes paramount to discuss the implications of such 'screen' *presence* on social cognition at large, how it is that societies have adapted and developed newer forms of recording and communicating information with the advent of digital displays.

Research has often shown the direct correlation between the decline in mental health issues, from that of developing ADHD to impaired working memory and the increased usage of digital displays/screens as "evidence thus far supports the conclusion that exposure to television and video games increases the risk for subsequent attention problems" (Swing et al., 2010). However, much of the studies are often based on either children or adolescents and consist of a limited sample size. It isn't easy however to categorise either the positive or negative impacts of digital displays on both the individual and the collective psyche based on limited sample size unless we are able to cross-culturally verify the same data over much larger sample size. The overall impact of the increasing number of screens on cognitive processes is arguably undeniable. The mutation of screens from that of light projections to the self-illuminating materiality of Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) alongside

their morphing of size and shape points to a paradigmatic shift on not only technocultural but also that of the psycho-social levels.

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Effect Of Over-The-Top On Traditional Broadcasting On Viewers After Lockdown In West Bengal

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Abstract

After the lockdown, the effects of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms on traditional broadcasting for viewers in West Bengal (WB) are set up in the opening. It talks about the rise in OTT use during the lockdown caused by the pandemic and how that could affect regular broadcasts. The chapter explains the study goals, why they were chosen, and how important they are. This sets the stage for the next parts. This part looks at the research that has already been done on how the media environment is changing. It focuses on the competition between OTT platforms and standard broadcasts in West Bengal after lockdown. The review also goes into detail about the things that are making people move toward OTT platforms and the problems that standard channels are having to deal with. The current section describes the quantitative and qualitative methods that were used to do the study. It talks about how the poll was set up, how samples were chosen, and how the users' views and tastes about OTT and standard broadcasts were gathered. There is also talk about ethical issues and limits. This chapter looks at the collected data and the research results to see what effect OTT platforms have on traditional media users after the lockdown in WB. It gives numbers to changes in user behavior, tastes, and the things that make people choose one site over another.

Keywords: Lockdown; Over the Top (OTT) platforms; post-lockdown impact; Traditional broadcasting; Viewership; West Bengal (WB)

Introduction

In the past few years, there has been a huge change in the media and leisure world. This was mostly caused by the digital revolution and the rise of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. These platforms have changed the way people receive information, putting pressure on the old television approach that has been the standard for a long time. Shifting Viewer Preferences:

Traditional programming, which includes TV and radio, has been the main source of pleasure and information for decades. But people's tastes are changing. But OTT services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar, and many others are brought a new era of on-demand material to users. As a result, it helps the user to watch what, when, and where they wanted. The evolution in preferences has caused a reevaluation of the function of traditional media in a world without lockdown.

Rise of OTT During Lockdown:

During the shutdown, people used OTT platforms a lot more because they wanted to escape the limits on outdoor activities by watching digital material. A study by Patnaik *et al.* (2021), the number of people who subscribed to and used OTT platforms every day in West Bengal went up by 67% during the lockdown. This event shows how people went to OTT platforms to watch movies, web series, and videos, among other things.

Diversification of Content:

Traditional television has been tested by OTT platforms, which offer a bigger range of material types and languages. People in West Bengal were used to watching regional shows on TV, but they started watching shows in different languages and themes, which helped them learn more about the world. This wide range of material choices has been shown to have a big effect on how and what people watch (Golwalkar & Mishra, 2023).

Impact on Advertising Industry:

The move toward OTT services has not only changed how people watch TV, but it has also changed how advertising works. Brands have started to move their advertising funds to online platforms because they see the potential in focused ads and custom content suggestions. This change

has caused people to talk about the future of advertising on standard TV, which relies heavily on straight scheduling and reaching a wide range of demographics (Farooq & Raju, 2019).

Challenges for Traditional Broadcasting:
Traditional broadcasters have had to change their tactics in order to stay relevant in the face of the rise of OTT platforms. Concerns have been raised about the future of standard television methods because viewing is declining, especially among younger people. The results of a study on viewing behavior done by Media Watch in 2021 show that people are watching less TV during peak hours, which adds to these worries.

Hybrid Consumption Patterns:
As the lockdown ended, people in West Bengal began to use both standard broadcasts and OTT platforms. This is called a mixed consumption behavior. This change is likely caused by people's desire for up-to-date news, live sports events, and the ease of OTT material. The fact that these two platforms are coming together shows how media viewing is changing and how producers need to change with it (Sadana & Sharma, 2021).

Future Prospects:
People argue a lot about how OTT affects standard programming and what that means for content producers, carriers, marketers, and users alike. In order to keep up with the changing media environment, players need a full understanding of how and why people use media. This helps them make better decisions about content creation, delivery methods, and income models.

The time after the lockdown in West Bengal has shown how OTT platforms are changing traditional programming. Changes in viewing tastes, the rise of OTT during the lockdown, the diversity of content, problems for the advertising industry, and the rise of mixed consumption patterns all show how important it is for broadcasters to have a plan for how to deal with this changing environment. By looking at how these two media platforms interact with each other, this piece hopes to show how media usage is changing and what that might mean for the future of broadcasting in West Bengal.

Objective of study

The goal of this study is described as follows:

- To figure out how many people in West Bengal switched from standard programming to over-the-top (OTT) services during and after the lockdown.
- To figure out what makes users choose between over-the-top (OTT) and standard broadcasts for content consumption after the lockdown.
- To look at how users in West Bengal have changed their tastes in material and how they watch it as a result of having more access to OTT services.
- To figure out how the relationship between OTT and standard television affects how users see the quality, range, and ease of material.
- To find out how age, gender, and socioeconomic position (SES) affect users' use of over-the-top (OTT) apps and standard broadcasts after the lockdown.
- To find out what problems traditional media in West Bengal might face because of the rise of OTT platforms and to offer ways for them to change.

Literature Review

This review aims to bring together the research that has already been done on how OTT affects standard broadcasts. It looks at changes in how people use material, how they interact with it, and what challenges and possibilities this split might offer. By explaining the media environment in West Bengal after the lockdown, this review tries to show how complicated the relationship is between OTT and regular television platforms.

According to Varghese & Chinnaiah (2021), a Boston consulting firm, India's OTT business is worth $0.5 billion right now and is expected to be worth $5 billion by 2023. The authors also notices that OTT is becoming a common way for certain movies to reach their target audience. Video streaming services have made it easy, cheap, and available to watch movies on the go, especially for people who like to watch a lot of movies at once.

Deb (2022), says that by 2020, sales of movie tickets are expected to rise slightly to about Rs 19,200 crore, while internet streaming services are expected to bring in about Rs 22,400 crore. Author also brings up a recent EY study that says India's average speed is very slow and that a five-second delay in video streaming due to loading could hurt a content publisher's viewing by a quarter.

India has a terrible lack of movie theaters. China, for example, has about 60,000 screens, while India has only about 10,000. According to appearances, there are only 8 movie theaters for every million people, and when Indians get out of jail, two-thirds of them can't go to the movies anymore. Large production companies and directors are being pushed to put movies out straight on OTT channels instead of in theaters. This is because people tend to watch multiple channels at once and want new and different content (Varghese & Chinnaiah, 2021).

Over the past few years, the online media industry has learned that India is a mix of different countries, each with its own unique traits. The number of people who speak regional languages and use the Internet is growing faster than the number of people who speak Hindi and English. Localized content gets more interaction because users always prefer to watch content in their own language. Because of this, big streaming services like Amazon Prime and Netflix are spending more money to make material in Hindi and eight other major Indian languages besides English (Farooqui, 2022).

On the other hand Onyeaka *et al.* (2021), says that the limits put in place after the COVID-19 spread had a big effect on how people used media and leisure. As lockdowns kept people from going outside to work or have fun, public events moved online. People can stay in touch with their families, friends, partners, coworkers, and others through web-based social networking. Due to the government's request to shut down entertainment programs outside of the home, home-based entertainment modes have grown and improved steadily.

As per the study by Srivarshini, (2022), OTT platforms are getting better and that they have a big edge over standard television outlets. Based on an online poll with 95 percent of the key players between the ages of 20 and 40, the study says that OTT will definitely grow in India because it is cost-effective and its material keeps getting better and better. Lastly, the author thinks that the fast growth of streaming media

in India is because it gives people the freedom to get information at any time, no matter where they are.

People couldn't leave their homes because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to more people watching TV and movies. Traditional television had to stop making shows and change their schedules, while OTT platforms saw a huge increase in users. Inadvertently, the lockdown set the stage for the OTT change, as users looked for different kinds of material that were easy to find and use with their newfound free time. West Bengal, which is known for its rich cultural history and many watchers, became a good place to study how the media scene is changing.

Choudhary *et al.* (2022), studied that OTT platforms like *Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+,* as well as local players like *Hoichoi and Addatimes*, have taken advantage of the fact that users want personalized content they can watch whenever they want. Viewers' tastes have changed a lot because of how appealing original shows and movies are and how easy it is to watch on multiple devices. Traditional programming, which was mostly based on fixed scheduling, had to compete with OTT platforms, which offered more freedom and customizing.

This literature review shows how the media environment has changed since the COVID-19 lockdown in West Bengal and how Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms have affected traditional broadcasts as a result. By looking at the research that has already been done, this piece hopes to put light on how readers' tastes and behavior are changing. This can help people in the media business learn how to change and thrive in a world that is changing quickly.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how West Bengal residents would respond to OTT versus traditional broadcasts following the lockdown. The quantitative approach was adopted for the exact same reason.

3.1. Sampling

The participants in this study were people of various ages and professions who lived in West Bengal and watched both OTT and conventional broadcasts. More than 100 participants took part in this investigation.

Evaluation of the data sample is made very simple because the majority of respondents provided answers to the question that was asked. Table 1 illustrate the questionnaire details about the survey.

Table 1. Questionnaire Details

No of question	23
Question Type	Voting Poll, Multiple Choice
How many numbers of people participate	100+
Ratio of female and male	7:3
Participants Age range	15 and above
Job fields details	Office workers, housewives, students (college, school),
Communicating Platform	WhatsApp (Majority), Mail, Telegram

3.2. Research Design

To gather factual data, the scientific approach was applied. Multiple choice questions and a voting poll were set up for this strategy. A sample size of more than 100 respondents was selected for the investigation.

Experimental Data Analysis

The respondents received the assessment via several widely used messaging services, including mail, WhatsApp, telegraph, etc. People of different ages and types have voluntarily participated in this survey. The following figures assess each question's visual assessment as well as all the participant replies to that question.

The first question was 'How frequently do you use OTT platforms?' Figure 1 depicted the analysis of this question.
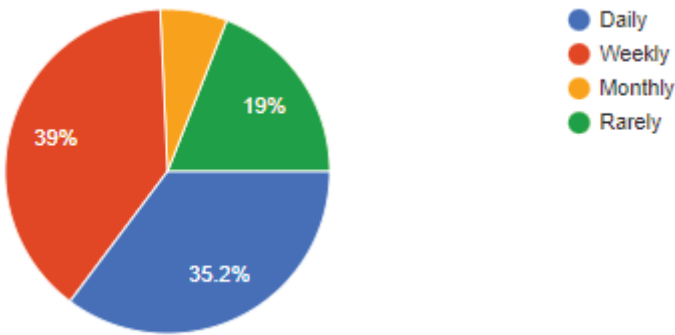
Figure 1. How many days spend on OTT

Based on the analysis of the figure 1, it was observed that the maximum percentage (39%) of people in West Bengal have weakly used OTT platforms in post-lockdown situations. Some people use it in their daily routine (35.2%), and a few people use it rarely.

The second question was 'Which OTT platforms do you use most?' Figure 2 depicted the analysis of this question
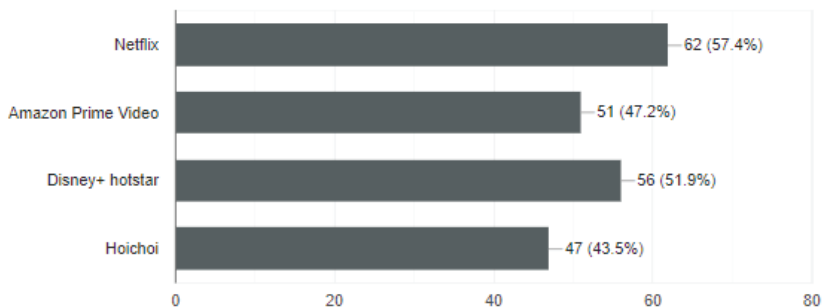
Figure 2 Which OTT platform do people like most

According to the figure 2, it can be concluded that nowadays West Bengal's maximum population likes to watch *'Netflix'* (57.1%). After that, they watch *'Disney +hotstar'* (51.4%). Some of them, respectively, watch '*Amazon Prime Video*' (47.6%) and *'Hoichoi'* (43.8%).

The third question was 'What type of content do you prefer to watch on OTT platforms?' Figure 3 depicted the analysis of this question
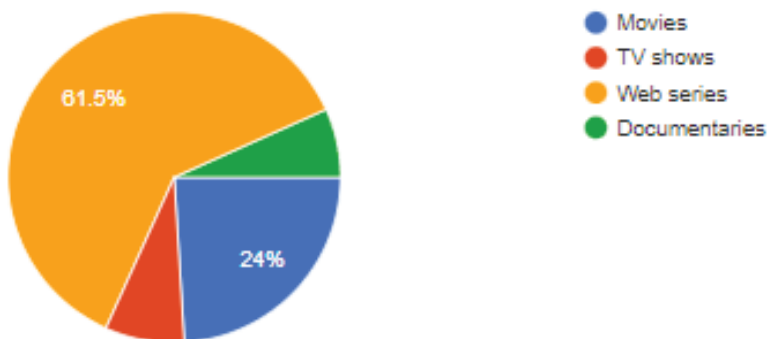
Figure 3. Which type of content people like most in OTT

Based on figure 3, the pie chart it has been visualized that, the maximum number of respondents like to watch *'Web series'* (61.5%).

Some people like to watch *'movies'* (24%) and very nominal present of people watch *'TV shows'* and *'Documentaries'* in OTT platform.

The fourth question was 'How often did you watch traditional TV channels before the lockdown?' Figure 4 depicted the analysis of this question
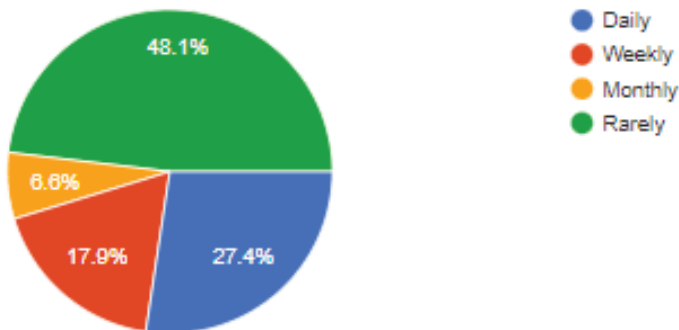
Figure 4. Before lockdown many days' people spend on T.V

Based on analysis of figure 4, it can be said that most of the respondents (48.1%) rarely watched TV before lockdown, maybe because of their busyness. 27.4% of people (most of them housewives and retired people) watched it on a daily basis. Few people use it weekly and monthly.

The fifth question was 'Which type of traditional TV content do you prefer?' ' Figure 5 depicted the analysis of this question
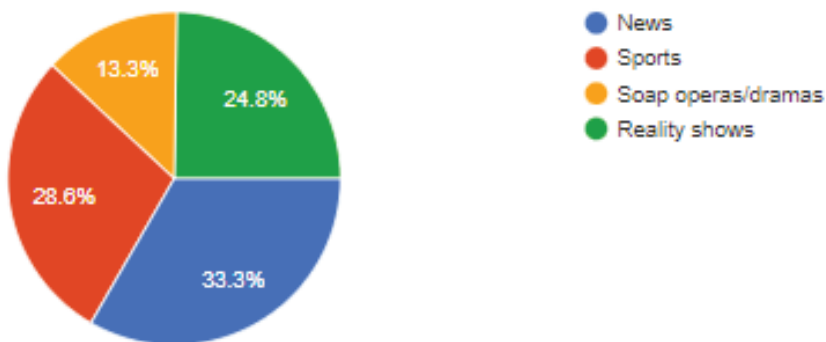
Figure 5. Which type of traditional TV content viewers prefer

Based on figure 5, it can be visualized that most of the viewers (33.3%) like to watch news channels on TV. Some of them like to watch Sports (28.6%) as well as reality shows (24.8%). Few people like to watch dramas and operas on TV.

The sixth question was 'Has your viewership of traditional TV channels changed after the lockdown?' Figure 6 depicted the analysis of this question
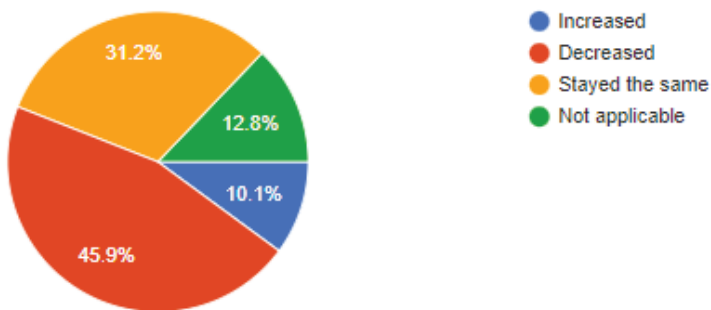
Figure 6. Has \viewership of traditional TV channels changed after the lockdown

Based on figure 6, it can be visualized that the majority of respondents (45.8%) said that their viewership of traditional TV channels did not change after lockdown. Few of them said that it has increased after lockdown (10.3%), and some of them do not want to talk about this (13.1%).

The seventh question was 'Did the lockdown lead you to explore OTT platforms more than before?' Figure 7 depicted the analysis of this question.
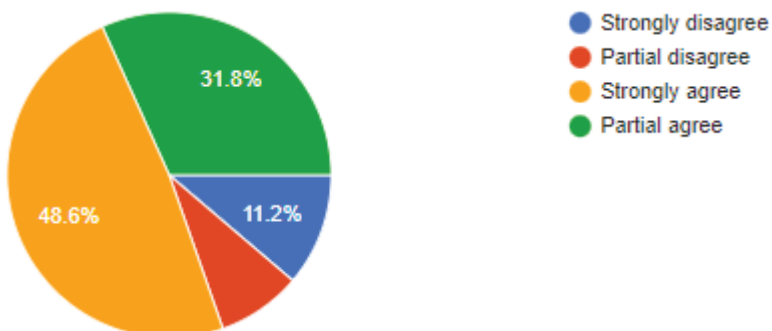
Figure 7. Dose the lockdown lead to explore OTT platforms more than before

Based on figure 7, it can be said that the maximum number of people (48.6%) strongly agree with the statement that they are exploring OTT in the lockdown period more than before. Some people (32.8%) partially agreed with the statement, and a very nominal number disagreed with it (11.2%).

The eight question was 'What influenced your increased OTT usage during the lockdown?' Figure 8 depicted the analysis of this question
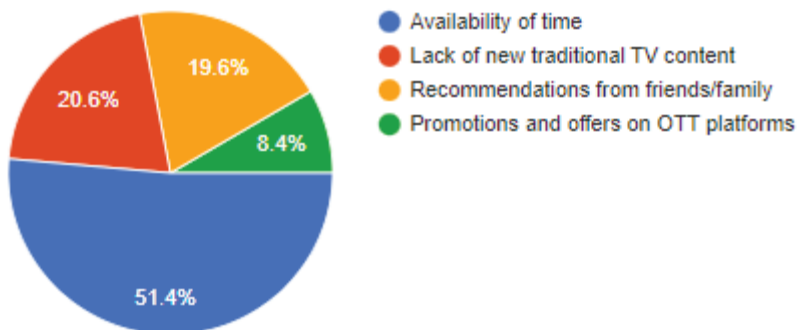
Figure 8. Influences which increased OTT usage during the lockdown

Based on figure 8, it can be said that during the lockdown period, huge amounts of free time influenced people to watch OTT platforms. 51.4% of people agreed with this. Few of them (20.6%) said that a lack of new traditional TV content picked them for OTT, and some viewers were influenced by friends and family recommendations as well as OTT platforms promotions.

The ninth question was 'Do you find OTT platforms to offer more diverse content compared to traditional TV?' Figure 9 depicted the analysis of this question
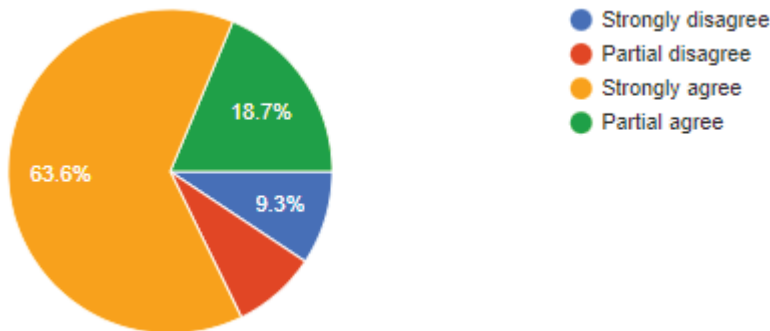
Figure 9,

As per the figure 9, it can be stated that the maximum percentage (63.6%) of viewers of W.B. strongly agreed that OTT services offer a wider range of material than regular TV. Some people (18.7%) were a little bit confused about it, so they partially agreed, and a very small percentage (9.3%) of people disagreed about the matter.

The tenth question was 'Which do you find more appealing in terms of content diversity?' Figure 10 depicted the analysis of this question
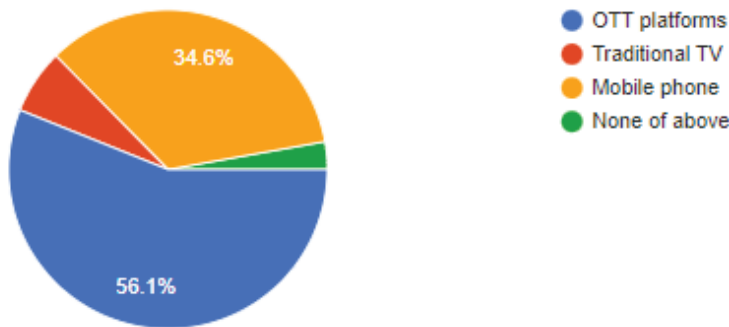
Figure 10. Which is find more appealing in terms of content diversity

Based on figure 10, it can be visualized that the majority (56.1%) said that OTT platforms are more appealing in terms of content diversity. The rest of them (34.6%) believe that mobile phones are more interesting in terms of the variety of material.

The eleventh 'Has the availability of OTT platforms made you more open to exploring content in regional languages?' Figure 11 depicted the analysis of this question
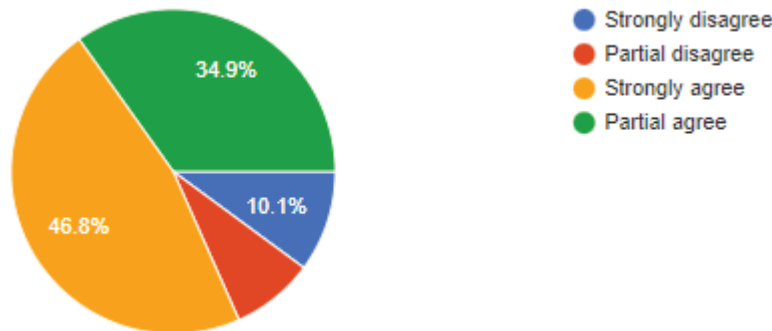
Figure 11. OTT platforms made more open to exploring content in regional language

According to figure 11, the majority of respondents (46.8%) strongly agreed that OTT platforms made them more open to exploring content in regional languages. 34.9% of people partially agreed with this statement, and a few people (10.1%) disagreed.

The twelve question was 'Do you binge-watch shows more on OTT platforms?' Figure 12 depicted the analysis of this question
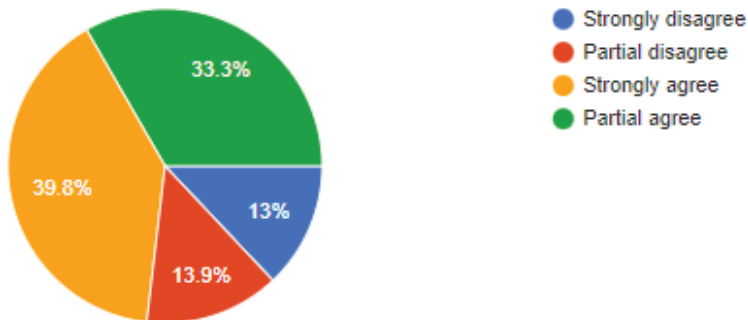
Figure 12. Watch shows more on OTT platforms

Based on figure 12, it can be seen that the majority of respondents (39.8%) strongly agreed that they watch shows more on OTT platforms. Few people disagree with the statement.

The thirteenth question was 'What changes do you think traditional TV channels should make to compete with OTT platforms?' Figure 13 depicted the analysis of this question
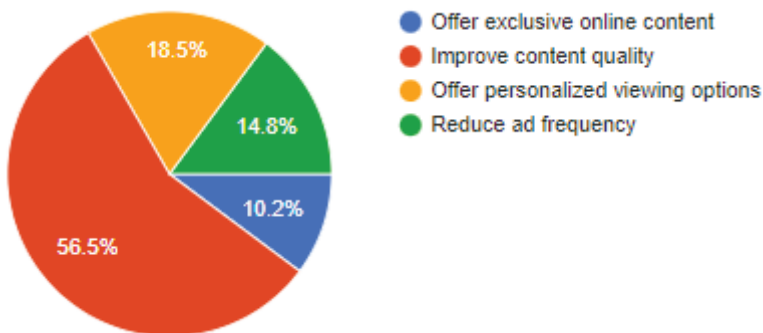
Figure 13. What changes TV channels should make

As per figure 13 it can be stated that maximum viewers (56.5%) of W.B said that T.V channels should improve their content quality. Rest

of the respondents respectively give various statements like, reduce ad frequently, executive online content and many more.

The fourteenth question was 'Which platform's advertisements do you find more engaging?' Figure 14 depicted the analysis of this question
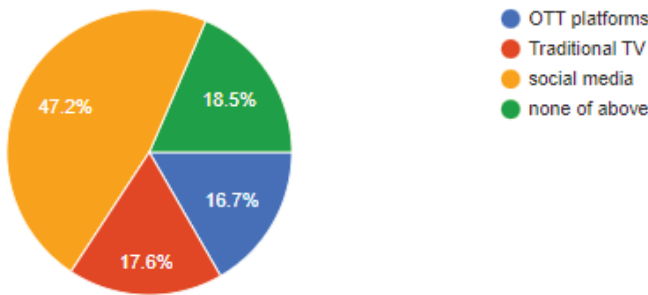
Figure 14. Which platform's advertisements find more engaging

According to figure 14, the majority of West Bengal residents (47.2%) prefer to engage in social media advertisements. The rest of the respondents, respectively, gave various statements like traditional TV and OTT, and some people recommended other platforms too.

The fifteenth question was 'Do you think traditional TV will become obsolete in the future due to the popularity of OTT platforms?' Figure 15 depicted the analysis of this question
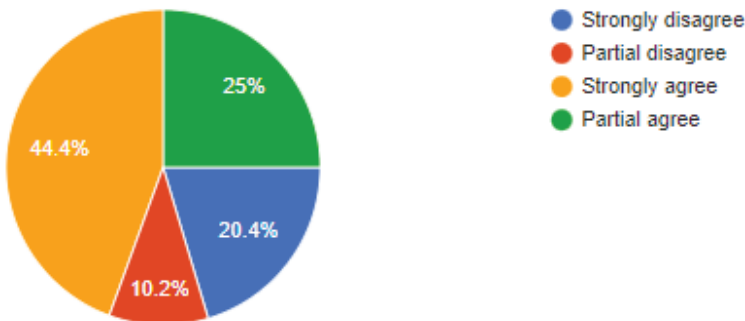
Figure 15. Traditional TV will become obsolete in the future due to the popularity of OTT platforms

As per figure 15, 44.4% viewers of West Bengal strongly agreed that "traditional TV will become obsolete in the future due to the popularity

of OTT platforms". 25% of people partially agreed and few percentage of people disagreed with the statement.

The sixteenth question was 'How do you see your viewing habits evolving in the next two years?' Figure 16 depicted the analysis of this question
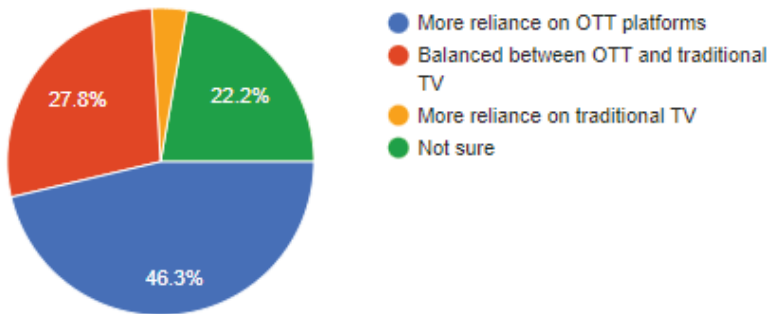
Figure 16. Viewing habits evolving in the next two years

According to figure 16, 46.3% of respondents were more reliant on OTT platforms. 27.8% of people are balanced between OTT and TV. The rest of them are not sure about the matter.

The seventeenth question was, 'Do you feel that OTT platforms provide enough content that represents West Bengal's culture and traditions?' Figure 17 depicted the analysis of this question
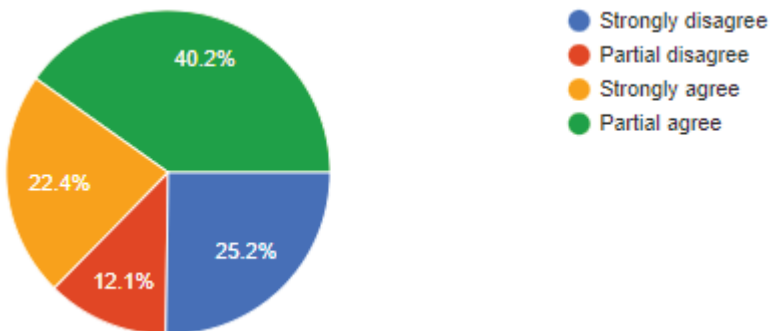
Figure 17. OTT platforms provide enough content that represents West Bengal's culture and traditions

According to figure 17, 40.2% of viewers partially agreed that OTT platforms provide enough content that represents West Bengal's culture

and traditions. 25.2% of viewers disagreed with the statement, and the rest of the interviewees disagreed with it.

The eighteenth question was 'Would you like to see more regional content from West Bengal on OTT platforms?' Figure 18 depicted the analysis of this question
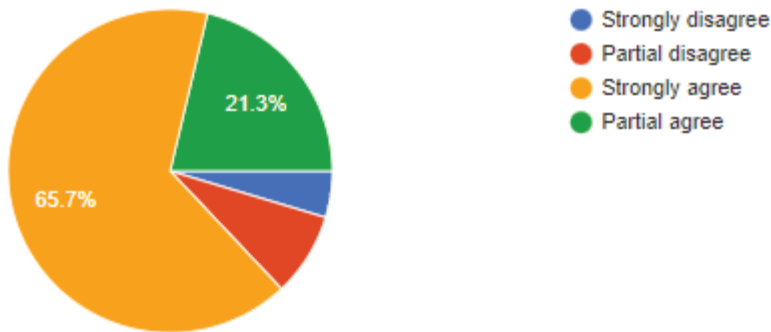
Figurer 18. Dose people like to see more regional content from West Bengal on OTT platforms

Based on figure 18 it can be said that, 65.7% of viewers would like to see more regional content from West Bengal on OTT platforms, and the rest of the viewers partially agreed with the matter.

The nineteenth question was, 'What is your primary reason for choosing OTT platforms or traditional TV?' Figure 19 depicted the analysis of this question
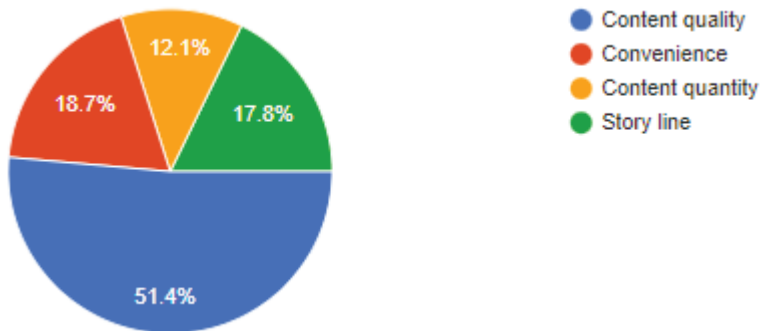
Figure 19. Why people choosing OTT or traditional TV

Based on figure 19, it can be said that the majority of viewers (51.4%) choose any platform depending on content quality. The rest of viewers choose any platform for different reasons, like storyline, convenience, and many more.

The twentieth question was 'Do you find personalized content recommendations on OTT platforms helpful?'
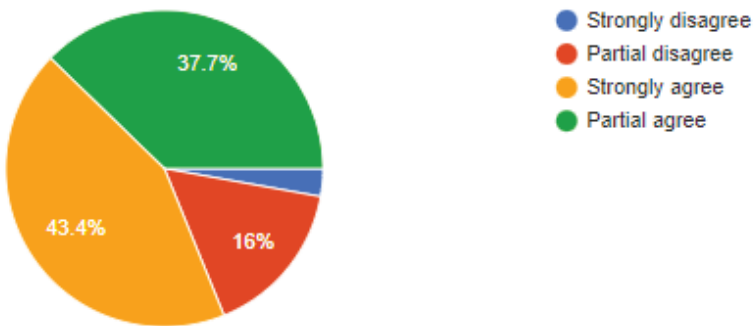
Figure 20. Personalized content recommendations on OTT platforms helpful

According figure 20, 43.4% people find personalized content recommendations on OTT platforms helpful. 37.7% viewers partially agreed with it and few people (16%) partially disagreed.

The twenty-first question was 'Do you think the availability of movies on OTT platforms affects your decision to watch them in theaters?'
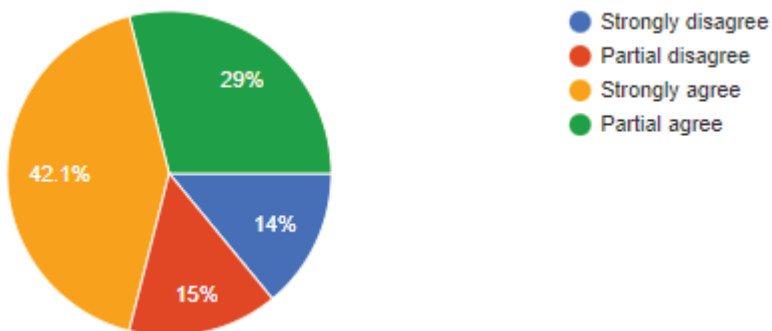
Figure 21. Availability of movies on OTT platforms affects your decision to watch them in theaters

As per figure 21, it can be said that, 42.1% people of West Bengal said that availability of movies on OTT platforms affects their decision to watch them in theaters. 29% partially agreed and the rest of people disagreed with the statement.

The twenty-second question was 'Do you appreciate the fact that OTT platforms have more lenient content censorship compared to traditional TV?'
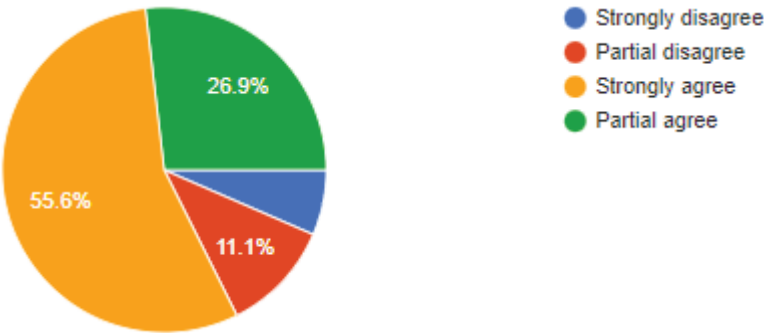
Figure 22. The fact that OTT platforms have more lenient content censorship compared to traditional TV

As per figure 22, maximum viewers (55.6% and 26.9%) accepted the fact that OTT platforms have more lenient content censorship compared to traditional TV, and a very small percentage of viewers did not agree with it.

The twenty-third question was 'Should there be stricter censorship on content provided by OTT platforms?'
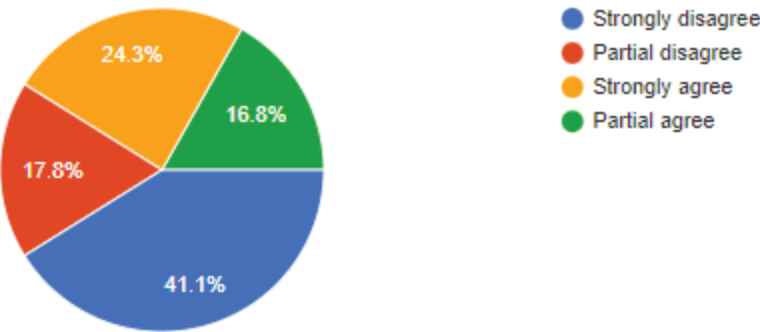
Figure 23. Should there be stricter censorship on content provided by OTT platforms

As per figure 23, (41.1% and 24.3%), viewers disagree that OTT platforms should have stricter censorship on the content provided. The rest of the viewers agreed with the statement.

5. Discussion

This survey provides the information about how people in West Bengal are changing the way they use media, especially after the shutdown. From the numbers.

From the above survey it is observed and verified that OTT (Over-The-Top) apps have gained a lot of popularity in West Bengal, where a large percentage of the population uses them every day. 39% of respondents said they use OTT platforms once a week, which is a lot. This shows that people are becoming more interested in digital streaming services.

With 57.1% of respondents choosing it, "Netflix" is the clear winner when it comes to OTT services. "Disney+ Hotstar" comes in second with 51.4%, showing how different people's tastes are. This data shows how competitive the OTT business is and how important it is for platforms to have a wide range of material to draw and keep people.

"Web series" is another most popular type of material, as 61.5% of those polled said they were interested in it. This trend shows how ongoing stories are becoming more and more popular in West Bengal. At 24%, "Movies" still has a big audience, which shows how important it is for OTT services to have a wide range of material.

In spite of the popularity of all the digital platform, described above the traditional television hasn't been completely left behind. About 27.4% of people, mostly women and retirees, still watch it every day. 33.3% of people who watch TV choose news programs, which shows that they are interested in current events and knowledge.

The COVID-19 lockdown was a major factor in how people watched and read the news. Most of the people who answered (48.6%) strongly agreed that they used OTT platforms more during the lockdown because they had more time on their hands. Others said that they switched to OTT because there wasn't enough new material on standard TV and because friends and family told them to.

Total 63.6% of respondents are strongly agree with the statement that OTT platforms offer a wider range of material than standard TV. This

is a theme that keeps coming up. This shows that users like the different kinds of content that OTT services offer.

Remaining 46.8% of people strongly agree that OTT platforms have made them more willing to check out material in regional languages. This shows that people want regional content. This gives people who make material the chance to cater to the likes and interests of people in West Bengal.

Interestingly, many respondents (56.5% or more) say they watch more shows on OTT platforms than on traditional TV. This could mean that people are moving away from traditional TV for certain kinds of material.

The analysis of voting poll provides that 56.1% of people want standard TV stations to have better programming. Also, 44.4% of respondents prefer to interact with ads on social media, which shows how important digital advertising is for reaching this group.

The future of traditional television is still up for question, with 44.4% of respondents saying it will go away because of the rise of OTT services. But 27.8% of people keep things in check by using both apps.

In short, the data show that the media environment in West Bengal is changing, with OTT apps becoming more popular but not completely replacing traditional TV. Diverse content, ease of access, and regional tastes all have a big impact on watching habits. People in the media business should pay attention to these changing factors so they can better meet the needs of the audience in West Bengal.

6. Conclusion

In West Bengal, after the lockdown, people's viewing habits have changed a lot, with OTT apps becoming more popular but not fully replacing traditional TV. The media environment has changed because OTT platforms give different kinds of material, are easy to use, and have options in regional languages. Traditional stations must change if they want to stay relevant. They must improve the quality of their programming and adapt to how their viewers' tastes are changing. The future of media viewing in West Bengal seems to be a lively mix of traditional and digital venues that give people a wide range of choices and experiences. This study can help content creators, providers, and marketers figure out how to work in this changing media environment.

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The Use of Narrative Style to Present Global News on Television: A Study on Selected English News Channels in India

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Abstract

Narrative journalism refers to creative nonfiction that follows a story-telling style to present news stories in order to increase the engagement of the audience. Using a point-of-view style in a journalistic presentation helps to evoke the emotion of the audience considering the character development, scenography and so on. In case of national television channels, sometimes the narrative style of news presentation shapes the global news and helps to increase the comprehension level of the audience. National news channels in India present global news in a more engaging as well as informative manner using a narrative structure. The current study focuses on the style of global news presentation of two English news channels such as CNN-News 18 and Republic TV. Moreover, this study also describes different aspects of narrative journalism considering the global news flow in a country like India. The purpose and potential of narrative news on global issues are the key aspects of this particular research study. The perspective of the mentioned two news channels on different international news is described in this research study. The current study has used content analysis of some selected international news considering the news presentation style of two news channels for understanding the potential of narrative journalism to make a news story more attractive and informative as well. With the help of narrative journalism, news channels promote a particular view-point among the audience. This study sheds light on the importance of narrative journalism to present international news to be more effective and informative.

Key words: Narrative news, International news, Story-telling, Audience engagement.

Introduction

Narrative journalism is creative non-fiction that contains accurate and well-researched information to evoke the emotion of the audience by increasing their level of comprehension. Narrative news in television helps the audience to understand the news story in an effective manner. Narrative journalism that stresses on audience engagement as well as influence is also known as literary journalism. The presentation of a news story in a narrative manner is the core style of narrative journalism. In case of television journalism, journalists sometimes use storytelling techniques in order to create a gripping and moreover, it is also a personal form of journalism. Considering global issues such as news related to the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, news channels present the news story sometimes in a narrative style for making the information easily understandable. The present research study is going to shed light on international news and the presentation of that news in different national English-language news channels in India. This study focuses on the narratives on a global news story provided by CNN-News 18 and Republic TV based on a global news story.

Literature review

Etymology of International News

International is a broader term in the field of mass communication which pertains to occurrences and events that take place on an international scale, involving several countries in the world. The word international has been derived from inter which is a Latin word. It means between. On the other hand, natio means nation. The term international indicates the global relations and interactions that help to transcend national boundaries. International news refers to the information that conveys the message about the developments and happenings which have relevance in the global arena.

From the point of view of Gupta (2012), the rise and demise of the new liaison makes a country more diverse in the international area in terms of global relations. Media houses present international news to inform people about the bilateral relations between countries. For this reason, international news related to bilateral relations between two countries is disseminated by different media houses and conveys a message to the audience.

Presentation of Narrative news on television

Narrative news is an important aspect in the field of journalism that basically focuses on literary techniques to present the message to the audience by evoking emotion. Narrative news is also presented by television considering plot development, characterisation, scenography and description of circumstances and events. According to the point of view of Huisman, Murphet & Dunn (2006), it has been found that television news helps to give shape to the narrative of real information. In order to keep the attention of the audience, television news channels use narrative techniques in an effective manner. The flow of information, presented in television news using narrative techniques, always focuses on the in-depth interpretation followed by characterisation, plot development and detailed description of the event (Huisman, Murphet & Dunn, 2006). In order to represent reality, the television channel uses narrative techniques significantly. Using a pyramid structure to present news in a narrative manner, is the style of television news channels to help the audience in increasing their level of comprehension. Technological development makes the process of dissemination of international news much easier than before. Through television channels, global news flow is maintained effectively to inform people about international happenings (Schrøder, 2019). The creative non-fiction or narrative style helps the television channel to present news stories in such a manner so that the audience can understand the complex issues on a significant note. In this regard, global issues are sometimes described in an effective way considering the point of view style. From the point of view of Mihelj, Bajt, & Pankov (2007), it can be stated that narratives in television news help the audience to understand the events and also help to develop the senses of the social world. For this reason, global news story narratives help the audience to make sense of society effectively.

Theoretical background of presenting narrative news

Genette's influential theory

Considering Genette's influential theory, it can be explained that narrative is a communicative phenomenon. Narration is concerned with time whereas description extends itself in space. For this reason, it is said by Landa (2005) that description is an indispensable element within the narration. Genette said the narrative mood is dependent on the 'distance' and 'perspective' of the narrator, and like music, the narrative mood has predominant patterns. In the case of news, it can be considered that a television channel presents the news stories in such a way, that the audience understands the perspective of the news presenter which increases the level of comprehension and makes the news stories more attractive.

Framing theory

News frames bundle key concepts, and iconic images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments. Framing helps the media in prioritizing the images, and facts as well as the interpretation of the news stories for helping the audience to increase their level of comprehension. The visual as well as vocal selection of the facts helps to build the frame and present the news story in an effective manner. The Framing theory of Erving Goffman (Frame analysis, 1974), helps to describe an issue which can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations. Goffman refers to the frame as a social framework and as a mental schema that allows users to organize experiences. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue. From the opinion of Tewksbury & Scheufele (2019), it can be found that news mostly contains information as well as the frame. Additionally, information in a news story can create a connection and engagement with the audience to make them understand properly. However, it generally relies on a frame for building relations and association with the event. While reading a news article or watching the news on television, the audience sometimes receives the information with different images, facts as well as charts and figures. This is the process of representing a frame in a particular news story to increase the level of understanding of the audience.

Role of television to present global news on Indo-Pak relations

Television plays a crucial role in presenting international news about the relationship between India and its neighbouring country Pakistan in the global arena. Television as an audio-visual medium analyses and discusses different events and developments along with issues between Pakistan and India. Television channels in India provide Real-Time news coverage of significant events regarding the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan such as border tensions, peace initiative diplomatic talks and military developments. Sometimes different news channels present different narratives on the same international news and help the viewers gain a better comprehension of the dynamics between two countries (Siraj, 2008). In order to maintain the global news flow inside the country the television channels play a vital role by providing in-depth analysis of the global events happening between India and Pakistan. It is because according to the study of Siraj (2008), it has been found that global characteristics of mass media help people to view conflict from different perspectives and different angles. Journalists use news framing to structure the narrative flow of events. The narrative style is adopted by the television for disseminating information among the audience considering their perspective and preferences. With the help of narrative style, it is possible for television to increase the comprehension level of the audience regarding complex issues like Indo-Pak relations in the global arena. Television plays a crucial role in explaining complex issues using different facts, figures and images. Television plays an effective role in fostering the relationship between Pakistan and India by shaping the reality (Hafeez, 2015). Hence, global news is disseminated to a larger audience through television to inform people about the recent developments in Indo-Pak relations.

Problem statement

The news in an inverted pyramid structure is presented in descending order based on its importance. It basically starts with the lead and sums up the most relevant aspects of the story. From the study of Emde, Klimmt & Schluetz (2016), it is stated that journalists usually discuss news stories with the help of narrative or storytelling format and it can be considered as an alternative format of news presentation. Character developments, plot developments, and descriptions of the events help to present the news stories in a narrative structure of news story that provides non-fictional as well as mediated information

(Machill, Köhler, & Waldhauser, 2007). For this reason, there is a low comprehension of the audience in the case of inverted pyramid-style news presentations (Emde, Klimmt & Schluetz, 2016). In this regard, the current research sheds light on the potential of narrative news to present global issues in English-language news channels in India for increasing the comprehension level of the audience.

Research Objectives, Research Questions and Research Methodology

Research objectives

- To understand the narrative structure of news related to Indo-Pak relations in English television channels in India

- To analyse the news narratives on Indo-Pak relations in two English news channels in India

- To identify the factors that help the English news channels in India to present global news related to Indo-Pak relations using narrative style

Research questions

1. What are the key structural narratives of news related to Indo-Pak relations in English television news channels in India?

2. What is the style of the news presentation on Indo-Pak relations in two English news channels in India?

3. What are the key factors that enable the English news channels in India to present global news related to Indo-Pak relations using a narrative style?

Research Methodology

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is significant credence for understanding the process by which data can be gathered, processed and presented in order to conduct the study. The research paradigm should be considered in this regard for conducting the study effectively. There are certain types of research philosophy that are discussed and distinguished in the different studies by the researchers. These are positivism, pragmatism, realism as well and interpretivism (Saunders et al. 2016). Interpretivism philosophy is based on the assumption that reality is subjective and

socially constructed. This research has chosen the interpretivism research philosophy for analysing data in a subjective manner. This research philosophy prefers qualitative data analysis in the study for meeting research objectives. On the other hand, other research philosophies have not been chosen for this research. It is because positivism adheres to the view that "factual" knowledge is trustworthy as it can be gained through observation (by senses) and it can also be measured. Moreover, realism philosophy can rely on the idea of independence of reality from the human mind. This philosophy assumes a scientific approach to the development of knowledge. In addition to this, A pragmatic study focuses on an individual decision-maker within an actual real-world situation. The process of undertaking a pragmatic study is first to identify a problem and view it within its broadest context. In this research study interpretivism philosophy has been selected because this philosophy relies on observation and questioning to generate an in-depth understanding of the study.

Research approach

The inductive approach has been followed in this research study. The inductive research approach helps the researcher draw a conclusion by going from specific to general. This approach is effective in observing the sample based on the research objectives. This approach is quite useful to analyse qualitative data (Hodkinson, 2008). Moreover, the deductive approach has been rejected for this research because the deductive research approach is effective for the researcher if the conclusion is drawn by going from general to specific and it is generally used in quantitative research studies.

In this research, qualitative research is conducted. It is because it is helpful for understanding the news content which is required in this research study. With the help of an inductive research approach, it is possible for the researcher to analyse data in a subjective manner. This research method is helpful for the researcher in analysing news from two different English-language television channels in order to understand the style of news presentation and narratives of the television news channels on the same global news.

Data collection and analysis

In this research, secondary qualitative data is collected and analysed for accomplishing the research objectives. In this regard, content analysis is

effective in meeting the research objectives. Secondary qualitative data from the English-language news channels in India is gathered for content analysis. According to the latest BARC report (Broadcast Audience Research Council), CNN-News 18 has the highest market share and has become the industry leader (firstpost.com, 2023). Additionally, Republic TV has the second highest market share after CNN-News 18. In order to conduct an in-depth exploration, two top English language news channels have been chosen to analyse one global news which is significant for the audience of India. For analysing international news on Indo-Pak relations, this research study has chosen one global news story. The chosen news event happened in the month of August 2023.

Sample size and sampling process

The current study has focused on the non-probability sampling process to analyse qualitative data in order to meet the research objectives. For this reason, in this research study, purposive sampling is followed to collect data from the news channels. From the study of Elo et al. (2014), it can be stated that in the case of qualitative content analysis, purposive sampling is one of the most commonly used sampling methods to collect relevant data for the research. In this study, the mentioned sampling method is chosen because with the help of this sampling process, the researcher can collect data based on a purpose and the sample should have the characteristics that the researcher may need in the research study. This study has chosen the mentioned sampling process and two news stories regarding the Mob attack on churches in Pakistan of two different national news channels CNN News 18 and Republic TV and the duration of the news is 8 minutes and 5 minutes have been selected for the research. So, the sample size is 160 minutes. News which describes the recent happenings related to Indo-Pak relations has been selected for this study to understand the narratives of two English-language news channels on the same news.

Result and discussion

Attack on churches in Pakistan

Indian news channels publish global news to inform people of our country about recent happenings. In recent days, one of the trending global news stories in National media houses is "Mob attack on churches in Pakistan". This global news has been presented on Republic TV and CNN News 18. In this study, narratives of the mentioned two

news channels in India are explained to understand the key factors of narrative news and the style and structure of the news.

Narratives of Republic TV

Republic TV, a national media in India has said through its news story that intolerant Pakistan blames India for the Mob attacks on churches in Jaranwala. In this news channel, a point of view is also presented because the news presenter says the statement given by Pakistan police has made allegations against India which has no basis (republicworld.com, 2023). The Republic TV has presented that a total of 19 churches have been damaged due to the violence. The news channel has portrayed Pakistan as covering up its intolerance by blaming India for the violence.

The channel has presented the news in an attractive style by including the background story of the incident. The channel has stated that the Punjab Police has evoked Manipur violence while blaming India for the attack on the church (youtube.com, 2023). This channel has also added that for several months, there has been violence and attacks on churches such as stone pelting and physical violence as well.

The Republic TV narrates the story considering the past incident and tries to portray that the attack is not a new incident but it has been continuing for several months (republicworld.com, 2023). This news has followed a point-of-view style while presenting the incident to the audience. Moreover, scenography, plot and characterisation have also been used in the news story. The duration of the news story is 8 minutes. The narrative of the news channel describes the Indo-Pak relations regarding the Jarawala violence.

Narratives of CNN-News 18

On a national news channel like CNN-News 18, the news related to the attack on the church has been broadcast. In this regard, as per the narrative of the mentioned channel, Pakistan blames India for the attack on the church in Jaranwala. The news also portrays Pakistan's allegations that India is responsible for the attack on a church which has triggered Pakistan Muslim-Christian riots. According to the news, three main suspects have been arrested for this and around 300 suspects have been taken to police custody for torching the homes of Christians and churches in Jaranwala (edition.cnn.com, 2023). The national media in a country like India covers the relations between India and Pakistan considering the allegation given by Pakistan that India is responsible for the attack on churches in Pakistan.

This channel has portrayed the news in such a manner that a brief introduction is given to arouse the interest of the audience. This news channel has said that the name India is added again and this time Pakistan has blamed India for the Jarawala violence. During the news presentation, the channel did not use an inverted pyramid style but gave a description of the incident along with photographs and catchy headlines (edition.cnn.com, 2023).

In this news story, there is a plot, characterisation, circumstances and events along with scenography. These are the key elements of narrative structure (Machill, Köhler, & Waldhauser, 2007). Moreover, from the perspective of the General of Police (IGP) Punjab Usman Anwar, the news is presented.

This news also uses the first personal narrative where the news presenter says "I pointed out" (youtube.com, 2023). It means in this news story, point of view style is also followed to attract the attention of the audience. The duration of the news story was around 5 minutes 30 seconds. In this news, the channel has pointed out the Indo-Pak relations by saying Pakistan has tried to distract people by blaming India for the attack on the church.

Discussion

On the basis of the above analysis, it can be stated that Indian media sometimes uses a narrative style to present global news. Based on certain aspects, the narrative style of news presentation can be discussed. In this regard, it has been found that news stories on global issues like the attack on churches in Pakistan are described in a detailed way to increase the comprehension level of the audience. The characterisation in both news stories is used to analyse the incident in an effective manner. The Police Officer in Pakistan is the character based on whom statement, in the entire news story is described.

Moreover, the plot of the news story is the attack on churches in Pakistan and Pakistan blames India for the violence. Both news channels have presented the plot clearly with the help of images and texts and the narration of the news presenter. The use of visuals of the incidents is an effective way to keep the audience engaged.

The news event is described by both news channels in such a manner that the audience can understand the message easily. Both channels have

not followed 5W's 1H structure but give a small introduction before presenting the main fact of the news event. Moreover, past information regarding the news event and first-person narrative is also used by the news channels to present the global issue in order to analyse the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and India.

From the above discussion, it can be said that the news presented considering the narrative structure follows a point-of-view style and first-person narratives. Additionally. characterisation, plot development as well as the description of the events using images and other texts help the audience understand the narrative structure (Machill, Köhler, & Waldhauser, 2007).

Moreover, the news narratives for the same news story are different in the two news channels considering the style of presentation. CNN-News 18 has focused on the statement given by Punjab Police and the news has been presented from the point of view of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Usman Anwar. On the contrary, Republic TV has stated that Pakistan has tried to cover its intolerance by blaming India for the attack on churches.

From the viewpoint of Keith Norambuena, Mitra & North (2023), Visual presentation is one of the important things that is used in narrative news. It has also been found from two news stories that in-depth reporting and visual presentation is the key factor that enables English news channels in India to present global news for analysing Indo-Pak relations. Both channels have presented the news in a detailed manner and in-depth reporting from the spot is also included in the news stories. It has been possible because ethical reporting followed by objectivity with news narratives is the key factor in presenting global news stories. Journalists identify the problems and then it helps them to make moral judgments (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000). English-language news channels like CNN News 18 and Republic TV use narrative techniques to present international news related to Indo-Pak relations.

Conclusion

The current study draws a profound conclusion that the use of narrative style by English language news channels in India is effective in disseminating international news related to Indo-Pak relations to help the audience understand the message easily. The media narratives help

the audience to persuade the message and increase the comprehension level of the audience in India. It can be concluded that point-of-view style is one of the core techniques that are used in news stories considering the narrative style. Global news story on violence in Jaranwala is a serious issue that needs to be discussed in an in-depth manner. For this reason, Republic TV and CNN News 18 have presented the news on Mob attacks on churches in Pakistan on a significant note to increase the engagement of the audience. Two news channels have focused on the point of view style as well as elements of narrative techniques to present the global news in order to analyse the relations between Pakistan and India. Therefore, the narrative style is used in Indian news channels to present global news stories by maintaining objectivity that helps to engage the audience and increase their level of understanding of complex issues. There is a scope of this study as the present study has only focused on one global news and analysed the news based on the structure and style of presentation. However, as a future scope, it can be stated that it is effective to analyse the purpose of the use of narrative style in presenting global news stories on television to understand the level of audience engagement.

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The Impact of OTT Platforms on the Advertising Revenue of Traditional Broadcasting

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Abstract

The global media landscape is undergoing a transformative shift driven by the ascendance of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. These digital streaming services, offering diverse, on-demand content accessible across various devices, have ushered in a new era in media consumption. Traditional broadcasting, long-standing as the dominant force in the entertainment and advertising industry, now grapples with unprecedented challenges and opportunities. This research paper undertakes a comprehensive examination of the intricate relationship between OTT platforms and traditional broadcasting, with a specific focus on the ramifications for advertising revenue.

Central to this research is the observation that changing viewer preferences, rooted in convenience, personalization, and flexibility, have prompted viewers to migrate towards OTT platforms, resulting in a marked decline in traditional linear television viewership. The allure of diverse content options, including original programming and niche offerings, along with affordability and flexibility, has catapulted OTT platforms into the forefront of media consumption. This viewer migration has not only reshaped the audience landscape but has also intensified competition for advertising dollars, with OTT platforms offering data-driven advertising solutions that promise precise targeting and measurable ROI. However, amidst the challenges lies a landscape ripe with opportunities. Collaborations between traditional broadcasters and OTT platforms offer avenues to extend content reach and catalog diversification. OTT platforms' unique features, such as interactivity and recommendation algorithms, provide a canvas for creating immersive, engaging content experiences. Additionally, by embracing OTT platforms as distribution channels, traditional broadcasters can reach cord-cutting audiences.

In conclusion, the impact of OTT platforms on the advertising revenue of traditional broadcasting is multifaceted, representing both challenges and opportunities. This research underscores the need for traditional broadcasters to adapt and innovate, striking a balance between tradition and innovation. The digital age beckons them to redefine their role, relevance, and strategies in the evolving media landscape, where collaboration and adaptation are keys to thriving. This research paper serves as a milestone in understanding the dynamic interplay between technology and tradition in the realm of media and advertising, offering insights into the future of advertising revenue in the digital age.

Keywords: OTT platforms , Traditional Broadcasting, Advertising Revenue, Media Landscape, Viewer Preferences, Media Consumption, Digital Transformation

Introduction

The global media landscape is in the throes of a profound and relentless transformation, a metamorphosis catalyzed by the relentless expansion of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. These digital streaming services, characterized by their flexibility, diversity, and on-demand accessibility across various devices, have ignited a media revolution, fundamentally altering the way audiences consume content (Morgan, 2018). In the wake of this digital renaissance, traditional broadcasting, long-standing as the bastion of televised entertainment and advertising revenue, now stands at a pivotal juncture, where its historical dominance faces a compelling challenge from the upstart OTT platforms.

The scope of this research delves into the profound implications that OTT platforms impose on the advertising revenue of traditional broadcasting, a subject that has become increasingly relevant and imperative in today's dynamic media landscape. It is a landscape where the paradigms of content consumption are shifting and evolving at an unprecedented pace, and where advertisers are navigating new channels and strategies to reach their audiences (Hess, 2019). At its core, this research seeks to unravel the complex and multifaceted dynamics of this transformation, understanding not just the causes and consequences but also the opportunities that emerge from this digital disruption.

The decline in advertising revenue for traditional broadcasters is more than just a financial concern; it is emblematic of a larger, multifaceted challenge. It reflects a profound shift in viewer preferences and behaviors, a transformation that underscores the evolving nature of our media consumption habits (García-Avilés, 2018). It highlights how the allure of OTT platforms, with their personalized content libraries, flexibility in viewing schedules, and sometimes even affordability, has led viewers to deviate from conventional linear television. This trend is reflective of a broader societal shift towards individualized, consumer-centric media consumption, where audiences are no longer passive spectators but active curators of their content experience (Fuchs, 2017).

Moreover, this decline in advertising revenue has precipitated heightened competition for advertising dollars. With OTT platforms offering sophisticated, data-driven advertising solutions that promise precise audience targeting and measurable ROI, traditional broadcasters have had to adapt to the realities of a digital, data-centric advertising landscape (Shapiro, 2019). The traditional model of broadcasting is undergoing a seismic transformation, where linear viewership figures are no longer the sole metric of success, but rather, audience engagement and data-driven insights take precedence.

This research paper sets out on a comprehensive exploration of the intricate interplay between OTT platforms and traditional broadcasting, striving to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities that emerge as a result of this paradigm shift. It aims to decode how changing viewer preferences, technological advancements, and innovative content strategies have reshaped the landscape of advertising revenue, compelling traditional broadcasters to redefine their roles and strategies in the digital age (Broughton, 2017).

The subsequent sections of this paper embark on an enlightening journey through the annals of this transformation. The literature review, comprehensive and exhaustive, offers a detailed exposition of existing research, pinpointing the pivotal insights and the interstices that still require exploration when it comes to comprehending the full scope of the impact of OTT platforms on advertising revenue (McKenzie, 2019). The methodology section, meticulously constructed, peels back the layers to unveil the research methods utilized to gather and analyze quantitative and qualitative data, allowing us to fathom the depth and breadth of this transformation (Carr, 2020).

Moreover, the discussion section is an intellectual arena where these findings converge, giving rise to an in-depth analysis of the multifaceted ramifications faced by traditional broadcasters and the opportunities that stand on the horizon, beckoning them towards adaptation and innovation (Picard, 2020). Finally, the paper culminates in a reflective conclusion, contemplating the trajectory of traditional broadcasting in an era where OTT platforms have risen to dominance, reshaping the contours of the media landscape (Fuchs, 2017).

In essence, this research paper serves as a testament to the transformative power of digital technologies in the media landscape. It acknowledges that while OTT platforms have posed challenges to traditional broadcasting, they have simultaneously opened new avenues for innovation, collaboration, and adaptation. By delving into the intricate relationship between these two facets of the media industry, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities that define the future of advertising revenue in the digital age.

As the digital revolution continues to unfurl, this research stands as a milestone in our understanding of the dynamic interplay between technology and tradition in the realm of media and advertising. It beckons traditional broadcasters to embark on a journey of reinvention, where the past is a foundation, and the future is an opportunity to redefine their role and relevance in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

The literature surrounding the impact of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms on traditional broadcasting's advertising revenue is a rich tapestry that underscores the transformative nature of this technological evolution.

2.1 Shift in Viewer Preferences

A cornerstone of this shift is the changing preferences of viewers. Research has consistently shown that audiences are increasingly drawn to OTT platforms due to the convenience they offer (Morgan, 2018). Viewers relish the ability to watch content on-demand, without being tethered to a rigid programming schedule (Hess, 2019). This shift in consumer behavior, characterized by binge-watching entire seasons of shows and avoiding commercials, has disrupted the traditional advertising model (Broughton, 2017).

2.2 Challenges to Traditional Broadcasting

Traditional broadcasters have faced a multitude of challenges stemming from this seismic shift. One of the key challenges lies in the fierce competition for advertising dollars. Advertisers are lured by the precision targeting capabilities of OTT platforms (Shapiro, 2019). The ability to reach specific demographic segments with tailored advertising has made OTT platforms an attractive choice for marketers (Lepore, 2018). Consequently, traditional broadcasters find themselves in a battle for the attention of advertisers, a contest in which they often struggle to match the granularity of data-driven targeting offered by OTT platforms (Picard, 2020).

Additionally, there is the issue of technological parity. The rapid evolution of OTT platforms, often at the forefront of technological innovation, requires traditional broadcasters to invest significantly in modernizing their infrastructure to remain competitive (Carr, 2020). This necessitates not only financial investments but also a cultural shift within organizations to adapt to the demands of a digital-first world (Fuchs, 2017).

Furthermore, the changing media landscape has compelled traditional broadcasters to reinvent their content strategies. The allure of OTT platforms extends beyond convenience to the rich variety of content they provide, including original programming and niche offerings (García-Avilés, 2018). To remain relevant, traditional broadcasters must invest heavily in producing engaging, original content while simultaneously catering to the demands of their existing audience (McKenzie, 2019).

2.3 Opportunities for Traditional Broadcasters

Amidst these challenges, numerous opportunities exist for traditional broadcasters to adapt and thrive in the age of OTT dominance. Collaboration between traditional broadcasters and OTT platforms has emerged as a strategic approach (Broughton, 2017). Such collaborations extend the reach of traditional broadcasters to OTT audiences while offering OTT platforms access to a broader content catalog (Picard, 2020).

Traditional broadcasters can also leverage the unique features of OTT platforms to their advantage. Interactivity, personalization, and recommendation algorithms provide avenues for creating immersive viewer experiences (García-Avilés, 2018). By experimenting with interactive storytelling, live events, and gamification, broadcasters can differentiate their content offerings (McKenzie, 2019).

Furthermore, traditional broadcasters can utilize OTT platforms as a distribution channel to reach cord-cutting audiences (Morgan, 2018). OTT platforms offer an accessible and affordable way for viewers to access content, presenting an opportunity for traditional broadcasters to maintain their reach.

2.4 Research and Innovation

The transformative nature of the media landscape has spurred extensive research and innovation efforts across academia and industry. Picard (2020) delves into value creation and pricing in multi-platform media markets, providing insights into the economics of advertising in the digital age. Shapiro (2019) explores the intricacies of the advertising market, shedding light on the evolving dynamics of advertising strategies. In the realm of policy, Fuchs (2017) scrutinizes the impact of social media on media policy and regulation, highlighting the challenges posed by the proliferation of digital platforms. Carr's (2020) book, "The Big Switch," provides a historical perspective on the broader implications of digitization, offering insights into the disruptions and opportunities wrought by digital technologies.

Furthermore, the research community continues to investigate various aspects of the impact of OTT platforms on traditional broadcasting, including audience behavior, advertising effectiveness, and content production strategies. The results of these studies provide valuable insights into the evolving media landscape.

Amidst these challenges, opportunities emerge for traditional broadcasters. Collaboration with OTT platforms presents one such opportunity. Joint ventures, partnerships, and cross-promotions allow traditional broadcasters to tap into the burgeoning OTT audience (Broughton, 2017). Such collaborations can lead to revenue-sharing arrangements that bolster the financial health of traditional broadcasters (Picard, 2020).

Additionally, traditional broadcasters can leverage the unique features of OTT platforms. These platforms offer interactivity, personalization, and engagement opportunities that are difficult to replicate on traditional broadcast channels (Shapiro, 2019). By experimenting with innovative content formats, such as interactive storytelling and gamification, broadcasters can engage viewers in new and exciting ways, thus mitigating the allure of ad-free viewing (García-Avilés, 2018).

Furthermore, OTT platforms provide a bridge to cord-cutting audiences. As viewers increasingly opt for streaming services over traditional cable or satellite subscriptions, traditional broadcasters can utilize OTT platforms as a distribution channel to reach this growing segment (Morgan, 2018). This not only preserves the broadcaster's reach but also allows them to monetize their content in new ways (Hess, 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The rationale behind this choice is to provide a holistic understanding of the multifaceted impact of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms on the advertising revenue of traditional broadcasting. By integrating quantitative data on advertising revenue trends with qualitative insights from industry experts and content creators, we aim to gain a comprehensive view of this dynamic landscape.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Quantitative Data

To examine the trends in advertising revenue, quantitative data was collected from multiple sources, including industry reports, financial statements of major traditional broadcasting companies, and databases maintained by media research organizations. Specifically, we analyzed advertising revenue figures over a period spanning several years, allowing us to identify and assess patterns and fluctuations.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data on advertising revenue trends were subjected to a thorough analysis. Time-series analysis and statistical techniques were applied to identify significant trends and patterns in revenue data over the selected time period. This analysis allowed us to discern the extent of the impact of OTT platforms on traditional broadcasting's advertising revenue.

3.4 Data Integration

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data occurred at multiple

stages of analysis. Triangulation was employed to cross-validate findings from different data sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For instance, qualitative insights from interviews were used to provide context and depth to the quantitative findings, elucidating the reasons behind revenue trends and the industry's responses to them.

4. Discussion (Results/Analysis)

4.1 The Decline in Advertising Revenue

The quantitative analysis of advertising revenue trends over the past decade reveals a consistent decline in traditional broadcasting's share of the advertising pie. From 2016 to 2021, advertising revenue in the broadcast television sector in the United States witnessed a substantial drop from $74.3 billion to $67.8 billion. This decline mirrors the global trend where traditional broadcasters are facing challenges due to the emergence of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms.

The decline in advertising revenue can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the migration of viewers to OTT platforms has significantly reduced the audience base of traditional broadcasters (Morgan, 2018). Advertisers are drawn to platforms that offer precise targeting and engagement, and OTT platforms have capitalized on this by offering personalized, data-driven advertising experiences (Shapiro, 2019). This shift has diverted advertising dollars away from traditional broadcasting channels.

Secondly, the rise of ad-blockers and the practice of 'cord-cutting' have contributed to the decline (Broughton, 2017). Viewers increasingly prefer ad-free or ad-light experiences on OTT platforms, further eroding the value proposition of traditional television advertising (Lepore, 2018).

4.2 Challenges Faced by Traditional Broadcasters

Traditional broadcasters are grappling with a multitude of challenges arising from these revenue declines. One of the most significant challenges is the intense competition for advertising dollars (Picard, 2020). As OTT platforms continue to innovate and offer advertisers more sophisticated targeting capabilities, traditional broadcasters find it challenging to compete in the increasingly data-driven advertising landscape (Shapiro, 2019).

Furthermore, adapting to the technological demands of the digital age

requires substantial investments (Carr, 2020). Traditional broadcasters must not only upgrade their infrastructure but also transform their organizational cultures to become more agile and responsive to the rapidly changing media environment (Fuchs, 2017).

Additionally, the need for more compelling content arises as viewers seek diverse and original programming (McKenzie, 2019). Traditional broadcasters must invest in creating engaging, high-quality content to remain competitive in an era where viewers have an abundance of choices (García-Avilés, 2018).

4.3 Opportunities for Traditional Broadcasters

Amidst these challenges, there are opportunities for traditional broadcasters to thrive in the age of OTT dominance. One notable avenue is collaboration with OTT platforms (Broughton, 2017). Joint ventures and partnerships can provide traditional broadcasters access to new audiences and revenue streams. Cross-promotions and co-produced content can be mutually beneficial.

Additionally, the unique features of OTT platforms, such as interactivity and personalization, offer traditional broadcasters innovative ways to engage viewers (García-Avilés, 2018). By experimenting with interactive storytelling, gamification, and personalized content recommendations, broadcasters can create more immersive and engaging experiences that counterbalance the allure of ad-free viewing (McKenzie, 2019).

Traditional broadcasters can also leverage OTT platforms to reach cord-cutting audiences (Morgan, 2018). By making their content accessible through these platforms, they provide viewers with a convenient and cost-effective way to access their programming.

4.4 The Future of Traditional Broadcasting

The future of traditional broadcasting remains uncertain in the face of the growing dominance of OTT platforms. However, it is evident that these platforms will continue to play a pivotal role in the media landscape. Traditional broadcasters must adapt and innovate to thrive.

By embracing collaboration with OTT platforms, experimenting with new content formats, and harnessing the potential of digital technologies, traditional broadcasters can continue to offer value to

audiences and advertisers alike (Carr, 2020). The key lies in finding the right balance between tradition and innovation, between linear broadcasting and on-demand experiences.

In conclusion, the impact of OTT platforms on the advertising revenue of traditional broadcasting is profound. It has led to a decline in advertising revenue, challenging the very foundation of traditional broadcasting's economic model. However, amidst these challenges lie opportunities for adaptation, collaboration, and innovation. The future of traditional broadcasting depends on its ability to evolve and remain relevant in a rapidly changing media landscape.

5. Conclusion

The revolution of the media landscape, catalyzed by the relentless rise of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, has ushered in an era where traditional broadcasting faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. This research paper has delved deep into the intricate interplay between OTT platforms and traditional broadcasting, seeking to uncover the multifaceted implications for advertising revenue and the broader media ecosystem. As we conclude this comprehensive exploration, it becomes evident that this seismic transformation has not only altered the rules of engagement but has also opened new horizons for adaptation and innovation.

The central storyline of this research has revolved around the decline in advertising revenue for traditional broadcasters, a decline catalyzed by shifting viewer preferences. Viewers, in pursuit of convenience, personalization, and flexibility, have migrated towards OTT platforms, leaving traditional linear television with dwindling viewership figures (Hess, 2019). The allure of on-demand access to a cornucopia of content, including original programming and niche offerings, has propelled OTT platforms into the forefront of the media landscape (García-Avilés, 2018). The affordability and flexibility of OTT subscriptions have further dismantled the traditional cable subscription model, fundamentally altering how audiences access content (Thierer, 2019).

This viewer migration has not only reshaped the audience landscape but has also intensified the competition for advertising dollars. OTT platforms, equipped with sophisticated, data-driven advertising solutions, have attracted advertisers with the promise of precise targeting

and measurable ROI (Shapiro, 2019). Traditional broadcasters, once the uncontested rulers of the advertising realm, have been compelled to navigate a rapidly changing advertising landscape. This challenge is not merely financial but also structural, as traditional broadcasters undergo a metamorphosis in their approaches to content creation, distribution, and engagement (Broughton, 2017).

Yet, within this turbulence lies a landscape of opportunity. Collaboration between traditional broadcasters and OTT platforms has emerged as a strategic avenue, where partnerships extend the reach of traditional content to OTT audiences and provide OTT platforms access to a broader content catalog (Picard, 2020). The unique features of OTT platforms, including interactivity, personalization, and recommendation algorithms, offer broadcasters an opportunity to create immersive, engaging content experiences that cater to evolving viewer expectations (McKenzie, 2019).

Traditional broadcasters, equipped with decades of experience in content creation and distribution, have the potential to leverage OTT platforms as distribution channels to reach cord-cutting audiences (Morgan, 2018). By making their content accessible through these platforms, they offer viewers a convenient and cost-effective way to access their programming, retaining their relevance in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

In conclusion, the impact of OTT platforms on the advertising revenue of traditional broadcasting is profound, reshaping the contours of the media industry. The decline in advertising revenue underscores the evolving media consumption habits of viewers and the intensifying competition for advertising dollars. However, this transformation is not merely a tale of decline but a narrative of adaptation and innovation.

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Digital Media Convergence-A Transformative Paradigm in the Digital Age

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Abstract

Media convergence, a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon, has emerged as a pivotal force reshaping the landscape of the media industry and society at large. The term "media convergence" describes the blending of once separate media types, such as print, broadcast, and digital media, into a single, interconnected system. It is fueled by the quick development of technology, notably the internet, which has dissolved conventional lines and altered the production, distribution, and consumption of information. This paradigm change has broad effects in many different domains. In the field of journalism, media convergence has made it possible for citizens to report news and disseminate information globally through citizen journalism. It has developed new platforms for the distribution of entertainment content, giving rise to streaming services and altering how we access movies, music, and video games. With the help of targeted and data-driven marketing strategies, the advertising business has adapted to the digital era. The convergence of various media formats within digital platforms has revolutionized content consumption, offering users seamless access to text, audio, video, and interactive elements. This research emphasises the need for a comprehensive understanding of media convergence's profound implications for society. As technology continues to evolve, media convergence will remain a critical area of study, necessitating ongoing research and discussion to navigate its complexities and harness its transformative potential for the betterment of society.Top of Form

Key words- Digitization of India, Digital media platforms, Social networks, Competition, Convergence,

Introduction:

The merging of technology and media platforms that were previously separate into a single digital environment is known as digital convergence.

This trend has been accelerated by the widespread use of digital networks and devices, which have changed the ways in which we create, distribute, and consume media content. Digital convergence has led to the emergence of new media formats and platforms, including social networking, mobile apps, and streaming video. These platforms have completely changed the face of traditional media and opened up new avenues for both consumers and content producers. The convergence of media technology has brought about a substantial change in the way we interact with media material. Rather than having to access content through multiple channels, such as print, radio, and television, we may now access a wide variety of content on a single device, like a smartphone or tablet. Now that consumers may access content anywhere and at any time, media companies have more avenues to reach audiences through a variety of platforms and channels.

Digital convergence has led to the emergence of new business models for media companies, such as social media advertising and subscription-based streaming services.

These techniques have revolutionized traditional distribution and advertising. paradigms and provided new avenues for direct audience communication for content creators and distributors. In addition to altering the media environment, digital convergence has had a significant impact on society at large. It's got increased opportunities for people to engage and collaborate on big projects and made it simpler for ideas to spread throughout the world. size. Concerns concerning data security, privacy, and the impact of digital media on our social connections and duration of focus. Digital convergence, as a whole, is a new media paradigm characterized by innovation and constant change. To stay ahead of the curve, media companies and consumers alike will have to adjust and transform as new platforms and technologies emerge.

Young people now have a different attitude as a result of the avenues that technology has opened. A new set of values has been prompted by the growth of blogging, music sharing, information downloading, and participation in chat rooms, message boards, and online communities. The Age of Competition, when "Me" was important, has given way to the Age of Cooperation, when "We" is important.

People have realized that rather than aggressive individualism, engagement, collaboration, and openness are the keys to success in life. Technology has contributed to the emergence of a new mentality that is more proactive and participatory than the apathetic type of adolescents that the media portrays: a "lean forward" mentality. Furthermore, they belong to a generation of "commentators" who are always online, engage in frequent communication, and spark controversy. There are more perspectives than ever before since communication media is so widely available and easy to use.

Objectives

1. To study the nature of Digital Media convergence.
2. To study the impact of Digital Media convergence on media and society
3. To study the future aspect, od Digital convergence of Media

Digital Convergence:

Digital convergence refers to the amalgamation of various technologies, services, and media into a unified digital platform, breaking down traditional silos and fostering seamless integration. This transformative process brings together formerly distinct industries such as telecommunications, computing, and entertainment, creating a synergy that transcends conventional boundaries. In the era of digital convergence, diverse devices and services, ranging from smartphones and smart TVs to streaming platforms and cloud computing, converge to provide users with an interconnected and immersive experience. This convergence not only simplifies and enhances user experiences but also facilitates the exchange of information and services across multiple channels. For instance, the integration of voice assistants, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT) has led to the development of smart homes, where various devices collaborate to create an intelligent and automated living environment. The impact of digital convergence extends beyond consumer technologies, influencing business models, communication strategies, and societal interactions. As industries continue to converge in the digital realm, the landscape of technology and human interaction evolves, presenting new opportunities and challenges that shape the future of our interconnected world.

Nature and scope of Digital Convergence

The phenomena of digital convergence is complex and goes beyond conventional limits, transforming the communication, entertainment, and technological landscapes. Fundamentally, it entails combining various media, services, and technology into a single digital platform to promote synergy and interoperability. Digital convergence encompasses a wide range of industries, technologies, and societal factors. Connectivity in the telecoms sector has been transformed by digital convergence. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) allows users to conduct video conferences and make calls over the internet by combining voice, video, and data communication on a single platform. The way we access and consume information has changed as a result of the convergence of telecommunications with other digital services like streaming and cloud computing, making communication more flexible and dynamic. Digital convergence has caused a fundamental shift in the entertainment sector. As a result of the convergence of digital platforms with traditional media formats including print, radio, and television, streaming services, online games, and interactive content have become increasingly popular. An individualized and on-demand entertainment experience has been made possible by the content's accessibility across many platforms. Furthermore, the incorporation of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) into entertainment serves as another example of the broad reach of digital convergence by providing engaging and interactive experiences. Digital convergence has changed organizational structures and procedures in the commercial sector. The convergence of cloud computing, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) is intended to improve resource management, decision-making, and efficiency. Companies use these tools to improve productivity, gather and evaluate massive volumes of data, and develop original solutions. The emergence of smart cities, where digital convergence optimizes urban living through intelligent infrastructure and services, is facilitated by the interconnection of devices and systems. Furthermore, the transformative aspect of digital convergence is exemplified by the integration of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) into numerous areas. Automation, predictive analysis, and tailored experiences are made possible by these technologies, which have an impact on the healthcare, financial, and educational sectors. As AI and other technologies come together, its potential is increased, resulting

in innovations like driverless cars and intelligent personal assistants. Digital convergence has an impact on social interactions as well. As a result of the confluence of digital and communication platforms, social media has grown to be an effective instrument for social influence, connectedness, and information sharing. Digital convergence has made it easier for personal and professional spheres to blend together, which has consequences for ethics, privacy, and interpersonal dynamics. In summary, digital convergence is broad and revolutionary in both nature and extent. Its impact is felt in business, entertainment, telecommunications, technology, and social interactions. It shapes a digital world where different aspects come together to form a more dynamic and interconnected future. The ongoing process of digital convergence will surely bring out new opportunities, challenges, and breakthroughs across varied sectors as technology continues to grow.

Impact of Digital convergence on the Media Industry:

The media sector has been greatly impacted by the rise of digital convergence. Deuze (2007) asserts that the convergence of media technologies has given rise to new types of media content, like user-generated content, as well as new ways for distributors and creators of content to communicate directly with consumers. Due to this, the old media industries have been upended, posing new opportunities and challenges for media companies. The audience's fragmentation has been one of the biggest effects of digital convergence on the media landscape.

With the emergence of social media and the expansion of digital media platforms, audiences can now consume media material on their own terms, frequently eluding conventional gatekeepers like publishers and broadcasters. This has made the media landscape more dynamic and competitive, but it has also made it harder for media businesses to connect with and engage with audiences. The growth of user-generated content is another way that digital convergence has affected the media landscape. The coming together of by creating, publishing, and distributing their own material, consumers can now do so without the assistance of established media firms thanks to media technologies. This has given content producers new options, but it has also presented media with new difficulties businesses that have to fight for viewers' attention with user-generated content.

Impact of Digital on Society:

The entire society has been profoundly impacted by digital convergence. Livingstone and Lunt (2014) claim that digital convergence has made it easier for ideas and information to travel around the world and has given rise to new possibilities for global collaboration and connection. But it's also sparked worries about data security, privacy, and how digital media affects social interactions and attention spans. A major effect of digital convergence on society has been the blending of private and public spheres, Civic life. Social media platforms have made it possible for users to share intimate details of their life with a worldwide audience, thus obfuscating the distinction between private and public information. Data security and privacy issues have been brought up by this, as personal Malicious actors can readily obtain and utilize information. Digital convergence has also affected our social connections and attention spans. It can be challenging to concentrate on just one thing due to the constant barrage of information and media, and the widespread use of social media can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and alienation. This has given rise to worries about how social interactions and mental health are affected by digital media. All things considered, the impact of digital convergence on society has been intricate and varied. In addition to bringing forth new possibilities for learning, creativity, and invention, digital media has sparked worries about data security, privacy, and the effects it has on social relationships and attention spans. For the advantages of digital convergence to be maximized and its drawbacks to be minimized, society will need to keep evolving and adapting to these developments.

Digital media and value chain

The media and content industries are about to experience a golden age. These days, start-ups are reinventing the content sector, media firms are spending enormous sums of money on non-traditional media delivery methods, and consumers are demanding and expecting access to almost any content on any device at any time. In addition to corporate, social, marketing, and entertainment media, this also covers personal and social media. The way businesses and consumers produce, present, view, and consume content will be permanently altered by the seismic changes taking place in the media and content industries. The continuous digitization of content, including business and traditional

media—corporate and internal communications, marketing and sales collateral, HR, accounting, document and productivity solutions—across verticals, regions, divisions, and the supplier and customer value chain, has been a major driver of innovation in the content space. Media firms are also discovering that by digitizing and controlling their assets, they can improve their monetization efforts, acquire more control, facilitate diverse distribution through numerous media gateways, and make production and collaboration simpler. The production, conversion, and retention of digital material are all on the rise, and this has led to the emergence of whole new markets, competitive landscapes, business models, and technological requirements. Only 0.25 percent of people worldwide had a cell phone in 1990, and only 0.05 percent of people utilized the Internet, according to data from Worldmapper.org, Computeruser.com, and Internetworldstats.com. By 2010, these figures had skyrocketed to 4 billion subscribers (or 67 percent of the global population) for mobile services and nearly 2 billion users (26.6 percent) for the Internet. The growth of digital material over the past 20 years, along with widespread internet penetration, has caused a seismic shift that has permanently altered the consumer and industry scene. Because of this, the resources of traditional storage, retrieval, and management systems have been put under strain by the growth of digital media and content libraries; a variety of content-capable devices has presented new difficulties for businesses seeking to offer multi-screen viewing; and the fierce competition among media companies has compelled them to develop intriguing interactive media platforms, creative alternatives for advertising and monetization, and captivating user experiences tailored to the tastes of an increasingly voracious but discriminating consumer market.

Most media companies today have come to realize that to gain the best advantage of their digital media assets and meet the needs of their customers, they must deploy scalable, integrated and synergistic content, business, and customer experience management technologies. The value proposition of deploying these solutions and their related ROI has been proven repeatedly within the digital media industry, as enterprise spend and deployment around these content management systems has more than quadrupled in the past five years; as needs escalate and technologies advance, media companies must invest in these solutions to remain agile, competitive, and viable. "Most media companies today have come to realize that to gain the best advantage of

their digital media assets and meet the needs of their customers, they must deploy scalable, integrated and synergistic content, business, and customer management technologies.

Various Theories

Media convergence refers to the interaction and related new developments. According to early thinker Marshall McLuhan, the integration of many media produces new kinds of media, similarly, According to Fidler, conventional media also adapt to new media that emerges. Older technologies are enhanced or corrected by new media. Media converges when already-existing forms are combined and repurposed. Furthermore, the merging of several media businesses with digital technology to create multimedia is what constitutes modern media development. Furthermore, the communication flow has shifted from a linear to a three-dimensional style thanks to new media technologies. The foundation of this concept is found in hypertext, a computerized method of arranging and displaying information in a way that is at least partially predetermined by the user-selected electronic linkages, or hyperlinks. Mass media thereby evolves from one-way communication to include interactive communication. Feedback can enter the system through interaction at any point during the communication process, from gathering and processing to storing and distributing. "Our perceptions of the world change along with the ways in which we store, manipulate, and retrieve information." Our access to knowledge greatly influences how we see the world. Two significant changes in media access were brought about by new media technology. With computer networks and satellites, time and location are irrelevant. The same hardware provides infinite distribution routes without the need for centralized management. These advancements in technology give rise to new cultures. Bolter and Grusin clarify that, like McLuhan, we define ourselves by the media that we consume. In traditional media, the producer's perspective is how the audience interprets the content. The user can choose what and how to see stuff thanks to interaction. Observe how the term "user" reflects how even the audience's function has evolved. Our culture values this operational flexibility because it aligns with "various attitudes about the role and value of the individual." Technology has an impact on our perceptions of ourselves and the environment we live in, even while media does not determine cultural or personal identity.

Conclusion:

The notion of digital media convergence presents itself as a paradigm-shifting idea that changes the way we produce, consume, and engage with information in the dynamic context of the digital age. Transcending the conventional boundaries of media, communication, and technology, the confluence of diverse technologies, platforms, and content in the digital sphere signifies a seismic shift. Digital media convergence is not only a technical phenomenon; rather, it is a complex force that affects every aspect of our existence, as we come to understand as we traverse this ever-changing environment. Entertainment, communication, and storytelling have all been revolutionized by the fusion of various media types, including text, images, audio, and video, on networked platforms. This confluence has produced social media platforms, which act as international platforms for the proliferation of user-generated content and as a hub for hitherto unheard-of levels of connectivity and information sharing. The convergence of entertainment, computing, and telecommunications technology has led to the development of new content distribution models, including streaming services, interactive media, and tailored media consumption. The fusion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and data analytics is fostering efficiency, creativity, and the development of intelligent systems in the commercial world. With user-generated content emerging as a potent buyer influencer, this game-changing paradigm has not only changed the way companies run but also how consumers behave. More than just business and entertainment, digital media convergence affects governance, healthcare, and education. For example, the integration of technology and education has resulted in e-learning platforms that democratize access to knowledge by removing geographical constraints. The convergence of digital technologies is transforming patient care in the healthcare industry by enabling telemedicine, remote monitoring, and data-driven diagnostics.Notwithstanding the revolutionary promise of digital media convergence, there remain significant problems and concerns. Concerns about data security, privacy, and the spread of false information emphasize the necessity of ethical guidelines and legal frameworks. The challenge of maintaining individual liberty and the social consequences of constantly connected lifestyles is brought up by the blending of the boundaries between the personal and public domains, which is made possible by the smooth integration of digital media. It is crucial that we find a balance between the advantages of digital

media convergence and the associated ethical issues as we struggle with these issues. To sum up, the convergence of digital media represents a paradigm shift that is still influencing the way we live online. It is a force that makes it difficult to distinguish between content, communication, and technology, weaving a complex web of interconnected experiences. Knowing the deep ramifications of digital media convergence helps us navigate this new era and handle the ethical and societal issues it raises while maximizing its potential for good. Digital media convergence's transformational power invites us to welcome innovation, encourage responsible usage, and create a digital landscape that improves our lives while upholding the principles that make us human. To sum up, digital convergence is a new media paradigm that requires constant invention and modification in order to remain current.

The convergence of media technologies has created new opportunities for consumers and content providers, but it has also had an influence on traditional media sectors. However, it has also raised concerns about privacy, data security, and the impact of digital media on society. The development of new income models for media companies, such as social media advertising and subscription-based streaming services, has had an impact on traditional distribution and advertising practices. To be competitive, media companies and consumers will need to adjust and transform as new platforms and technology emerge.

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Resilience Rekindled: Exploring Gauri Sawant's Portrayal in *Taali*

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Abstract

Mass media serves as a potent tool for disseminating messages to wide-ranging external audiences. In contemporary India, it plays a crucial role in elevating the transgender community. A striking example of this transformation is the groundbreaking 2023 web series "Taali," produced by GSEAMS Triple Ace Entertainment Jio Studio. This series passionately champions the transgender community's cause while shedding light on their poignant life experiences. Historically, transgender individuals faced severe societal marginalization and oppression, with the media largely ignoring their existence and rights. However, times have changed. Transgender women writers have emerged in the literary sphere, sharing their genuine experiences, emotions, and sufferings, unveiling the intricacies of Indian transgender life. Media shapes and reflects reality, operating within a complex web of discourses that influence cultural understanding. The predominant themes include transgender awareness, identity exploration, and the power of role models. Nonetheless, a disparity exists between media portrayal and the lived realities of transgender individuals. Sushmita Sen's web series, *Taali,* tells the compelling story of transgender activist Gauri Sawant's relentless legal battle for official recognition of the third gender in India. It offers an unflinching look into the daily struggles of the transgender community, from statelessness to denial of proper burial rights, relentless harassment, and limited employment opportunities. *Taali* vividly depicts Gauri Sawant's journey from Ganesh to Gauri, her ascent to motherhood, and the unyielding struggle that led to the official

recognition of the third gender in Indian bureaucracy.

Keywords: Transgender, Representation, Web-series, Awareness, Portrayal.

Introduction:

Mass media serves as a formidable instrument to disseminate messages across vast external audiences. In contemporary times, mass media has assumed an indispensable role in the elevation of the transgender community in India. A notable example of this transformation is evident in the groundbreaking web series *Taali*, produced by GSEAMS Triple Ace Entertainment Jio Studio in 2023. The series actively represents the cause of the transgender community while shedding light on their poignant and harrowing life experiences. Historically, transgender individuals have endured societal marginalization and oppression, with the media scarcely acknowledging their existence, let alone advocating for their rights. They were ensnared in the constraints of a prejudiced society, their voices stifled. However, the tide has irrevocably shifted, particularly within the realm of literature, where a cadre of transgender women writers has broken through, endeavouring to convey their genuine experiences, emotions, thoughts, sufferings, and sentiments. These writers have earnestly endeavoured to unveil the innermost recesses of the transgender psyche, revealing their profound emotions, aspirations, and authentic encounters in the complex landscape of Indian transgender life. Media, as a potent discourse, plays a pivotal role in shaping and reflecting reality, operating within a multifaceted tapestry of discourses that collectively contribute to the construction and reinterpretation of cultural comprehension. The predominant themes that have emerged revolve around transgender awareness, the quest for identity, and the power of role modelling. Evidently, there exists a chasm between the portrayal of transgender norms in media and the lived realities they encounter. Sushmita Sen's web-series *Taali,* is a narrative grounded in the actual struggles and unwavering determination of transgender activist Gauri Sawant, who waged a legal battle for the official recognition of the third gender in India. This biographical drama series will chronicle Gauri Sawant's journey, marked by unyielding resilience and indomitable fortitude. "Gaali se taali taak ke safar ki yeh kahaani" - thus unfolds the tale of Gauri Sawant's crusade for the recognition of India's third gender. This web series

offers an unflinchingly candid glimpse into the daily existence of the transgender community, from enduring statelessness to being denied proper burial rights, grappling with incessant harassment and death threats, and encountering severe obstacles in securing employment opportunities. *Taali* vividly portrays the remarkable life journey of Gauri Sawant, including her audacious transformation from Ganesh to Gauri, her valiant ascent to motherhood, and the unrelenting struggle that culminated in the official acknowledgment and identification of the third gender in Indian bureaucratic documentation.

Knowing Gauri Sawant: The Beacon of Resilience and Transgender Empowerment through *Taali*:

Gauri Sawant, the luminary transgender activist, stands as a beacon of inspiration within the transgender community and beyond. Her indomitable spirit has fueled her lifelong commitment to championing the rights and well-being of transgender individuals. Beyond her remarkable advocacy, she envisions a brighter future, one where even the most vulnerable among us find refuge and opportunity. Gauri's life story is an epic narrative, woven with threads of unyielding determination, unwavering resilience, and an unwavering dedication to her cause. As a child, Gauri confronted a cruel twist of fate when she lost her mother at the tender age of nine. Simultaneously, her sister embarked on her matrimonial journey, leaving young Gauri to grapple with solitude. Her father, a police officer preoccupied with his duties, remained largely absent from her life. The tenuous relationship between father and daughter was marred by discord and disapproval. Her father's insistence on her conforming to societal norms of masculinity became a ceaseless source of tension. Yet, within Gauri's heart beat the spirit of authenticity, an unwavering conviction to embrace her true self. She possessed an innate femininity that resonated with her very essence. Her longing to express her identity through feminine attire and mannerisms was stifled by her father's unrelenting opposition. The pain she endured was compounded by the relentless harassment she endured at the hands of neighbors and relatives. At the age of 16, Gauri embarked on a transformative journey when she found solace and acceptance at 'The Humsafar Trust,' a sanctuary for the LGBTQIA+ community. There, she encountered individuals who defied convention, boldly embracing their identities through attire and makeup. This newfound haven bestowed upon her a profound sense of self-assurance

and resilience, yet her familial circumstances prevented her from vocalizing her truth. The turning point arrived when her father, in an act of painful rejection, compelled her to leave home. Aged 18, Gauri Sawant forged a powerful alliance with 'The Humsafar Trust,' setting forth on a mission to uplift India's transgender community. Guided by Ashok Row Kavi, the pioneering founder of the trust, Gauri discovered her life's purpose. In 2000, she laid the cornerstone of the Sakhi Char Chowghi Trust, a pharos of hope offering vital counseling services and promoting safe practices among transgender individuals. Gauri Sawant's unwavering commitment extends beyond self-realization; she is a vocal advocate for transgender rights and equality in India. Her tireless efforts contributed to the historic Supreme Court recognition of transgender individuals as the "third gender." In 2014, she boldly petitioned the Supreme Court, championing the rights of transgender individuals in matters of marriage and child adoption. A testament to her boundless compassion, Gauri established "Nani ka Ghar," a nurturing shelter for the children of sex workers. Here, these children are lovingly cared for by "nanis," revered elderly transgender individuals. Gauri's vision extends further as she seeks to empower members of the LGBTQIA+ community by appointing them as security personnel outside the gates of the revered Siddhivinayak temple. Collaborating with crowdfunding platforms, Gauri is spearheading initiatives to provide financial assistance for education, nurturing the aspirations of these children towards independence. Her story serves as a profound lesson, urging society to embrace individual identities, to harbor respect for all, and to welcome individuals of diverse orientations into the mainstream, thereby facilitating an inclusive and equitable society that transcends the boundaries of gender and sexual identity.

The web-series *Taali* ardently endeavors to imbue the profound odyssey of Gauri Sawant within the canvas of its six meticulously crafted episodes. Its deployment on an OTT platform not only augments its prospects of reaching a vast and diverse audience but also assumes the mantle of a potent medium for catalyzing introspection on a myriad of vital themes. These encompass the discernment of choices, the cherished freedom of expression, the capacity to transcend rigid binaries, and the fostering of a heightened sense of acceptance. *Taali* audaciously beckons its viewers to voyage beyond the confines of the familiar periphery, imploring them to question prevailing norms and

to assertively craft a counter-discourse. Drawing upon the profound scholarship of critical theorists like Nikki Sullivan, the series delves into a nuanced examination of the parallels and distinctions that exist between transsexual surgeries and a spectrum of other bodily modifications, ranging from piercing and branding to tattooing, cosmetic surgery, and even self-initiated amputations. Sullivan advances the captivating argument that these diverse practices may collectively be regarded as "trans" practices, surmising that transsexual body modifications are but a specific manifestation within the broader constellation of such phenomena. Her erudite discourse artfully elucidates the manner in which dominant cultural paradigms often endorse body modification practices that corroborate established cultural norms while unfairly stigmatizing counter-cultural expressions of bodily transformation (Sullivan 552). Central to Sullivan's theory is her conceptualization of "transmogrification." Traditionally associated with peculiar or grotesque transformations characterized by distortion and unsettling amalgamations, she remarkably redefines this concept. Rather than perceiving transmogrification as an inherently negative process that engenders ostracized and abhorred monstrosities, she perceptively portrays it as an embodiment of an intrinsic facet of the human condition. It stands as an integral facet of the intricate process through which we navigate the nebulous boundary that demarcates self from other. It serves as the crucible through which our very identities undergo perpetual metamorphosis, eternally reshaping our essence in relation to the ever-evolving "Other."

In the essay "What Does it Cost to Tell the Truth?" by Rikki Anne Wilchins, a transgender-specific perspective is presented in response to a question originally posed by Michel Foucault. Foucault's query pertains to the necessity of subjecting oneself to becoming an object of knowledge for others (Wilchins 547). Wilchins, known for her sharp wit and humor, astutely recounts how her own understanding of her body, as well as that of her transgender friends, underwent a profound transformation during their gender transitions. Through these personal experiences, she sheds light on the intricate web of cultural frameworks that govern how we perceive and make sense of our bodies, particularly when transgender individuals embark on journeys of physical transformation. In this context, Gauri Sawant's approach closely mirrors the essence of the truths that Wilchins expounds upon. Gauri's unwavering commitment

to following her instincts and confronting her reality resonates with the very notions of truth elucidated by Wilchins. Gauri's courageous self-revelation serves as an exemplar of empowerment, not only inspiring others within the transgender community but also extending its impact to a broader audience. Her story transcends restrictive boundaries, offering a compelling testament to the courage required to authentically embrace one's identity, desires, and aspirations. It underscores that true valor lies in not only acknowledging these facets but also taking affirmative steps to transform them into tangible realities.

Establishing a Counter-Culture:

In recent years, social media platforms have become instrumental in advancing awareness and fostering greater acceptance for transgender individuals. These digital spaces offer an expansive and accessible platform for transgender activists, advocates, and the broader LGBTQ+ community to amplify their voices and messages. Through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, transgender individuals and their allies can share personal stories, experiences, and insights on a global scale, transcending geographical boundaries and reaching diverse audiences. One of the most impactful aspects of social media in this context is its capacity to educate the public about transgender issues. Transgender activists utilize these platforms to dispel myths, challenge stereotypes, and provide accurate information about gender identity and expression. They also advocate for the rights and protections that transgender individuals deserve, helping to shape public opinion and influence policy discussions.

Moreover, social media serves as a vital space for connection and community-building within the transgender community. Transgender individuals can find support, share resources, and connect with others who have similar experiences. Online forums, groups, and hashtags like #TransVisibility and #TransRightsNow have gained significant traction, creating digital movements that not only raise awareness but also empower transgender voices and concerns. By offering a platform for open dialogue, storytelling, and activism, social media plays a pivotal role in challenging prejudice and fostering empathy. It contributes significantly to the broader goal of transgender acceptance and inclusion in society, encouraging individuals to embrace diverse gender identities and advocate for equal rights. In this digital age, social

media has become a powerful ally in the ongoing fight for transgender visibility and equality.

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Women's Empowerment and Inclusive Development through Communication Strategies in Tribal Communities in West Bengal

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Abstract:

Empowering women and promoting inclusive growth is vital for accomplishing sustainable development objectives. In some tribal communities of West Bengal like Santal, Tharu, Oran, Nayak, Sobbar, Munda, Majhi, and Lohar, particularly in Gazole, Bamongola, and Old Malda Block of Malda District, women encounter various forms of oppression and exclusion, but using effective communication techniques can aid in their emancipation and the advancement of all-inclusive growth.

This research paper aims to investigate how communication techniques contribute to women's empowerment and comprehensive growth in indigenous communities in West Bengal. Gender inequality is prevalent in these areas, manifesting in restricted access to educational resources, medical facilities, and financial prospects for females. Thus, strengthening their rights and encouraging equitable progress are crucial for bridging social and economic gaps.

Keywords: Tribal Communities, Communication Challenges, Gender Studies, Women's Empowerment, Development Communication.

Introduction:

Women's empowerment is integral to achieving global inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development. However, women from marginalized and disadvantaged groups like indigenous tribal communities face overlapping gender and social exclusions, severely restricting their participation, voice, and agency in decision-making processes concerning them. Transformative communication approaches that amplify tribal women's perspectives and enable their leadership can catalyze processes of empowerment, inclusion, and social change.

West Bengal is home to around 5.8 million tribal persons belonging to 40 notified Scheduled Tribes. concentrated mostly in the western, northern, and southern districts (census India 2011). Tribal groups constitute around 5.5% of the state's total population.

The northern Malda district of West Bengal is home to large marginalized tribal communities including Santhals, Oraons, and Mundas. Adivasi (indigenous) groups constitute over 9% of Malda's population, with women facing particularly stark gender inequities, inadequate livelihoods, and public service access (District Census 2011). Tribal women in Bengal experience multifaceted developmental challenges and gender disparities. Nearly three-fourths of tribal women are illiterate compared to less than half of tribal males (Census India 2011). Only 23% of tribal women participate in the workforce compared to 51% of men.

Early marriage is prevalent leading to early pregnancies and anemia among women. Tribal women lack decision-making autonomy and control over resources within their households. They face high rates of gender-based violence with little legal recourse (Mohanta,2022).

Tribal women's participation in local self-governance institutions like Gram Panchayats and public forums remains negligible. Mainstream media platforms marginalize tribal women's voices and development initiatives often exclude their perspectives in program design and implementation (Mohanty,2022). This empirical research aims to develop a gender-transformative communication framework to promote tribal women's inclusion, participation, and empowerment in local governance and development programs in West Bengal. It will analyze gaps in existing communication initiatives and co-design context-specific solutions centering on tribal women's priorities and knowledge.

The study analyzes cases of government, NGO, and civil society interventions in Malda using folk media, street theatre, communicative training, and local participation to promote tribal women's empowerment across spheres of livelihood, education, and political engagement. The paper concludes by proposing integrated communication models capable of accelerating gender-equitable human development in Malda's marginalized tribal belt through locally driven efforts that amplify and skillfully link women's voices to wider platforms.

Literature Review:

Numerous studies on women's empowerment shed light on the challenges and barriers that stand in the way of this goal and the effects that policies and programs have on the various facets of women's empowerment.

Tauffiqu Ahamad & Ananta Narayana (2016) stated in their study "Role of media in accelerating women empowerment" mentioned in the "International Journal of Advanced Education and Research" that Women's growth is greatly aided by effective communication. It is regarded as the most significant instrument in modern civilization due to its ability to reach a wide range of audience. The mainstream media has played a significant part in supporting the movement for the liberation of women, although not to the degree desired. The media has focused on the neglect and marginalization of women in society, which raised awareness of these issues to galvanize support for the movement. There is no doubt that the media are the primary means of advocating for women's rights, gender parity, and other issues. Traditional and digital media must present a fair representation of women's varied lives and social contributions in a rapidly evolving world. Increasing women's participation in media-mediated creative expression and making choices contributes to women's empowerment.

Justice G.N. Ray, Chairman, Press Council of India at the inauguration session of National Press Day on November 16, 2008, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, in "Media's Role in the Empowerment of Women in India" stated the ability to communicate is necessary for women's advancement, and the media plays a key part in that. The growth of media can be attributed to the increase in female educational attainment and employment. Women play a crucial role in almost every aspect of life, regardless of whether it's curbing the growth of the population, increasing literacy, or enhancing the standards of life for many people. Women can be expected to play this role when they acknowledge their strength and are not intentionally marginalized by male dominance. in such a scenario, the mass media has an essential function to play in awakening women to their potential as catalysts for change in civilization. In present-day society, The message is efficiently communicated through print and electronic media.

Longjam Meena Devi (2012) mentioned in her study "Empowering Women through Alternative Media" published in the "International Conference on the Interplay of Economics Politics and Society for Inclusive Growth", that The use of alternative media has been promoted to be an essential tool for empowering women. It will be beneficial to provide women with the necessary support and opportunities regarding injustice and marginalization at the grassroots level. Alternative media frequently aims to challenge current authorities amplify the voices of underprivileged groups of women and foster symmetrical connections across areas of concern. It is committed to communication liberalization, and these forms of media provide a different point of view, separate facts, and perceptions of the world that are not available in the mainstream.

Zafar Shahila & Gupta Rai Anmol (2013) mentioned in their study Rural India: "The Next Frontier for Social Media Networks" published in the "International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology" that All India Radio has been a source of information for rural Indians. AIR also provides programs for rural women's empowerment that inform them about family planning, dowry, female feticide, child care, and other topics. AIR collaborates with the Ministries and Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development of the federal and state governments. Gender concerns, the necessity of adequate learning, and child abuse are among the other topics covered in the programs broadcast on AIR. There is no denying that social media networks have had an impact on the lives of rural individuals.

Duflo E. (2012) argues in his paper "Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research Cambridge: The Study" that Liberation and advancement tend to be insufficiently weakly linked to last, and continual governmental commitment to equality for the sake of equality is possibly necessary to attain fairness among men and women.

Theoretical Framework: This research applies an interdisciplinary theoretical approach combining frameworks from gender and development studies, participatory communication theory, and feminist media studies.

Theory of Gender and Development:

The female empowerment and development paradigm arose as a response to the women in development approach. GAD argues

that women's empowerment requires transforming unequal gender relations, not just increasing women's access to resources (Rathgeber, 1990; Parpart et al., 2000).

GAD examines how gender identities, roles, relations, and power dynamics shape development outcomes. It focuses on strategic gender needs like equal wages, women's control over resources, and freedom from violence; going beyond just practical needs like health and education (Moser, 1993; Kabeer, 1999).

This research utilizes the GAD lens to analyze gender-based constraints faced by tribal women, examine how gender relations within tribes influence women's exclusion, and develop strategies to transform discriminatory gender roles and norms.

Participatory Communication:

Participatory approaches view communication as a process of dialogic engagement and social change, not just diffusion of information from a sender to passive receivers (Freire, 1970; Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

Participatory communication emphasizes amplifying marginalized local voices, the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, and enabling people's critical consciousness and agency to identify and solve local issues. It facilitates community participation, ownership, and action for social transformation (Bessette, 2004; Lennie and Tacchi, 2013).

This framework guides the research to critically examine existing top-down communication in tribal regions, identify gaps excluding women's voices and agency, and co-develop bottom-up, dialogic solutions to empower marginalized women.

Feminist Media Studies: Feminist media scholars have critiqued how mainstream media perpetuates dominant patriarchal ideologies and representations that further marginalize women's identities and experiences (van Zoonen, 1994; Gallagher, 2014).

This research applies a feminist lens to analyze tribal women's exclusion from mainstream media platforms and representation. It informs strategies for creating alternate empowering communication platforms informed by tribal women's needs and perspectives.

Integrating these three frameworks provides a robust theoretical basis to examine dimensions of gender and social exclusion facing tribal women, critiques of existing communication approaches, and transformative solutions centered on amplifying marginalized women's voices and agency.

Research Methodology:

This is a descriptive and analytical research study. The data used in this study is derived entirely from secondary sources, such as books, journals, periodicals, research papers, Internet sites, government records, and so on. The information gathered was analyzed, compiled, and presented on the pages that follow.

This research adopts a feminist participatory approach to:

- Critically examine communication gaps, barriers, and power dynamics that have excluded tribal women's participation and led to disempowering interventions.
- Center tribal women's perspectives and lived experiences to identify contextual communication needs and strategies.
- Facilitate tribal women's articulation of their key concerns, knowledge, and solutions about issues impacting them.
- Promote tribal women's capacities for critical thinking, leadership, and collective mobilization to demand rights and action.
- Co-develop communication models enabling tribal women's inclusion and agency to drive social change for gender equality.

This feminist participatory communication perspective guides the study to uncover oppressive structures and transform them by centering the subjugated voices of tribal women to articulate their own empowerment needs.

Discussion:

Women's Empowerment Initiatives in Tribal Communities in West Bengal: Current Situation

The West Bengal government has implemented various policies and programs for the socio-economic development and empowerment of marginalized tribal groups. Some key initiatives include:

Education

- Special grants to boost literacy among tribal girls and recruitment of teachers versed in tribal languages.
- The Kanyashree scheme provides scholarships and monetary incentives to retain girls in school.
- Adult literacy drives and bridge courses for school dropouts to continue education.

Health

- Expansion of basic healthcare services in tribal areas through additional sub-centers, and primary and community health centers.
- Hiring tribal women for front-line positions Anganwadi staff and accredited social health activists (ASHAs) provide maternity and child health services.
- Financial incentives for institutional delivery and enrollment in nutrition and immunization programs.

Livelihood

- Self-help group (SHG) formation and microcredit linkages under the National Rural Livelihood Mission.
- Vocational training programs in agriculture, animal husbandry, food processing, handicrafts etc.
- Infrastructure development like irrigated land, storage facilities, and market access.

Governance

- 50% reservation for women in local Panchayat positions.
- Inclusion mandates for tribal community members in Village Education and Health Committees.

However, despite these measures, tribal women continue to experience developmental deficits and marginalization. The female literacy rate among scheduled tribes is 57.7% compared to 72.5% for scheduled caste women and 75.6% for all women nationally (Census 2011). Workforce participation of tribal women is very low at 19% versus 43% for men.

Lack of culturally resonant communication has proved disempowering rather than facilitating tribal women's agency and action. Community engagement and empowering communication approaches are vital to transforming prevailing gender relations and gaps hindering tribal women's development in West Bengal.

Government Policies and Programs:

Constitutional Protections
- Article 15(4) enables affirmative action for disadvantaged groups.
- Article 46 requires the state to support scheduled tribes' educational and economic interests.
- Tribal regions have authority under the Fifth & Sixth Schedules.

Legislations
- Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 mandates tribal self-governance.
- The Forest Rights Act, of 2006 recognizes rights over ancestral lands.
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 raises the age of marriage for girls to 18 years.

Policies
- National Policy on Tribal Empowerment (2006) focuses on health, education, and gender equality.
- The National Policy on Women's Empowerment (2001) includes measures for underprivileged women.

Schemes
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao - awareness and incentives for educating the girl child.
- Janani Suraksha Yojana - conditional cash transfers for promoting institutional deliveries.
- Mahila Samakhya - Rural women's education and empowerment.
- Kanyashree Prakalpa - scholarships and financial assistance for higher education of girls.

Gaps
- Poor monitoring reduces accountability and hampers implementation.

- Centralized planning excludes community participation in program design.

- Lack of culturally relevant content and media for tribal groups.

- Tribal language barriers inhibit scheme uptake and access to rights.

- Coordination gaps across ministries implementing women and child schemes.

While extensive policies and programs exist, their implementation has been suboptimal due to a lack of coordination, monitoring, and participatory communication strategies. A localized, collaborative approach is vital for the timely dissemination of schemes, grievance redressal, and amplifying tribal women's voices to make programs truly inclusive and empowering.

Communication Strategies:

Communication Channels and Mediums

Various communication channels and mediums have been utilized by government and civil society actors to disseminate information and engage with tribal communities in West Bengal.

- Mass media like radio, television, and newspapers – used for broadcasting information on schemes, policies, and social issues mainly in dominant languages. Lacks specificity to tribal context.

- Print materials like posters, leaflets, and pictorial booklets in tribal languages by NGOs on education, health, and rights. Useful but literacy barriers inhibit full uptake.

- Puppet shows, folk arts, and street play in rural areas by frontline workers on sanitation, immunization, nutrition, etc. Culturally resonant but lacks continuity.

- Public address systems for village announcements on public meetings, health camps, and other events. Suffers from one-way communication.

- Video vans have helped take tailored audio-visual content to remote villages. However, the participation of communities in content creation is limited.

- Digital media initiatives are emerging but tribal women have less access to internet-enabled phones. Lack of vernacular interfaces on

websites and social media constrain usage.

Key gaps include a lack of tribal language interfaces, two-way dialogic platforms, mechanisms for regular feedback from communities, and processes enabling user-generated content. Harnessing interactive, participatory community media has a high potential for empowering communication strategies among marginalized tribal women.

Sustained multi-channel communication embedding women's voices, vernacular articulations, and traditional cultural forms can enhance the reach, recall, and resonance of messaging among tribal groups to enable awareness, participation, and social change.

Awareness and Education:

Lack of awareness about rights, government programs, and social issues is a key barrier to tribal women's empowerment. Tailored communication strategies are vital to enhance their awareness and education levels.

- Radio programs in tribal languages on legal rights, schemes, and social taboos to expand reach across remote areas.
- Video vans with curated visual content to overcome barriers of language, literacy, and access.
- Folk media like songs, drama on gender sensitization, and elimination of discriminatory norms.
- Sensitization drives involving tribal community leaders, elders, and men to build gender-just attitudes.
- Bridge courses, mobile libraries, and bilingual learning materials enabling access to functional literacy.
- Communication training for frontline workers like ASHAs and Anganwadi staff to effectively counsel tribal women.
- leveraging SHGs as hubs for awareness generation, peer learning, and experience sharing.
- Public discussions and debates on empowerment issues through community radio programs.
- Participatory workshops to develop context-specific IEC materials on health, nutrition, finance, etc. based on tribal cultural idioms.

Two-way dialogic mediums providing space for the articulation of concerns by tribal women themselves such as participatory radio/video,

offline/online discussion forums, and folk arts activities can enable transformative education.

Sustained, tailored communication embedding tribal languages, cultural metaphors, and community participation is vital to drive awareness to action - enabling tribal women to claim rights, access opportunities, and articulate needs.

Capacity-building and Skill Development:

Building the capacities and skills of tribal women is key to increasing their participation and leadership in community development. Targeted communication approaches are vital to facilitate skill training and enable empowerment.

- Radio and video tutorials in vernacular languages on vocational skills like sewing, food processing, and beekeeping based on market assessments.
- Digital media like mobile apps and interactive voice response (IVR) calls for self-paced e-learning modules on micro-enterprise, financial literacy, livestock rearing, etc.
- Community radio programs involving experts to discuss best practices, troubleshooting challenges, and fostering peer learning on livelihoods.
- Participatory workshops to develop context-specific communication materials on skills training based on trainee needs and cultural nuances.
- Interpersonal channels like frontline workers, women's self-help groups, and tribal opinion leaders to identify trainees, coordinate logistics, and provide mentoring.
- Refresher training and post-training support through guides/ manuals, helplines, and peer networking platforms to enhance retention and application of skills.
- Leadership camps for capacity building of tribal girls and women in public speaking, digital literacy, social audits, and civic engagement.
- Sensitization drives involving tribal men and community leaders on gender-inclusive development and women's economic rights.

- Locally generated media content highlighting role models and success stories of empowered tribal women.

Participatory, dialogic communication channels enabling two-way engagement can help assess tribal women's skills gaps, customize training based on local context, and provide continuous mentoring and peer support networks for enhanced impact.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Challenges

- Language - Low literacy and linguistic diversity make communication in dominant languages ineffective. Translations may lack cultural nuance.
- Access - Remote terrain and lack of infrastructure constrain the reach of communication media and training programs in interior hamlets. The digital divide limits technology access.
- Patriarchy - Deeply entrenched gender roles, discrimination, and bias require sustained attitudinal change. Risk of backlash from male community members.
- Coordination - Gaps in the convergence between departments handling tribal welfare schemes, and limited monitoring of field activities.
- Suitability - Mainstream content often lacks cultural relevance. One-way dissemination of generic information rarely empowers.
- Sustainability - Many pilots fizzle out due to short-term project outlook. Mechanisms lacking for continuity, follow-up, and real-time feedback.
- Capacity - Frontline workers require adequate training and incentives to serve remote areas. A community may lack tech skills for participatory media.

Opportunities

- Growing policy focus on inclusive development and ensuring last-mile service delivery in rural areas.
- Momentum of women's empowerment agenda and push for gender budgeting across domains.
- Scope for public-private partnerships, CSR collaborations, and use of flexible funds for innovative solutions.

- Emergence of lower-cost technology platforms like community radio, IVR calls, and vernacular apps that can be localized.
- The young tribal population provides an opportunity to usher in intergenerational social change and skill development.
- Vibrant tradition of participatory folk arts and experience of using traditional media for social messaging.
- Women's self-help group ecosystems nurture solidarity and peer learning for empowerment.

Targeted communication strategies that harness participatory media, leverage traditional cultural expressions, catalyze women's collectives, and sustain engagement with men and women can help transform gender relations and developmental outcomes for marginalized tribal women.

Challenges and Barriers:

Multiple challenges constrain the effectiveness of communication strategies for gender empowerment in tribal areas of West Bengal.

Language and Literacy Barriers: Low literacy rates and linguistic diversity among tribal groups hamper the uptake of mainstream communication in Bengali or English. Lack of content in native dialects excludes women from accessing key information on rights, schemes, and opportunities.

Technological Access: Lack of electricity, internet connectivity, and digital devices like radio or phones in remote villages restricts the reach of modern media channels. The digital divide exacerbates the exclusion of marginalized tribal women.

Cultural Relevance: Top-down communication often lacks contextualization of local customs, traditional practices, and nuanced realities of tribal women. This reduces resonance and impact.

Gender Biases: Patriarchal norms that undervalue women prevail across many tribal communities. Entrenched discriminatory attitudes require long-term engagement and sensitization. Risk of backlash against empowerment efforts.

Coordinated Efforts: Interdepartmental coordination gaps between tribal welfare, women and child development, education, healthcare, etc.

providers result in duplication or lack of convergence in communication activities.

Participation Issues: Tribal women are rarely consulted in designing communication strategies intended for them. Top-down approaches curtail ownership and agency. Lack of local representation in media production perpetuates non-participation.

Sustainability Concerns: Pilot initiatives fizzle out quickly due to short-term project outlook. Continuity of engagement, ongoing feedback loops, and long-term roadmap is missing.

Capacity Limitations: Frontline workers in remote areas may lack training, resources, and incentives to undertake participatory communication. Community mobilization skills are limited.

A participatory, feminist approach is vital to uncover oppressive structures and address barriers by centering tribal women's voices and co-creating contextual solutions to communication gaps hindering their empowerment.

Conclusion:

The analysis reveals strategic communication approaches like participatory training, folk media, and collective mobilization platforms show promise in raising legal, health, and vocational awareness, building self-efficacy, and fostering solidarity among tribal women. However, realizing transformative outcomes remains constrained by persisting gender barriers like restrictions on women's mobility and individual leadership.

Tailoring communication to tribal contexts by using vernacular languages, leveraging oral traditions, and building on existing social structures emerges as vital for effectiveness. Success is enabled when communication strategies align with indigenous worldviews and adapt flexibly to community feedback. However, superficial engagement with tribal culture or language is insufficient for empowerment.

Sustained, locally-driven efforts are needed to tackle deeper patriarchal norms, link women's mobilization to structures of authority, and prevent marginalization of tribal women's individual and collective agency. Slower progress arises when programs fail

to adequately respect indigenous knowledge systems and support structures.

This analysis provides insights into designing context-specific communication strategies capable of accelerating social change in marginalized tribal areas like Malda. It underscores that realizing the transformative potential of communication approaches to advance tribal women's empowerment requires a commitment to the amplification of subaltern voices, cultural grounding, and confronting structural gender barriers. Strategic communication must be positioned as part of holistic, locally-led development.

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Media, Culture and Audience: Contemporary Issues and Challenges
A Study of Some Select Biopics of Indian Hindi Cinema

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Abstract:

Movies are the most common means of recreation and relaxation that is available to the masses. Movies can be of different genre such as Action, Horror, Romance, Drama, Science fiction, Thriller, Crime, Adventure, Mystery, Romantic Comedy, Fantasy, Animation Documentary etc. The blockbuster Hindi movies have the potentiality to attract millions of audiences to the movie theatres. The tradition of the Indian cinema is incredibly opulent. In the beginning the movies were made with the sole intention of entertaining the audience. But with the passage of time as human beings experienced gradual changes in every aspect of their lives, in a similar manner the cinema also evolved and started to introduce several new themes and ideas. This change in the entertainment industry was welcomed by both the masses and the classes. This paper will focus on the biopics made in Indian Cinema on the lives of eminent personalities.

Keywords: Biopic, Indian Hindi Cinema, movie, inspiration, tradition, representation, society.

Introduction:

The new age cinema has more varied content, as the makers of the movies are now experimenting with new themes. The new term given for the Hindi film industry is Bollywood. Movies with various themes are made in the present scenario. There are various genres of movies that are made in Indian cinema such as Action, Horror, Romance, Drama, Science fiction, Thriller, Crime, Adventure, Mystery, Romantic Comedy, Fantasy, Animation Documentary etc. But lately a trend has started that

has gained immense popularity from the masses, which is known as Biopic. This paper is going to review some biopics made in Indian Hindi Cinema, namely, *Bhag Milkha Bhag, Mary Kom, M S Dhoni: The Untold Story, Dangal, Soorma, Shabaash Mithu.*

Biopics: Biopic is a particular form of cinema that tells a narrative about the life of any famous personality. The audiences have welcomed this new trend with open arms as they find this both inspiring and motivating. These biopics also sometimes make the audiences enriched with relevant truths about history. From the past few decades this trend has been proved to not only entertaining the masses but also enlightening them. The cinema that we watch are mostly based on real life incidents and they reflect our society. The movies not only entertain us, but most of the time it contains certain morals that has corrective and reformative aspects for the society. In addition to this the new age of cinema showcases innovative ideas on the large screen, which acts as a tool to educate the audiences. Cinema when combines these enlightening ideas with entertainment, only then the society is benefitted with this form of entertainment which is termed as movies. Cinema has a different aura among the masses due to its larger than life projection. So, it is a fact that the element of fantasy cannot be totally ruled out from Cinema. Apart from these any form of Cinema is a collective form of art. It is an amalgamation of many art forms such as Acting, Singing, Music, Direction, expertise in handling of camera, Cinematography etc. Cinema has widest accessibility, even a person who cannot read an autobiography of any legend can watch their biopic onscreen and learn about the important details of his or her life and feel inspired as well as enlightened. There are   people who have led extraordinary lives and have leverage to motivate the masses by their real-life stories. The masses must be knowing these extraordinary real-life tales of courage and perseverance of the legends, so that they get their true worth in the society. People can know about them through their autobiographies. However, it can be observed that everyone does not have the habit of reading and as a result these autobiographies or biographies could not get maximum readers. So, in order to unfold these extraordinary tales of valour, the film industry initiated a unique and outstanding concept of movies made on biographies and auto biographies known as Biopics.

Biopic movies are those films that narrates the tale about the life of a real character or person, like any freedom fighter, monarch, sports personality, political leader or any actor etc. The personalities whose lives are depicted in the Biopics are generally people who have inspired, motivated and impacted the masses in multiple ways. In this article, the focus is on the study of the Indian Cinema to immortalize, ennoble and glamorize the lives of the legends so that it can have a positive impact on the audiences as well as the society. It will also initiate a social change through the medium of Cinema. The Films like *Lagan* and *Chak De India* have showcased sports as the main subject while narrating stories. But in the last decade a new trend was witnessed in Indian Cinema that was of making Biopics. These movies were not only based on the life of real heroes but it also had some elements of dramatics and melodrama for the purpose of entertainment. Through these Biopics the Indian Cinema have conveyed or projected the real toiling and struggle of these legends in the most glorious manner. Due to this reason these movies have influenced, impacted and enlightened the masses. These movies encouraged the common people to become resolute in life for achieving their goals, despite of all the hardships and challenges in their lives. The Indian Cinema has begun to accept and appreciate the achievements of these real-life heroes through these Biopics. The film industry is committed to present these Biopics on the large screen as a measure to narrate the stories of the real-life heroes so that it reaches to the maximum audiences. This paper is going to focus on the five Biopics made on the lives of sports personalities as the instances of the shifting trend of the Indian films. These movies are *Dangal, M.S Dhoni: The Untold Story, Soorma, Mary Kom, Bhag Milkha Bhag, Shabaash Mithu.*

The movies that we are discussing are all released within a span of the last 15 years. These Biopics are made on the lives of sports personalities. These Biopics make the common man aware of the challenges faced by these brave men and women to achieve success in their professions. The movies reviewed in this paper are about five different games. Today's generation is more inclined towards virtual games, they have a sedentary lifestyle, these movies on sports personalities will make them understand the importance of outdoor games and also motivate them to play outdoor games. The movies that are reviewed in this paper are both entertaining as well as influencing for the society.

The first movie that is focussed on this new trend of Biopics is *Bhag Milkha Bhag*. The film Bhag Milkha Bhag, was directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra and released in the year 2011. It is a biopic made on the life of the iconic sprinter Milkha Singh. He was popularly known as "The Flying Sikh". He was in the Indian Army when he joined sports. The role of Milkha Singh was portrayed by famous Bollywood actor Farhaan Akhtar. Farhaan was phenomenal in enacting the role. This movie has portrayed the challenges faced by Milkha Singh right from his formative years till the time he became the champion and won Gold for India in both Asian as well as Commonwealth Games.

The next movie that is focussed here for review is *Mary Kom*. This movie is directed by Omung Kumar and was released in the year 2014. This Biopic is made on the life of a boxing champion named Mary Kom. Mary Kom was the first boxer from India who won a bronze medal in the Olympics. She belonged from a remote village in the state of Manipur. The role of the protagonist is played by the famous Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra. Priyanka enacted the role with utmost dedication. In this movie the narrative shows the sheer dedication and determination of the protagonist by which she overcomes all the challenges and represents her country India at the Olympics.

The third movie reviewed here is *Dangal*. It was directed by Nitesh Tiwari and was released in the year 2016. This Biopic is made on the lives of the Wrestlers Geeta Phogat and Babita Phogat, who were sisters and belonged from the state of Haryana. This story shows the struggle of not only the Phogat sisters but also the struggle of their father Mahavir Singh Phogat, who himself was a wrestler and since he did not have any son to take further his lineage of wrestling decides to train his daughters to become wrestlers. The role of Mahavir Singh Phogat is enacted by veteran Bollywood actor Amir Khan, who was exceptional in this role. This movie has aptly portrayed the hardships and challenges faced by Phogat sisters to make a mark in the field of Wrestling and represent India at the International Level. They were a true inspiration for all the girls who want to make a mark and choose sports as a profession.

The fourth movie reviewed here is M S Dhoni: The Untold Story. This film is a biopic which is directed by Neeraj Pandey and was released in the year 2016. This Biopic is based on the life of the former Indian Cricket Captain M.S Dhoni. The role of M.S Dhoni was portrayed on the screen by Late Shushant Singh Rajput. He was exceptional in this

movie. This movie is an account of the journey of a simple middle-class boy from Ranchi who with his sheer dedication and hard work became the most accomplished and successful captain of the Indian Cricket team. This movie not only focusses on the Cricket career of the legend but also shares the story of his personal life. This movie is an inspiration for all the young cricket lovers who wants to make it big in the field of Cricket.

The fifth movie that is reviewed here is *Soorma*. This movie is directed by Shaad Ali and was released in the year 2018. This biopic is based on the real-life story of the legend of hockey Sandeep Singh. The movie narrates the story of victory of hockey legend Sandeep Singh and how he overcame a fatal accident, which left him paralysed with sheer determination and perseverance. Later after his comeback, he became the captain of Indian Hockey team and led the team to become victorious. The role of the protagonist was played by Diljit Dosanjh in the movie, which he nailed with perfection. This makes *Soorma* a perfect dose of inspiration for the youth of the society.

The last movie reviewed in this article is *Shabaash Mithu*. This movie is directed by Srijit Mukherjee and was released in the year 2022. This biopic is based on the life of Mithali Raj who is the former Test and ODI captain of Women's National Cricket team. This story narrates the hardships and challenges faced by Mithali Raj in the journey to finally reach the national Cricket team as a Captain. The role was essayed by young and talented actress Taapsee Pannu.

Conclusion:

The films are either categorised as fiction or non-fiction. The latest trend of the Indian Cinema is Biopics that are based on the real - life events of any person. This makes Biopics fall under the category of non-fiction. The biopics have become popular over a period of time as these are based on the real struggles and journey of the legends which have influenced the audiences as well as the society. The Indian Cinema has finally succeeded creating a powerful impact on the lives of the common folk with the help of these biopics.

So, it can be concluded that though Bollywood is known for its power to entertain the masses, but with the latest trend of Biopics it is playing an important role in educating the audiences as well as enlightening the masses.

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The Function of ICTs in Enhancing Government-Citizen Engagement and Public Service Delivery in India

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Abstract:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have played a pivotal role in transforming the landscape of government-citizen engagement and public service delivery in India. This abstract deals with the multifaceted impact of ICTs by exploring two significant case studies that exemplify their influence in the Indian context.

The first case study illuminates the transformative potential of the Digital India initiative. With its ambitious vision of connecting rural and urban India through high-speed internet and digital infrastructure, this initiative has catalyzed a digital revolution. The Aadhaar project, a cornerstone of Digital India, has streamlined public service delivery by providing every citizen with a unique biometric identity. This innovation has not only curbed leakages in social welfare schemes but has also facilitated direct benefit transfers, ensuring that government services reach those who need them most efficiently.

The second case study highlights the role of ICTs in participatory governance through the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign). Leveraging mobile apps and social media, this campaign has engaged citizens in identifying and addressing sanitation issues in their communities. Through crowdsourcing and citizen reporting, it has not only enhanced government responsiveness but has also fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens towards public services.

The research paper emphasizes how ICTs are pivotal in reshaping India's governance landscape, making it more transparent, inclusive,

and efficient. These case studies exemplify how India's journey towards digitalization has not only improved government-citizen relations but has also redefined the contours of public service delivery, ultimately leading to more accountable and citizen-centric governance.

Keywords: ICTs, government-citizen engagement, public service delivery, Digital India, and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

1. Introduction

In the modern era, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionized the way governments interact with citizens and deliver public services. India, as one of the world's largest democracies, has made significant strides in using ICTs to enhance government-citizen engagement and improve public service delivery. This paper explores the impact of ICTs on governance in India, with a particular focus on two flagship initiatives, the Digital India scheme and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The importance of ICT in decreasing corruption was acknowledged in a recent book on the subject (Bhatnagar, 2013), yet it is noted that it has not always been simple to realize this promise. According to a 2012 survey by the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) assessing the state of e-governance (i.e., the use of ICT to deliver government services), while it is important to continue service delivery, governments must increasingly start to rethink in terms of e-government and e-governance.

According to Easton (1965), political phenomena are made up of an open system that must deal with the issues brought about by being exposed to environmental systems' influences. Some note, as an example, how the results of the industrial revolution led to furious reactions like communism and socialism. Some mention how the Industrial Revolution resulted in furious responses like communism and socialism. According to predictions, the information revolution will leave behind gaps between the information classes that must be bridged appropriately (Mahizhanan, 1999). The role of ICT and an ICT-based democracy in fostering citizen political involvement and, as a result, reducing the knowledge gap between citizens will be the main topic of this essay.

2. The Digital India Scheme

2.1 Background

The Digital India scheme was launched in 2015 with the aim of transforming India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It seeks to ensure that government services are made available to all citizens electronically, bridging the digital divide and promoting inclusive growth. The Digital India Scheme is a transformative and ambitious initiative launched by the Government of India in July 2015. The scheme aims to harness the power of digital technology to bring about comprehensive and inclusive growth across various sectors of the economy and to improve the quality of life for all citizens. The program is built on the foundation of providing digital infrastructure, bridging the digital divide, and promoting digital literacy and empowerment. At its core, Digital India seeks to create a digitally empowered society and a knowledge economy.

To achieve this, it focuses on several key pillars:

- **Digital Infrastructure:** The scheme aims to ensure that high-speed internet connectivity and digital access are available to every corner of the country, even in remote and rural areas. The creation of the National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN), now known as BharatNet, is a crucial part of this effort.

- **Digital Governance:** It seeks to make government services and information available to citizens electronically, reducing paperwork and enhancing transparency. Initiatives like the Digital Locker and e-governance platforms are significant components of this pillar.

- **Digital Empowerment:** To bridge the digital divide, Digital India focuses on digital literacy and skill development. Programs like Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) aim to make at least one person in every household digitally literate.

- **Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity:** The scheme aims to provide mobile connectivity to all areas, even in remote and hilly regions, to ensure that citizens can access digital services and information easily.

- **Information for All:** The initiative promotes the widespread availability of government information and services in multiple Indian languages to make them accessible to all citizens.

- **Electronics Manufacturing:** Digital India encourages the manufacturing

of electronics and hardware within the country, promoting the "Make in India" initiative and creating employment opportunities.

2.2 ICTs in Government Services

The Digital India scheme has leveraged ICTs to provide a wide range of government services online, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and making services more accessible to citizens. E-governance initiatives like the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) and the Aadhaar biometric identification system have played pivotal roles in achieving this goal. First and foremost, ICTs have streamlined administrative processes within government agencies. Digital platforms and automated systems have replaced manual paperwork, reducing bureaucratic red tape and minimizing delays in service delivery. This has not only improved the speed at which citizens can access government services but also reduced the scope for corruption and inefficiency.

ICTs have expanded the reach of government services, particularly to remote and underserved areas. Online portals and mobile applications enable citizens to access essential services, such as healthcare, education, and public utilities, from the comfort of their homes. This has not only improved accessibility but also enhanced inclusivity, bridging the urban-rural divide.

2.3 Citizen Engagement

The scheme has also facilitated improved government-citizen engagement through the use of ICTs. Initiatives such as MyGov.in and the Digital Locker enable citizens to participate in policy formulation and access important documents securely.

2.4 Challenges and Criticisms

While the Digital India scheme has made significant progress, it has not been without challenges. Concerns about data security, privacy, and the digital divide persist. Moreover, issues related to internet infrastructure and digital literacy need to be addressed to ensure equitable access to ICT-enabled services.

3. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

3.1 Background

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, also known as the Clean India Mission, is a nationwide cleanliness and sanitation campaign initiated by the Indian

government in October 2014. The campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the aim of transforming India into a clean and open-defecation-free (ODF) nation by October 2, 2019, to coincide with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan seeks to address various issues related to sanitation and cleanliness, including the construction of toilets in rural and urban areas, proper waste management, behavior change communication, and creating awareness about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a pivotal role in the success of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. It is instrumental in several aspects:

- **Monitoring and Reporting:** ICT tools and mobile applications have been developed to enable real-time monitoring of the construction of toilets and other sanitation facilities. This helps in tracking progress and ensuring accountability.
- **Data Management:** ICT facilitates the collection, storage, and analysis of data related to sanitation and cleanliness. This data-driven approach aids in decision-making and resource allocation.
- **Awareness and Communication:** The campaign leverages ICT platforms, such as social media, websites, and mobile apps, to disseminate information and engage with the public. It promotes behavior change through digital campaigns and educational content.
- **GIS Mapping:** Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology is used to map areas that lack sanitation facilities and prioritize interventions in those regions.
- **Mobile Toilets and Bio-Toilets:** ICT innovations have led to the development of mobile and bio-toilets, which are especially beneficial in remote and underserved areas, contributing to the ODF goal.

3.2 ICTs for Behavioral Change

ICTs have been instrumental in spreading awareness and motivating citizens to participate in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Mobile apps, social media campaigns, and community-driven initiatives have been used to engage citizens in cleanliness drives.

3.3 Monitoring and Accountability

ICTs have also played a crucial role in monitoring and ensuring accountability in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Real-time data collection

through mobile apps and web portals has enabled the government to track progress and address issues promptly.

3.4 Challenges and Limitations

Despite the successes, challenges remain in the implementation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Ensuring sustained behavioral change, addressing infrastructure gaps, and maintaining public participation are ongoing challenges.

4. Comparative Analysis

4.1 Successes

Both the Digital India scheme and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan have achieved notable successes in enhancing government-citizen engagement and public service delivery. ICTs have played a pivotal role in expanding the reach of government services and fostering citizen involvement.

4.2 Challenges

However, both initiatives face common challenges related to digital literacy, internet connectivity, and data security. Bridging the digital divide and addressing these issues are critical for the sustained success of ICT-driven governance initiatives.

4.3 Future Prospects

The integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain holds promise for further improving government-citizen engagement and public service delivery in India. These technologies can enhance transparency, reduce corruption, and streamline government processes.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have emerged as powerful tools in enhancing government-citizen engagement and improving public service delivery in India. The impact of ICTs can be vividly observed through two flagship government initiatives, namely the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' and 'Make in India' scheme.

The 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (Clean India Mission) is a remarkable example of how ICTs can be leveraged to drive citizen engagement and public service delivery. Through the use of mobile applications, citizens

can report sanitation and cleanliness issues in real-time, making it easier for local authorities to respond promptly. This digital feedback loop has not only improved the efficiency of public service delivery in the sanitation sector but has also fostered a sense of ownership among citizens in keeping their surroundings clean. A study by Kumar and Chauhan (2018) highlights that the use of ICTs in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has led to a significant reduction in open defecation rates and an improvement in overall sanitation conditions (Kumar & Chauhan, 2018, p 354-357)

Similarly, the 'Make in India' initiative, aimed at boosting manufacturing and investment in India, has harnessed ICTs to engage with potential investors and streamline administrative processes. According to a report by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2019), the 'Make in India' initiative, backed by ICT-enabled processes, has attracted substantial foreign direct investment (FDI) and facilitated the growth of the manufacturing sector (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2019).

In conclusion, ICTs have played a pivotal role in transforming the landscape of government-citizen engagement and public service delivery in India. Through the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' and 'Make in India' scheme, ICTs have not only improved the efficiency of service delivery but have also empowered citizens and attracted investment. As India continues to digitize its governance and administrative processes, the potential for ICTs to drive positive change remains immense.

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The Emergence of OTT Platforms: Redefining the Roles of Women

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Abstract

The world of cinema and cinematic television has been transformed and dramatically altered with the emergence of the digital landscape and online streaming platforms. Such online streaming platforms are colloquially known as Over-the-top (OTT) platforms. OTT being the digital media service offers film and TV content directly to viewers via the internet. Through various device connectivity as well as its easy and accessible delivery method OTT platforms have not just revolutionized the traditional entertainment apparatus, but also provided a global stage to local writers, producers, creators, artists, and actors. With the advent of OTT platforms, several changes have been seen in the representation as well as the making of the film and series. One major change has been observed in the roles, representation and narrative of women on screen across the globe. OTT platforms have given opportunities to audiences to enjoy, and women to step in as creators to present diverse, compelling, original, and realistic narratives and characters.

This paper intends to analyse the significant change brought about in the narratives and representation of women in India through its local OTT platforms. Netflix, Hulu, HBO, and Amazon Prime are a few popular platforms. However, India has around over 25+ local streaming platforms including Sony LIV, Voot, ALT Balaji, Zee5, TVF, Hungama, etc, which are offering female storytellers space and freedom to rise and tell distinct, local, relatable, authentic and ground-breaking stories. OTT platforms in India have liberated and democratized the film industry which traditionally used to marginalize and sideline the identity and representation of women. This paper will examine and unfold the different levels of change in the representation of women on

and off the screen through such platforms in India. The attempt will be to understand the significance of OTT platforms in accelerating female-centric or female-led stories and to analyse and decode the change in the idea or standard of beauty, body politics, sexuality, femininity, power and the paradox of choices through such representations.

Keywords: OTT platforms, representation, identity, women, sexuality, transformation.

Introduction

The audiences in 21ˢᵗ century have seen dramatic changes in the way of consumption of entertainment content, especially in terms of cinema and series. From being shown in theatres and cable channels to being available at over-the-top (OTT) platforms in computers and mobiles. Cinema and series which form the entertainment media is one of the strongest medium and powerful agent of binding people together and breaking them, perpetuate the stereotypes and challenging them, reinforcing the patriarchal values and questioning them, creating as well as destroying certain types of images of women. Digital entertainment has been the core reason to channel the audiences towards the OTT platforms. From the early representation of women in stereotypical roles in cinema to empowering roles of women in and out of cinema, significant change has been observed in the portrayal of woman through digital media. This paper will emphasis on the significant role of digital media through OTT platforms in redefining the roles and images of women. With the examples of some films and series, the paper will also highlight upon the space and opportunity that OTT platforms have provided to not just women actors, but also to women directors, artists, producers, cinematographers and other contributors to create a new definition of empowerment and expression for women. This paper will take turn to talk about OTT platforms and its impact on us as spectator, but largely about its wider scopes and opportunities to local female directors, storytellers and artists to have a platform which provide space for their stories and narratives, specifically in India.

Why ott Platforms?

Digital media has swiftly accelerated their potential and growth after covid 19 pandemic effects has shut cinema theatres, paused

new production for television series broadcasting and disrupted the mainstream cinema production companies. Digital media through several online streaming services started to expand with new scope and new contents. The online streaming platforms which are colloquially known as Over-the-top (OTT) platforms, are the service providers for movies, TV series, web series, documentaries, reality shows, news, live sports, etc. that are directed to digital users across the world through internet using their mobiles, tablets, laptops or smart TV, without the involvement of broadcasting cables, TV providers, or satellite television, which liberates the audiences at several levels. Some of the famous OTT platforms in India are Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney + Hotstar, Youtube TV, Zee 5, SonyLiv, Voot, Hoichoi, ALT Balaji, MX Player, Jio Cinema, TVF, Ullu App, Sun NXT, Adda times, Yupp TV, Hungama, Eros Now, Airtel Extreme and many more. With the diverse languages in India, some regional OTT platforms also provide content to their local users in the regional languages which attracts rural populations as well.

These OTT platforms provide number of benefits to the users and audiences. To list a few,

1. **Internet penetration**: Internet penetrability is the accessibility that OTT platforms provide, which allows its users to access the contents of the several OTT platforms with any stable internet connection through their devices. It facilitate mobility of gadgets, and doesn't require audience to sit at their homes to enjoy content, but accessible at anytime, anywhere at one's own pace.

2. **Seamless viewing experience**: The viewing experiences of the audiences have been made smooth and strategically aiming to provide consistent and wide range of personalised recommendations based on the watch history and experiences. Moreover, it also provide multi-screen facility for a household (which farther the popularity and respect the personalization of recommendations.)

3. **Cost-Effective:** These multiple OTT platforms are subscriber-based system. Cost and subscription depends upon the users' accessibility and preferences to choose monthly, quarterly, annually payment

4. **On-Demand or Real Time facility:** With on-demand and real time facility, users and audiences pay per view for content of their choice and can access the content whenever they want, and don't

need to wait for a specific time for consuming a content (like in TV broadcasting). Moreover, real-time feature adds the element of accessing the content live from across the world happening at real-time. Recently, the live telecast of Chandrayan 3 landing on moon was been watched by people across India and Indians across the world through several OTT platforms. Watching sports happening at any corner of the world became easier with the simple accessibility at one's fingertip.

5. **Increase in Local Content:** Having multiple OTT platforms increases the competition among the providers which also promotes the numbers of content and their visibility. Local OTT platforms in India attempt to provide more local contents, giving space and opportunities to new directors and producers to make their local stories available for everyone. Even if the contents are local and in regional language, the impact, connectivity and accessibility of these contents are global which motivates the new filmmakers and directors to reach larger audiences. Moreover, with the facility to watch any content in your preferred language, it liberates the audiences from the language barrier, and connect with people through their content even if they do not speak a specific language. Through OTT platforms, directors, producers and filmmakers are also free from the expectations of being blockbusters as their deal with the OTT operators provide them fair amount and visibility.

6. **Original and Varied content:** With opening the space for new stories and narratives, these OTT platforms attract new and varied content which are easily relatable to the diverse audiences of India and across globe.

7. **Convenience:** Having no fixed time frame to follow to watch any content, OTT platforms allows its audiences the flexibility to watch the content at their own pace and space.

8. **Democratization of content creation:** Content creation in a digital media has become more accessible than ever before. In this era of digitalization, content creation has been democratized through OTT platforms. Even with a small budget, one can create stories, films or series and can easily make it available for audiences to watch through the help of OTT platforms.

9. **Multiple Representations:** As mentioned earlier, with growing market of OTT platforms, the competition for content also got intensified where original stories and narratives are given preferences which open the window for multiple representations. Its addresses and brings into the frame the portrayals and narratives which were largely undermined and underrepresented in mainstream cinema and TV series.

The availability of internet in every corner of India, even where the metalled road has not reached, has put India at the second into the ranking where internet users are the largest in number. With this capacity and increasing demand for content, India and Indian users also consume and have access to a larger variety of content, especially through the OTT platforms.

Transition of Representation of Women through ott Platforms

Having a long history of women being represented in stereotypical roles in mainstream cinema and TV series, the role and images of women were limited to male gaze[1]. In Bollywood films, the visual pleasure in the form of women's sexuality is still very much prevalent, not just in the projection of women in the form of eroticism, but also in projecting overt sexuality and objectification of the image on the screen. For Instance, *Jism* (2003), *Grand Masti* (2013), *Great Grand Masti* (2016), *Kya Super Kool Hain Hum* (2012), *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* (2016), *Mastizaade* (2016), *Kuch Kuch Locha Hai* (2015) are overtly sexual films and representing women only as sexually attractive objects where women are introduced as 'a beautiful girl' but camera angles and zooms her long legs, her lips, her waist, her back, her perfect body type. Indian cinema, more specifically Bollywood, is still very strongly influenced and shaped by sexual objectification.

In mainstream Bollywood films, men are mostly known and recognized for their masculine power or strength, for their role as a loyal or good person, for their path to success or being successful, being a dedicated employee, for their perfect attribute for the patriarchal ideal ego, etc. Women, on the other hand, are recognized and judged based on their beauty, charm, and sexuality. They are either beautiful and good looking or not so good looking. Women in the Bollywood films are represented with the patriarchal version of female sexuality, either as totally traditional or totally corrupt. Bollywood films have glorified

the idea that if a man wants a girl to love him back, he has to follow her again and again, he has to persuade the girl, protect her from all other men and their gazes and make her realize that she is to love him. However, these ideas have created false stereotypes for society as well as for the fantasy of the audiences. Love has been equated with obsession as well as oppression. This created a trend of defining love of what men proclaim without even considering what does a woman want? Does she want the love that is being offered? Does she love someone else? or does she want love at all? These films do not really convey the words of women. Instead, it creates a myth that if a girl is silently accepting whatever is happening or even if she says No, it means she is interested or just needs some more persuasion.

Parallelly in Indian TV series or Soap opera, women are shown as Perfect *Bahu, Saas, Patni, Abla Naari* or someone, who easily and very often gets scared if violated and would wait for the hero of the film to fight for her and rescue her from molestation or rape. Rightly pointed out by Jeffery Brown in his book *Dangerous Curves: Action Heroines, Gender, Fetishism, and Popular Culture*, 'All that was required of an actress was an innocently sexual appearance and a ready scream. This type of female role still exists today but is overshadowed by the new action heroine.'[2] TV Series has also started to come up with women action, story revolving around her now, however, these protagonist roles are still embracing patriarchal values and misogynistic perspective.

The major paradigm shift and change in the portrayal of women has been seen in recent years through the contents of OTT platforms. The contents on OTT platforms have adapted themselves according to the demand of the society and the movements in socio-cultural realm. With feminist movement to understand, evaluate and criticize the representation of women on the screen, new contents, shows and films on OTT platforms have showcased women as an individual, as people, as someone having agency, which shifted women's identity from male-dependent characters to an individual having own story and narratives to present. A large section of the audiences, as well as the Society, is still accustomed to see and understand things, works and roles in a gender-specific manner, however, the impact of OTT platforms through their contents are breaking the stereotype, changing the narratives, bracing antidotes to repression, bringing more positive contents related to women as well as marginalized people, portraying identities and images

which were hitherto undermined and undervalued. These changing roles and narratives are gradually changing the mindset of the people and giving the audiences a strong message of right and empowering representation.

Portrayal of women have been revolutionized. Projection of working women, ambitious women, women in leadership, women's friendship, women-oriented issues, women not as *devis* but imperfectly perfect human being, women choosing their passion and career over relationship, and also positive representation of homosexuality, trans-woman, bisexual women, etc., OTT platforms through their contents have provided a safe space and opportunity to transform the social mindset and overcome the cultural/stereotypical barriers drawn and solidified by mainstream cinema and TV series.

Web series like *Made in Heaven, Fore More Shots Please!, Lust Stories, She, Bombay Begums, Mai, Tooth Pari, Leila*, etc. and films like *Mimi (*2021), *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022), *Bulbbul* (2020), *Paggalait* (2021), *Darlings* (2022), *Super Deluxe* (2019), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021) have presented stories and narratives like never before. For instances, Bulbbul from *Bulbbul* who hides her own painful past but avenges the women who are being wronged and was ultimately called as *chudail* (witch); Mimi in the film *Mimi* becomes a virgin surrogate mother, breaking the taboo of the society and coming out strong; Sandhya from *Paggalait* was mocked and questioned because she didn't cry or respond in a specific manner after the death of her husband (who has been cheating on her); Badrunissa from *Darlings* who was a victim of domestic violence, and wanted to confront her husband about it; wife in *The Great Indian Kitchen* unfolded and presented several layers of misogyny in the film. Through all these films which were released through OTT platforms, women and their roles have been redefined.

Moreover, with few mentioned web series where Tara from *Made in Heaven,* Damini, Siddhi, Anjana and Umang from *Four More Shots Please!,* Bhumika from *She*, Sheel from *Mai,* Leila/Shalini from *Leila,* all these women have been the protagonist where the effort is to simply break free from any form of oppression or repression, and address the problems of our socio-cultural-political-economic realities at different levels. Additionally, these contents, shows and films on the OTT platforms also provide an opportunity for writers, directors, artists as

well as the investors and producers to create content for niche audience. As P Wardhan has pointed out,

> 'With introduction of Netflix, Amazon Prime and various other streaming services and their original content, the wen series culture in India is regarded as a new wave of narrating women's stories, reflecting their realities.'[3]

An overall improvement in the role and representation of women inside as well as outside the cinematic world need to be included, towards which, OTT platforms have made a grand progress in redefining the meaning of Indian women. Society and films somehow reflect each other and act as a mirror. Thus, in order to improve the status of women as well as minority groups, films in the form of visual effect are making a lead by encouraging and producing issue-based films and series. Another enhancement in the role and representation of women has been brought in by women directors, which not just impact the representation of women on the screen, but with the power of presentation, various women directors are constantly challenging and breaking the stereotypical image of women as typical in *saas-bahu, abla naari,* etc. and bringing new, refreshing, and empowering roles through their scripts.

Women Directors Redifining Women's Role on Screen

In order to counter these stereotypes, feminists from the Second wave feminism and women's studies started criticizing women's representation and mechanisms in the film. Influenced by the work of Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, in 1960s and 1970s, few American film theorists such as Molly Haskell, Marjorie Rosen have analyzed the role and representation of women in the Hollywood mainstream film while focusing on the different ways in which female characters were presented in the film narratives and genres since 1920s. In contrast with American feminist film theorists, British feminist film theorists centered their view on the semiotic, psychoanalysis and critical theory where they analyzed the way mainstream movies emphasize on the sexual representation of women and strengthens the male gaze. British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey, Claire Johnson, Christian Metz, Pam Cook focused on the psychoanalytic and semiotic approach in analyzing the representation of women on the screen and enhancing their roles through realistic representation of women. Extending the

view of presenting the women in realistic form, Claire Johnson argued for the production of films made by women. According to Johnson, women's cinema can function as 'counter cinema' and change the roles and narratives that mainstream cinema has established so far.

As argued by Claire Johnston, women's cinema as Counter-cinema must learn to unlearn the stereotypical construction of the image of women, and myths about their nature and identity. According to Johnston, techniques, tools, process, and form of cinema themselves are somehow the manifestations of the same dominant patriarchal ideology, which objectifies women for pleasure. In order to counter the mainstream cinema, women's cinema,

> '…must challenge the depiction of reality; it is not enough to discuss the oppression of women within the text of the film; the language of the cinema/the depiction of reality must also be interrogated, so that a break between ideology and text is effected.'[4]

She suggested that if women directors come forward to direct the films, it would bring a significant change in dislocating stereotypes pertaining to women that prevails in the cinematic industry. According to Johnston, women auteur's perspective as director can formulate a new discourse from a feminist perspective. As argued by her, in mainstream cinema, with dominant patriarchal and sexist ideology, 'woman is presented as what she represents for man'.[5] Johnston strongly believed that the way dominant mainstream cinema has created a discourse that naturalises women's roles, societal ideologies, and cultures, could be de-naturalised by the implication of women's cinema by creating another discourse that breaks and challenges the constructed images, myths, and icons of women. As argued by Butler, Claire Johnston proclaimed 'counter-cinema as the discursive struggle' of women.

Based on Claire Johnston's acclaimed notion that the emergence of women directors can give way to the idea of women's cinema as a Counter-cinema to subvert the patriarchal viewpoint, and bring forth the representation of a woman as a woman on the screen, Indian revolution in web series and films on OTT has given way to women directors and filmmakers to change the narratives and symbols that exist in our society.

Women coming from wider array of backgrounds in India are bringing their ways of understanding the society and its values, and transforming the approach of filmmaking, storytelling, power, life, empowerment and representation. Directors like Zoya Akhtar, Nitya Mehra, Reema Kagti, Alankrita Shrivastava, Gauri Shinde, Guneet Monga, Kiran Rao, Konkana Sen Sharma, Meghna Gulzar; cinematographers like Solanki Chakraborty, Sraiyanti, Deepti Gupta, Kavya Sharma, Archana Ghangrekar, Priya Seth, Rachna Deshpande, Pooja Sharma, Anshu, Juhi Sharma, Anuradha Pathak; Scriptwriters like Kanika Dhillon, Urmi Juvekar, Nupur Asthana, Shibani Bathija, Shonali Bose, Tanuja Chandra, Kavitha Lankesh, Anjali Menon are coming from diverse regions of India, bringing diverse stories and perception, providing contents which fulfils the appetite for diversity and different kind of roles with intriguing narratives.

OTT platforms have provided a global stage to these writers, directors, cinematographers, and artists who tell the stories from a unique vantage point which not just bring in more realistic roles but also spark conversation about evolving roles of women on and out of the screen. These filmmakers through the help of OTT platforms, which absorbs all the narratives, bridge the gap of cultural understanding and people through authentic, ordinary and relatable stories.

These filmmakers are challenging the roles and representation by highlighting the narrow and overlooked stereotypes in society, by bringing realistic roles of and for women, and doing justice with those representations on screen. According to Johnston, female directors have managed to bring the sexist ideology underneath the construction of women out into the open and challenged it, which is evidently seen through contemporary web series and films on OTT platforms where filmmakers have attempted to redefine the roles and demystify the image of women used in the mainstream as signs or symbols without incorporating the patriarchal discourse. As a successful attempt, OTT platforms have provided the voices to the voiceless to be heard.

Ott as Future

India has a very complex market where there is no linear demand. With its diversity being the core value, India and Indian people have an appetite for every kind of stories and roles depending upon the current scenario. According to the latest report by Women's Media Center

Report, with the emerging diversity in the society, the issues related to women's right and representation, gender equality, minorities right are being address globally and are need of the hour. With the advent of OTT platforms, the media and entertainment industry has seen a dynamic changes in India.

The Chief Content Officer of Zee 5 Nimisha Pandey has acclaimed that,

> 'The OTT ecosystem provides for a more authentic depiction of what women truly are without deifying them as goddesses or women of virtue. Instead of either placing women on a pedestal or focusing on their plight, narratives have begun to explore what women truly want. And they are not shying away from portrayals that are human-living real lives and dealing with real consequences.'[6]

The emergence of OTT platforms have also challenged the supremacy of mainstream cinema and television channels, and turning into the need of the future. With its benefits, there are also some challenges of OTT platforms. One such challenge is the lack of censorship in language and presentation, which also help some directors to present things as they are with bold languages and scenes, but also risks the exposure of inappropriate content to children.

The Diversity of India, with fast pacing media entertainment industry, allows the space for every variety of OTT platform, be it in regional language or in Hindi or in English, their compelling and captivating narratives are providing space for audiences to enjoy and creators to present.

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Endnotes

1. The **male gaze** is a concept coined by Laura Mulvey in 1975 that refers
    to the way in which films are made to cater to the male viewer , or visual
    arts are structured around a masculine viewer. She explained the concept
    with the reference to **visual pleasure** and its impact on cinema.

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A Feminist Reading of "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

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In her seminal text *Second Sex*, Simon De Beauvoir opines that "one is not born but becomes a woman." It is true as we know sex is biological while gender is a social construct. Child is a common gender. Society dictates a set of rules for the child who is born with a penis and the child who is born with a vagina. Following the societal rules, one is expected to become a man and one will become a woman. As for the third gender, there is a strange silence ; as if there is nothing outside this binary – man/woman.

We can say as Beauvoir correctly pointed out that no one is born a woman but becomes one, this is true for men also. They are also expected to behave in a certain way which makes them manly. They are supposed to be driven by logic and reason, completely devoid of emotion. In Charlotte Perkin Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper", we find narrator's husband John , trapped in this very image. He is someone who believes in everything concrete. There is no room for imagination in his life. The narrator says "John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures" (Gilman 1).

The narrator is suffering from postpartum depression. She has lost her appetite. She feels like she doesn't have any energy. Her husband John is a physician and according to her this is the very reason why she is not recovering quickly. "John is a physician, and perhaps - (I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is a dead paper and a great relief to my mind) - perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster" (Gilman 1). It is not difficult to understand what she wants to convey. When her husband, a renowned physician assures everyone that there is nothing seriously wrong with her except one temporary nervous depression and a hysterical tendency, it becomes all the more difficult

for her to convince people that she is really suffering from mental ailment. Her brother is also a physician and he also conforms with the stereotypical image of "man" set by the society. He too doesn't show any effort to understand his sister's illness and prescribes her "phosphates or phosphites …whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise" (Gilman 2) and she was forbidden to work until she was well again. Although the narrator herself believes that congenial work about which she is excited would be good for her. The narrator writes in concealment which exhausts her a lot. She feels that if she could have got support from her husband, if she could share her thoughts and writing, it would have contributed to her betterment. But, unfortunately, she didn't get that support. Her husband made her convinced that if she thought about her condition, it would make her condition worse. As a remedy for her ailment, her husband brought her for a change. The narrator likes the place and in her imagination, she fancies there is something strange about the house. But her husband doesn't share her feelings. The robot-like behaviour of John irritates the narrator. She had to control her true self from venting out. There comes the relevance of her writing. It is only to those papers, where she could emptied her heart out. The paper would not judge her. The paper would not rebuke her.

Interestingly, it is to be noted, John is loving and caring, at least in his own way. He does not inflicts any torture on his wife. He does everything what he thinks will be best for his wife. There lies the problem. He doesn't regard his wife as a mature human being with brain and heart; logic and emotion, an individual. To consider women as immature and weak meant that they were discouraged from having any control over their lives.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" was published in New England Magazine in 1892 when women were still twenty six years behind from gaining their right to vote. The role of women in the then American society was heavily restricted both socially and legally. Women were encouraged, rather compelled to conform to their husband's decision in every walk of life - financial, social, even medical. Women's health was a particularly confusing area of medicine, as women were viewed as nervous, hysterical beings, and were discouraged from pursuing any kind of intellectual activity, that according to the stereotypical male physicians would "upset" them. . Writing itself was revolutionary. As writing suggests expressing one's self, it naturally creates a sense of identity, and was thought to be destructive for naturally fragile women.

Moreover, writing was considered as a complete male domain where women are intruders.

"Alas! A woman that attempts the pen!

Such an intruder on the rights of men!" (Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea)

In 1912, Gilman published an article "Why I wrote the Yellow Wallpaper" in *Forerunner*. Her short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" created an upheaval in the society and a famous physician opined that this kind of story could drive someone into insanity. In her article, Gilman stated that the short story is autobiographical. She herself went through a similar mental ailment, just like the narrator. A famous physician's prescribed rest cure had driven her on the verge of insanity. Finally, she stopped following those instructions and resumed her regular work which included her writing and gradually she recovered. She claimed that she learnt after reading her short story that famous physician altered his treatment which she considers a success of her writing because it would same numerous women from becoming insane.

Jane, another female character in the short story is depicted as a victim and at the same time a vehicle of patriarchy. Jane is John's sister, who looks after the household. Like her brother, she also thinks that any kind of intellectual activity would be harmful for the narrator and that's why the narrator hides her writings from Jane too. In fact, Jane does not have any opinion of her own. She echoes her brother's thoughts. The narrator was terribly alone. She desperately wanted someone who could understand her, share her thought. That's why she hallucinated another woman trapped behind the yellow wallpaper, just like herself trapped behind the ghastly bars of patriarchy. If Jane, as a woman, could identify with the narrator ; if she could understand she too is entrapped within the prison of patriarchy, it could have been a story of sisterhood, where both could get a room of their own. The narrator would not have to search someone behind the ghastly wallpaper. Together, they could try to tear off the ghastly wallpaper of patriarchy, as much as they could.

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Cinema and Propaganda: Bollywood's Self-fashioning of Indian Politics in *The Kashmir Files* (2022) and *The Kerala Story* (2023)

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Abstract:

Over time, Bollywood Cinema as an audio-visual media entertained us with stories of love, devotion, fantasy, romance, melodrama, horror and thriller, and simultaneously communicated Indian historical, political, mythological, religious, academic, theological, scientific, regional, cultural and social matters through television, various Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and silver screens. It is also an extremely effective way of swaying and influencing every section of Indian people, because the filmmakers attract and persuade us with the cinematic focalisation of contemporary socio-cultural and political discourses. They sometimes dilute the differences between reality and hyperreality in the entire trajectory of the cinematic representation of an all-pervading socio-cultural phenomenon. Nowadays, Bollywood cinema most significantly attempts to contribute some popular movies as propaganda of contemporary Indian politics. It self-fashionably commercialises its films to politicize the events and the facts, manipulate characters as the spokesperson of contemporary politics and confuse the audience to understand the actual reality to fall into the oscillation between the depiction of reality and re-created reality. So, Bollywood cinema has been used as propaganda to shape India's historical, political, cultural and societal ideologies. It diplomatically focuses on the political rise of the contemporary Indian government to power with a promise of

foregrounding a Hindu nation in the polarization of other communities. However, this paper attempts to incorporate the theoretical discourses of media and politics in order to explore Bollywood's self-fashioning of Indian politics in *The Kashmir Files* and *The Kerala Story*. It also examines how Bollywood movies systematically play the role of propaganda to produce hegemonic influences on the mindset of the people and cold-mindedly monitor divisive politics to affect the homogenizing sensibilities of Indian culture and society.

Keywords: Bollywood, OTT, Cinema, Media, Propaganda, Indian Politics, *The Kashmir Files*, *The Kerala Story*

Introduction

Nowadays, Indian cinema has highly been acclaimed as an academic discipline in the global context of film studies. It has gradually been transformed into a crucial medium of the academic field that attracts a large community of scholars across the world to study Indian movies as cross-disciplinary work in the fields of anthropology, sociology, history, politics, performance studies, cinema studies, cultural studies, comparative literature, media and communication studies, and South Asian studies. It concurrently attracts researchers to examine the cinematic representation of Indian socio-cultural and political phenomena. Like Indian Literature, Indian cinema is made of various regional languages that basically include Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Maratha, Odia, Bhojpuri and Punjabi. All these regional films invariably represent not only their regional culture, faith, caste, customs, history, tradition and various socio-cultural issues but also show India as a country of cultural richness, heritage, diversity, customs and tradition in the world. They also promote Indian values such as family, uprightness, love, devotion and social harmony in the global platforms of cultural studies. Traditional Indian cinema advocates the inclusiveness of Indian culture, religion, myths and tradition, the oneness of diverse socio-cultural practices, institutionalised prejudices and faiths, and the ideology of nation and nationalism. Besides, it displays various socio-cultural, historical, and political affairs including British colonisation and the Indian struggle for freedom, the Partition, patriotism, ethnic conflicts, border issues, and caste and religious conflicts. Thus, Indian cinema has become one of the finest mediums that helps people know and explore all kinds of hidden treasures of Indian history, geography, politics, culture, and society.

Bollywood cinema constructs and displays institutional discrimination against India's Muslims that has been evidenced over decades since Partition. Filmmakers of Bollywood indirectly reframe the characters of Muslims as thieves, dacoits, criminals and prostitutes. Side by side, it promotes community participation and communal harmony in the representation of scenes, action, music, songs, dance, weddings, cultural festivals, religious festivals, secular ideas and the brotherhood of Indian people. Hindi Cinema (Bollywood) in the 21st century self-fashionably shifts from only entertaining people with stories of love, devotion, fantasy, romance, melodrama, science, horror and thriller to screening cultural, religious, social, historical, political and national matters through television, various OTT platforms and silver screens. It starts functioning to inform the people about the current social, political and economic issues. Bollywood cinema attempts to display various dark sides of Indian politics like power politics, money laundering, citizenship politics, lobbyism, nepotism, family politics, inner political disputes, caste politics, autocracy, dictatorship, corruption, inflammatory speech, election violence and murders that intimidate the democracy of India. Over the past decade, Bollywood has diplomatically shown the political rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government at the Centre with a promise of building a Hindu nation through the polarization of other communities. To be associated with politics, it works as propaganda for the government at the Centre. It thereby shapes positive images of the contemporary ruling government and negative images of the previous government of the Indian National Congress. Bollywood also promotes divisive politics between Hindus and Muslims by politicizing the facts, myths, stories, settings, incidents, and characters to achieve the voting favour of the Hindu Community. It consequently represents Islam through the facts of "Love Jihad", religious conversion, Islamophobia, terrorism, polygamy, unpatriotic and other stereotyped prejudices. Bollywood directly or indirectly re-creates the images of Islam and the Muslim community as bad and vulnerable to the Hindu community with the fabrication of truth. It conveys negative messages to society about Islam and it creates a social gap between Hindus and Muslims. However, the research paper aims to incorporate the theoretical discourses of media and politics to explore Bollywood self-fashioning of Indian politics in *The Kashmir Files* (2022) and *The Kerala Story* (2023). At the same time, it examines how Bollywood stereotypically

plays the role of propaganda to produce hegemonic influences on the mindset of the people and cold-mindedly monitors divisive politics to affect the oneness of Indian culture and society. Besides, this paper not only attempts to investigate the hypothetical shifts of Bollywood from moral and artistic values to the field of politics as propaganda but also explores the means of Bollywood to othering Muslims as an imagined community in the diversity of Indian history, culture and society.

Literature Review

Bollywood cinema has significantly moved on to bridge the gap between cinema and politics in the cinematic representation of socio-political issues. It minutely shows cinema as an artistic medium that not only communicates the nature of Indian politics but also disseminates the approaches, ideology, and agendas of Indian politics as propaganda. Bollywood directly shows the anti-Muslim ideology over the years through movies like *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2016), *Padmaavat* (2018), *72 Hoorain* (2019), *Tanhaji* (2020) and *Sooryavanshi* (2021). All the movies project Muslims to be villains, dangerous, violent, barbaric, oppressive, harsh, abusive, uncivilized or indecent. Like social media, Bollywood attempts to create a narrative of Islamophobia against the Muslim community. It has held Muslims as terrorists to portray the dark and violent images of Islam in *Kabul Express* (2006), *New York* (2009), *Tere Bin Laden* (2010), *Baby* (2015), *Phantom* (2015), *Raazi* (2018) and *Uri: The Surgical Strike* (2019). These films satirically portray the stereotypical images of Islam as supporting terrorism and extremism. In order to further their political agenda, those in power often resort to cinema as a perfect medium of political communication to designate its ideologies and discourses in society and influence the common people. Bollywood is often coerced to narrate Indian history, culture, and society according to the political line, to alter facts and legitimatise their attribution of reality as appropriate and accurate. It also secretly empowers filmmakers to produce political movies in which they can show the dark images of the earlier governments and glorify the works of the ruling government. The paper finds out the means of political communication to manifest Bollywood self-fashioning of Indian politics as discourse or propaganda in the movies, *The Kashmir Files* (2022) and *The Kerala Story* (2023).

Research Methodology

Media is a mode of analysis that examines how particular communication is done to transmit specific messages in society. The transmitted information in any setting or environment encourages certain types of interaction and discourages others. Marshall McLuhan uses the phrase "the medium is the message," by which everyone can reshape culture, society and the mindset of the people. He has emphasized the agenda-setting theory of media to determine the public issues, debates and expectations. So, the media can shape what issues are given the most attention and what agenda can be widely acceptable to the public in various forms of media. Anyway, the film is an audio-visual media that creates reality rather than merely reproduces an already-existing reality. Like all ideological discourses, it hides this construction process by portraying it as natural to create an illusion of reality that is created by the cinematographic process and viewed directly on the screen. The film always produces a bridge between reality and hyperreality to express all fictional narratives of socio-political facts with a fusion of truth and lies. Nowadays, it is "impossible to distinguish between a conception of art that is free of ideology to its core and the misuse of aesthetic rationality for mass exploitation and mass domination." (Adorno 77) Media as the medium of technological communication fabricates an excessive proliferation of meaning and ideas. Cinema is one of the finest mediums of technological communication that significantly proliferates any ideas, thoughts and practises. It creates hyperreality that distinguishes reality from a simulation of reality. Jean Baudrillard defined 'hyperreality' as "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality." (Baudrillard 1) From this statement, it can be said that hyperreality is a representation or a sign without originality and it shows the reality with distortion or something different from reality. Over the years, Cinema has led political communication in the political system and plays a central role in facilitating democracy by allowing a wide variety of views to be expressed. On the other hand, it becomes anti-democratic when the political leaders manipulate cinema to mislead the common people to understand the facts around them and make them believe in hyperreality. This research paper takes on the theoretical discourses of media and politics to focus on hyperreality with overamplification, distortion and misrepresentation of reality. It analyses Walter Benjamin's idea of the aestheticization of politics

to consider the distinction between art and politics meaningless. The paper also takes a look at cinematic art for politics' sake in the field of mass media to persuade people about governmental enterprises.

Discussion

Today, Film is an effective way of storytelling facts and ideas through the manipulation of setting, plot, events and characters. It has the dominant power to motivate people in the distortion and re-creation of the facts, and it presents the reality as if it is more real than the actual reality. It is not a metaphor for life as lived but life as thought about. It does not reflect reality but the solipsism and narcissism of the filmmaker. We know that "False and flawed storytelling is forced to substitute spectacle for substance, trickery for truth." (McKee 13) Here Robert McKee emphasises the originality of the story, not duplication and reminds the filmmakers to be true to the representation of the facts. In the global village, the film has also been used as propaganda to hold up the matter of politics in a persuasive way. Propaganda is a manipulative approach that conveys biased or distorted messages to society. The filmmakers of Bollywood currently attempt to politicise their movies and strategically communicate political facts and ideas in support of the government in power. As a result, they can commercialise their movies and obtain the favour of the government. This research minutely finds out how the political movies of Bollywood have become political propaganda for the government at the Centre. It also focuses on how the filmmakers manipulate and misrepresent the facts in the movies, *The Kashmir Files* and *The Kerala Story* to assist the agenda of the government at the Centre.

The Kashmir Files (2022) and Propaganda

Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri's *The Kashmir Files* has emerged as one of the highest-grossing Indian films of 2022. It is a film based on the genocide and exodus of Kashmiri Hindu Pandits in the 1990s and after. The film depicts the anguish, rape, suffering, the genocide of Kashmiri Hindu Pandits and the struggle of the Kashmiri Pandit community. It shows how Islamic militants stormed and banished Kashmiri Hindu Pandits from the Kashmir valley using the slogans: "Raliv Galiv ya Chaliv" ("convert, die or leave") and "Al-Safa Batte Dafa" ("with god's grace, whole Kashmiri Pandit community will leave the valley"). The film, *The Kashmir Files* beautifully combines the incidents of the past and the

present to blatantly show the helpless condition of the Kashmiri Pandits and their family through flashbacks. The story of the past displays that Pushkar Nath Pandit, a man of the Hindu Pandit community, worries for his son Karan's safety because the terrorists have claimed that Karan is an Indian spy. Pushkar asks his friend Brahma Dutt, a government employee to look out for Karan. He then takes Brahma to Kashmir where he observes the violence committed against Kashmiri Pandits. He brings up the matter with Jammu and Kashmir's chief minister who suspends Brahma. Eventually, Pushkar Nath's home is invaded by the militant leader, Farooq Malik Bitta who shoots Karan behind a rice container. Pushkar begs for their lives, along with Sharda, his daughter-in-law. For their lives, Bitta forces Sharda to consume rice that has been stained with Karan's blood. Then Pushkar begs his doctor friend, Mahesh Kumar to save Karan's life to admit him to the hospital but the extremists took control of the hospital and forbade the employees from treating non-Muslims. Karan then lost his life from the bullet wounds. Pushkar and his family are sent to Kaul, a Hindu poet who keeps friendly ties with Muslims to secure their safety. Kaul welcomes numerous Pandits into his home, but a bunch of militants kidnap Kaul and his son under the charge of providing shelter to the Hindus. The Pandits are later shocked to find the corpses of Kaul and his son hanging from trees. Then, the film story of the present shows the journey of Krishna who eventually lost his parents and that shocking incident inspires him to embark on an investigation to learn the truth behind the death of his parents. Krishna is a young student who is confused about what to believe and what not to do regarding Kashmir. He believes that his parents died in an accident. Under the influence of Professor Radhika Menon, Krishna supports Kashmiri separatism. He holds the Government of India responsible for the issue of Kashmir. When Pushkar passes away, Krishna travels to his ancestral home in Kashmir to scatter the ashes of Pushkar. At the same time, Menon asks Krishna to record some footage in Kashmir to expose the alleged atrocities of the government at the Centre. Going there, Krishna meets Bitta and accuses him of being responsible for the situation of the Pandits. But Bitta declares himself to be a new-age Gandhi who supports a non-violent democratic movement. He attempts to mislead Krishna and accuses the Indian army of murdering his parents. When Krishna questions Brahma about this matter, Brahma hands him files of newspaper cuttings and exposes how the Muslim extremists, disguised as Indian Army soldiers had killed them. After

returning to Delhi, Krishna delivered his scheduled speech for the university presidential elections to a roaring crowd at the ANU campus. He then elaborates on the history of Kashmir and the plight of his family and other Kashmiri Hindu victims. This shocks his mentor Professor Menon and her other students at the ANU.

Vivek Agnihotri introduces the genocide history of the Kashmiri Pandits with the amalgamation of truth and lies in *The Kashmir Files*. With the distortion and the reconstruction of the factual reality, he cinematically represents the documentary of alternative facts about the number of deaths and the migration of Kashmiri Pandits in the film. He mostly sets up the narrative of the film without the originality of facts. He has politically and socially created controversy over the hyperreality of the film concerning the factual issue of Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir. Vivek Agnihotri very craftily uses his film as a medium of political communication and involves inflammatory scenes in the film to create an atmosphere of communal violence. The Israeli filmmaker Nadav Lapid, the jury head of the 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) has described the controversial Bollywood film *The Kashmir Files* as "propaganda" and "vulgar." (Lapid) But Vivek Agnihotri insisted in a conference that "every frame, every word in my film is truth." (Kak) He repeatedly states through the characters of the film to convince the audience that thousands of Kashmiri Pandits are brutally killed by the Muslim extremists to sweep away the Hindus from Kashmir. But he does not talk about military violence against Kashmiri Muslims. So, Vivek Agnihotri's *The Kashmir Files* is biased in cinematic discourse and shows Islamophobia and discriminatory politics between Hindus and Muslims in the sensational scenes of murders, gang rape, brutality, and extortion of Kashmiri Pandits. Here, Vivek Agnihotri also represents Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) as a hotbed of enemies of the nation in the cinematic focalisation of ANU's Professor Radhika Menon and a group of students who reacted to the revocation of Article 370 by the Indian Government to support the protest of the Kashmiri Muslims. Thus, this paper has attempted to discuss the filmmaker's solipsistic representation of the genocide history of the Kashmiri Pandits in the film, *The Kashmir Files*. It simultaneously investigates how the film self-avowedly shifts from its artistic value to propaganda of political discourse to design images of Islamophobia in the fictional blend of reality and hyperreality about the sensational history of the Kashmiri Pandits. It also justifies that the film persuades Hindus to think about

the neighbouring Muslims as "others", "terrorists" and "anti-nationals".

The Kerala Story (2023) and Propaganda

Sudipto Sen's *The Kerala Story* tells the story of three women, Shalini, Geetanjali and Nimah from Kerala who are brainwashed, raped and tortured in a nursing college. By this time, they are converted to Islam and forced to join the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The film mostly describes a fictionalized portrayal of real-life events about Fatima Ba (Shalini Unnikrishnan), a woman who converted to Islam and shares her journey of aspiring to become a nurse but eventually being pressured by extremist Muslims in her college, she joins ISIS. Here Fatima Ba narrates how she was manipulated and brainwashed to join ISIS and ended up imprisoned in Afghanistan. She claimed to be one of 32,000 women from the Hindu and Christian communities who are missing from Kerala and have been recruited into the ISIS after being converted to Islam. To be dressed in a full Islamic veil, she mournfully speaks to the camera: "My name was Shalini Unnikrishnan," and "Now I am Fatima Ba, an ISIS terrorist in an Afghanistan jail. And I'm not alone." She describes that while studying at college in Kerala, she along with two women befriends a young Muslim woman who is seen conspiring with older Muslim men at an "Islamic Study Centre,". The Muslim men instruct a group of boys to isolate Unnikrishnan and her roommates from their families. The boys trap them in love, make sexual relationships with the women and force them to wear hijabs. Besides, she narrates that the Muslim roommate says derogatory comments toward Hindu gods and claims that women who wear hijabs are never raped. Fatima Ba finally informs that thousands of women were allegedly lured into converting to Islam and trafficked into joining ISIS and they had become instruments in a dangerous conspiracy hatched against India.

The research paper investigates and simultaneously analyses how the filmmaker, Sudipto Sen commercialises his film to misrepresent the facts and endorses Hindutva's ideological apparatus of "Love Jihad" as a political discourse to destroy religious harmony between Hindus and Muslims in the film, *The Kerala Story*. Here the way Sudipto Sen re-creates the environment of all the Muslim figures, practices and faiths is dark and intimidating to all Hindus. Muslims along with secular-minded people claim that this movie is politically made to spread hate and inflammation, trigger Islamophobia and justify violence against Muslims. After watching the film, they believe that the data of some

conversions from Hindu to Islam are found true in Kerala but the way Sudipto Sen has screened the thousands of Hindu conversions to Islam and their joining to ISIS is factually wrong and misrepresented. They also believe that this film is unconstitutional and unsecular. Regarding this, A renowned Indian reviewer and columnist, Shubhra Gupta (2023) called it "a poorly-made, poorly-acted rant which is not interested in interrogating the social complexities of Kerala, an Indian state proud of its multi-religious, multi-ethnic identity." She means that the film does not show the beauty of Kerala and other social problems but it targets the faiths and practices of the Muslim community. The editor and columnist of The Hindu, Anuj Kumar has also described the film as "burlesque" propaganda that has borrowed its understanding of Islam, from "hate-filled WhatsApp groups" and seeks to turn the audience into conveyors of hate by marketing "half-truths". From this, we understand that Sudipto Seen has narcissistically produced it to commercialise his film and to propagate the Hindutva ideology against "Love Jihad". He has overtly amplified the scenes of terrorism, conspiracy, religious conversion, violence, rape and sexuality to demean the Muslim community in the eyes of the Hindus. This is done in the film to distort the facts of religious conversions in Kerala and introduce Kerala as an Islamic state, possibly because Kerala is a state which is currently not ruled by the political dispensation at the centre. Sudipto Sen said at a seminar on 'Reality of Conversion and Uniform Civil Code': "Some people make films to earn ₹100 crore. We made this film to awaken 100 crore people." (Gupta) He tries to convince people that he has made *The Kerala Story* to awaken 100 crore Indians. The ruling dispensation have hailed the movie for bringing "Love Jihad" to the nation's attention. Thus, this research paper analyses how Bollywood has fashionably established "Love Jihad" as a political discourse to project the divisive politics between Hindus and Muslims in the film, *The Kerala Story*. It also examines how the term, "Love Jihad" shifts from religious discourse to political discourse to fuel the inflammation among Hindus towards Muslims, perpetuates Islamophobia and negative stereotypes of Muslims and sustains religious polarization over the minority Muslims.

Conclusion

Bollywood gives expressions of Indian history, myths, culture and society on screen. It entertains people with aesthetic pleasure, shows Indianness in all ways, and enlightens the secularity, fraternity,

sovereignty, and unity in diversity. But Bollywood has lost its artistic values and become an integral part of politics in the 21st century. Like other mass media, the government at the Centre use Bollywood as a gateway to political power, a medium to maintain its position in power and a medium to advertise its good images and moral values, democratic and constitutional ideas but it does not work for the public interest in India and it, of course, works to devise the discriminatory politics between Hindus and Muslims. The government at the Centre uses the films, *The Kashmir Files* and *The Kerala Story* as propaganda and plays the role of spreading political and communal venom among the people. It timely plays the triumph card of divisive politics to disrupt communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims when the election comes. This government has also used the divide-and-rule policy to break the unity of India like the British colonizers. However, this research paper has significantly examined how Bollywood has been used as a medium of political communication in *The Kashmir Files* and *The Kerala Story*. It also studies the ways the films cinematically show Islamophobia and provoke the Hindu consciousness and awareness about "Love Jihad" and "Islamic terrorism". Thus, this paper demonstrates an enduring connection between cinema and politics in the representation of all-pervading issues to be predominately expressed in the films, *The Kashmir Files* and *The Kerala Story*.

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Deceitful Bytes: Political Misinformation, Echo Chambers, and Empathy in WhatsApp Forwarding

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Abstract:

The across-the-board diffusion and circulation of false information and the materialization of isolated information bubbles on internet platforms have presented as extraordinary issues in the modern era of digital technology. This article proposes to delve into the interconnection between political deception, the creation of digital echo chambers, and the erosion of empathy regarding the thoughtless and sometimes nefarious forwarding of mass messages on WhatsApp. Through an investigation of assorted research findings and explorations into the propagation of misinformation and fake news, the mechanics of each sector, and the repercussions on Empathy, this paper seeks to illustrate the intricate and challenging facets of political discourse, digital consumption and its emotional effect on audience in our digital epoch.

Keyword political misinformation, empathy, echo chamber, WhatsApp

I. Introduction

The intensification of social media and digital connectivity in the world of Web 2.0 has altered the behaviors in which individuals communicate, shape relationships, and devour information. While these technologies provide a number of benefits, there is also a mounting apprehension in society about construction of online highly-polarized "echo-chambers", and the consequence of relentless and instantaneous cybernetic connectiveness on real-world networks that we generate among ourselves, in our societies. What does social media, and this age of content-driven rapid information and misinformation dissemination and influencer-celebrities do to our empathy, love, rational logic and our perspectives about the communities we make and belong to? This paper will scrutinize the composite chemistry between empathy, fake news, digital echo-chambers and information sharing practices on encrypted

platforms like WhatsApp. This paper will, additionally, provide an appraisal existing literatures on these topics as well as present a qualitative analysis of a limited sample survey finding vis-à-vis WhatsApp news, misinformation encounters, and WhatsApp forwarding practices among social media users. This analysis purposes to observe behaviours and perceptions related to empathy, fact checking, and susceptibility to fake news and digital echo-chambers that aggravate critical divergence among various communities and identity-groups. The survey and its analysis will use key variables like age, gender, education, profession etc. to contend that digital spaces present challenges for empathy and objective facts, but there are also sufficient prospects integral in the social media to foster more mindful and comprehensive online engagement.

II. Review of Existing Research

A robust area of research has already explored the hazards of fake-news and misinformation in social media users trapped in uninterrupted echo-chambers, but a few till date have been able to re-count the impact of end-to-end and tough to moderate social media channels like WhatsApp, and its effect on human-empathy. S. Timilsina(2023) in her article titled 'The Viral Society: Impact of Social Media and Empathy and Helping Behaviour' notes that- "The desire to be viral has led to a phenomenon where people are more likely to focus on creating content that will get them attention rather than being present in the moment and enjoying the experiences, they are having…This focus on getting views and likes has led to a decline in empathy and helpful behaviour. People are more likely to stand by and film an accident or a crime than to intervene and help the victim." (Timilsina, para 2 and para 3). How many times have we been electrified and dismayed by the innumerable calamities and misadventures arrested in bits and sound-bytes to turn them over and over in our minds and our devices in a "schadenfreude, or experience of pleasure"('Empathy Gap'), that news channels today so efficiently portray in their shrill-voice warped excited reporting on Televisions? S.A. Morelli and others in a study on "The neural components of empathy" define the role of empathy in establishing and nourishing communal ties amid human beings by vesting us in understanding, sharing and rejoining suitably to their emotive positions. (Morelli et al, 39). The epidemiologic trend and fixation among 'friends', fans and followers in these ubiquitous digital communities scarcely decipher into real-life 'friendship',

responsiveness and concern- "media critics suggest they often only serve news forms of self-presentation." (Tichy, 35). Matthias Tichy observes- "...the uniformity with which many people look spellbound at the display of their smartphones and forget about their environment is reminiscent of the standardization of behaviours that Adorno and Horkheimer had criticized under the banner of culture industry." (38). The spartan fixation into the lighted rectangular screen is evocative of "strange prisoners" in Socrates' allegory of cave, who live in their own 'scientia-sphaera' and are not even cognizant of their isolation (ibid, 43-44)- "[E]xpressed in the media studies idiom, they are in a perfect echo-chamber; the prisoners mutually confirm their convictions regarding classification of the shadow images, and they fend off from the outset … attempts to inform them about their situation" (ibid). Inspite of the all-purpose disquiet about the deteriorating value of moral, emotive and ethical concerns in the age of fake news and viral media, "literature linking individuals' emotions to their overall digital behaviour is scarce…"(Wollebaek, 2), with most studies this paper consulted on (see Wollabaek, Tornberg, Myrto Pantazi, Nobre, Kross, Radzvilavicius, Honigsbaum) failing to either fittingly link Empathy as emotion to viral misinformation content on end-to-end encrypted and partially moderated platforms like WhatsApp , or study Empathy and Social media unconnectedly as diverse fields of study belonging to neurobiology and Media Studies, or focus on Anger, Fear and divisiveness instead of more positive faculties like Empathy and its effect on social bonds that endure human communities. Honigsbaum, in his article titled "Barack Obama and the Empathy deficit", for example provides an agreeable historical investigation of the word 'empathy' but doesn't display adequately the miseffects of 'empathy-deficit' beyond limiting it as a modern moral sentiment and a "'social glue' and the just an "evolutionary basis of human co-operation" (Honigsbaum), before dismissing 'empathy-deficit' as "nothing more than the current vogue for connectedness" (ibid). Tornberg, for example, in his study examines fake-news as "complex contagion" (Tornberg, Title) in a "distinctly postmodern turn with digital technology" (ibid, 2) and summarizes "the disappearance of media intermediation… [to have] …fostered a space for direct meetings in a sort of online Habermasian public sphere…" where "we go in search of new communities, new worlds in which we may again feel a sense of togetherness" (ibid, 17). Myrto Pantazi *et al* in their study titled "Social and Political Aspects

of the vulnerability to political misinformation" believes "empirically testing whether political misinformation consumed in real or realistic settings has any impact on peoples' beliefs, worldviews, attitudes, and behaviours is inherently difficult" (269). The study, while it sheds critical light on "meta-cognitive myopia" and "illusory truth-effect" (Myrto Pantazi, 274) confines the allowance of this critical perception (ibid, 272) on political context of misinformation and its bearing on 'cognitive-bias'(ibid), difference between 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' (ibid, 269) by "algorithmic recommendations" (ibid, 272). Overall, prevailing literatures that study emotional impact of internet, social media, fake news and its effect on emotional loci are often markedly alienated into either Neurobiological and Cognitive studies or Media Studies and regrettably the 'twain' doesn't look like it often meets.

One of facts, however, that most of the literatures I have examined settle upon one component regardless of their divergent fields- the age of the influencers, digital media, "friends" and follower counts and clickbait news have made emotional response to fake news, no matter how unreasonable and harmful, desensitized to a large degree. We have begun to see it as hitherto just one more part of the online landscape, cut off from any real -world milieu and something to be unheeded and move on rather than be dynamically confronted. This desensitization splits publics where we are no longer able to extricate between fact and un-truth, it makes us less able to connect empathically to those who may hold diverse interpretations than us, and we turn out to be less and less prepared to engage neutrally with alternative standpoints, choosing as a substitute to withdraw into our own digital echo-chambers, where individuals surround themselves tribally with only those who share their opinions and beliefs based on social media alogorithms, where each individual only mirrors everyone else further desensitizing them to alternative perspectives and real world consequences of misinformation. Rossini *et al* in their paper titled "Dysfunctional information sharing on WhatsApp and Facebook: The Role of political talk, cross-cutting exposure and social corrections" write this- "Scholars have long warned that the high-choice environment of online news could have detrimental effects on democracy (Lewandowsky et al., 2012)- particularly by enabling users to consume information that supports their worldviews, while avoiding contrary perspectives (Prioe, 2007)." (2432). This is what

Tornberg labels as "echo-chamber" (3)- circumstances where people are exposed to perspectives that are conducive to their own ideas by either their own "algorithmic choices" or "selective exposure" which a direct result of "the rise of partisan media" that leads to "insular consumption of news against opposing ideas" (Han, 1838).

> An echo- chamber as a set of users characterized by two properties: opinion and network polarization. Opinion polarization means that they, in relation to a given question, are more inclined to share similar views. Network polarization means that they are more densely connected with each other than with the outside network. In other words, an echo chamber is a tightly connected set of nodes more inclined to share a common view on a given narrative. (Tornberg, 3)

The paradox of the internet is that while it can submerge us into the neon-bright dopamine-inducing fixation on its digital landscapes throwing explicit and subliminal messages of constant consumption to garner views, likes and engagements with us- the process or "landscape" that created it is "hard to question" (Myrto Pantazi, 272)- "[o]n many social media platforms, these processes include algorithmic recommendations that amplify content that agrees with individuals' prior beliefs….(and) provides users with easily accessible meta-data like the number of likes and shares of a given piece of (mis) information."(ibid). The "complex contagion"(Tornberg, Title) of misinformation that has virally infected the real lives so effectively that "the World Economic Forum considers it among the main threats to human society"(ibid, 1), taking the world for a "distinctly postmodern turn…as networks and identities now carry more weight than the truths of traditional authorities…to a decentralized and dynamic complexity of what resembles a swarm or herd…where neither unaided cognition or traditional scientific methods are able to disentangle the complex chains of causality…"(Tornberg, 2). This "herd" or "swarm" that Tornberg labels is what scholars have often named "echo-chamber"- an almost tribal identification with one's 'group/digital communities' that can not only border on manic violence in real-life, and less evidently in a casual ignoring of click-bait misinformations circulating unchecked in end-to-end encrypted platforms like WhatsApp. This link between decrease in empathic quality and formation of intensely segregating digital echo-chambers, as Tornberg further suggests-

> …is an on-going reduction in the quality and credibility of available information online…There are certain signs that point to a link between these two phenomena-echo chambers and the spread of misinformation-since homogenous clusters of users with a preference for self conformation seem to provide capable green houses for the seedling of rumours and misinformation… and resist information that does not conform to their beliefs… (2)

However, the presence of and/or our clear capacity to differentiate and scientifically study an otherwise amorphous group in cross-cutting social media platforms is often quite difficult, leading some detractors like Rossini to declare that "research on selective exposure has found little evidence of online echo chambers, which can be partially explained by the blurred boundaries between different online platforms where people can access information…"(2433). The difficulty that cross-cutting of all social media platforms makes digital communities amorphous and more viewers would have rationally been exposed to a variety of viewpoints than a clear-cut theory of echo-chamber can study empirically. On top of that a sizeable number of internet is not only bots that crawl the digital space for various purposes and may automatically post comments for/against certain digital product for a variety of reasons often complicate such a data survey or study. Echo-chambers and its cousin "filter-bubbles" have found proponents and opponents everywhere, and while there is a clear link between confirmation bias, spread of fake and decrease in overall mental wellbeing of digital natives, there can be little to no method of studying digital echo-chambers absolutely empirical and quantitative methods.

The extent of echo-chambers and their genesis in social media is debated, as we have already seen, and further research is needed to examine specific conditions and usage factors enabling echo-chambers versus diversity of internet. Synthesizing literatures on the above factors may provide critical context for examining complex user behaviours and how the various digital platforms effect circulation of intensely polarizing misinformation or "Fake news". One of the most prominent and popular social media tools in the Global South for sharing information and "chatting" with one's digital-tribes, as it were, is Meta-owned end-to-end encrypted WhatsApp. As Nobre

points out, "WhatsApp has emerged as in important platform for information dissemination reaching more than 2 Billion users worldwide"(1). It is popular particularly in the Indian sub-continent where forwarded information and misinformation can spread rapidly reaching upto thousands with just a few clicks without much thought or moderation leading to a further amplification of existing biases and prejudices. Whatsapp forwarding has become such a menace of fake news, real-life violence and a general attrition of emotional social bonding in communities like Empathy, that the Honourable "Supreme Court of India has held WhatsApp admins liable for any offensive posts found in groups they manage."(Rossini, 1110). Moreover, on WhatsApp, unlike other Social media like Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat, a post is forwarded often without much context and absence of "comment" section that may p[rove useful as somewhat self-regulatory for any false information. The social nuisance of forwarded messages on WhatsApp became such a issue that "after an alleged rumour of child kidnapping spread by users, led to killing of nearly 31 people in different Indian states… WhatsApp limited the number of forwards for messages, and also made changes to how people are added to WhatsApp groups."(Despite Fake News and Rumours, WhatsApp is Most Preferred In India, n.d.). Kazemi says, WhatsApp has "…currently over 400 million active users in India. With availability of cheap internet data and smartphones with WhatsApp pre-installed, the app has become ubiquitous. Aside from messaging friends and family, Indians use WhatsApp to participate in political discourse…with 1 in 6 Indian WhatsApp users being part of such (political)group (Lokniti, 2018)". (9). He provides in a table format a number of popular "fake news" content that were mass-forwarded to WhatsApp groups and users, for example "UNESCO declares "Jana Gana Mana" world's best national anthem"(Kazemi, 9), or the more mischievous "Coal India is on verge of ruin!"(ibid) being only few of hundreds such even we have encountered on our devices. One of the reasons why "WhatsApp differs so greatly from other social media platforms" (Rossini, 2435) is because of its "end-to-end encryption" (ibid) which makes fact-checking and tracing a particular source of such "fake news" almost impossible (ibid), nor does it feature, unlike Facebook or Instagram, anything that can be termed "news-feed" (ibid, 2434). This has led to not only the popularity of the medium for its perceived degree of privacy over the

other social medias like Facebook, Instagram, twitter, YouTube etc. as a source of information, spreading and discussing said information or misinformation freely with far less fear of repercussion, it has also been popular with political campaigning especially during the 2019 Indian elections that led to hate-speech and harm-mongering against any group perceived as outside its echo-chamber (Rossini, 1110). In a country still with dangerously low levels of literacy, "[m]ost users are either not equipped with the know-how to detect such inaccuracies or are not interested, hence getting more and more entrenched in dangerous beliefs about a community" (1119). A similar study on the emotional characteristics of those who participate is such air-tight echo chambers as WhatsApp observed that emotionally charged and polarizing content is far more likely to be shared than neutral events, particularly those that expressed anger or shock towards a particular group or event, leading to stirring of negative emotions and strife that makes educated and conflict -avoidant personalities to avoid taking part in these charged discussions and generally avoid or ignore such messages instead of combating them. (Wollebaek, 4). Empathy then, it seems, goes straight out of the proverbial window where such echo-chambers of charged misinformation is forwarded and massively shared in a few minutes with a simple tap of fingers.

> Several cognitive biases and heuristics that have been identified in psychological research…can be viewed as resulting from a general meta-cognitive myopia: an inability of human processors to assess the quality and history of information and a tendency to take such information at face value (Fielder, 2012). Thus, people seem to be inherently sensitive to information available in their environment but "stubbornly" resist relevant meta-information concerning the history and accuracy of this information. (Myrto Pantazi, 272)

I for my part recall my father, who is almost 65, regaling the tales of alternative remedies to COVID-19 that he was being forwarded on WhatsApp with as much faith as he has on his daily newspapers, and how immensely difficult it was to convince him that such news was misinformation at best and malicious fake-news at worst no matter how reliable and friendly a source it was forwarded from. It just as what Myrto Pantazi observes in his study- "Even more worrisome

is the prospect that misinformed people take political action on the basis of incorrect information… the "active misinformed" (1). The data source company Statista writes in a succinct investigation on the surge on fake news on WhatsApp during Covid -19 in India that found "around 30 percent of Indians used WhatsApp for Covid-19 for information, and just about as many fact checked less than 50 percent of messages before forwarding them…The survey also looked at age groups and found that over the age of 65 were more likely to receive misinformation and were also likely to believe and act upon it…Three quarters of Indians found that an attached link or mention of a source made a message more trustworthy- even though this does not necessarily make a claim legitimate."(Chart: COVID & WhatsApp cause surge of fake news in India, Statista, para 3 and para 4 , n.d). The observation confirms my personal experience and dare I say many others reading this paper about the virality of fake news and the threat it causes to ethical and emotional well-being of our societies.

III. Methodology

To further explore the link between empathy in digital age, fake news, echo chambers and WhatsApp forwarding, and the behaviours and perceptions related to the above, the author conducted a random survey of 172 individuals from around her reachable space. The author decided to perform a limited survey among 172 participants on questions - such as age, gender, educational qualification, profession, the name of social media most used by them, how often do they come across contended news on WhatsApp, how likely are they to forward information or news on WhatsApp without fact-checking it first, if WhatsApp more susceptible to the sharing of misinformation compared to other social media platforms, certain age groups are more likely to forward misinformation on WhatsApp, if they think gender plays a role in how likely someone is to forward political misinformation on WhatsApp etc- in order to study the connection between Fake news on social media forwarding especially WhatsApp and how empathically the recipients acted on those forwards even when they had no context. The qualitative data provides insights into how different groups engage with social media platforms, especially WhatsApp.

IV. Explanation of Survey Data

Demographics: Who Uses WhatsApp?

- Age

what is your age
172 responses

- 18-25
- 26- 35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 55 above
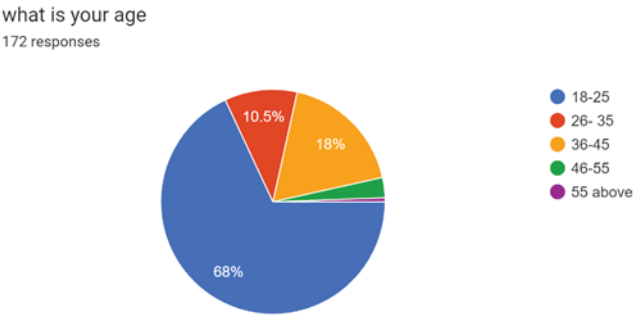
Figure 1

- 18-25- 68% (117)
- 26-35-10.5% (18)
- 36-45- 18% (31)
- 46-55-2.9% (5)
- 55 and above- 0.6% (1)

Notably, the age distribution indicates a wide range of participants, with the majority falling in the 18-35 age young bracket. Figure 1 suggests that WhatsApp is popular among young and middle-aged individuals, aligning with the platform's reputation as a versatile communication tool. However, there is also a notable presence of older users, above 35. WhatsApp's user base appears to span different age groups, making it a cross-generational platform, although young users seem to be most comfortable with it.

- Gender:

Gender: How do you identify your gender?
172 responses

- male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
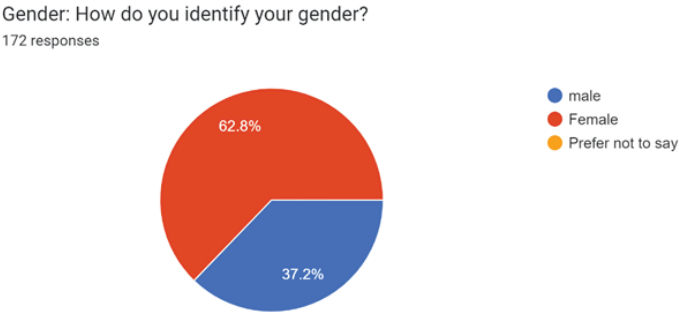
Figure 2

- Male: 64 respondents (37.2%)
- Female: 108 respondents (62.8%)
- Prefer not to say: 0 respondents (0%)

According to Figure 2, in terms of gender, majority of the respondents were female (62.8%) compared to males (37.2%). The higher representation of females could be due to factors like more willingness to participate in surveys or greater usage of social media by females on average.

- Occupation:

what is your occupation?
152 responses

Figure 3

- Academic: 1 (0.7%)
- Assistant Professor: 8 (5.3%)
- Business: 1 (0.7%)
- College Faculty Member: 1 (0.7%)
- Government Service: 1 (0.7%)
- Student: 86 (56.6%)
- Teacher: 7 (4.6%)
- Others: Various occupations with 1 response each.

When we analyse the occupation of respondents, most of them were students (56.6%) followed by academic professionals like teachers and professors (10.5%). This indicates that the sample was dominated by individuals currently engaged in education. In terms of highest educational qualification, more than half of respondents (54.7%) had an undergraduate degree. Thus, the sample represented individuals with at least some college education.

- Highest Educational Qualification:

what is your highest educational qualification?
172 responses
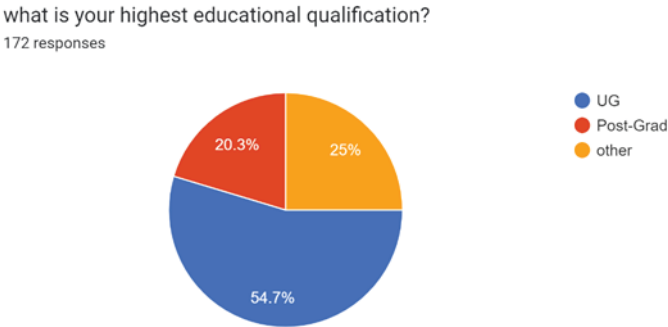
Figure 4

- Undergraduate (UG): 94 respondents (54.7%)
- Post-Graduate (Post-Grad): 35 respondents (20.3%)
- Other: 43 respondents (25%)

According to this data set, a majority of respondents have at least one University level degree, thus showing us how even the highly educated are vulnerable to malicious or uninformed WhatsApp forwarding, especially the young age group from 18-25. Education thus, while providing a certain measure against the spread of unchecked misinformation, cannot be the only solution to this menace.

Social Media Usage: WhatsApp's Dominance

- Social Media Platforms Used Regularly:

Which social media platforms do you use regularly? (select all that apply)
172 responses
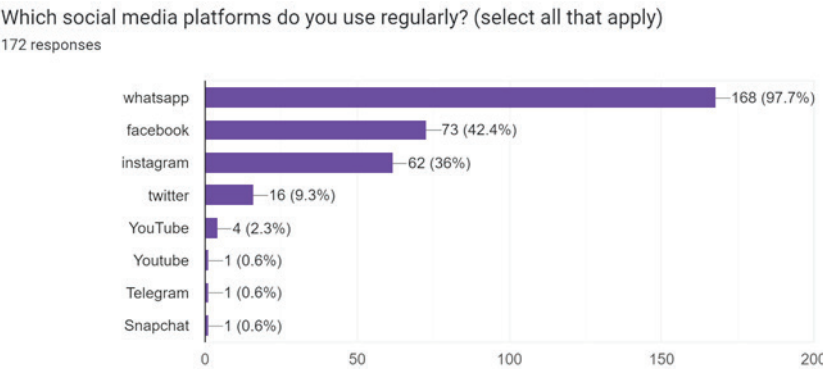
Figure 5

- WhatsApp: 168 respondents (97.7%)
- Facebook: 73 respondents (42.4%)
- Instagram: 62 respondents (36%)
- Twitter: 16 respondents (9.3%)
- YouTube: 4 respondents (2.3%)
- Telegram: 1 respondent (0.6%)
- Snapchat: 1 respondent (0.6%)

The survey findings showed that WhatsApp is by far the most commonly used social media platform, with a massive 97.7% respondents using it regularly. This is likely because WhatsApp has replaced SMS and is universally used for private communication owing to its features of personal messaging and group chats. Facebook was the second most popular platform according to 42.4% respondents, but its usage paled in comparison to WhatsApp. Platforms like Instagram and Twitter had considerably less penetration at 36% and 9.3% respectively. Only a tiny fraction (2.3%) still used YouTube regularly. Thus, the usage is dominated by instant messaging and social networking platforms over other kinds of social media networks.This widespread popularity and regular usage of WhatsApp forms the backbone for further analysis of issues pertaining to information diffusion and spread of misinformation through it. The anonymous and private nature of WhatsApp messaging also facilitates less restrained sharing of unverified information

WhatsApp Usage Patterns: Information Sharing and Misinformation

- Encountering Controversial News on WhatsApp:
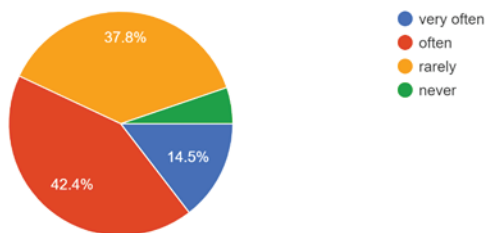
Figure 6

- Very often: 25 respondents (14.5%)
- Often: 73 respondents (42.4%)
- Rarely: 65 respondents (37.8%)
- Never: 9 respondents (5.2%)

A recent study into the media consumption habits of social media users uncovered some concerning trends about the dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information on one of the most popular messaging platforms. The results of the survey demonstrated that many respondents frequently encountered news stories and posts on WhatsApp that were either controversial in nature or unable to be verified as completely factual. Over half of those polled indicated they sometimes or often came across such content while using the service, suggesting potentially unreliable sources are actively circulating unconfirmed details among large networks of individuals. As WhatsApp is utilized daily by nearly all participants in the survey, the platform serves as a vast distribution network for spreading information of questionable reliability or truthfulness due to its immense outreach. With nearly universal adoption allowing ideas to spread far and wide instantly, maintaining integrity in the sharing of news and events presents a significant challenge on WhatsApp given its role in convening huge audiences with unknown oversight of entering conversations

Likelihood to Forward Information on WhatsApp Without Fact-Checking:

How likely are you to forward information or news on WhatsApp without fact-checking it first?(1 being least likely, 5 being most likely)

172 responses
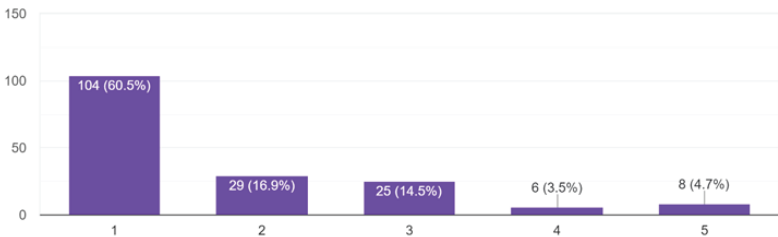
Figure 7

- 1: 104 respondents (60.5%)
- 2: 29 respondents (16.9%)

- 3: 25 respondents (14.5%)
- 4: 6 respondents (3.5%)
- 5: 8 respondents (4.7%)

When asked about their likelihood to forward information without fact-checking, a concerning 22.7% from scale 3 to 5 suggest they would be vulnerable. This highlights a lack of diligence in cross-checking facts before spreading content further. However hopefully, a majority of 60.5 % said they actively engage in discussions to verify information accuracy. However, a significant segment of respondents seemed willing to forward questionable information without applying due scrutiny.

- Susceptibility to Misinformation on WhatsApp:

in your opinion, is WhatsApp more susceptible to the sharing of misinformation compared to other social media platforms?
172 responses

- Yes
- No
- not sure

39%

19.2%

41.9%
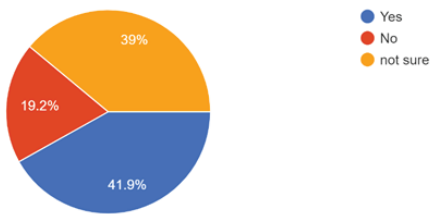
Figure 8

- Yes: 72 respondents (41.9%%)
- No: 33 respondents (19.2%)
- Not sure: 67 respondents (39%)

A substantial 41.9% of respondents believe that WhatsApp is indeed susceptible to the sharing of misinformation. This perception suggests concerns about the platform's role in facilitating the spread of false or misleading information. Conversely, 19.2% of respondents do not consider WhatsApp to be particularly susceptible to misinformation. This group may believe that the platform has mechanisms or user behaviours that mitigate the spread of false information effectively. mA significant 39% responded with "Not sure", indicating a degree of uncertainty or lack of a definitive stance on the issue. This suggests that misinformation on WhatsApp is a complex and nuanced topic that may vary based on individual experiences and contexts.

- Age Group Influence on Forwarding Misinformation: A Complex Relationship

Do you believe that certain age groups are more likely to forward misinformation on WhatsApp?
172 responses
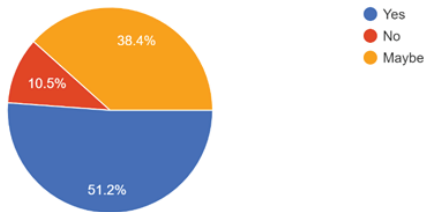
Figure 9

- Yes: 88 respondents (51.2%)
- No: 18 respondents (10.5%)
- Maybe: 66 respondents (38.4%)

The responses showed that 51.2% felt age influences the propensity to spread misinformation. This correlation has been found in other research studies too, where older adults are at a higher risk. However, opinions were more divided on gender being a deciding factor, with 18.6% agreeing but over 48% disagreeing it plays a role in political misinformation sharing. Conclusive evidence on gender differences remains elusive. The majority of the respondents (51.2%) believe that certain age groups are more likely to forward misinformation on WhatsApp, while 10.5% do not believe so. 38.4% of the respondents are unsure about the influence of age groups on forwarding misinformation on WhatsApp. The data suggests that a majority of the respondents believe that age groups play a role in forwarding misinformation on WhatsApp. Just like gender below, there appears to an age-bias in spreading of misinformation on WhatsApp whether factual or not. More research is required to verify this belief.

- Gender Influence on Forwarding Political Misinformation: Mixed Perceptions

Do you think gender plays a role in how likely someone is to forward political misinformation on WhatsApp?

172 responses
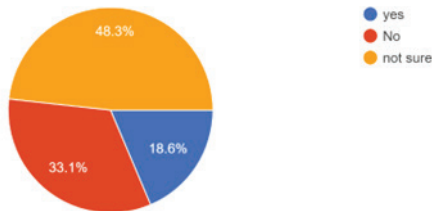
Figure 10

- Yes: 32 respondents (18.6%)
- Not sure: 83 respondents (48.3%)
- No: 57 respondents (33.1%)

A minority, 18.6%, believe that gender does play a role in forwarding political misinformation. This suggests that some respondents perceive gender-based differences in how individuals engage with and share political information on the platform. A majority, 48.3%, responded with "Not sure", indicating a significant level of uncertainty or a lack of a definitive stance on whether gender influences misinformation sharing. This reflects the complexity of the issue and the need for further research and understanding. A notable 33.1% of respondents believe that gender does not play a significant role in forwarding political misinformation. This group suggests that other factors may have a more pronounced impact on how political misinformation is disseminated on WhatsApp.

- Engaging in Discussions to Verify Information Before Sharing: Seeking Accuracy

Besides forwarding, do you engage in discussions to verify the accuracy of information before sharing it on WhatsApp?

172 responses
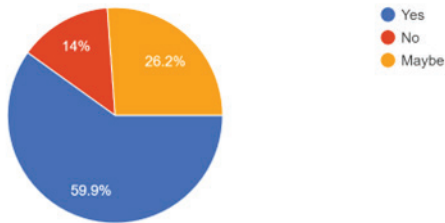
Figure 11

- Yes: 103 respondents (59.9%)
- No: 24 respondents (14%)
- Maybe: 45 respondents (26.2%)

The data from Figure 11 reveals that a substantial portion of respondents, accounting for 59.9%, actively engage in discussions to verify information before sharing it on WhatsApp. This indicates a commendable commitment to fact-checking and responsible information sharing. However, it's noteworthy that 26.2% of respondents are uncertain ("Maybe") about whether they engage in such discussions, suggesting that there may be room for increased awareness and intentionality in verifying information. The 14% who indicated "No" to engaging in discussions before sharing may benefit from understanding the importance of fact-checking in mitigating the spread of misinformation on the platform. In essence, these findings highlight the diversity in users' approaches to ensuring the accuracy of information shared on WhatsApp, with a majority demonstrating a proactive stance toward verification.

This leaves room for active fact-checking practices, rather than letting things play out without positively interrupting the flow of fake news. To sit idly and watch it all play out ignoring the often-violent effects of fake news, suggests that a significant portion of the people surveyed, in spite of their occupation and education, fail to emotionally and empathically engage with the violent and the destructive effect of fake news, and prefer to see it either as a detached thing playing out

on a screen rather than as a part of real life in front of them, or prefer a "not my problem" attitude. Empathic practices and addressing to this detachment of real-life with something flashing in front of your screen needs to be actively addressed and only classroom or degree education is not enough to address this lack of empathy in this modern world of digital content.

- Encounter of Emotionally Charged Content on WhatsApp: Study of Impact and Engagement

How often do you encounter emotionally charged or sensational content in forwarded messages on WhatsApp?
172 responses
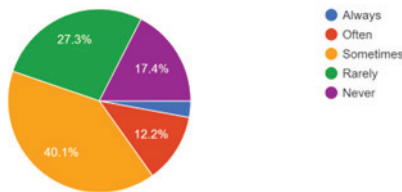
Figure 12

- Always: 5 respondents 2.9%
- Often: 21 respondents 12.2%
- Sometimes: 69 respondents 40.1%
- Rarely: 47 respondents 27.3%
- Never: 30 respondents 17.4%

The data suggests that a significant percentage of the respondents encounter emotionally charged content on WhatsApp.

The data so far seems to support our theory that WhatsApp, due to its end-to-end encrypted nature, and lack of moderation like other social media like fakebook or Instagram, is indeed the breeding ground of misinformation and formation of echo -chambers (based on the sheer percentage of respondents being routinely bombarded with sensational and click bait content)

- Regretting Forwarding Misleading Messages on WhatsApp: Empathy and Digital Consumption with regards to WhatsApp

Have you ever regretted forwarding a message on WhatsApp after realizing it was misleading, false, or had negative consequences?

172 responses
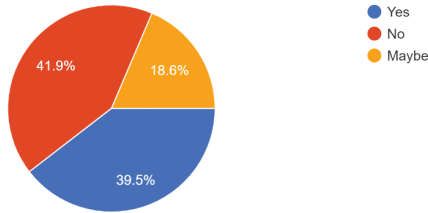
Figure 13

- Yes: 68 respondents , 39.5%
- No: 72 respondents , 41.9%
- Maybe: 32 respondents , 18.6%

Figure 13 presents intriguing insights into users' sentiments regarding forwarding misleading messages on WhatsApp. Notably, a significant portion, 39.5%, admitted to having regrets after forwarding such messages. This suggests an awareness among users about the potential consequences of sharing misinformation. On the other hand, a slightly higher percentage, 41.9%, stated that they did not regret forwarding misleading messages, indicating a degree of complacency or a lack of awareness. The 18.6% who responded with "Maybe" highlights a level of uncertainty, potentially indicating that some users may not always recognize when they've shared misleading information

The data suggests that a significant percentage of the respondents are unsure about regretting forwarding misleading messages on WhatsApp.

- Concern about Negative Effects of Forwarding Emotionally Driven Messages: A Study in Empathy

How concerned are you about the potential negative effects of forwarding charged or emotionally driven messages on WhatsApp? 1 being not at all to 5 being very.

172 responses
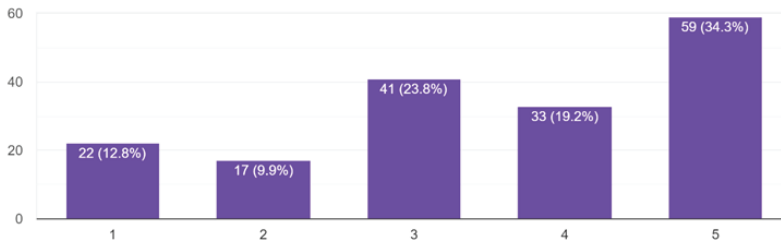
Figure 14

- 1: 22 respondents (12.8%)
- 2: 17 respondents (9.9%)
- 3: 41 respondents (23.8%)
- 4: 33 respondents (19.2%)
- 5: 59 respondents (34.3%)

The majority of the respondents (34.3%) are very concerned about the potential negative effects of forwarding emotionally driven messages on WhatsApp.

23.8% of the respondents are somewhat concerned about it, while 12.8% are not concerned at all.

The data suggests that a significant percentage of the respondents are concerned about the potential negative effects of forwarding emotionally driven messages on WhatsApp.

This shows a degree of empathy in users, although it may be post-event rather than pre-event.

- Age's Role in Erosion of Empathy in Forwarding Messages: Guilty as Charged

Do you think age plays a role in the erosion of empathy when it comes to forwarding mass messages without considering their impact?

172 responses
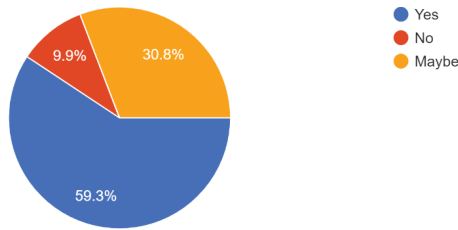
Figure 15

- Yes: 102 respondents , 59.3%
- No: 17 respondents , 9.9%
- Maybe: 53 respondents , 30.8%

Figure 15 explores the perception of age's role in the erosion of empathy when forwarding messages on WhatsApp. A substantial majority, 59.3%, believe that age does play a role in this erosion, suggesting that younger users may be more inclined to forward messages without considering their emotional impact. This perception raises concerns about the potential insensitivity or thoughtlessness in younger users' messaging behaviours. On the contrary, only 9.9% believe that age is not a significant factor, indicating that empathy can be a universal trait transcending age. The 30.8% responding with "Maybe" reflects some uncertainty, potentially suggesting that the relationship between age and empathy in messaging behaviour is complex and not easily defined. This data highlights the importance of fostering empathetic communication regardless of age on messaging platforms.

- Role of Gender: Mixed Perceptions

Do you think gender plays a role in how likely someone is to forward political misinformation on WhatsApp?
172 responses
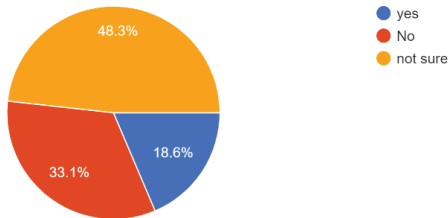
Figure 16

- Yes: 32 respondents (18.6%)
- No: 57 respondents (33.1%)
- Not sure: 83 respondents (48.3%)

Figure 16 delves into perceptions regarding the role of gender in forwarding political misinformation on WhatsApp. The data suggests that opinions on this matter are mixed among respondents. A minority, 18.6%, believe that gender plays a role in this behaviour, suggesting that they perceive some gender-based differences in misinformation sharing. Conversely, a significant portion, 33.1%, outright reject the notion that gender is a significant factor in forwarding political misinformation. The majority, at 48.3%, are uncertain or "Not sure" highlighting the complexity of the issue and indicating that more research and understanding may be needed to discern any potential gender-related patterns in misinformation sharing on WhatsApp.

Online Interactions: Seeking Different Viewpoints

- Engaging in Conversations: Understanding Difference (Echo-Chambers)

How often do you engage in conversations on social media platforms to understand differing viewpoints on political or social issues?

172 responses
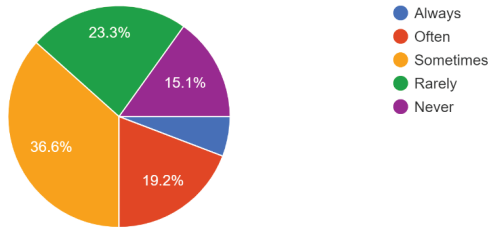
Figure 17

- Always: 10 respondents (5.8%)
- Often: 33 respondents (19.2%)
- Sometimes: 63 respondents (36.6%)
- Rarely: 40 respondents (23.3%)
- Never: 26 respondents (15.1%)

Figure 17 explores respondents' engagement in conversations to understand differing viewpoints on WhatsApp. The data reflects a spectrum of engagement levels:

A small minority, 5.8%, indicated that they "Always" engage in such conversations, demonstrating a high commitment to seeking diverse perspectives.

A moderate 19.2% reported that they "Often" engage in discussions to understand differing viewpoints, indicating a proactive approach to fostering open dialogues.

The majority, 36.6%, stated that they "Sometimes" engage, suggesting a willingness to explore diverse perspectives but not on a consistent basis.

A significant 23.3% noted that they "Rarely" engage in such conversations, indicating a less frequent interest in seeking differing viewpoints.

Finally, 15.1% reported that they "Never" engage in discussions for this purpose, suggesting a lack of interest or engagement in diverse perspectives.

This data highlights a diverse range of attitudes and behaviours regarding engaging with differing viewpoints on WhatsApp. While a substantial portion is open to such discussions, there are also individuals who engage less frequently or not at all, which may impact the diversity of perspectives encountered on the platform

- Maintaining Empathy in Sensitive Topic Discussions: A Challenge

In your interactions on digital social media, do you find it challenging to maintain empathy while discussing sensitive topics?
172 responses
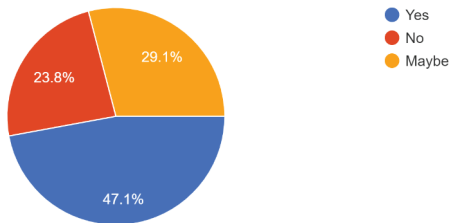
Figure 18

- Yes: 81 respondents (47.1%)
- No: 41 respondents (23.8%)
- Maybe: 50 respondents (29.1%)

Figure 18 explores the challenge of maintaining empathy during discussions on sensitive topics on WhatsApp. The data reveals a variety of responses from respondents. A significant portion, 47.1%, expressed that they do find it possible to maintain empathy in such discussions. This suggests that a substantial number of users make conscious efforts to engage in empathetic and respectful conversations, even when topics are sensitive. On the contrary, 23.8% of respondents stated that they do not find it possible to maintain empathy during these discussions. This indicates that a portion of users may struggle with maintaining a considerate and empathetic tone when engaging in sensitive conversations. Approximately 29.1% responded with "Maybe" suggesting some uncertainty or variability in their ability to maintain empathy in such discussions. This middle-ground response reflects the complexity of online interactions and the varying emotional dynamics involved

- Instant Nature's of Digital Communication's Impact on Lack of Empathy in Online Interactions: A Correlation

Do you believe that the instant nature of digital communication on social media platforms contributes to a lack of empathy in online interactions?
172 responses
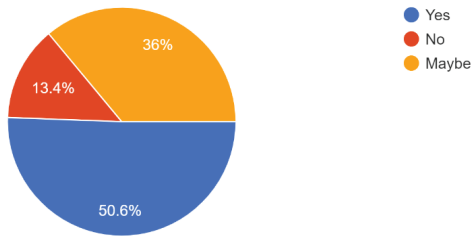
Figure 19

- Yes: 87 respondents (50.6%)
- No: 23 respondents (13.4%)
- Maybe: 62 respondents (36%)

Figure 19 explores the perceived impact of the instant nature of digital communication on the lack of empathy in online interactions, particularly on WhatsApp. The data reveals diverse perspectives among respondents. A majority, 50.6%, believe that the instant nature of digital communication does contribute to a lack of empathy in online interactions. This suggests that rapid-fire messaging and the immediacy of responses may hinder users' ability to consider the emotional impact of their words, potentially leading to less empathetic exchanges. On the contrary, 13.4% of respondents indicated that they do not believe the instant nature of digital communication has a significant impact on empathy. This minority perceives that users can still engage empathetically despite the speed of digital interactions. A substantial 36% responded with "Maybe", indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the relationship between instant messaging and empathy. This suggests that the issue is complex and may vary based on individual experiences and contexts.

- ## Unfollowing/Muting Due to Polarizing Posts: A Common Ground

Have you ever unfollowed or muted someone on social media due to their consistently polarizing or emotionally charged posts?

172 responses
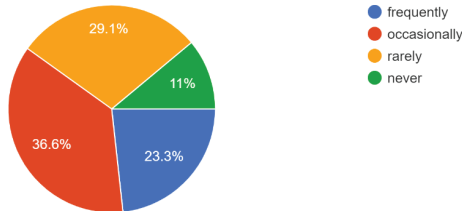
Figure 20

- Frequently: 40 respondents (23.3%)
- Occasionally: 63 respondents (36.6%)
- Rarely: 50 respondents (29.1%)
- Never: 19 respondents (11%)

Figure 20 investigates the actions taken by respondents in response to polarizing or emotionally charged posts on social media platforms, including WhatsApp. The data reveals a spectrum of responses. A notable portion, 23.3%, reported that they "Frequently" unfollow or mute individuals who consistently share polarizing content. This suggests that a significant number of users actively curate their online experiences to avoid exposure to divisive or emotionally charged content. A substantial 36.6% of respondents indicated that they "Occasionally" unfollow or mute such users. This demonstrates a more moderate approach, where users may selectively curate their feeds based on the content they encounter. Another segment, 29.1%, stated that they "Rarely" take these actions, implying that they are less inclined to unfollow or mute individuals despite encountering polarizing content. This group may have a higher tolerance for diverse viewpoints or a less active approach to content curation. A minority, 11%, reported that they "Never" unfollow or mute due to polarizing posts, suggesting a willingness to engage with diverse perspectives and content, even if it is emotionally charged.

- Emotionally Affected After Sharing Inaccurate Information: An Emotional Toll

Have you ever felt emotionally affected after sharing a news article or information on WhatsApp that you later found out to be inaccurate or misleading?

172 responses
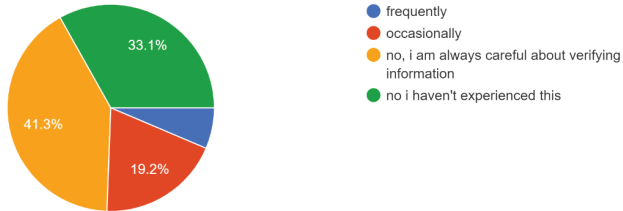
Figure 21

- Frequently: 11 respondents (6.4%)
- Occasionally: 33 respondents (19.2%)
- Always Verify Information: 71 respondents (41.3%)
- No Negative Experience: 57 respondents (33.1%)

A small minority, 6.4%, indicated that they feel "Frequently" emotionally affected after sharing inaccurate information. This suggests that some users are particularly sensitive to the consequences of misinformation and may experience guilt or regret. A larger portion, 19.2%, reported feeling "Occasionally" affected by their inaccurate sharing. This indicates that a significant number of users do experience negative emotions at times but not consistently. A notable 41.3% of respondents stated that they "Always Verify Information." This responsible approach suggests that a substantial majority actively engage in fact-checking before sharing information, which likely contributes to a reduced likelihood of experiencing negative emotions due to misinformation. Interestingly, 33.1% of respondents claimed to have "No Negative Experience" after sharing inaccurate information. This group may either be highly confident in their sharing practices or less affected by the consequences of sharing misinformation.

- Conflicts Due to Sharing Unverified News on WhatsApp:

Have you ever witnessed conflicts or arguments arise among your WhatsApp contacts due to the sharing of unverified news or information?

172 responses

Yes i have
No i have never
sometimes

27.3%
43.6%
29.1%
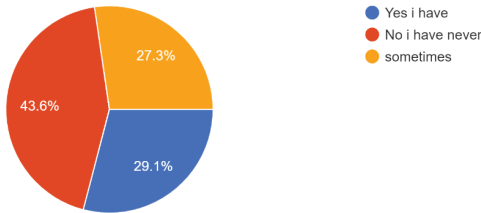
Figure 22

- Yes: 50 respondents (29.1%)
- No: 75 respondents (43.6%)
- Sometimes: 47 respondents (27.3%)

Approximately 29.1% of respondents reported that they have witnessed conflicts or arguments arising among their WhatsApp contacts due to the sharing of unverified news. This suggests that the spread of misinformation can indeed lead to discord within personal or group chats. A larger portion, 43.6%, stated that they have "No" witnessed conflicts of this nature. This indicates that a significant number of respondents have not observed such disputes among their WhatsApp contacts, suggesting relatively peaceful interactions within their networks. An additional 27.3% noted that they have observed such conflicts "Sometimes." This middle-ground response implies that conflicts arising from unverified news on WhatsApp are not rare but also not a constant source of tension in their communication circles.

- Response to Forwarded Emotionally Charged Messages on WhatsApp:

How do you typically respond when you receive a forwarded news article or message on WhatsApp that evokes a strong emotional reaction?

172 responses

I immediately forward it to others
I pause and verify its accuracy before sharing
I ignore it and don't engage

41.9%
52.3%
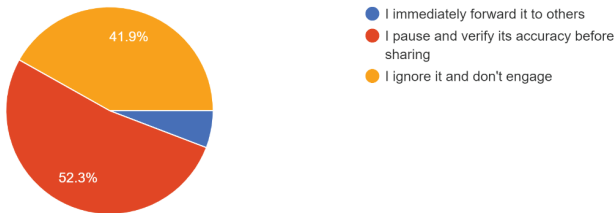
Figure 23

- Immediately Forward: (To others)-(10 respondents) 5.8%
- Pause and Verify: (Accuracy before sharing) -(90 respondents)52.3%
- Ignore and Don't Engage- (72 respondents)41.9%

A small minority, 5.8%, indicated that they "Immediately Forward" such messages to others. This suggests a quick and impulsive response, potentially contributing to the rapid spread of emotionally charged content. A significant majority, 52.3%, reported that they "Pause and Verify" the accuracy of the content before sharing it. This responsible approach reflects a commitment to fact-checking and ensuring the information's reliability before disseminating it further. A substantial 41.9% stated that they "Ignore and Don't Engage" with emotionally charged messages. This response indicates a deliberate choice to avoid getting involved in discussions or forwarding content that may contribute to emotional polarization or misinformation.

IV. Analysis

In analyzing the dataset, a wide-ranging age distribution among WhatsApp users is evident, with a substantial 68% falling within the 18-25 age bracket. This aligns seamlessly with WhatsApp's reputation as a favored platform for the young, renowned for its flexibility in communication. However, it is crucial to dispel the common misconception that WhatsApp exclusively caters to the younger demographic. Surprisingly, the platform boasts users from older age groups, challenging the conventional belief that it is solely the domain of the youth. This cross-generational presence not only challenges stereotypes but also highlights WhatsApp's unparalleled appeal that transcends age boundaries. Among the respondents in the survey, a noteworthy gender disparity emerges, with females constituting a substantial majority at 62.8% compared to males at 37.2%. This gender skew raises intriguing questions about the factors underlying this disparity. It is imperative to recognize that several complex elements may contribute to these statistics, including differences in survey participation rates and varying usage patterns between genders on social media platforms. Therefore, further research is imperative to untangle the intricacies of this gender divide and gain a deeper understanding of gender-specific WhatsApp usage. An exploration of the dataset unveils fascinating insights into the occupation and educational qualifications

of WhatsApp users. The majority of respondents are students, comprising 56.6% of the sample. Following closely are academic professionals such as teachers and professors, constituting 10.5% of the respondents. This occupational distribution offers valuable context to the dataset, indicating a strong presence of individuals actively engaged in the education sector. Moreover, more than half of the respondents (54.7%) hold undergraduate degrees, shedding light on the educational background of the sample. This predominance of individuals with some level of college education underscores the platform's appeal among the educated populace. Despite the relatively high level of education among respondents, a striking revelation surfaces from the dataset – even well-educated individuals, particularly those aged 18-25, are susceptible to misinformation on WhatsApp. This unsettling revelation brings to the forefront the sobering reality that formal education, while indispensable, may not be the sole solution to combating the unchecked spread of misinformation. This alarming trend urges us to explore alternative measures and interventions aimed at bolstering critical thinking and information literacy skills among WhatsApp users. WhatsApp emerges as the undisputed champion in the realm of social media platforms, with a staggering 97.7% of respondents regularly utilizing it. This towering prominence can be attributed to WhatsApp's unique role as a private messaging and group chat platform, usurping the traditional SMS. In stark contrast, Facebook, while occupying the second position, lags significantly behind with a usage rate of 42.4%. These figures firmly establish WhatsApp's central role in the landscape of social media usage, underscoring its potential to influence information diffusion and shape digital discourse. The dataset sounds an alarm bell, indicating a troubling trend in the realm of misinformation on WhatsApp. A significant portion of respondents, constituting 57%, frequently encounter controversial news and misinformation on the platform. Even more concerning is the revelation that 22.7% of respondents admit to a willingness to forward information without engaging in the critical process of fact-checking. These revelations force us to confront the urgent need for enhanced awareness campaigns and educational interventions to foster responsible information sharing practices on WhatsApp. Notably, a substantial 41.9% of respondents harbor the belief that WhatsApp is intrinsically susceptible to the dissemination of misinformation. This perception among users is a clarion call for platform administrators and policymakers to address this vulnerability

effectively. It underscores the imperative of implementing robust mechanisms to counter misinformation and bolster digital media literacy among users. A majority of respondents (51.2%) posit that age plays a pivotal role in influencing the propensity to disseminate misinformation on WhatsApp. This intriguing perception aligns with existing research, which suggests that older adults may be more inclined to share misinformation. However, it is imperative to delve deeper into the reasons behind this age-related disparity in misinformation sharing, acknowledging that the digital literacy gap may be a contributing factor. The dataset hints at a profound connection between empathy and the sharing of misleading messages. A substantial portion of respondents (39.5%) confesses to feelings of remorse or regret after forwarding such messages. This heightened awareness of the potential harm inflicted upon recipients underscores the pressing need for promoting empathy and responsible sharing practices on the platform. It prompts us to contemplate how platforms like WhatsApp can be harnessed as tools for fostering empathy rather than perpetuating harmful content.

V. Conclusion

The accessible research and survey data both indicate a diverse age range among WhatsApp users. While existing research review highlight the impact of older users on the spread of misinformation, the survey data strengthens this concept by highlighting that WhatsApp is not solely used by younger individuals. Both sources recognize the consequence of education in WhatsApp usage and convey apprehensions about the diffusion of half-truths on the platform. They also touch upon the linking between empathy and the spread of false information. The existing research review also reveals that even individuals with higher education levels can be potentially vulnerable to misinformation, although education does encourage critical thought which may reduce the risks to being susceptible to misinformation circulating on WhatsApp. The existing research review discusses the desensitization to fake news and its costs, as well as the waning in empathy ensuing from a focus on attention-seeking content. On the other hand, the survey data sheds light on the educational backgrounds of the participants, presents statistics regarding the frequency of encountering misinformation, and explores users' partiality to forward such material without fact-checking. It also reveals that some users experience regret after sharing misleading messages, indicating an awareness of the potential harm that might

have caused, but it may just as well be due to embarrassment at looking imprudent. Both the existing research review and survey data recognize the decline in empathy within the context of social media usage. The research suggests that the pursuit of virality and attention on platforms like WhatsApp can lead to a decrease in empathy, as individuals become more focused on seeking attention rather than engaging with others on a deeper level. The survey data indirectly addresses empathy by highlighting users' feelings of regret or remorse after sharing misleading content, indicating a recognition of the potential negative impact. Both sources also discuss the formation of digital echo chambers, although they emphasize different aspects. The research review emphasizes the dangers of fake news and misinformation within social media echo chambers, suggesting that individuals trapped in these bubbles are less likely to empathize with those who hold different viewpoints. The survey data indirectly touches on the formation of echo chambers by signifying a predisposition among respondents to form herds based on digital behavior, emphasizing specific beliefs which is displayed by the chunks of data-set on highly polarized "agree/disagree" sides of each question, whereas other options recorded very low responses or remained untouched. However, it does not tie these echo chambers to misinformation directly. Further research is needed to explore these aspects across a broader sample population to come to a comprehensive conclusion. It is worth noting that there are some differences between what the data the survey reveals and what the existing research reveals. The research review places more accent on the deterioration in empathy due to the pursuit of attention on social media platforms, suggesting that individuals may be less likely to intercede and help others in real-life conditions. The survey data admits the decline in empathy to some extent but does not probe deeply into this aspect. Additionally, while the research review primarily links echo chambers to the consumption of misinformation and its negative impact on empathy, the survey data focuses more on statistics related to misinformation sharing and how demographic factors such as age, gender, and occupation influence these behaviors. To draw solid conclusions, a wider range of surveys across a more diverse populace would be necessary. It is important to conduct further research to determine if the survey results have been influenced by the higher education levels of the respondents by conducting a survey across a wider sample population which is beyond the scope of my present study, although it may grow upon these across disciplines like

Critical Theory, Mass Media and Communication, Digital Humanities and Psychology.

Statement of Originality

The Author states that the paper is completely original and has never been submitted elsewhere before this conference.

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The Impact Of Social Media In Traditional Journalism To Develop Public Opinion

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Abstract

This research study investigates the dynamic relationship between social media and traditional journalism, with a particular focus on their combined influence on the formation and development of public opinion. In the age of information abundance, the role of traditional journalism as a gatekeeper of news has evolved significantly due to the proliferation of social media platforms. This research aims to comprehensively analyze the multifaceted impact of social media on traditional journalism practices and its consequences for the formation of public opinion.

The study employs a qualitative approach, qualitative analysis of social media engagement metrics, content analysis of news articles. Through this approach, we seek to uncover the ways in which social media platforms have reshaped the dissemination of news, the role of journalists as mediators, and the public's engagement with news content.

Preliminary findings indicate that social media has democratized the news landscape, allowing a wider range of voices and perspectives to be heard. However, it has also given rise to challenges such as misinformation, filter bubbles, and echo chambers, which can polarize public opinion. Moreover, traditional journalism institutions have had to adapt their practices to the demands of real-time reporting and audience engagement on social media.

This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on media and democracy by shedding light on the complex interplay between social media and traditional journalism in shaping public opinion. By gaining a deeper understanding of this relationship, we can better appreciate the opportunities and challenges it presents for the future of journalism and its vital role in fostering an informed and engaged citizenry.

Keywords: Social Media, Traditional Journalism, Public Opinion, Media Impact, News Dissemination,Information Democracy.

Introduction:

In an eramarked by rapid technological advancements and digital transformation, the land scape of journalism has under gone a profound met a morphosis.Traditional journalism, once characterized by print publications and televised news broadcasts, has been enveloped by the omni presence of social media.The emergence and wide spread adoption of platforms like Facebook,Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have not only revolutionized the way news is disseminated but have also reshaped the very fabric of public opinion. This research paper delvesin to the i n tricatere lationship between social media and traditional journalism, exploring how the set wo forces intersect and collaborate to influence, mold, and attimes, disrupt the formation of public opinion.

The amalgamation of social media and traditional journalism has given rise to adynamicandever-evolving information ecosystem. Journalists now have the unprecedented ability to share news stories instant a neously, engaging with audiencesinreal-time. Simultaneously, social media users have become active participants in the newscycle, contributing to the di scourse, sharing their perspectives, and scrutinizing the authenticity of information. This interplay between prof essional journalism and citizen journalism on digital platforms has implications far beyond mere information dissemination, extending into the realm of public perception, credibility, and trust.

This research seeks to illuminate the multifaceted impact of social media on traditional journalism's role a sagate keeper of information and its influence on public opinion formation. Through acomprehensive examination of case studies, statistical analyses, and qualitative investigations, this paper end eavors to provide in sight into how s ocialmedia platforms have facilitated the democratization of news, whilesimultaneously challenging the traditional journalistic standards of accuracy, accountability, and objectivity.

Aswena vigate this digital age, where information flowsseamlesslyand boundaries between reporters and cons umers blur, it is imperative tounderst and the in tricacies of this symbiotic relationship between socialmedia and traditional journalism. Indoingso, we can comprehend the complexities of contemporary public opinion formation, paving the way for a more informed, discerning, and media-literate society.

Background of The Research:

The relationship between traditional journalism and social media has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, ushering in a new era in the field of media and communication. This shift has been driven by the rapid proliferation of digital technologies and the widespread adoption of social media platforms worldwide. Understanding the background of this evolving landscape is crucial for comprehending the impact of social media on traditional journalism in shaping public opinion.

- **The Rise of Social Media:** The emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat has fundamentally altered the way people access and consume information. These platforms have become primary sources of news and information for a large portion of the population. According to Pew Research Center, in the United States, two-thirds of adults get at least some of their news from social media, highlighting the growingimportance of these platforms in the media landscape.

- **Democratization of News Production:** Social media has democratized the production of news by allowing virtually anyone with an internet connection to become a content creator and disseminator. User-generated content, including eyewitness accounts, photos, and videos, has become integral to reporting on breaking news events. This phenomenon has challenged the traditional gatekeeping role of established news organizations.

- **Real-Time Information Dissemination**: Social media enables real-time dissemination of news and information, often bypassing the editorial processes and time constraints of traditional journalism. This immediacy has led to the rapid spread of both accurate and inaccurate information, creating challenges for media accuracy and credibility.

- **The Virality of Content:** The viral nature of social media has amplified the reach and impact ofnews stories and content. Stories, images, and videos can quickly go viral, shaping public discourse and opinion at an unprecedented pace.

- **Challenges of Misinformation and Disinformation:** Social media platforms have been criticized for their role in the spread of misinformation and disinformation, often referred to as "fake news." The ease with which false or misleading information can be disseminated on social media poses a significant challenge to the credibility and integrity of journalism.

- **The Changing Business Model:** The transition to digital media consumption has also had economic implications for traditional journalism. The decline in print advertising revenue and the shift toward digital advertising have forced many traditional news outlets to adapt their business models, sometimes at the expense of quality journalism.

- **Audience Fragmentation:**Social media allows individuals to curate their news feeds, leading to audience fragmentation. People are exposed to information that aligns with their existing beliefs, contributing to the phenomenon of "echo chambers" and polarization in public opinion.

- **New Forms of Engagement:** Social media has introduced new ways for the public to engage with news content through comments, likes, shares, and direct interactions with journalists and news organizations. This interactive dimension has altered the nature of audience participationin shaping news narratives.

The complex interplay between social media and traditional journalism has created both opportunities and challenges for the media industry and the public at large. This background highlights the transformative forces at play and underscores the need for in-depth research to understand how social media influences traditional journalism's role in creating and shaping public opinion in the digital age.

Problem of the Statement:

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, the pervasive influence of social media on traditional journalismhas raised critical concerns about

the integrity, accuracy, and impact of news content in shaping public opinion. The dynamic interplay between these two forces has given rise to a pressing problem: How does the integration of social media into traditional journalism practices affect the ability of journalism to responsibly create and influence public opinion, and what are the broader societal implications of thisevolving relationship? This problem statement underscores the urgency of investigating the multifaceted challenges and opportunities arising from the fusion of social media and traditional journalism in the 21st century media ecosystem.

Research question:

What are the effects of social media on the agenda-setting function of traditional journalism, and how does it contribute to the formation and dissemination of public opinion on various societal issues?

This question explores the role of social media in shaping the public agenda and how it influences the narratives and discussions surrounding important topics. It aims to understand whether social media amplifies certain issues, challenges established agendas, or introduces new topics into public discourse.

This research question represents key area of inquiry for understanding the complex interplay between social media and traditional journalism and their profound impact on public opinion in the digital age.

Research Objectives:

- Examine the role of social media in setting news agendas, both for traditional news outlets and among users who actively engage with news content on these platforms.

- Investigate the relationship between the prominence of news topics on social media and their subsequent coverage by traditional news organizations.

- Analyze the influence of social media-driven news trends on public discussions and the formation of public opinion across different societal issues.

Significance of the Research:

The significance of the study on "The Impact of Social Media in Traditional Journalism to Create PublicOpinion" is multifaceted:

- **Media Transformation:** It illuminates how the fusion of social media and traditional journalism hasreshaped the media landscape, influencing how news is produced, distributed, and consumed.

- **Public Opinion Dynamics:**The study offers insights into how these changes affect the formation of public opinion, helping us understand how societal attitudes and beliefs are shaped in the digital age.

- **Media Literacy:**Understanding this impact is crucial for media literacy efforts, empowering individuals to critically assess the information they encounter on social media and traditional news outlets.

- **Journalistic Practices:**It guides journalists and media organizations in navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by social media, fostering responsible reporting and maintaining credibility.

- **Democratic Societies:**The study's findings have broader implications for democratic societies, as they inform discussions about the role of media in supporting informed citizenship and robust public discourse.

- **Policy and Regulation:**Policymakers can use the study's insights to develop policies and regulations thataddress the changing media landscape and its impact on public opinion.

In essence, this study's significance extends to its ability to enhance our understanding of the complex interplay between social media, traditional journalism, and the formation of public opinion, with implications for media practices, information literacy, and the health of democratic societies.

Literature Review:

Examine the role of social media in setting news agendas, both for traditional news outlets andamong users who actively engage with news content on these platforms.

In an era where social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, it has also revolutionized the way news agendas are set. This literature review explores the latest significant research on the role of social media in shaping news agendas for both traditional news outlets and the users who actively engage with news content on these

platforms. We will examine how social media influences the selection and prioritization of news stories, thereby impacting public perception and opinion.

- **The Power of Social Media in Agenda Setting:** The role of social media in setting news agendas has gained significant attention in recent years. According to Messing and Westwood (2020), social media platforms serve as a powerful tool for agenda setting, not only by traditional news outlets but also by individual users. The rapid dissemination of information through platforms like Twitter and Facebook allows news stories to gain prominence quickly, influencing the topics that receive attention in the media landscape (Messing & Westwood, 2020). This phenomenon underscores the coexistence of traditional journalism and user-driven news agendas on social media.

- **The Influence of User-Generated Content:** User-generated content plays a pivotal role in shaping news agendas on social media. Research by Neubaum et al. (2014) suggests that users actively engage with news content by sharing, commenting, and discussing stories on social platforms. These interactions create a feedback loop, influencing what news stories gain prominence and what aspects of those stories receive attention.

  Social media platforms provide a space for users to contribute to the news discourse, amplifying their role in agenda setting (Neubaum et al., 2014).

- **Challenges of Verification and Misinformation:** While social media empowers users to shape news agendas, it also presents challenges related to information accuracy and credibility. As Zubiaga et al. (2018) note, misinformation and fake news can spread rapidly on social platforms, leading to the inclusion of false or misleading topics in the news agenda. Traditional news outlets must navigate these challenges by verifying information andmaintaining journalistic standards, while also acknowledging the influence of user-generated content (Zubiaga et al., 2018).

- **The Role of Algorithms and Personalization:** Social media platforms employ algorithms that tailor users' news feeds based on their preferencesand past interactions. Research by Tufekci (2016)

emphasizes how algorithmic personalization can contribute to filter bubbles, where users are exposed to content that aligns with their existing beliefs and opinions. This personalization can further shape individual news agendas, potentially limiting exposure to diverse perspectives (Tufekci, 2016). Understanding the role of algorithms is crucial in comprehending how social media influences news agendas.

The influence of social media in setting news agendas is a multifaceted phenomenon that impacts both traditional news outlets and active users. It empowers individuals to engage with news content, shaping public perception and opinion in ways that were previously unattainable. However, this influence is not without challenges, including issues of misinformation and filter bubbles. As social media continues to evolve, it is imperative to consider how these platforms shape the news landscape and the implications for an informed and diverse public discourse.

- **Investigate the relationship between the prominence of news topics on social media and their subsequent coverage by traditional news organizations.:** In the digital age, the emergence of social media platforms has transformed the news ecosystem, creating new dynamics in how news topics are prioritized and disseminated. This literature review aims to explore recent research that delves into the intricate relationship between the prominence of news topics on social media and their subsequent coverage by traditional news organizations. By examining this connection, we can gain insights into how social media influences traditional news agendas and the broader implications for public information consumption.

- **Social Media as a Catalyst for News Prominence:** Social media platforms have become influential in the promotion of news stories. Recent research, such as that by Messing and Westwood (2020), emphasizes how social media platforms can rapidly amplify the visibility of specific news topics. They argue that the quick sharing and engagement with content on platforms like Twitter and Facebook can thrust certain issues into the public spotlight, thereby affecting the overall prominence of news topics (Messing & Westwood, 2020).

- **Social Media as a News Source for Traditional Outlets:** One prominent aspect of the relationship between social media and traditional news coverage is the role of social media as a source of news for traditional outlets. Research by Hermida (2012) highlights that traditional news organizations frequently rely on social media platforms to identify emerging stories and gauge public interest. This symbiotic relationship between social media and traditional journalism demonstrates how the prominence of news topics on social media can directly influence traditional news coverage (Hermida, 2012).

- **User Engagement and News Prioritization:**The degree of user engagement with news topics on social media is another crucial factor shaping traditional news coverage. Studies by Neubaum et al. (2014) reveal that user-generated content, such as comments, shares, and likes, plays a pivotal role in determining which stories gain prominence on social platforms. Traditional news organizations often take these signals into accountwhen selecting topics to cover, thus reflecting the influence of social media on news priorities (Neubaum et al., 2014).

- **Challenges in Verifying Social Media Content:** While social media can elevate certain news topics, it also presents challenges related to the verification of content. Zubiaga et al. (2018) discuss the rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on social media platforms, which can lead to inaccurate or biased news coverage by traditional outlets. This dynamic underscores the importance of media literacy and fact-checking in the digital age (Zubiaga et al., 2018).

The interplay between the prominence of news topics on social media and their subsequent coverage by traditional news organizations is a complex and evolving relationship. Social media platforms serve as catalysts for news visibility, provide news sources for traditional outlets, and leverage user engagement as indicators of news importance. However, challenges related to content verification and misinformation persist. As we continue to navigate this evolving landscape, understanding the dynamics between social media and traditional news coverage is essential for comprehending how news agendas are shaped and the impact on public awareness and opinion.

- **Analyze the influence of social media-driven news trends on public discussions and the formation of public opinion across different societal issues.:** The advent of social media has reshaped the landscape of public discourse and opinion formation, introducing new dynamics in how news trends influence discussions on various societal issues. This literature review aims to explore recent research that delves into the complex interplay between social media-driven news trends and their impact on public discussions and the formation of public opinion. By analyzing this influence across different societal issues, we gain insights into the evolving nature of public discourse in the digital age.

- **Social Media as a News Trendsetter:** Social media platforms have emerged as powerful trendsetters for news topics. Studies, such as the work by Messing and Westwood (2020), have highlighted how social media can catapult specific news stories into prominence. The rapid sharing and engagement with news content on platforms like Twitter and Facebook often result in the viral spread of news topics, influencing the broader public discourse (Messing & Westwood, 2020).

- **Diverse Impact on Different Societal Issues:** Research underscores that the influence of social media-driven news trends varies across different societal issues. Bakshy et al. (2015) note that certain issues gain more traction on social media due to their inherent appeal, emotional resonance, or relevance to a broad audience. This variance in impact raises questions about the role of social media in amplifying specific issues and potentially shaping the public's perception of their importance (Bakshy et al., 2015).

- **Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles:** The role of social media in public discussions and opinion formation is not without challenges. Scholars like Pariser (2011) have pointed out the phenomenon of filter bubbles and echo chambers, where users are exposed primarily to content and opinions that align with their existing beliefs. This selective exposure can intensify polarization and hinder constructive dialogue across different societal issues, ultimately influencing public opinion formation (Pariser, 2011).

- **User Engagement and Issue Salience:** User engagement with news trends on social media also plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. Research by Barberá et al. (2015) suggests that high levels of user engagement, such as likes, shares, and comments, can increase the salience of certain societal issues. This increased visibility can lead to greater public awareness and discourse surrounding these issues, influencingpublic opinion formation in the process (Barberá et al., 2015).

- **Challenges in Information Credibility and Misinformation:** The influence of social media-driven news trends on public discussions is not without its downsides. The rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on these platforms, as highlighted by Vosoughi etal. (2018), poses significant challenges to the formation of informed public opinions. Misinformationcan distort perceptions of societal issues and impede meaningful discourse, underscoring the importance of media literacy and fact-checking in the digital age (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

  The influence of social media-driven news trends on public discussions and the formation of public opinion is a dynamic and evolving area of research. Social media serves as a powerful catalyst for news trends, but its impact varies across different societal issues. Issues of echo chambers, filter bubbles, user engagement, and challenges related to information credibility and misinformation all shape the complex interplay between social media, public discussions, and the formation of public opinion. Understanding these dynamics is crucial in comprehending the evolving nature of public discourse across various societal issues in the digital age.

Methodology:

Case Study 1: Arab Spring and Social Media: What are the effects of social media on the agenda-setting function of traditional journalism, and how does it contribute to the formation and dissemination of public opinion on various societal issues, with afocus on the Arab Spring?

- **Objectives:**
  Examine how social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook played a pivotal role in disseminating information during the Arab Spring.

Investigate how traditional news outlets responded to and incorporated information from social media sources into their coverage.

Analyze how the public opinion and awareness of the Arab Spring were influenced by the news and discussions on social media.

- **Analysis:**

During the Arab Spring, social media platforms emerged as key sources of information and communication for activists, citizens, and journalists. Protesters used platforms like Twitter and Facebook to organize, share real-time updates, and document events on the ground. Traditional news outlets often relied on these social media posts for their coverage, which, in turn, amplified the messages and images shared by activists.

The rapid dissemination of information via social media also led to an increased global awareness of the events in the Arab Spring countries. People worldwide became more engaged in discussions about the uprisings, and traditional news organizations covered these discussions extensively. Consequently, social media not only set the agenda for news coverage but also influenced the framing and prioritization of stories by traditional journalism.

Public opinion about the Arab Spring was significantly shaped by the images, videos, and first-hand accounts shared on social media. These platforms allowed individuals to voice their opinions, share their support or criticism for the movements, and engage in discussions. Traditional journalism played a role in curating and contextualizing these social media narratives, thereby contributing to the formation of a global public opinion on the Arab Spring.

Case Study 2: Black Lives Matter Movement and Social Media: What are the effects of social media on the agenda-setting function of traditional journalism, and how does it contribute to the formation and dissemination of public opinion on various societal issues, with a focus on the Black Lives Matter movement?

- **Objectives:**

Examine how social media platforms facilitated the spread of information related to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Investigate how traditional news outlets covered the movement, including their reliance on social media content.

Analyze the impact of social media-driven discussions and activism on public opinion regarding racial justice and police brutality.

- **Analysis:**

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement gained immense traction on social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Instagram. Users shared videos of protests, personal stories, and calls for justice using hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter. This grassroots activism on social media quickly garnered the attention of traditional news organizations.

Traditional journalism played a dual role in covering the BLM movement. First, they reported on the events themselves, often relying on user-generated content from social media to provide real-time updates. Second, they delved into the social media discourse surrounding BLM, analyzing trends, controversies, and public sentiment.

The influence of social media on public opinion during the BLM movement was profound. The widespread sharing of videos depicting instances of police brutality and racial injustice led to increased awareness and calls for reform. Public opinion polls and surveys indicated a significant shift in attitudes toward issues of racial justice, with social media being a primary catalyst for these changes.

Case Study 3: Fake News and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election:
What are the effects of social media on the agenda-setting function of traditional journalism, and how does it contribute to the formation and dissemination of public opinion, with a focus on the role of fake news during the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election?

- **Objectives:**

Investigate the prevalence and dissemination of fake news on social media platforms during the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. Analyze how traditional news outlets covered and fact-checked fake news stories originating from social media.

Assess the impact of fake news on public perception, political discourse, and voting behavior during the election.

- **Analysis:**

    The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election witnessed the rapid spread of fake news stories across social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. False information and sensationalized headlines were widely shared, often reaching millions of users. Traditional news organizations found themselves in the position of debunking or verifying these stories.

    During the election campaign, traditional journalism played a critical role in fact-checking and countering fake news. However, the prevalence and rapid dissemination of false information on social media made it challenging for traditional outlets to keep up. Some fake news stories gained significanttraction before being debunked, potentially influencing public opinion.

    Research indicates that exposure to fake news on social media may have influenced voters' beliefs and decisions. Some voters who were exposed to false information were more likely to express doubts about the legitimacy of the election or specific candidates. The influence of fake news on public opinion during this election highlighted the need for a closer examination of the relationship between social media, traditional journalism, and political discourse.

Case Study 4: COVID-19 Misinformation and Social Media: What are the effects of social media on the agenda-setting function of traditional journalism, and howdoes it contribute to the formation and dissemination of public opinion, with a focus on the role of COVID-19 misinformation?

- **Objectives:**

    Investigate the spread of COVID-19 misinformation and conspiracy theories on social media platforms. Analyze how traditional news outlets covered and countered COVID-19 misinformation.

    Assess the impact of misinformation on public trust, adherence to public health guidelines, and vaccination rates during the pandemic.

- **Analysis:**

     The COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge in misinformation and conspiracy theories on social media, ranging from false cures to conspiracy narratives about the virus's origins. Social media platforms struggled to curb the spread of such content, leading to concerns about public health consequences.

     Traditional journalism played a crucial role in providing accurate information and fact-checking COVID-19-related claims. News outlets worked to combat misinformation by highlighting expert opinions, presenting data-driven reports, and debunking false claims. However, some individuals remained exposed to and influenced by misinformation, which had tangible consequences for public health.

     Research suggests that individuals exposed to COVID-19 misinformation on social media were more likely to express skepticism about vaccines and public health measures. This, in turn, impacted vaccination rates and compliance with safety guidelines, emphasizing the significant role of social media in shaping public opinion during a health crisis.

Case Study 5: Climate Change Activism and Social Media: What are the effects of social media on the agenda-setting function of traditional journalism, and how does it contribute to the formation and dissemination of public opinion, with a focus on climate change activism?

- **Objectives:**

     Examine how climate change activists utilize social media platforms to raise awareness and mobilize support for climate-related issues.

     Investigate how traditional news outlets cover climate change topics and whether social media-driven campaigns influence their reporting.

     Analyze the impact of climate change discussions on social media on public attitudes and behaviors related to environmental sustainability.

- **Analysis:**

     Climate change activists have effectively leveraged social media

to organize global movements, such as the Global Climate Strikes and the Fridays for Future campaign led by Greta Thunberg. Social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have allowed activists to share compelling visuals, stories, and calls to action, reaching millions of people worldwide.

Traditional journalism has increasingly covered climate change, in part due to the significant attention generated on social media. News outlets often report on major climate events, scientific findings, and the activities of environmental activists and organizations. Social media-driven campaigns and discussions have influenced the news agenda by placing climate change higher on the priority list.

The influence of social media on public opinion regarding climate change is evident. Surveys and studies show that individuals who engage with climate-related content on social media are more likely to express concern about environmental issues and take personal actions, such as reducing their carbon footprint or supporting climate policies. Social media has played a vital role in shaping public awareness and advocacy for climate action.

Sample Data

Case Study 1: Arab Spring and Social Media

- Social Media Data:

    Number of tweets and Facebook posts related to the Arab Spring during a specific timeframe.

    Trends in the usage of key hashtags related to the Arab Spring.

Geographic distribution of social media posts about the Arab Spring.

- Traditional News Coverage Data:

    Number of news articles, TV segments, and radio broadcasts covering the Arab Spring.

    Analysis of how traditional media sources cited or incorporated social media content.

    Editorial choices regarding which social media content was featured in traditional news.

- Public Opinion Data:

   Surveys measuring public awareness and understanding of the Arab Spring.

   Analysis of public sentiment toward the Arab Spring on social media platforms.

   Correlation between traditional news coverage and public opinion changes on the Arab Spring.

Case Study 2: Black Lives Matter Movement and Social Media

- Social Media Data:

   Number of tweets, Instagram posts, and TikTok videos related to the Black Lives Matter movement.

   Engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) for key social media posts.

   Demographic data on individuals participating in BLM-related discussions.

- Traditional News Coverage Data:

   Number of news articles, TV segments, and radio broadcasts covering the Black Lives Mattermovement.

   Analysis of how traditional media framed BLM stories and whether they referenced social mediacontent.

   Public perception of media coverage of BLM and its alignment with social media discussions.

- Public Opinion Data:

   Surveys assessing changes in public attitudes toward racial justice and police reform.

   Analysis of public discourse on social media regarding BLM's impact and goals.

   Qualitative data on how BLM activism influenced individuals' opinions and actions.

Case Study 3: Fake News and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

- Social Media Data:

Number of fake news stories shared on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms during the 2016election.

Engagement metrics for fake news posts, including likes, shares, and comments.

Demographic information of users engaging with fake news content.

- Traditional News Coverage Data:

Number of news articles, TV segments, and radio broadcasts addressing fake news during theelection.

Analysis of how traditional media fact-checked and reported on fake news.

Public perception of news organizations' credibility in relation to fake news.

- Public Opinion Data:

Surveys measuring trust in media before and after exposure to fake news during the election.

Correlation between exposure to fake news and shifts in voter behavior or political beliefs.

Qualitative data on how individuals reacted to and discussed fake news on social media.

Case Study 4: COVID-19 Misinformation and Social Media

- Social Media Data:

Number of COVID-19 misinformation posts, including false remedies, conspiracy theories, andinaccurate statistics.

Engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) for COVID-19 misinformation content.

Trends in the spread of COVID-19-related misinformation over time.

- Traditional News Coverage Data:

Number of news articles, TV segments, and radio broadcasts addressing COVID-19 misinformation.

Analysis of how traditional media corrected or fact-checked COVID-19 misinformation.

Public perception of media's role in combating misinformation during the pandemic.

- Public Opinion and Behavior Data:

Surveys measuring public trust in health authorities and media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data on adherence to public health guidelines (mask-wearing, social distancing) and vaccinationrates.

Qualitative analysis of social media conversations related to COVID-19 and misinformation.

Case Study 5: Climate Change Activism and Social Media

- Social Media Data:

Number of posts related to climate change activism on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.

Engagement metrics for climate change-related content.

Geographic distribution of climate activism posts and discussions.

- Traditional News Coverage Data:

Number of news articles, TV segments, and radio broadcasts covering climate change issues.

Analysis of how traditional media sources referenced social media-driven climate activism.

Changes in the prioritization of climate change in traditional news due to social media trends.

- Public Opinion Data:

Surveys measuring public awareness and concern about climate change.

Analysis of public sentiment regarding climate change activism on social media.

Correlation between social media activism and individual actions or policy support related to climatechange.

Research Conclusion:

This research has explored the multifaceted impact of social media on traditional journalism's agenda- setting function and its significant role in the formation and dissemination of public opinion on various societal issues. Through a series of case studies, we have examined the interplay between social media, traditional news outlets, and the public, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of this evolving relationship.

Key Findings:

Social Media as an Agenda-Setting Force: Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, have emerged as potent forces in setting news agendas. These platforms enable rapid dissemination of information and discussions, often driving traditional news organizations to cover topics that gain traction on social media.

Influence of User-Generated Content: User-generated content on social media, including hashtags, videos, and personal stories, has become integral to the news cycle. Traditional journalism increasingly incorporates such content into their reporting, recognizing its impact on shaping narratives and news priorities.

Public Opinion Amplification: Social media serves as a powerful amplifier of public opinion. It allows individuals to engage in real-time discussions, share their perspectives, and participate in activism on a global scale. Traditional news organizations play a pivotal role in curating and contextualizing these discussions, contributing to the formation of public opinion.

Misinformation Challenges: The rapid spread of misinformation on social media poses a significant challenge to traditional journalism and public opinion formation. Fake news, conspiracy theories, and false claims can gain substantial traction before being debunked, influencing public beliefs and behaviors.

Impact on Societal Issues: The impact of social media extends across various societal issues, from political elections and movements like Black Lives Matter to environmental activism and public health crises like COVID-19. Social media not only shapes the narrative but also drives public awareness and engagement.

Recommendations:

Media Literacy Education: Promote media literacy education to empower individuals to critically evaluate information on social media. Educational institutions, news organizations, and social media platforms should collaborate to enhance digital literacy skills.

Fact-Checking and Transparency: Traditional news outlets should continue their commitment to fact- checking and providing transparent reporting. They should also make their processes more visible to the public to build trust.

Responsible Social Media Use: Encourage responsible social media use by emphasizing the importance of verifying information before sharing. Social media platforms should implement measures to detect and label misinformation.

Collaboration between Journalism and Social Media: Foster collaboration between traditional journalism and social media platforms to improve the accuracy and reliability of news shared on these platforms. This can include partnerships to promote credible sources and reporting.

Research and Monitoring: Continue research and monitoring of the evolving relationship between social media, traditional journalism, and public opinion. Understanding the ever-changing landscape is crucial for adapting strategies and policies effectively.

In conclusion, the influence of social media on traditional journalism and public opinion is undeniable. While it offers unprecedented opportunities for information dissemination and public engagement, it also presents challenges related to misinformation and the need for critical media literacy. By addressing these challenges and harnessing the strengths of this dynamic interaction, we can contribute to a more informed and empowered public discourse.

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Global News Flow: A Study on the Attitude of Developed Countries Towards Developing Countries

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Abstract

The flow of news between developed and developing countries are imbalanced, with developed countries dominating the production and framing of news. This can lead to a distorted view of the world in developed countries and make it difficult for developing countries to communicate their perspectives and priorities. Additionally, it can reinforce power imbalances between developed and developing countries. Our study aimed to investigate how developed countries view developing countries in terms of global news dissemination and the influence of these attitudes on reporting. We analysed various sources, including newspapers, television broadcasts, online databases, and websites, and found notable differences in coverage of events, particularly on politically sensitive topics like immigration, terrorism, transfer of political power, and natural disasters. This study must collect quantitative data to effectively gather information regarding the given topic.

Keywords: Developed, Developing, Countries, Imbalance, News, Flow

Introduction: -

The sharing of news between countries, also known as the global news flow, is heavily impacted by a multitude of factors including geography, economics, politics, and culture. Unfortunately, developing countries are often portrayed in a biased manner through negative events such as natural disasters, conflict, and poverty. This creates an inaccurate representation that reinforces negative stereotypes.

To investigate the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries in the global news flow, this study will analyze news articles and academic studies. The study will providean overview of the global

news flow and the factors that influence it. Additionally, it will delve into the relationship between developed and developing countries in the global media. Finally, the study will thoroughly analyze the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries within the global news flow.

The significance of this study lies in its aim to illuminate the portrayal of developed countries in global media and its impact on developing nations. This research can be utilized to devise effective strategies to enhance the representation of developing nations in the mediaand challenge any negative stereotypes or biases.

Objective Of the Study: -

The study aims to examine the portrayal of developing countries and their inhabitants in media outlets of developed nations and how it affects the perspectives of individuals in those countries. This research holds significant importance as it could potentially lead to a more unbiased and equitable representation of developing nations and their people. Additionally, it has the power to enhance the exchange of news between these nations, which is crucial for fostering mutual understanding.

Limitation of the Study: -

The study on the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries in global newsflow has several limitations:

Sample size: The study may have used a small sample of news stories or countries,which may not be representative of the global news flow.

Data collection: The study may have relied on data from a limited number of sources,such as international news agencies, which may not be representative of all news coverage of developing countries.

Methodology: The study may have used a methodology that is not widely accepted orreliable, such as content analysis.

Interpretation: The study may have interpreted the data in a way that is biased orsubjective.

In addition, the study does not take into account the following factors:

The changing nature of the global news landscape: The rise of social media and othernew technologies has disrupted the traditional flow of news from developed to developing countries.

The increasing diversity of news sources: There are now more news sources than ever before, including those from developing countries themselves. This has led to a more pluralistic and nuanced coverage of developing countries.

The growing importance of developing countries in the global economy and politics: Developing countries are playing an increasingly important role in the world, which islikely to lead to more coverage of them in the news.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries in global news flow. It is important to note that the study was conducted in 2020, and the global news landscape has changed significantly since then. More research is needed to understand the current state of global news flow and the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries.

Literature Review: -

The global news flow, which refers to the dissemination of news across national borders, is a constantly evolving and intricate process that is influenced by various factors such as economics, technology, politics, and culture. One of the most significant factors that shape the global news flow is the developed countries' attitude toward the developing nations.

Developed countries have typically been the dominant force in the global news flow, owingto their economic power, control over major news agencies, and cultural sway. This often results in a significant bias towards developed countries in news coverage, with developing nations frequently portrayed in a negative light, with limited coverage of issues such as conflict, poverty, and disaster. This portrayal can lead to the perception that developing countries are inherently unstable and unsafe.

Journalists in developed countries are trained to view the world through a Western lens, which can result in the misinterpretation

or neglect of critical stories from developing countries. While some research has been done on this subject, there is still a need for further study on the developed countries' attitude towards developing countries in the global news flow.

Specific Studies-

One of the most well-known studies on the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries in the global news flow is the MacBride Report, which was published in 1980. The MacBride Report found that the global news flow was "imbalanced, one-directional, and distorted." It also found that the news coverage of developing countries was often negative and stereotypical.

Another important study is the Global Media Monitoring Project, which has been conducted every five years since 1995. The Global Media Monitoring Project monitors the gender and race/ethnicity of news sources and news subjects in major media outlets around the world. It has consistently found that women and people of color are underrepresented in the news, both as sources and as subjects.

Other studies have examined the specific ways in which the attitude of developed countries towards developing countries is reflected in the news coverage of specific topics, such as conflict, poverty, and climate change.

For example, a study by the Centre for Global Development found that the news coverage of conflict in Africa was often focused on violence and instability. The study also found that the news coverage of poverty in Africa was often focused on individual stories of hardship and suffering.

Another study by the Overseas Development Institute found that the news coverage of climate change in developing countries was often focused on the negative impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods. The study also found that the news coverage of climate change in developing countries rarely discussed the solutions to climate change.

Research Gap: -

The flow of global news is an issue that has been discussed for many years. It is largely impacted by the perspectives of developed nations,

who hold sway over many transnational news organizations. This can result in developing countries being portrayed with bias that aligns with the priorities and values of the developed world. Unfortunately, this can have damaging consequences, including reinforcing stereotypes, silencing the voices of developing nations, and stymieing progress.

While some research has been conducted on this issue, further exploration is necessary to fully comprehend the effects of developed countries' attitudes on news coverage. In order to develop effective approaches that foster a fair and precise depiction of developing nations, it is critical to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to this problem.

One possible solution to this issue could be to promote diversity within news organizations, particularly at the leadership level. By including more individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, news organizations can ensure that the coverage they provide is more representative of the world as a whole. Additionally, efforts could be made to encourage journalists to seek out diverse sources and perspectives when reporting on developing nations.

Ultimately, it is important to recognize that the flow of global news is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. By working together to promote fairness and accuracy in news coverage, we can help to ensure that all voices are heard and that progress is made in developing nations around the world.

Research Methodology: -

When it comes to examining the perception of developing countries and their news coverage by developed nations, there are various factors that need to be taken into account. A quantitative methodology would be the best approach to achieve this goal. This would involve a thorough analysis of news content from developing countries that has been presented by newspapers, magazines, and televised broadcasts in developed nations.

To carry out this analysis, statistical methods would be employed to facilitate the detection of any recurring themes or tendencies in the coverage. Multiple factors would be considered, including but not limited to the subject matter, origin, sentiment, and significance of the news article. By taking into account all of these factors, it would be

possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of how developing countries are perceived by developed nations through their news coverage.

One of the key benefits of using a quantitative methodology is that it allows for a systematic and objective analysis of the data. This means that the results of the analysis can be trusted and relied upon to provide accurate insights into the perception of developing countries by developed nations. Additionally, this approach allows for the identification of any biases or other issues that may be present in the news coverage, which can then be addressed to improve the accuracy and fairness of the reporting.

Overall, the use of a quantitative methodology to examine the perception of developing countries and their news coverage by developed nations is a valuable tool for gaining insight into this important issue. By carefully considering all of the relevant factors and using statistical analysis to uncover any patterns or tendencies in the coverage, it is possible to gain a more nuanced understanding of how developing countries are viewed by the rest of the world.

Research Analysis: -

Global news flow is the study of how news is produced, distributed, and consumed around the world. It is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a variety of factors, including geography, culture, economics, and politics.

One of the most important aspects of global news flow is the relationship between developed and developing countries. Developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, tend to produce and consume more news than developing countries. This is due to a number of factors, including the greater resources and infrastructure that developed countries have available to them.

As a result of this imbalance, the news that is produced and consumed around the world often reflects the perspective of developed countries. This can lead to a number of problems, including:

Misrepresentation: Developing countries are often misrepresented in the news, with stories focusing on negative events such as poverty, crime, and conflict. This can lead to a negative perception of developing countries among people in developed countries.

Neglect: Developing countries are often neglected in the news, with stories about them receiving less coverage than stories about developed countries. This can lead toa lack of awareness among people in developed countries of the challenges and opportunities facing developing countries.

Stereotyping: The news can also reinforce stereotypes about developing countries. For example, developing countries are often portrayed as being backward, corrupt, and dangerous. This can lead to prejudice and discrimination against people from developing countries.

Economic: Developed countries prioritize news coverage that aligns with their economic interests, leading to limited representation of challenges faced by developing nations. Reports often overlook economic contributions and regulatory initiatives taken by developing countries, reinforcing the belief that they are reliant on developed nations for progress.

The attitude of developed countries towards developing countries is often reflected in the news coverage that they receive. For example, studies have shown that developed countries tend to focus on negative news stories about developing countries while neglecting stories about positive developments. This can lead to a negative perception of developing countriesamong people in developed countries.

There are a number of things that can be done to address the problems associated with global news flow. One important step is to develop more balanced and representative news coverageof developing countries. This can be done by supporting independent media outlets in developing countries and by encouraging journalists from developed countries to report on developing countries in a more nuanced and informed way.

Another important step is to increase awareness of the challenges and opportunities facingdeveloping countries among people in developed countries. This can be done through education and outreach programs. It is also important to challenge stereotypes about developing countries and to promote understanding and respect for all cultures.

By taking these steps, we can help to create a more just and equitable global news flow.

Digital Era of Global News Flow: -

The impact of the digital era on international news and the relationship between developed and developing countries cannot be denied. While developing countries now have easy accessto news and information from around the world, developed countries have more resources to invest in digital technology and media production, giving them greater influence over global news. However, this has resulted in negative and stereotypical stories dominating news coverage of developing countries in the developed world, making it difficult for them to attract investment and aid while negatively affecting public perception.

Despite these challenges, positive developments have emerged. Independent news organizations in developing countries produce high-quality journalism that challenges dominant narratives about developing countries. Developed countries like Canada are takingsteps to promote a more balanced and fair global news flow by supporting independent journalism in developing countries.

To foster a world where all voices are heard and all cultures are respected, we must support independent news organizations in developing countries, demand a more balanced and fair global news flow from news organizations, educate the public about the importance of mediadiversity and the dangers of stereotypes, encourage journalists to travel to developing countries and report on local stories, and support policies that promote media freedom and pluralism. By taking these steps, we can confidently promote a more balanced and fair global news flow.

Conclusion:

In summary, the global news cycle is largely controlled by developed nations, which can often depict developing nations in a negative and stereotypical manner. This can have detrimental effects on the public perception of these countries, making it harder for them to attract investment and aid for development. With the advent of the digital age, this problem has only been exacerbated, as developed nations can more easily influence the global news narrative by spreading misinformation and disinformation. However, it has also created newopportunities for independent news organizations in developing countries to challenge thesedominant narratives.

It's imperative to acknowledge the challenges that this digital era poses for global news flow,as well as the attitudes of developed nations towards developing ones. Nevertheless, we should remain optimistic about the future. By supporting independent news organizations in developing countries, advocating for a fairer and more balanced global news flow, and educating the public about the importance of media diversity, we can help create a world where all voices are valued and all cultures respected.

Furthermore, we should emphasize the importance of promoting critical thinking skills among media consumers. This will help individuals evaluate the news they consume and become more aware of the biases that can shape news coverage. Ultimately, our goal should be to create a world where people have access to a wide variety of news sources and can form their own informed opinions about the world around them.

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Growth and Impact of Digital Platforms on News and Media: An Attempt to Reshaping The Notion of Mass Media

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Abstract

Technology, especially the internet and digital communication tools, has revolutionized how information is spread. News, articles, videos, and other forms of content can reach a global audience within seconds, thanks to platforms like social media, news websites, and online streaming services. Technology has made it possible for people to access a vast amount of information and diverse viewpoints from anywhere in the world. This has democratized the media landscape, allowing individuals to be more informed and engaged in various topics. Mass media, including newspapers, radio, television, and more recently, the internet and social media, have been crucial in disseminating information to the public. They have served as a primary source of news, allowing people to stay informed about local, national, and global events. This role of this paper is to ensure an informed citizen, which is essential for a functioning democracy.

Keywords: Mass media, documentaries, news analysis, public knowledge, supplementary teaching tool, digital communication tool and global events

Introduction

Mass media provide a plethora of entertainment options, including movies, music, television shows, and video games. Entertainment media offer a means of relaxation and escapism for individuals, and they can also reflect cultural values and trends. Mass media have had a profound impact on shaping societal norms, values, and culture. They can influence fashion trends, popularize certain lifestyles, and contribute to the development of shared cultural references. Media representations

of different groups can impact perceptions and stereotypes. Media outlets are part of a vast industry that contributes significantly to the economy. Advertising, in particular, is a major revenue source for media organizations. The media industry also employs a large number of people, ranging from journalists and content creators to technicians and marketing professionals. Advances in technology have transformed the media landscape. The internet, in particular, has democratized access to information and allowed for a greater diversity of voices. However, it has also raised concerns about misinformation and the quality of content. Mass media have played a role in shaping public opinion and influencing political movements and activism. They can raise awareness of social issues, advocate for change, and hold those in power accountable. Despite their commendable contributions, mass media also face challenges such as sensationalism, bias, privacy concerns, and the spread of disinformation. Ethical considerations in journalism and media production are essential to maintaining trust and credibility. Mass media have been a powerful force in shaping society and culture throughout history. Their role in informing, educating, and entertaining the public is commendable, but it also comes with responsibilities and challenges.

Social media has indeed transformed the way we consume information and interact with the world. Over the past few years, it has become a dominant force in the media landscape, impacting various aspects of our lives. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become primary sources of news and information for many people. They provide real-time updates on events, trends, and news stories, often breaking news before traditional media outlets. Social media has revolutionized the way we connect with others. It enables instant communication with friends, family, and even strangers across the globe. This has had profound implications for personal relationships, enabling people to maintain connections regardless of geographic distance. Social media has given rise to online communities and subcultures, where individuals with shared interests can connect, exchange ideas, and support each other. These communities span various topics, from hobbies to political movements. Social media has played a significant role in political activism and social movements. It provides a platform for people to express their opinions, organize protests, and raise awareness about various issues. Movements

like the Arab Spring and Black Lives Matter have utilized social media to mobilize supporters and amplify their messages. Social media is a crucial tool for businesses and brands to connect with customers, advertise products, and build their online presence. Influencer marketing has also become a prominent way to reach audiences.

The increased use of social media has raised concerns about privacy, data security, and the spread of misinformation. Issues like data breaches, online harassment, and the manipulation of public opinion have gained attention. Social media platforms use algorithms to curate content for users, which can lead to filter bubbles and echo chambers, where users are exposed to information that aligns with their existing beliefs. This can have implications for the polarization of society. Excessive use of social media has been linked to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. The constant comparison with others and exposure to curated, idealized lifestyles can contribute to these problems. Social media has transformed the way people connect, communicate, and consume news in today's digital age. The evolution of technology, including improvements in internet infrastructure and the proliferation of smartphones, has greatly influenced social media consumption habits. Faster internet speeds and more accessible devices have made it easier for people to engage with social platforms. Social media platforms continuously introduce new features and tools that shape how users interact. From text-based posts to multimedia content like photos, videos, and live streaming, communication models are diversifying. Additionally, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat have popularized short-form video content and stories, altering how users share information. Messaging apps and direct messaging features within social platforms have become vital for real-time communication. These provide a more personal and immediate way to connect with friends and family.

As social media platforms collect vast amounts of user data, privacy concerns have grown. Many users are becoming more conscious of their digital footprint and the potential consequences of sharing personal information online. Features like disappearing stories have gained popularity, encouraging more spontaneous and less curated sharing. This reflects a shift towards authenticity and impermanence in online communication. Social media platforms use complex algorithms to curate content for users. These algorithms personalize the user

experience, but they also raise concerns about filter bubbles and the potential for platforms to influence users' perspectives. Excessive social media use has been associated with mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. Users and platforms are increasingly focusing on digital well-being and ways to mitigate these negative effects. Interest in social media development and efforts to predict "the next big thing" in the social media landscape have indeed been hot topics for various stakeholders, including communicators, marketers, investors, and governments, since the advent of social media platforms. Understanding user behavior and preferences is crucial for predicting the success of a new social media platform. Features such as user-friendly interfaces, content personalization, and privacy controls can significantly influence a platform's popularity.

The integration of emerging technologies like virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) can reshape the social media landscape. Predicting which platforms will effectively leverage these technologies can be a focus of interest. While major platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok dominate the market, niche social media platforms catering to specific interests or demographics can gain traction. Identifying and investing in such niche platforms can be a strategy for marketers and investors. Keeping an eye on content trends, such as short-form video, live streaming, and user-generated content, can provide insights into the future of social media. Platforms that adapt to these trends or pioneer new content formats may become the next big thing. Governments have a vested interest in regulating social media platforms to ensure data privacy and curb misinformation. Changes in regulations can impact the development and success of social media platforms. Social media trends can be influenced by cultural and demographic shifts. Understanding how different generations and cultural groups use social media can help in predicting which platforms are likely to gain popularity. Social media is a global phenomenon, and platforms that successfully navigate international markets can become significant players. Understanding cross-cultural dynamics and localization is essential. The integration of social media into broader digital ecosystems, including e-commerce and entertainment, can drive the success of new platforms. Platforms that offer seamless integration with other digital services may have an advantage.

Methodology

Primary data like texts on media and culture have been analysed. Library work, secondary materials have also been analysed to find the adequate data and information. Articles, journals papers are evaluated significantly.

Discussion

Yes, the early history of social media can be traced back to the 1980s and even earlier. During this time, the concept of online communication and community-building was in its infancy. Usenet was one of the earliest forms of online discussion forums, dating back to the late 1970s and becoming more prominent in the 1980s. Usenet groups allowed users to participate in threaded discussions on a wide range of topics. It was a text-based platform where users could share information, ask questions, and engage in conversations. Bulletin Board Systems were another precursor to modern social media. These were computer systems that allowed users to dial in with a modem and interact with each other through text-based messages. BBSes hosted discussion boards, games, and file sharing, creating a sense of online community. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, online services like CompuServe and Prodigy provided a platform for users to connect with each other, send messages, and access various information resources. They were early examples of online communities. The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link, commonly known as The Well, was an influential online community launched in 1985. It was a pioneering platform that facilitated discussions on a wide range of topics, similar to modern-day social media.

Launched in 1997, Six Degrees is often considered one of the first social networking sites. It allowed users to create profiles and connect with friends. While it wasn't as successful as later platforms like Facebook, it laid the groundwork for social networking concepts. Friendster, founded in 2002, is often credited with popularizing the social networking model. It allowed users to create profiles, connect with friends, and expand their social networks. It gained significant attention but faced technical challenges and was eventually overshadowed by later platforms. MySpace, launched in 2003, was a major player in the early social media landscape. It allowed users to create personalized profiles, share music, and connect with others. MySpace was particularly popular among musicians and bands. Mark Zuckerberg and his

college roommates launched Facebook in 2004, initially as a platform exclusively for Harvard University students. It later expanded to other universities and eventually opened to the general public. Facebook revolutionized social media by introducing features like the News Feed and extensive user profiles. These early platforms paved the way for the development of the modern social media landscape, with platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat emerging in the years that followed. The history of social media is a testament to the evolution of online communication and community-building over the past few decades.

The evolution of social media from its early beginnings to the large social media corporations we see today has been a remarkable journey. Social media's roots can be traced back to early internet communities and platforms like Usenet and AOL, where users could connect with others who shared similar interests through forums and chat rooms. Friendster and MySpace were among the first dedicated social networking platforms to gain popularity. They allowed users to create profiles, connect with friends, and share content like photos and music. Twitter, launched in 2006, popularized the concept of microblogging, enabling users to share short text updates (tweets) with a wide audience. It became a valuable platform for real-time news and information sharing. Instagram, acquired by Facebook in 2012, focused on photo and video sharing, with an emphasis on visual aesthetics. It became a platform for influencers and businesses to showcase their products and lifestyles. Snapchat introduced the concept of disappearing photos and videos in 2011. This ephemeral nature of content appealed to a younger audience and spurred the adoption of Stories on various platforms. Platforms like Periscope (acquired by Twitter) and later, Facebook Live and Instagram Live, popularized live video streaming, allowing users to broadcast live events and interact with their audience in real time. Messaging apps like WhatsApp, WeChat, and Facebook Messenger gained prominence, enabling private and group communication, as well as the exchange of multimedia content. Social media corporations began integrating multiple services into their platforms, offering features like instant photo/video sharing, live streaming, direct messaging, and even match-making, all interconnected within a single ecosystem.

Advances in technology, particularly the widespread availability of the internet and the proliferation of smartphones, made it easier for people to access social media platforms. This accessibility expanded the user base

and allowed for more frequent and seamless interactions. Social media platforms offered a space for users to share various types of information, including personal updates, photos, videos, and links to interesting content. This sharing aspect contributed to the growth of social media as a means of self-expression and information dissemination. Social media platforms evolved to accommodate entertainment and content creation, including the rise of influencers, vloggers, and user-generated content. This shift attracted users who sought entertainment and creative outlets. The recognition of social media as a powerful marketing tool led to the integration of businesses and brands into the social media landscape. Companies use social media to engage with customers, advertise products, and gather market insights. Social media became a significant source of news and information, with many users turning to platforms like Twitter and Facebook for breaking news and updates on various topics. This role in information dissemination has both positive and negative implications, including issues related to misinformation. Social media facilitated the formation of online communities centered around shared interests, hobbies, or causes. These communities provide a sense of belonging and a platform for like-minded individuals to connect. Social media transcended geographical boundaries, allowing people from different parts of the world to interact and share their experiences. This globalization aspect made social media a tool for cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Social media platforms have indeed invested heavily in the development of e-commerce features, allowing users to shop directly from within the platform. Users can browse and shop for products without leaving the social media platform, streamlining the shopping process. Social media platforms provide a fertile ground for product discovery through targeted advertising and recommendations based on user interests and behavior. Many social platforms have integrated payment systems, making it easy for users to make purchases without having to navigate to external websites. Users can read reviews, ask for recommendations, and see what products their friends are buying, enhancing the shopping experience. Businesses can directly interact with potential customers, answer questions, and provide support through messaging and comments. Social platforms provide businesses with valuable data and insights on user behavior, which can be used to refine marketing strategies and product offerings. The 21st century

has witnessed an unprecedented explosion in the availability and accessibility of media. This transformation has been driven by rapid advancements in technology and the internet. There is a wide array of media channels available today, ranging from traditional sources like newspapers and television to newer digital platforms like social media, podcasts, and streaming services. This diversity allows people to choose how they consume news and information. The internet has made it possible for media content to reach a global audience instantly. News, entertainment, and information can be shared and accessed from virtually anywhere in the world. This has contributed to a more interconnected global society.

Many media platforms use algorithms to personalize content for users. This means that individuals can receive news and information tailored to their interests and preferences, creating echo chambers and filter bubbles. The rise of social media has empowered individuals to become citizen journalists. People can report on events as they happen, often providing eyewitness accounts and photos or videos from the scene. This has changed the landscape of news reporting. With the abundance of media sources, there is also a challenge of misinformation and fake news. It's important for consumers to critically evaluate the credibility of sources and fact-check information. The digital age has emphasized the importance of media literacy. People need to develop critical thinking skills to navigate the vast amount of information available and discern credible sources from unreliable ones. Media convergence refers to the merging of different media forms and technologies. For example, smartphones can now serve as a platform for newspapers, television, radio, and social media, blurring the lines between these traditional categories. The availability of media has also improved accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Many digital platforms provide features like closed captions and screen readers to make content more inclusive. Traditional media outlets have had to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and revenue models. Many have moved to online platforms and subscription-based models, while advertising has also shifted online. The proliferation of media has had profound cultural impacts, influencing the way people communicate, form opinions, and engage with society. It has also raised questions about privacy, surveillance, and the ethics of data collection.

Conclusion

In addition to formal codes of ethics, there are longstanding journalistic norms and practices that guide reporters and editors in their work. These norms include fact-checking, verifying sources, providing balanced coverage, and avoiding conflicts of interest. Many news organizations and professional journalism associations have established codes of ethics that outline the principles and standards that journalists should adhere to. These codes typically emphasize principles such as accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and transparency in reporting. In addition to formal codes of ethics, there are longstanding journalistic norms and practices that guide reporters and editors in their work. These norms include fact-checking, verifying sources, providing balanced coverage, and avoiding conflicts of interest. News organizations often have specific editorial guidelines that provide detailed instructions to journalists on how to cover certain types of stories or topics. These guidelines help ensure consistency and quality in reporting. Some news organizations appoint ombudsmen or public editors whose role is to independently review and critique the publication's journalistic practices. They serve as a bridge between the newsroom and the public, addressing concerns and complaints about journalistic standards. Many news outlets encourage reader feedback and corrections. They provide channels for readers to report errors or biases in reporting, and corrections are issued when mistakes are identified.

There are independent organizations, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF), that monitor press freedom and journalistic integrity worldwide. They advocate for journalists' rights and investigate cases of attacks on the press. In some countries, there are legal and regulatory frameworks that govern the media industry and hold news organizations accountable for their content. These may include laws protecting freedom of the press and regulations against hate speech or incitement to violence. Some countries have self-regulatory bodies or press councils that oversee the conduct of news organizations and adjudicate complaints from the public. Many news organizations are increasingly transparent about their funding sources, ownership, and potential conflicts of interest. This transparency helps build trust with the audience. With the rise of digital journalism and social media, there is also a growing awareness of the need for accountability in online journalism. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook have policies and mechanisms for reporting misinformation

and abusive content. Social media has evolved beyond being just a tool for entertainment and connecting with like-minded individuals. It has become a powerful platform for information dissemination and staying updated on various events, ranging from local to global.

Social media platforms allow users to receive real-time updates on a wide range of topics, including news, sports, politics, and more. Users can follow news outlets, official accounts, and influencers to stay informed about the latest events. Many local news organizations and community groups use social media to share news, events, and updates specific to a particular region. This helps users stay connected with what's happening in their local communities. During emergencies such as natural disasters or public health crises, social media platforms play a crucial role in disseminating vital information, including safety instructions, evacuation routes, and relief efforts. Social media has empowered ordinary citizens to act as amateur journalists. They can report on events as they unfold and share information that may not be covered by traditional news outlets. Social media has been a catalyst for political and social movements. Activists and organizers use these platforms to mobilize supporters, raise awareness, and share updates about protests, campaigns, and social justice issues. Social media also plays a role in fact-checking and verification of information. Many organizations and individuals use these platforms to debunk misinformation and promote accurate information. Social media exposes users to a wide range of perspectives and opinions. While this can lead to echo chambers, it also offers an opportunity to engage with different viewpoints and gain a more comprehensive understanding of various topics. It's essential to note that the abundance of information on social media can sometimes lead to information overload and the spread of misinformation. Users must exercise critical thinking and verify the credibility of sources. Social media has become an integral part of our information ecosystem, offering a dynamic and multifaceted platform for accessing and sharing news and updates at both the local and global levels. However, users should be mindful of the potential pitfalls and challenges associated with consuming information on social media.

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Absurdism in Select Songs of Rabindranath Tagore

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Abstract:

'Absurdism' as a philosophy claims that our universe is arbitrary and insignificant and hence any attempt to seek any order may bring the individual into conflict with the entire universe. In other words, it mainly highlights the meaninglessness of the universe and the futility of making any effort to make sense of it. The movement of Absurdism has its roots in Romanticism, having a strong disregard for the old societal norms and religious traditions. It is thus a study of human behaviour which acknowledges the inevitable futility of man's efforts. The Theatre of the Absurd was an eminent genre in literature that became quite popular in the mid-twentieth century, which explored various themes of absurdity. Similarly, one can find similar elements in some of the songs of Tagore. The collection of the songs of Rabindranath Tagore is compiled under the collection named *Gitabitan* translated as *Garden of Songs*, containing 2232 songs, popularly known by the name of "Rabindra Sangeet". This paper thus demonstrates how Tagore has used the theme of 'Absurdism' in his select songs.

Keywords: Absurdism, Gitabitan, Rabindra Sangeet, Romanticism, Theatre of the Absurd

In the modern world, man has an inherent habit of fixing aims in life. He invests his entire effort, energy, and time in fulfilling those dreams of life, but he fails to realise that life is actually meaningless and purposeless. No matter how much one truly achieves in life, he has to end in death, leaving behind all that he has earned throughout his entire life. Death is the only certainty in life, yet our lives are trapped in the absurd circle of materialistic dreams and the never-ending endeavour of achieving them, thereby often succeeding and sometimes ending up in failures.

Philosophers of the modern times had an aversion towards finding the purpose and meaning of life. In fact they even refuse to seek their own existence in God; rather they prefer it to believe in their own selves. According to them, man must make no more endeavour to quest any meaning in life, which led them to the formulation of existentialist philosophy. Existentialism as a philosophy pronounces the existence of an individual being as a as an independent and responsible being, determining their own progress by their own will and labour. The 20th century has seen two World Wars and the 21st century has endured a long pandemic period, when we all had to revisit basic questions regarding the basic purpose of life. Existence became the major concern in both the situations. An important philosophy named Absurdism was conceptualised in the era of the world of the World Wars, which tried to tackle the tension that had been created from man's endeavour to seek the meaning of life and at the same time the entire universe's refusal to pay any head to it. The truth of the very existence of God became questionable. In the 1950 and 1960s, a genre of literature came into existence, inspired by the disillusionment with war, known by the name of Absurdism. The French philosopher, thinker, novelist, and author Albert Camus is credited to be the father of the very movement or philosophy of Absurdism. In his eminent works of literature, he has explored the theme of alienation in modern life. Each time he emphasized the futility of a search for meaning in the meaningless universe. According to him, Absurdism thus generates from the universe's indifference to man's desire for achieving order, purpose, and happiness in his life. It is important to not here that Absurdism is evidently different from both Existentialism and Nihilism, though they all have been formulated and conceptualised almost around the same time. While Nihilism finds no meaning of life and hence sternly declares that creating meaning is a useless effort, Existentialism on the other hand, believes that man can definitely assign a meaning to his very existence but only out of his own accord. Nevertheless, Absurdism propagates the idea that we should accept the meaninglessness of the world around us, but at the same time rebel against it.

The Western world in the 1950s and 1960s has witnessed the emergence of a new theatrical genre named "Theatre of the Absurd" that explores existentialism and the human condition being inspired notably by the existentialist philosophy of Albert Camus as asserted in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" that it is Absurdism that defines

human existence, which is actually meaningless. It was first introduced in Paris and later got spread to New York City. Critic Martin Esslin in his book *Absurd Drama* (1965) coined the term "Theatre of the Absurd", arguing that absurdist plays are not meant to be driven by realism, plot, character development, or any other notions of traditional theatre; rather it mainly involves the state of mind of its characters, being trapped in illogical and incomprehensible situations.

It is not true that "Theatre of the Absurd" has been the first to introduce absurd elements but it has been observed that such elements also found their place earlier in Greek drama, Elizabethan tragicomedy mime, and vaudeville. In 1986, Alfred Jarry wrote a puppet play named *Ubu Roi*, inspired by the most eminent Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare, which in turn had been a high inspiration to the Surrealist and Absurdist theatre artists. Kiddish, profane dialogues and the cruel nature of man mainly featured the play. It is to be noted that the avant garde movements Dadaism and Surrealism, being direct responses of the World Wars, can be considered as forerunners of the "Theatre of the Absurd" as they were somewhere instigated by Sigmund Freud's tendency of exploring the unconscious mind.

The concept of 'anti-theatre', a term formulated by the famous playwright Eugene Ionesco, was created in 1950s in response to a world, with seemed devoid of any purpose or any reason as a means to rebel against the conventional theatrical practices. Martin Esslin, one of the eminent critics of the theatre world, identified Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet and Harold Pinter to be authors who tried their hands at this genre along with Tom Stoppard, Edward Albee, and Fernando Arrabal.

The most well-known play of this genre is *Waiting for Godot* (1953) by Samuel Beckett, which narrates the story of two tramps Vladimir and Estragon, who had been seen waiting throughout the play for the arrival of a character supposed named Godot, who does not come at all. Surprisingly, they seem to get entrapped in the situation, though they tried their best to free themselves but to no effect. Each time they come to the same place to meet Godot, confront the same events, deliver the same dialogues, and return frustrated. Another play of the same playwright which succeeded it is *Endgame* (1957). This play being a tragic comedy recounts the existential angst and despair experienced by a blind and paralyzed man along with his servant as they both wait for

their end, which could be either the end of the play or the end of their lives is well, ultimately resigning to the fact that human condition is actually meaningless

Eugene Ionesco in his first absurd play *The Bald Soprano* (1950) recounts the tale of two Londoner families who are engaged in meaningless dialogues; their conversations leading to nowhere and at the same time also fails to make a connection as no one actually listens to the others. The play ends with the characters reciting dialogues from the beginning of the play. The next absurd play of Ionesco *Rhinoceros* (1959) is set in a small town of France where the residents gradually transforms into rhinoceroses except one man. The play explores the tension between mob mentality and conformity and in particular about human mobility. Several critics have opened that the play was written in response to the rise Fascism and Nazism in the time of World War.

The Balcony (1957), an absurd drama by Jean Genet describes an incident of mass killing during an uprising in a brothel of an unnamed city. The patrons of the brothels were themselves the murderers who have showcased their powers when faced with unrest, thereby establishing the fact that the statusquo will always reassert itself. Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1957) tells the tale of a birthday party being disrupted by the arrival of two strangers having no actual motive. The unreliable characters contradict themselves frequently contributing to the play's absurdity.

In the Indian context likewise, one can find Absurdism in some select songs of Tagore included in the collection named Gitabitan translated as Garden of Songs, containing 2232 songs, popularly known by the name of "Rabindra Sangeet". One such song being "Dibasa Rajani Ami Jeno Kar Ashaye Ashaye thaki"

দিবসরজনী আমি যেন কার

পর্যায় : প্রেম

দিবসরজনী আমি যেন কার

আশায় আশায় থাকি।

তাই চমকিত মন, চকিত শ্রবণ,

তৃষিত আকুল আঁখি।।

চঞ্চল হয়ে ঘুরিয়ে বেড়াই,

সদা মনে হয় যদি দেখা পাই,

'কে আসিছে' বলে চমকিয়ে যাই

কাননে ডাকিলে পাখি।।

জাগরণে তারে না দেখিতে পাই,

থাকি স্বপনের আশে-

ঘুমের আড়ালে যদি ধরা দেয়

বাঁধিব স্বপনপাশে।

এত ভালোবাসি এত যারে চাই

মনে হয় না তো সে যে কাছে নাই,

যেন এ বাসনা ব্যাকুল আবেগে

তাহারে আনিবে ডাকি।।

being translated as –

> For whom do I keep my hope alight,
> Night and day, I wonder.
> My mind so heedful,
> My ears so alert,
> My eyes so keen with longing.
>
> Restless, I wander,
> Hoping to catch his glimpse.
> Even when a bird whistles in the trees
> Startled, 'Who comes there!', I wonder.
>
> He is never there in my wakeful hour,
> I await him in my dreams
> As if to secure him with reverie,

In the hidden canopy of my slumber.

Someone so profoundly I love,
Someone so profusely I desire
Would he still be far away from me?
Would my impassioned heart
Not be enough to summon him? (Majumdar Web)

Here, one can observe a repetition of the same action, though the narrator is quite aware of the fact that her endless waiting for her beloved will ultimately bear no fruit. Nevertheless, her unparalleled love and dedication does not make her realise the futility of the act. Though the translation of Anondo Majumdar is written from a female perspective, but Tagore does not hint at any particular gender.

There is yet another song titled "Sohena Jatona", where again the failed longing of a lover can be noticed. The admirer can no more bear the separation, but cannot stop to expect the other person's attention. The absurdity of the situation gets more and more pronounced when the lover although knowing that her sweetheart will not come, laments for the union but does not turns her face away as if somehow she gets entrapped in his charm. Here, we can directly get a stark similarity with Beckett's play Waiting for Godot. The tramps repeatedly face rejection, yet they cannot stop themselves from returning again and again in search of Godot.

<div align="center">

সহে না যাতনা

দিবস গণিয়া গণিয়া বিরলে

নিশিদিন বসে আছি শুধু পথপানে চেয়ে--

সখা হে, এলে না।

সহে না যাতনা॥

দিন যায়, রাত যায়, সব যায়--

আমি বসে হায়!

দেহে বল নাই, চোখে ঘুম নাই--

শুকায়ে গিয়াছে আঁখিজল।

</div>

একে একে সব আশা ঝ'রে ঝ'রে প'ড়ে যায়--

সহে না যাতনা॥

Translated as –

> Unbearable is the agony
> Counting days all alone,
> Spending days and nights -
> Glassy eyes fixed at wayside.
> O' dear, you did not turn up.
> Days slip, nights slip by,
> As slip all my chances,
> And regrettably I remain idle.
> Body sans vitality, eyes sans sleep,
> Trickling of tears have ceased.
> Slowly each drop of hope
> Falls apart one by one. (Ganguly Web)

Another song "Mone ki Dwidha Rekhe Gele" also seems to deal with the theme of absurdity.

মনে কী দ্বিধা রেখে গেলে চলে
সে দিন ভরা সাঁঝে,
যেতে যেতে দুয়ার হতে
কী ভেবে ফিরালে মুখখানি,
কী কথা ছিল যে মনে মনে
মনে কী দ্বিধা রেখে গেলে চলে।।

তুমি সে কি হেসে গেলে আঁখিকোণে
আমি বসে বসে ভাবি
নিয়ে কম্পিত হৃদয়খানি।
তুমি আছ দূর ভুবনে
মনে কী দ্বিধা রেখে গেলে চলে।।

আকাশে উড়িছে বকপাঁতি
বেদনা আমার তারি সাথী
আকাশে উড়িছে,
বারেক তোমায় শুধাবারে চাই
বিদায়কালে কী বল নাই,
সে কি রয়ে গেল গো
সিক্ত যূথীর গন্ধবেদনে, মনে।
মনে কী দ্বিধা রেখে গেলে চলে
সে দিন ভরা সাঁঝে,
যেতে যেতে দুয়ার হতে
কী ভেবে ফিরালে মুখখানি,
কী কথা ছিল যে মনে মনে
মনে কী দ্বিধা রেখে গেলে চলে।।

The English translation being –

You seemed to be faltering while your return.
And you had a look back,
I wonder what else you might have to say.
Did your angled eyes make a grin -
I only have my anxious thoughts,
While you remain far away.
Trail of cranes line up above the sky,
My sorrows follow.
I wish to ask the words you failed to utter at the end.
Does the painful aroma of moist JUTHI contain that. (Ganguly Web)

One can again well observe in this song the absurd theme of being unable to find the ultimate meaning of the last words of a lover, which can also refer to the beloved's inability to seek the purpose of life being deserted by the beloved. The search has not been over yet.

Absurdist belief is actually a reaction against the Romantic surge of 1830s in Paris, along with the religious collapse in Germany and the philosophical and social protest led by the eminent philosophers like Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. The philosophy of Absurdism gradually finds its way to the entire orient and thus finally the intercultural exchange during the times of Tagore facilitated its spread even in the oriental literatures as well owing to the colonial rule.

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Afrofuturism's Influence On Black Panther: Examining Futuristic Technology, Spirituality, and Cultural Symbolism

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Abstract:

By expertly fusing Afrofuturist elements, the 2018 superhero film *Black Panther* transformed the genre. This study explores the enormous influence of Afrofuturism on *Black Panther*, carefully dissecting how spirituality, technological innovation, and cultural symbolism are woven into the storyline. We analyze how Wakanda, the fictitious African nation at the center of *Black Panther*, serves as an illustrative example of an Afrofuturist utopia by delving into the aesthetic and thematic components of the movie. Our study examines how vibranium, a sign of modern technology, dispels common misconceptions about Africa and positions it as a leader in innovation. We also explore the movie's spiritual aspects, looking at how the character T'Challa embodies the tension between respect for the past and modern technology. We reveal how *Black Panther* creates a distinctive identity for its characters by deciphering complex cultural symbolism and skillfully fusing African heritage with a future story. Our study emphasizes the cultural importance of *Black Panther* as a starting point for Afrofuturist representation in mainstream media, changing conversations about identity, empowerment, and the future. This study expands our knowledge of how this cinematic masterpiece has deepened discussions about Black representation and broadened the boundaries of narrative diversity within the superhero genre by deconstructing the film's complex Afrofuturism fabric.

Keywords: Afrofuturism, Black Panther, Cultural Symbolism, Futuristic Technology, Identity Representation, Superhero Genre

Introduction:

An important turning point in the development of cinema and popular culture was reached with the debut of *Black Panther* as a ground-breaking superhero movie. The 2018 Marvel Cinematic Universe film *Black Panther* stands apart for a number of reasons. The movie is praised for its groundbreaking depiction of African culture and a cast that is overwhelmingly made up of people of color. It challenged the long-standing underrepresentation of Black folks in superhero stories and Hollywood in general by showcasing African traditions, languages, and aesthetics on a global platform. This point of view is supported by academic discussions such as "The Return of the Black Panther" by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Coates examines how *Black Panther* represents a fundamental change in how Black culture is portrayed in superhero stories in his piece in The Atlantic, highlighting the movie's depiction of African traditions. The movie was well-received by critics, who praised its plot progression, character growth, and cutting-edge special effects (Anderson, 2017). It received numerous nominations and accolades, including three Academy accolades, illustrating its influence on the movie business. *Black Panther* is one of the all-time highest-grossing movies thanks to its incredible commercial success (D'Alessandro, 2018). Its success at the box office proved there is a market for diverse narrative in mainstream movies.

The creative and cultural movement known as "Afrofuturism" had a significant influence on the plot and design of *Black Panther*. Afrofuturism is a multidisciplinary genre that examines the future of Black identity by fusing aspects of science fiction, fantasy, African mythology, and cultural commentary. Afrofuturism's salient traits include:

Afrofuturism challenges historical stereotypes of Africa as a backward or exoticized region by imagining a future in which the continent is at the forefront of technology and cultural innovation (Carroll, 2014).

It highlights the significance of recovering and celebrating African heritage, spirituality, and identity while emphasizing the empowerment of Black people and communities (Yaszek, 2006).

Speculative and futuristic aspects like advanced technology, space travel, and alternate histories are frequently included in afrofuturist works (Minella, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Afrofuturism is incorporated into the plot of *Black Panther*, with a focus on how futuristic technology, spirituality, and cultural iconography are used. In order to understand how the movie represents Afrofuturist ideas and adds to the conversation about Black representation, empowerment, and the future in popular culture, this study will examine the movie's visual and thematic components.

Literature review:

Numerous academics and cultural critics have defined and studied the cultural and artistic trend known as afrofuturism. Definitions frequently highlight its speculative and prospective character. In terms of culture and identity, Nelson's work "Afrofuturism: A Special Issue of Social Text" by Alondra Nelson, provides an informative definition and study of Afrofuturism. Exploring significant Afrofuturist works can enable examining the effect of Afrofuturism on cultural representation. Among the key texts to take into account are: *Parable of the Sower* and *Kindred* by Octavia E. Butler are regarded as foundational pieces of Afrofuturist fiction. They have had a significant influence on discussions of Black history, identity, and prospects. Afrofuturist music pioneer Sun Ra has a sizable discography. His work has affected music, culture, and even the film business. Albums like "Space Is the Place" incorporate Afrofuturist themes.

Methodology:

The study will analyze key scenes from "Black Panther" using a systematic approach, prioritizing Afrofuturist elements like advanced technology, cultural symbolism, and spiritual themes. Clear criteria will be established to determine the presence of these elements in the selected scenes. Scenes in Wakanda showcase advanced technology, spiritual practices, and cultural symbols, showcasing the country's rich heritage and identity. The data analysis phase will use a framework to analyze Afrofuturist elements in selected scenes. The framework will focus on identifying advanced technology, spirituality, and cultural symbols. It will examine how these elements contribute to the Afrofuturist narrative, how they reinforce cultural identity, and how they shape the film's narrative. The coding process involves applying criteria to selected scenes, with multiple coders analyzing each for reliability. Inter-rater reliability is assessed using Cohen's Kappa coefficient. Scenes are categorized based on Afrofuturist elements, and discrepancies are resolved through

consensus. This process assesses cultural identity and authenticity. This methodology provides a systematic analysis of Afrofuturist elements in *Black Panther* scenes, focusing on the film's incorporation of futuristic technology, spirituality, and cultural symbolism.

Results Analysis:

When *Black Panther* is analyzed, it exposes a rich depiction of cutting-edge technology in the made-up African nation of Wakanda. The vibranium element, a precious and potent material that characterizes Wakanda's technical accomplishments, serves as the narrative's focal point. The movie demonstrates the adaptability of vibranium, from its usage in weapons to cutting-edge medical procedures and transportation systems. This portrayal dispels myths that traditionally link Africa to a lack of technological advancement.

In *Black Panther*, vibranium is portrayed as a representation of African invention and progress. It challenges outmoded assumptions that have frequently portrayed the continent as lagging behind in scientific and technological disciplines by reimagining Africa as a pioneer in technology development. The movie's depiction of Wakanda as a highly developed technological nation challenges the stereotype of Africa as a continent that is always the victim and puts it as a leader on the international scene. This concept is compatible with Afrofuturism talks, which aim to redefine and empower Black communities by embracing and celebrating their technological potential.

Black Panther explores spirituality and ancestral reverence in its Afrofuturist narrative, focusing on T'Challa's Black Panther ritual and his connection to ancestors. The film highlights the cultural significance of Wakanda and spirituality as a source of strength and guidance, aligning with Afrofuturist ideals. Scholars like Anderson and Jones provide scholarly perspectives on the intersections of spirituality, identity, and Afrofuturism in media and culture.

Black Panther showcases a meticulous attention to detail in its costumes and settings, reinforcing identity and authenticity within the Afrofuturist context. Ruth E. Carter's costumes pay homage to African cultures, while the architectural design of Wakanda blends traditional and futuristic elements, creating a unique sense of place. This integration aligns with Afrofuturism's goal of celebrating African identity and heritage.

Conclusion:

The movie *Black Panther* is regarded as a classic because it expertly incorporates Afrofuturist ideas into its story. It is clear from a thorough review of the movie that *Black Panther* altered the conversation about Black identity, culture, and potential in the superhero genre in addition to challenging stereotypes.

Long-held misconceptions about Africa's technological potential were dispelled by the portrayal of futuristic technology, which was exemplified by vibranium, establishing the continent as a leader in innovation globally. This portrayal is in line with the goals of Afrofuturism, which is to promote Black ingenuity and eradicate harmful stereotypes.

In addition to giving character identities more dimension, the Black Panther ritual's investigation of spirituality and ancestral themes highlighted how crucial cultural continuity and spiritual connection are to overcoming today's issues. The Afrofuturist storyline was made more real by the incorporation of cultural symbols in costume and scenery, which highlighted the rich and varied history of Africa.

As a cultural milestone that demonstrates the ability of Afrofuturism to transform narratives, confront stereotypes, and inspire a vision of a future where Black identity and innovation thrive, *Black Panther* is a must-see. It has done this through leaving a lasting impression on pop culture and the superhero genre and encouraging viewers to picture a more diverse and inclusive future.

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The Impact of Ott Platforms on the Movie Theatre

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Abstract

Cinema hall, Theatre, multiplex, talkies or big screen, be it any kind or name, this monikers have always been the center of attraction or entertainment for movie lovers . So more than entertainment as well as enjoyment platforms These kinds of platforms have been portraying or reflecting as well as showcasing a significant compact of both community life , traditions and culture. So the main point stands here that, Are they going to be one the extinct constituent of past?

With the rise of OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms and online streaming services both Internationally and Nationally like Zee5 , Hot Star , Amazon Prime , Jio Cinema , Netflix , Voot etc. So is it a threat for the Movie theatres or would the movie theatres or multiplexes may mislay its value and demand which it used to had in previous times? Is there any chance that The idea of Movie theatre like big screens are going to be defunct in near future?

So Basic motto of the paper is to give the detailed perspective about the effect as well as influence of OTT known as online streaming services on main stream movie theatres and multiplexes' marketplace with a special reference towards before Covid 19 (post pandemic condition).

Keywords - Movie Theatres, OTT, Technology, Internet, Entertainment, Consumption.

Introduction

Evolution of communication has been pivotal in entertaining humans. Since historical times People of all age groups have invented different means of entertainment sources for not only themselves but also for their family members and society. In the ancient time with the help of rock painting, folktales, storytelling, folksongs, legends, myths People used to express themselves and their thoughts But after some

point of time through writing mankind exhibited their feelings.

Day by day with the advancement of the technology many new as well as creative modes of Entertainment sources came up that makes people's life easier and entertaining. Specially after introducing the internet the total scenario of consuming Entertainment just changed because now people have all the access to what they want to consume in their preferable time.

From the past few decades movies are the main source of Entertainment. Theatre, talkies, cinema hall, multiplex or big screen are always been the center of attraction among them those have a craze about cinema. Still few people are there who love to watch movie in their homes like those who doesn't want to go out and enjoy watching movie in any kind of movie theatre. But the number of these kind of people is very less and apart from these kind of people most of the population visit any theatre or multiplex to enjoy their movie night because of the excellent sound quality, good picture quality and the ambience they're providing over there ,that is next to impossible to create the whole atmosphere in homes.

But in 2020 the because of covid the pandemic impacted drastically not only over the entertainment industry but also changed the whole game of the Movie Theatre but introducing OTT Platforms that is known as "Over the Top". In quarantine time slowly people showed more initiation towards these OTT Platforms and with the end of covid phrase people are used to it. Nowadays people are finding it more convenient to watch any kind of content over OTT Platforms rather than go out and watch a movie over any movie theatre.

This study basically aims towards the   understanding of how the OTT platforms had impacted the current as well as the future of the movie theatre business and which changed the consumers behavior, that lead to this phrase that now existing Movie theatres and multiplexes need to change their all over game after covid 19 and pandemic just to be compete against these Over-The-Top platforms. So experts have different perspectives over it. Like some of them thinks that the traditional movie theatres and multiplexes might be coincide alongside Over-The-Top platforms. But others think differently that it might be take the space of movie theatre as if it will replace the movie consumption style in near future. After so many discussions also not still not cleared whether it'll

replace or it both will cater it's audience simultaneously. So the actual realistic schema is so far encompassing with uncertainty. So to reduce the uncertainty this study works on the understanding of the viewers point of view and the perspective about their movie consumption style specially after pandemic (post Covid-19).

Literature Review

Here comes the review of related literature where the data has been shown related to this topic those are already presented in several articles or research papers. The Multiplex Association of India and the Exhibitors across the whole country, made it clear that in the initial months of the lockdown when a set of films locked deals for a direct-to- OTT release. And with the tremendous growth of digital space , the biggest OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney Plus Hotstar, Sony LIV, ZEE5, Eros Now, Voot, ALT Balaji, MX Player continue to grow and after some period of time when MUBI enters in the Indian entertainment industry it makes the hand-curate films on demand.

After that the launch of cinemapreneur that's an avenue for the independent filmmakers. For example ShemarooMe Box Office is a platform where new movies releases directly on digital with a pay-per-view model. This is how the covid not only introduces the new era for entertainment but also changed the traditional movie watching habit of the people (Bhirani, 2020).

According to a National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) research, fewer Americans visited the movies in 2017 than in 2016. According to the survey, the rise of OTT services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Hulu is to blame for this reduction. (NATO, 2018).

According to a similar survey done by Deloitte in 2018, 51% of US homes subscribed to at least one OTT platform, which led to a drop in movie going. (Deloitte, 2018). These results imply that movie going has been significantly impacted by OTT platforms.

According to a study by Ailawadi and Farris (2017), consumers' willingness to pay for movie theatre tickets has decreased as a result of the availability of internet streaming services. According to the study, people are more inclined to pick an online streaming service if the movie they want to watch is offered both in theatres and online.

The survey also discovered that when consumers must pay extra for a movie ticket, they are more likely to pick an online platform. The rise in popularity of internet streaming services has been blamed for studies that have revealed a fall in recent years' moviegoing.

According to a report by the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), moviegoing in the US fell by 6% in 2017. The emergence of OTT platforms is blamed for the fall. (NATO, 2018). Like this, a Deloitte survey revealed that 51% of US homes subscribed to at least one OTT platform, which caused a drop in moviegoing. (Deloitte, 2018).

It is now simpler for customers to watch movies and television shows from the comfort of their homes thanks to the availability of internet streaming services. According to a 2017 study by Ailawadi and Farris, customers' willingness to pay for movie tickets has decreased as a result of the availability of internet streaming services. According to the study, people are more inclined to select an online platform if the movie they want to view is offered both in theatres and online. Additionally, if a movie ticket costs more, customers are more inclined to select the growth of OTT platforms has altered audience behavior in addition to having an effect on movie theatre attendance and income streams. According to a McKinsey & Company (2021) report, the pandemic has expedited the shift to digital platforms, with many customers turning to internet streaming services as their main source of entertainment. According to the report, consumers are becoming more and more willing to pay for memberships to several OTT platforms in order to access a variety of content, Online platform. Changes in content consumption habits have also been brought on by the rising popularity of OTT platforms.

According to a Nielsen (2020) survey, the pandemic has increased people's interest in older films and television programmes. Many of these customers are now turning to online channels to get this content. According to the report, all ten of the most popular films streamedin the US during the pandemic's early months were produced before 2017.

Methodology

This part of the research paper presents the methods and the procedure that was applied to complete the research work. This includes research design, research questions, research objectives and methodology.

This research is exploratory research design in nature. This research explains The Impact Of OTT Platforms on the Movie Theatre.This research design is both qualitative and exploratory in nature and it was adopted for the study in survey with structured questionnaire with both closed and open – ended questions and focus groups. Not only that about this topic some scholars observations and point of view was already there as well as few articles has been already published over this topic so this research has not only focused upon the survey and focus group method but also put some articles review and explained their observations.

The research is qualitative and exploratory in nature .For this study the survey and focus group methodology and article reviews has been adopted. This survey has been done on random sampling of mostly students with 90 samples and 15 self employed person from under 18 to 26 years of age. In which the students were from different school, college, university of West Bengal were involved. And the two focus groups were formed in the locality near Barasat, one was with 10 students of MA journalism students from school of Media and communication, and another one was with 25 Government job aspirants.

Tools are basically two types of, one is primary tools and another one is secondary tools. For this research it's both using primary tools and secondary tools like online surveys, focus groups and other than that few data were collected through secondary tools like Google scholars, articles already published on this topic etc. Because for this research only few data was available online that was mostly from Google, those used to explain the review of literature of the study. The method used in this research is mostly the students and self employed persons of West Bengal. They're all from under 18 to 26 years of age group .The total population comprised of 125 students and 15 self employed persons are a part of this research methodology.

The data of the study was collected through the Survey Questionnaire and Focus group discussions .A total number of 104 copies of questionnaire was distributed through Hand printed survey forms within West Bengal. This survey was basically based on Simple Random Sampling method and the filled up copies and recordings data was collected from the common people. Because there was some articles about this topic was already there so by article review methods their opinion and observation was firmly presented by this method to give some additional input.

Result Analysis

In this segment the public opinion and articles reviews result as we as ratio has been shown what people accurately prefer, like is it Movie Theatre or OTT platform. According to several studies and publications the rise of Over-The-Top which is known as OTT platform as well , which had clearly created a huge impact on the movie business and revenue model as well as box office collection and not only that it also affected the moviegoing pattern. So by using these OTT platforms a variety of movies and Television shows is easily accessible from any place by the users or subscribers. So the rise of these Platforms, as a result the behavioral pattern of content consumption has been really changed a lot, there's so many options and tons of Entertainment shows available over there for any consumers that they're feeling it more convenient to watch movies over OTT rather than make time in their busy schedules to go for the theatres to enjoy the same movie. According to the Deloitte analysis after the advent and development of the OTT platform services a new trend has been pop up and since 2002; a continuous downfall in the numbers of the moviegoers has been clearly seen. Because of the rise of OTT platforms the box office collection was falling down worldwide day by day. Like in 2018, the worldwide box office collection was $43.1 billion and after one year in 2019 it made $42.5 billion. And on the other side, the OTT platforms have been consistently increasing their revenue. Like for a instance, in 2018 up to $15.8 billion and in 2019 more than $20.2 billion amount was generated by the world's one of the most leading OTT platform Netflix.

According to a PWC survey it has been found out that arround 46% people doesn't want to go out and watch a movie in the Movie theatre , rather than they just prefer it to enjoy over their homes comfortably. So in few years the consumers behavior and approach towards their consuming pattern has been drastically changed. So it's now playing a huge role over the movie business as well as it created a positive impact over the entertainment industry as well. So in the present scenario it has been aimed by a huge number of people that the popularity of the movies somehow grows with the rise of these OTT Platforms. Because of these Over The Top mediums people has that easy accessibility over the tons of movies available on these platforms that slowly but gradually resulted towards the increasing pattern of the public knowledge as we as their interest in terms of that particular movies.

As a result, that particular movie got more popularity. It's not only beneficial for the commercial and big budget movie producers but it created a path for those independent filmmakers who wants to showcase their work to the larger spectrum and reach as well as connect to the large number of audiences. And by this the OTT platform promotes various unique and original and realistic topics. So by changing the consumption pattern by these OTT Platforms, it creates a notable impact over the movie business. By the advent of these Over-The-Top mediums now audience got two types of options that gives them different types of watching experience. So one is , to be at home and comfortably watch what they wants to consume in their own space and another one is to travel to the theatre and enjoy the movie in a different ambience. But they don't have to wait for the earlier times as they used to wait for the CD or DVD releases or for the world TV premieres those who didn't watch that particular movie over any theatre or multiplexes. But nowadays OTT services made it easy Entertain themselves by varieties platforms available over there like Disney+ Hotstar , Amazon Prime Video and Netflix those becomes very popular within these short periods of times. So basically by these platforms audience and consumers can enjoy whatever they want to watch or stream interesting of movies or TV shows in their cozy spaces.

These were the analysis of the survey questions those had been asked to know the public opinion about this study:

Gender plays a basic role in the society. For my dissertation survey it's important to know and show others about the percentage of male, female and other gender's percentage to clearly show the survey results. This will give a vast point of view about my dissertation survey. In this survey I got responses from 41.3% female and 58.7% male.

Out of the 104 responses , 3.8% responses were from under 18 years people , 8.7% responses were from 18 to 20 years old people, 34.6% were from 20 to 22 years old people , 37.5% were from 22 to 24 years old people , and 15.4% were from 24 to 26 years old people.

Out of 104 respondents 79.8% is student , 2.5% is business man , 9.6% is self employed , 4.5% is industry professional ,2% is teacher, 1.6% engineer .

To do a survey educational qualifications ratio of respondents is one of the most important things to know. Out of 104 responses 8.7% is qualified as a higher secondary student, 51.9% is undergraduate, 34.6% is postgraduate, and 8.7% is from other category.

1. **How often would you go to watch a movie over a theatre?**

   This shows that how often people go for a movie theatre for theatrical experience. Out of 104 respondents 19.2% people regularly watch movies in theatres , 26.9% people occasionally watch movies over a theatre and 53.8% people not really go for any movie theatre, they would like to watch it in home.

2. **What aspects of the movie theater experience do you value the most?**

   This segment shows that for what are the reason people prefer to go for a movie theatre. Out of 104 respondents 34% answered that they like the Large screen and immersive audio , 32% people prefer it for the theatres Atmosphere and ambiance , 21% prefer it for the Exclusive early releases , 7% answered that they're go for it just for Social outing with friends or family , 6% answered that they prefer it for the Popcorn and concessions.

3. **Do you prefer watching OTT channels or not?**

   This segment shows whether people prefer to watch OTT content or they're not that much interested into it. 60% people answered that they prefer watching OTT shows , 30% people answered that sometimes they prefer it and sometimes not and 10% people answered that they are not at all prefer watching OTT content.

4. **Which OTT platforms do you subscribe to or use regularly?**

   This question shows how many people subscribed these popular OTT channels. 35% people answered that they had subscribed all these channels , 33% people subscribed for Netflix and Amazon Prime Video , 23% people only subscribed for Disney+ Hotstar, 5% people subscribed for Hulu and HBO Max , 4% people subscribed for Apple TV .

5. **How many OTT channels had you subscribed currently?**

   This segment shows how many OTT channels people have subscribed to see the OTT channels inclinations towards them.

   Out of 104 respondents 71.2% people answered that they had

subscribed more than 5 OTT channels , 26% people answered that they had subscribed 3 OTT Platforms, 1.8% people mentioned that they had subscribed 2 OTT channels and 1% people answered that they haven't been subscribed any OTT channels so far.

6. **Do you think that OTT makes more relatable and interesting content?**

This segment shows that what people think about OTT platform's Content, like us it more relatable than movies or not. Out of 104 respondents 45% answered yes, 35% answered somewhat yes and 20% answered no.

7. **How often did you visit movie theaters before the COVID-19 pandemic (pre-2020)?**

This segment explains that before covid - 19 and lockdown how many people used to go for the theatrical experience.

Out of 104 respondents 45% answered that they Frequently go for a movie theatre like More than once a month before pandemic happens, 38% answered that they Occasionally go for movie theatres like Once a month or less before covid, 12% answered that they Rarely go for the theatrical experience like few times a year and other 5% answered that they Never gone to any movie theatre to enjoy a movie.

8. **According is to you what's more convenient?**

This question shows the opinion of people that According to them what's more convenient between watching a movie over theatre and enjoying the content of OTT platforms in homes. Out of 104 respondents 67.3% people answered that watching content over OTT Platforms is more convenient , 17.3% said that they're okay with both OTT and movie theatres like both are convincing in their own ways , and 15.4% people thinks that they consider it more convenient to watch a movie over any theatre or multiplexes.

9. **Do you think that one day OTT can replace movie theatres?**

This segment shows people's assumptions over the future of OTT platform. Like is it has that capability to replace movie theatres in near future or not. Out of 104 respondents 58.7%people thinks that one day it'll replace movie theatres , 33.7% people thinks that with the growth of OTT Platforms movie theatres also will be there and other 4.8% people thinks that movie theatres can never ever

replaced by OTT platforms.

10. **Do you prefer watching a movie over theatre or enjoying a movie at home?**

This question shows the public opinion about whether people prefer to watch movie over theatre or OTT Platforms.

Out of 104 respondents 46.20% people answered that they prefer watching movie over home , 28% people enjoy watching a movie over theatre , 25.8% people prefer both movie theatre and OTT Platforms depending upon their mood.

11. **Approximately how many times in a year you visit a movie theatre?**

This segment shows that craze within people to go for a movie theatre. Out of 104 respondents 40% people answered that they hardly go for a movie theatre for theatrical experience, 35% people said that they go for a movie theatre like occasionally about 2 to 3 times and 25% people answered that they go for movie theatres uncountable times like in every two to three months they visit movie theatres or multiplexes.

12. **Do you believe that movie theaters will continue to be a relevant entertainment option in the future despite the rise of OTT platforms?**

This question shows the people's opinion about what they think that OTT Platforms rise going to be effect upon movie theatres. 29.3% people thinks that yes it'll be still relevant , 17% people think that maybe because they're not sure about it , and other 46.3% people thinks that it'll not be as relevant as earlier times with the growth of OTT Platforms.

13. **Rate the theatrical experience between 1 to 10.**

This question shows that how much rating people are giving to their theatrical experience. Out of 104 respondents 39% people rate it 5 out of 10 , 27% people rate it 7 out of 10 , % people rate it 8 out of 10 , 18% people rate it 9 out of 10 and other 16% people rate it 10 out of 10.

14. **Give rating between 1 to 10 according to the experience to watch a movie over any OTT platforms.**

This segment shows that how much people like the experience to watch a movie over any OTT platforms. Out of 104 respondents

16.2% people gave a rating of 6 out of 10 , 29 % people gave a rating of 8 out of 10 , 34% people gave it 9 out of 10 and other 20.8% people rated it 10 out of 10.

Convenience: OTT platform allows their users to stream movies and any kind of television shows from anywhere at any time To watch a movie they don't need to make time within their busy schedules to go to a theatre to watch a movie.

Variety: OTT platform serves as well as provides a vast selection of content, including unique films and series that would not be shown in theatres. Nowadays to keep people's convenient in mind many mainstream movies are also releasing over the OTT platforms to give them the first day first show like experience and not left out from others who doesn't have that facilities to go for any movie theatres.

Cost: Watching movies on an OTT platform is typically less expensive than purchasing a cinema ticket, making it a more appealing choice for viewers. Because in one movie ticket people can only watch that particular movie but taking any OTT channel's subscription people have the eligibility to consume end numbers of content over that platform.

Flexibility: OTT platforms give users more freedom and control over their viewing experience by enabling them to pause, rewind, and fast-forward through movies. Not only because of these reasons but also the box office earnings of big studios have shown how much OTT platform services have influenced the entertainment industry and oppressed over the moviegoing.

In 2020 because of the pandemic, as a result of it that caused 71% reduction in global box office revenue is a fact which is presented according to the Motion Picture Association which is known as MPA. In MPA 2020 Theatrical and Home Entertainment Market Environment study showed the data about it where it has been clearly seen that in 2020 the COVID-19 and the pandemic situation lead to 71% depletion in global box office revenue. In spite of that, these over the top platforms, which include digital home entertainment as well, had increased their revenue of 23% during the exact same time span. So it's clearly showed how the rise of Over-The-Top platforms has hugely affected people's moviegoing ritual which has been going on for like ages.

Conclusion

So based on the current scenario the calculation is, that by 2024 India will achieve 1 Billion OTT users. With exchange of 23,758 crores Viacom18 bought the OTT streaming rights of IPL In 2020. 20 billion revenue was generated by the OTT industry In 2020 and 31 Billion was generated by the same industry as well in 2021.

So by the end of next year which is 2024 experts are expecting the earning of more than 46 Billion from this Over The Top industry that's basically depending on the current performance of OTT platforms in India only. In 2020 around 48% growth already had been shown by the Online gaming platforms. So it's assuming that by the end of 2024 780 Billion market must be achieved by the Digital Media Market in India. In current situation with 29% users , Disney+hotstar is the one of the most hyped as well as biggest and popular OTT platform in India. Its being guessing that more than 70 million subscribers will take and pay for the subscription charges to subscribe and enjoy their preferable OTT Platforms By the end of 2024.

It's obvious that the OTT platforms are quite cheaper than the Movie theatres or multiplexes. Any OTT platforms average cost of the monthly subscription is around 149 to 199 rupees in India. On the other hand, the cost of a single ticket in multiplex starts from 249/- in small cities. So it's quite natural that people found the ott platforms more cost-effective as well as beneficial. OTT is promoting promising actors like most of time people can see them those are not from any film background as if they're representing the commoners . Most of the time it has been noticed that because of the star kids and established actors they're not getting chance to act despite being having the stamina and potential to act flawlessly. So by these kinds of OTT Platforms they're getting that opportunity to showcase their talent and most numbers of users want to see these types of deserving actors.

Now here comes the most important part that is attention span. Attention span is something that is really important to consume any kind of content thoroughly. Specially after the easy availability and acciciblity of social media within people the attention span of humans are slowly decreasing because there's always some interesting content coming up every minute and if they fail to find it they feel bored. OTT is giving a thrill to the audience and they feel interested throughout the show. So in

the Movie theatre it's next to impossible to change what they're watching in the middle of the Movie even if they're bore or irritated by that piece of content ,on the other hand if somebody doesn't like the content in OTT then he / she can change it immediately, So people are finding it more convenient.

The biggest advantage that people talked about OTT is it gives people the flexibility to watch any sort of content at any point time from anyplace and not only that while doing any kind of chores and travelling also they can entertain themselves. Working professionals who do not have enough time to watch movies over theatres mostly they find it favorable because they can watch it at any time and no matter where they're. So OTT has the advantage in terms of time duration. Mostly the average duration of any web series is like seven to nine hours, whereas the average duration for any movie is about two to three hours. So it's clear among people that OTT can deliver the content in a more detailed way as well as it gives more clear vision about the topic in comparison to theatre movies.

Everyone one believes that the Content is the king irrespective of any platforms and it's became the universal truth that if the content is not wholesome then nobody is going to watch it ,whether there is popular star cast , mesmerizing locations or soothing music . In the past few years, OTT has pulled off content that is any commoner can easily relate it with them, and extreme as well as entertaining. On the other hand, Bollywood is still making the same kind of old movies or bad copies of original content from different regional movies and not only that the portrayal of those remake movies also not up to the mark.

Yes in recent times OTT is dominating the entertainment industry but if they want to hold on this position for the longest time then OTT platform needs to do a lot of hard work. Like the Online streaming platforms requires to keep delivering and making amazing content. Right now OTT is doing their job to entertain people quite beautifully but some content creators are promoting violence and nudity which will not acceptable to a large audience.3d and 5d movies are the future of entertainment and enjoying them at home is not that much interesting. And that will always be the plus point for cinemas in Theatre vs OTT fight. So OTT needs to buckle up and launch some kind of new as well as unique content that can give it a great pull against the 3d and 5d movies.

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Formulating New Dynamics of Interaction between Media, Culture and Audiences in the Virtual World

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Abstract

VWs (virtual worlds) are in their entirety built-in hyperreal environments with individuals connected in real time over an information superhighway (Bartle, 2004; Bell, 2008). As the line between real and virtual blurs in VWs, new levels of creativity emerge on the World Wide Web. This culminates in a race to create a perfect virtual environment for the public.

VWs have become the gateway to the future and conglomerates such as NVIDIA Corp, Linden Lab, Metaverse, Microsoft, and Electronic Arts among others are involved in creating such e-environments. This has fundamentally altered how we communicate using technology, ushering in the "information Panopticon" future (Zuboff, 2001).

The goal of this study is to investigate the dynamics of interaction between media, culture, and audiences in Virtual Reality (VR) enterprises from the perspective of an American hegemony. This study formulates new dynamics in American VWs that influence the social, historical, economic, and political context that directly impacts the corporeal world.

Keywords: Virtual worlds (VWs), Virtual Reality (VR), Metaverse, power discourse, hyperreality.

Introduction

The VR industry has wide uses and applications for multiple scenarios and encompasses VR (virtual reality), AR (augmented reality), MR (mixed reality), XR (extended reality), and digital twin technologies (Singla et al., 2023). Using electronic gadgets as a tool to enter the "other" domain and "become virtual" is a very basic way to

explain VWs. To explain it in terms of social online interaction, the process of associating power-driven social, cultural, and economic connections within predetermined areas is unique to VWs. (Egliston & Carter, 2021).

Recent technological developments indicate growing speculation towards a new era of social interaction and communication where portable VR headsets, AR specs, haptic gloves, and full-body VR gears are used to access VWs. Currently, US Meta Platform's CEO Mark Zuckerberg prescribes the Metaverse to be an ensemble that comprises various distinct VWs allowing users to play games, engage in work, purchase things, hang out with friends, view movies, visit live concerts, and socialize with others (Mac et al., 2022). The mere concept of Meta's Metaverse remains to be formulated in future.

Expanding on Bosworth & Clegg's (2021) definition of the Metaverse, the 3-D rendered VW is a virtual environment where people interact, develop, and explore business ventures with others who may or may not share the same "physical position" as them in reality. A fast connection and a server to handle thousands of subsequent data streams from millions of users are two examples of 19th-century technology restrictions that do not exist today. This has significantly accelerated the VR business.

British developers Roy Trubshaw & Richard Bartle invented the first-ever online adventure game based on text, Multi-User Dungeon (MUD) in 1978. VWs are classified into two categories through their functions (Papagiannidis et al., 2010). The first is MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing games) which exhibits specific rules, regulations, and limitations on activities and dialogues in-game. Examples include games such as Fortnite, Roblox, Niantic Labs' Pokémon Go, World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy, Lord of the Rings, and The Sims Online. The other category demonstrates social involvement in a virtual setting where interactions are unbarred through limitations in dialogue or virtual space. Second Life, There, Active World, Somnium Space, Altspace VR, and Decentraland are some existing VWs. People are allowed to express themselves freely through a variety of actions and conversations.

VWs display a convergence between both categories so far. They rely on the realistic immersion of the self into a new or replicated

environment generating fresh user experiences. Utoyo et al. (2022) have laid down the eight building blocks of VWs, namely,- hardware, software (virtual platform), networking, computing power, interchange standards and tools, payments, content services and assets, and business behaviour.

An analysis of the top VR companies worldwide revealed that the industry is dominated by North American companies with Europe not far behind. (Software Testing Help, 2023). Hence, the rhetoric on American hegemony of markets is presented both economically as well as on the social plane.

Literature Review

In the available literature review of the last two decades, there are three chains of reasoning presented, - the dominant, alternative, and the neutral vista. The dominant vista suggests that VWs will simply exist as a new piece of tech available to corporations and governments, besides the already existing tech. They will be used to train and educate individuals who can afford it. This is a school of thought attributed to Pasfield-Neofitou et al. (2015); Petter et al. (2018); Chamok et al. (2020); Lin et al. (2022); Fajar et al. (2022); Dahan et al. (2022); Koles & Nagy (2014); Duca et al. (2012); and Njoku et al. (2022).

The alternative vista suggests that whatever activity we engage in the real world will be substituted by similar virtual actions as seen in movies, - Ready Player One (2018), and Gamer (2009). Singla et al. (2023); Lifton & Paradiso (2009); and Chong et al. (2020) have prescribed this view.

Bartle (2003) takes a more neutral stance and leaves ethics and morals to VW designers. Zhang et al. (2023) resist the temptation to classify VWs as simply good or bad. Farhi et al. (2023) emphasize how it will be a haven for advertisers and marketers.

Aided by the chronicled revolutions in technology, cyber-prophet Marshall McLuhan composed The Gutenberg Galaxy (1962) and Understanding Media (1964). Building on Harold A. Innis' book "The Bias of Communication" (1951), he prophesied a "nightmarish global village" based on advancements in technology and communications in electronic media. This newly structured society, he claimed, was consistently monitored and governed by a centralized elite authority which has a parallel in J. Bentham's "Panopticon" and S. Zuboff's

"information Panopticon". It is acknowledged that VW user experiences always take place in a setting that the architects carefully track and record.

Present research on VWs is provided from multiple angles presenting them to be a boon as well as a bane. In both conditions, communication surveillance generates enough user data for VWs to become the next symbol of the economy for private entities. The journals on VWs have been categorized into seven groups in this paper, - VW definitions and models, construction of VW identity, technological configurations, branding and marketing in 3-D space, education through recreation in virtual spaces, research on avatars and Second Life (SL), and the impact of VW on children. This paper only discusses the groups that fall under its purview.

Radaev (2023) focuses on the platform economy and market capitalization through VWs. He developed such theories from ideas of total surveillance from J. Bentham's "Panopticon" and P.M Foucault's "Power Discourse". It is noted that the virtual social interaction among users generates dynamics of community power formed through inclusion, and not seclusion. Inclusion results from individuals with disparate ideologies and cultures coexisting and interacting in similar cyberspaces. Hence, Foucauldian ideas of prohibition, the dialectics between sanity and insanity, and the desire for truth are given a new interpretation in the customized environment where each user becomes a centre of information and knowledge. As a result, when VW users communicate with one another, they individually become a centre of power, advancing discourse.

Helmer & Light (2007), Gottschalk (2010), and Pighin & Savorgnan (2010) highlight avatar interaction in Second Life (SL), a VW platform. The effects of VW on users' micro- and macro-identities have been the subject of a significant amount of research. However, there is little insight into how American enterprises manage information and communication as a result of VW's incorporation into modern society.

Methodology

The present research is the result of a meta-analysis of over 40 studies conducted between 2000 and 2023, and it employs an inductive method that combines distinct patterns and evidence. In addition, websites and videos have been cited wherever necessary.

Discussion

According to functional displacement in media theories, when a new medium of communication emerges, it changes or replaces the roles of an old medium (Lee & Leung, 2008). Print media changed with the introduction of radio just as TV transformed radio. Finally, the Internet has provided media convergence by soliciting as a sole platform to engage with all other types of media. AI, VW, and VR tech are the next-gen evolution of the Internet categorized as Web 3.0 (Hendler, 2009). En route is VW's potential to progressively replace conventional social networking sites (Cheng et al., 2022).

A virtual environment promises not to let users down in terms of anticipation and involves forging a utopian world free from the complexities and disappointments in real life. Combining this with VR tech, the user gets transported into a fantasy world customizable to the specific likes and dislikes of the user. Complete control, or rather, the illusion of complete control is given to the user (Hobbs et al., 2010). Gottschalk (2010) discusses how VWs provide us with a chance to fulfil "unfulfilled ego demands".

Illusion is insinuated since gatekeepers and moderators control the entire platform architecture. As an example, the user could fall from a cliff or dive from a plane and die, create virtual communities, and enter into virtual relationships with another user. NPCs or Non-playable characters serve as guides to specific circumstances or events and are programmed to deliver in-game tutorials. According to Hazan (2010), this manufactured world of illusion is so appealing and addictive that it may cyber-syndrome. It is expected to then inquire as to what distinguishes VW artwork.

Aristotle's theory on mimesis or art as an imitation of reality is redefined in the context of VW artwork. It is argued that such architecture which includes immersive gaming experiences, museums, embassies, galleries, brand specific islands (e.g.: Nikeland in SL) ceases to just be a copy of reality. They offer a universe that, to the users, seems more real than the physical world. A duality manifests between the digital and physical planes of existence engaging in a deconstructive scrutiny. Understanding the virtual is redefined as that which is simply not real. However, a VW is a world on its own. It is laden with sign-signifier systems which occur uniquely, or only in VWs. New meaning

is embedded into that which already exists on the physical plane. The Forbidden City (Beijing, China), the 3D version of Van Gogh's Starry Night, the Roman auditorium Interamnia (Teramo, Italy), and others have been virtually recreated.

An identity crisis develops when the user identifies himself with the virtual avatar that he/she creates (Gottschalk, 2010). Avatar construction, identity, and attachment have been researched by Taylor (2002), Yee et al. (2011), Powers (2003), and Sung & Moon (2011). They highlight the intensification of emotions and feelings that occur through user fixation on avatars and the virtual environment. Interaction through avatars changes user perspectives as Gottschalk (2010) puts it. This interaction cannot be termed as "simply real" or "simply virtual". Jean Baudrillard (1981) refers to this as a "hyper-real environment" where the real and virtual become difficult to diagnose (Hancock, 1999).

The cave allegory presented by Plato may be envisaged in this context where prisoners in a cave watch shadows cast by moving objects outside on the cave wall. Their heads are fixed so that they do not turn around and glance at the real world. They perceive shadows on the cave wall to be actual. VW mimics this effect. A new aesthetic norm is created whereby the VW becomes more real to the users than the real world since they are completely wrapped in their personalized worlds.

VWs can target specific audiences to achieve desired goals and objectives. Contrary to this, users can engage with other avatars according to their demands. This virtual social engagement produces communities in VWs (Ensslin & Muse, 2011). Fox (2004) states that VWs make it possible to create "imagined communities", where users are neither limited by time nor space. Such a large user base is sometimes utilized to further political goals. Gottschalk (2010) gives instances of John Kerry, Sarah Palin, Barrack Obama, and Dick Chesney using SL to target the public and influence voting patterns.

Propaganda can be spread easily through VWs. They start influencing history by constructing narratives that modify the past, create the present, and influence the future with AI-generated content by chatbots such as Google's Bard, Open AI's DALL-E and Chat GPT. This is the reason Hollywood studios and US actors' unions are at odds over utilizing AI to create "digital twins" of performers, as reported

by multiple newspapers on July 2023 (Wall Street Journal, Telegraph, and TOI). Entertainers worldwide are enraged at how AI uses original artwork of artists to create replicas which are then being circulated on the Internet by everyone.

Digital outrage and conflict results, and, if not handled with empathy leads to an increase in bigotry, sexism, and zealotry. A recent example is the Barbenhemier conflict in social media (Kotaku, 2023). This experience is comparable to VWs, where fan-made pop culture groups are supposed to engage under particular parameters to disengage stereotypic illustrations. A VW event, "Astronomical", featuring a Fortnite-hosted online psychedelic performance attracted over 27 million gamers (Treese, 2020). American hip-hop artist, Travis Scott appeared as a giant-like avatar in this live event. It is realized that be it the positive or negative aspects of Metaverses at play, a hedonistic VW is built to challenge the users' reality.

VWs are tools of immense power and potential. However, when misused it can decapitate entire societies or cultures. Meta's corporate strategies of merging and acquiring foster a prospective hegemony over future VW enterprises. It is envisaged that the rest of the world needs to counter the American tech advancements by corporations such as Meta, SL, Nvidia, or EA.

American monopoly enunciates a new dialectic in the Centre-Periphery rhetoric. The U.S. is at the hedonistic centre creating a dominant homogenized language and culture while the rest of the world is at the Periphery. Since almost all VWs are American-owned, they can easily regulate the virtual environment by manipulating individual desires through ads and requirements that can change an individual's conception of what the person needs or how he/she portrays himself. American cyberspace catapulted by the marketing of virtual commodities for profit generates an American oligopoly of VWs (Du Toit & Swer 2021). This leads to the creation of an American experience arbitrated through technology.

The business models of Meta and Second Life (SL) are analyzed to observe their impact on society. Meta's business model can be likened to theories of Bentham's Panopticon, where individuals are transparent as well as contingent on observation. Theorist Shoshanna Zuboff terms this "information Panopticon". Meta's Zuckerberg

himself states that "privacy is no longer a social norm" (Blank et al., 2014). Non-verbal communication such as prosodic, paralinguistic, and indexical reflexes are recorded through VR tech that provides data and information instantaneously to advertisers and marketers. Body and eye movement, emotional states, and bio-data such as heartbeat and temperature change are easily registered on haptic gloves and V.R. headsets. The exploitation of such data by private entities is an issue. This is further observed in the social media age where data leaks and privacy concerns are frequent concerns of the user. Philip Rosedale of SL considers that the Metaverse could become "an existential threat" if they decided to adopt the Facebook model to its metaverse (Ciancio, 2022). Contrasting Meta's Metaverse to Linden Labs' Second Life is inconclusive because Meta is not scheduled to be released for another ten or more years.

At present, Meta owns Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Their user base worldwide is represented by about 4 billion inhabitants using one Meta platform (Shvartsman, 2023). With such a wide user base at Meta's disposal, Meta might likely force a user conversion with incentives when the Metaverse becomes a reality. Users would be lured into a world dominated by American interests.

Conclusion

VWs make daily tasks simpler for the aged, invalids, and crippled. User diversity can promote cultural acceptance as well as dissonance. This paper suggests further research paradigms be done on concepts previously theorized concerning VWs. In light of the potential predominance of VWs generated by American transnationals, a regulatory structure is required.

Accepting that communication originating in cyberspace is likely to impact users' cognitive skills, it remains to be seen if VWs will be a utopia or an impediment depending on how they are used or misused (Nisiotis, et al., 2020; Bainbridge, 2008). This ambiguity allows innovative study paradigms to incorporate cognitive aesthetics and machine learning, especially when cyberspace in VWs is turned into cyber public spaces, which facilitates the new dynamics of interaction between VWs and users.

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"I think we won't be able to understand the operations of trans-phobia …": Critiquing through "The Danish Girl" and "Chandigarh Kare Ashiqui" How Stereotypes of Gender are Challenged

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Abstract

This paper attempts to contend the fact that trans people experience transphobia in multifarious forms. This includes bullying and discriminatory treatment in schools, harassment and physical/sexual assault, negligence and rejection from families, colleagues in the workplace and friends. Tackling transphobia must be a priority. It appears that large sections of the British population hold negative and discriminatory views towards trans people, though there is evidence of positive change.

The paper seeks to focus on the issue that transphobia, which is the prejudice individuals hold against the transgenders, can be reduced on increasing support for equality and accommodation policies for transgenders. These policies are often met with controversy and resistance due to the prevalence of transphobia in society. The paper hopes to explore that personal interaction (with transgender friends, colleagues, or acquaintances) and para-social contact (transgender celebrities, media figures, or social media influences) can increase support for transgender rights.

The concept of gender has been going under sea change in our society. New ways of struggles are being enacted everywhere in our society for

the achievement of the right to live differently which a major section of the society is not ready to accept. With the implementation of laws in favour of transgenders, they have gained ground to live and voice their own selves with dignity in our society. The concept of transgender has now become a more acceptable form of living in the society.

The argument can be better contextualized in the films named "The Danish Girl" and "Chandigarh Kare Ashiqui" which have relevant implications that it is a timely need to bring out to the forefront the voices of the marginalised through different media. The paper intends to articulate the angsts and pangs of two transwomen represented in the aforementioned films.

The paper shall resonate with implications that transgenders convincingly claim and forward their transgender identities amidst various obstacles in our society. They boldly defy the public outcry, social discriminations, traditional prejudices and such other social norms. Doing so, they are somewhere able to tackle their psychological vulnerability so much so that they finally decide to choose a secured space from their conventional/traditional past to celebrate and assert their gender identity.

Keywords: transgender, films, trans-phobia, sexual violence, gender.

"I think we won't be able to understand the operations of trans-phobia...": Critiquing through The Danish Girl and Romance in Chandigarh how stereotypes of Gender are challenged

Introduction

According to *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* the word 'transgender' means "describing or relating to people whose gender identity does not match the sex they were said to have at birth." The transgender sees his own biological gender as a blunder of God and feels he is a woman trapped inside the body of a man. The gender identity of a transgender man is not consistent with his behaviour that is totally effeminate. It is not just men who are transgender as there are women who feel they are men trapped inside the bodies of women. Transgender people are assigned a sex at their time of birth, but they grow up dissatisfied with their sex believing themselves to be a person of the opposite sex. With the hope to overcome their forced societal discomfort they continuously experience physical and psychological challenges from

the world in general and the chosen society in particular. A human being gradually grows through the struggles that he/she faces on being unable to subscribe oneself to the socially constructed idea of gender. A transgender has to either endure to or choose pertinent ways to defy the structured ways of alienation, segregation, isolation etc.

Stringent ways of discriminating transgenders from the other categories of human beings is an ongoing practice. They do not receive the necessary share of awareness to stop themselves from becoming victims of deadly diseases across the world. According to US Transgender Survey conducted in the year 2015 the rate of HIV infection among transgender people was five times higher than the general population. The Survey also revealed that 40 percent of transgender people tried to commit suicide at some point of time in their lives.

Transgenders are globally known by different names such as hijras, female husbands, berdache, sambian boys, Fa'afafine, sworn virgins, kotoey etc. In India they are given varieties of local names like hijra, kinnaur, kothi, khusras, iravanis, jogtas, jogappas, shiv shaktis etc. However, the then society displayed in the Hindu religious texts like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* did not traumatise the transgendered people. Arjuna had to take the form of transgender in the name of Brihannala and it was thought as a better disguise to spend his banishment. The Hindu devotees also accepted the transgender gods since long past. Even during the Mughal period, the transgender people played important roles in society. They used to perform the duty of guards in courtyards. With the coming of the British rule the transgenders were criminalised gradually. British introduced the Section 377 of Indian Penal Code in 1860 where homosexuality was criminalised and transgenders were also seen as criminal elements. Thereafter in the society they became marginalised. They did not get any facilities from the government. They began to face social discrimination, governmental deprivation, health hazards rendering their lives miserable. Naturally they became victims of suicidal tendency, drug addicts and such other traumatic situations which lead them to depression.

Recently in 2014 the Supreme court of India has ordered the government to extend all facilities to the transgenders. According to that all state governments of India are working to improve the livfe nad standards of the lives of transgender people. In India there was no system of counting the total number of transgender people. For legal

recognition of the transgenders, we see many countries across the world have passed laws in favour of the transgenders. In 2012 Argentina passed a law stating that anyone with and above age 18 can decide gender identity and can wish to go for gender reassignment surgery. Following Argentina Columbia, Denmark, Ireland, Malta and other countries attempted to eradicate barriers in the way of legal recognition.

Another change that has come to familiarise the transgenders is the introduction of the discipline Gender Studies in different universities and colleges across the world. It is to create awareness among the young ones about the transgenders and thereby making them socially more acceptable. Gender awareness is highly being recommended as a course for the learners in order to build a good society for us all. Beside this positive progress there are countries which still criminalise the transgenders. This paper is aimed at exposing the acceptability of the transgenders through the critical and representational analysis of two films *The Danish Girl* (2015) directed by Tom Hooper and *Chandigarh Kare Ashiqui* (2021) directed by Abhishek Kapoor.

Literature Review

A literature review on the topic of challenging gender stereotypes through films like *The Danish Girl* and *Romance in Chandigarh* can provide valuable insights into how popular culture contributes to reshaping societal perceptions of gender identity and expression. This review will explore existing research, theories, and discussions related to the portrayal of gender stereotypes in these films and their potential to challenge conventional norms. Below is a structured literature review for your paper:

This literature review delves into the portrayal of gender stereotypes and their subversion in two distinct cinematic narratives: *The Danish Girl* and *Romance in Chandigarh*. These films provide a unique lens through which to critically examine how popular culture can challenge traditional perceptions of gender and contribute to a broader conversation about identity and expression.

Gender stereotypes have long been a staple of cinematic storytelling, often perpetuating narrow and limiting views of masculinity and femininity. This section will explore the historical context of gender stereotypes in film, discussing their origins, evolution, and their

pervasive influence on societal perceptions of gender roles.

Methodology

In trying to analyse, the challenges, oppositions, difficulties experienced generally by every transgender the paper will focus on the theoretical idea of the Other, the marginalised, as has been discussed by Spivak and other thinkers of the trend. The paper shall then communicate through pertinent references the reality where the transgenders journey from being victims of the violence towards becoming participants of the world order where they might gradually receive approval and acceptability. In order to do so there shall be references to Beauvoir's idea of the mind and body dichotomy. The paper shall finally review the life of the survivors of this stereotyped world order through the suitable instances from the aforementioned films.

This paper will explore theoretical frameworks such as Judith Butler's concept of performativity and its relevance to understanding how gender is portrayed and challenged in these films. It will also discuss the idea of queer cinema and its role in deconstructing conventional gender norms.

Examining the reception of these films by audiences and critics is crucial to understanding their potential to challenge gender stereotypes. This section will review audience reactions, critical reviews, and the broader social impact of these films in terms of generating discussions about gender and identity.

Analysis

Chandigarh Kare Ashiqui (2021) is a film depicting and representing the love journey of a trans woman called Maanvi. She is the only child of her parents. She has already made a journey from Manu to Maanvi when the film starts. As a transwoman her establishment is already over but what we see is her challenges and acceptance in the end of the film. As regards to her family her parents are apparently happy with her transformation. The first scene of dialogue with her father shows that the gentleman instead of subscribing himself to the constructed notion of gender and performance, supports Maanvi in her psychosocial struggle. The audience at this juncture is able to see Maanvi to be battling hard to battle with the idea of the body as socially constructed. Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* (1949) suggested that cultural practices and processes

have a significant role in constructing and giving shape to the body. But later when we see the conversation with her mother while her father is hospitalised due to severe heart attack, we understand that in the inside her parents were suffering with the happenings in the life of Maanvi. Maanvi is liked always to be addressed as their daughter while her mother addresses her as son she protested and makes her mother to rectify that she is always their daughter.

Romance in Chandigarh offers a contemporary perspective on the challenges of navigating gender identity and sexuality within the context of Indian cinema. This section will discuss the film's approach to gender stereotypes in the Indian cultural context and its potential to influence societal perceptions of gender and relationships.

Regarding her career and love affair she is a successful woman. As an expert demanding zumba teacher she teaches or delivers zumba classes to the clients who come to the established gymnastics centre owned by Manu Munjal. Nobody doubts her trans character. She gives no iota of doubt regarding her body and mind to anybody to find her trans character. Her body attracts every man. Within a short time she got well acquainted with Manu Munjal and Manu Munjal fell in love with her. All these are ignorance is happiness as Maanvi never told him about her transformation. Manu makes love with her. They met secretly and have physical relationship with each other. The scene depicting their first physical relationship never gives any abnormal nuance. It was very much exciting and normal. It has been possible due to complete transformation of Maanvi from Manu. She inculcates and draws every possible feminine characteristic. She has already undergone gender transforming surgery. Even the family members of Manu Munjal were excited to meet Maanvi as she is hoped to be the new bride or future daughter-in-law in their house. They never suspect her anything.

But the psychological conflict within Maanvi is visible while confessing it to him. Apparently, she looks confident at the beginning of the film. There may be reasons behind this. She is a migrated transwoman in Chandigarh originally belonging to Ambala. This urbanscape has primarily allowed her to suppress her identity. Her problems actually start after her confession to her lover. Her struggles are seen to have started from that point. She decided to tell her trans identity to her lover Manu. The moment she tells it to him, Manu was confused because the very idea of transwoman was unknown to him. It took some time for

Maanvi to make her understand the fact but as soon as he understands that he has made sex with a boy he became furious and insults Maanvi. He took bath in the bathroom to purify himself. When his family came to know that Maanvi is a transgirl they rebuked Manu for having made a relationship with her. It was totally unacceptable to their house. Maanvi tried her best to tell him about her situation but Manu did not pay any heed to her words. Therefore, Maanvi felt herself guilty of cheating Manu. Maanvi is rejected outright by Manu and she was threatened to leave Chandigarh. She felt somewhat depressed she cried but she never gave up hope. She tried everyone to make understand her situation. The process through which Manu realizes the situation of Maanvi is significant from the social point of view. Manu was absolutely ignorant of the system of trans gender transformation. He began searching for information to know about it. He watched on mobile phone and knew about it. He met a eunuch who told him that Maanvi was right because she has undergone transformation. He ultimately met a doctor named Dr. Kaur who tells him that our minds determine our gender. Maanvi is female in her mind and she has corrected herself by undergoing surgery. Dr, Kaur wanted to provide some literature review of trans women so that Manu can understand the matter better. After that Manu having been totally transformed in mind became ready to accept Maanvi. He met her and expressed sorrows for misbehaving with her. He went against his family members. His sisters are rude enough o use abusive words against Maanvi. He threatened them not to interfere in his decision.

The Danish Girl is a seminal film that explores the life of Lili Elbe, one of the first known recipients of gender-confirming surgery. This section will analyze the portrayal of gender identity and expression in the film, highlighting how it challenges traditional gender roles, norms, and expectations. It will examine the critical and audience responses to the film and its impact on conversations surrounding transgender issues.

The Danish Girl (2015) is Einer's journey from his male self to his female self-ending in a surgical procedure. Einer was living happily with his wife Gerda. He was absolutely unaware about his female self. The moment Gerda makes him play the role of a female model, this latent female self comes to appear and he becomes conscious about it. In the "Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People" it has been said that

although gender identity is usually established in childhood, individuals may become aware that their gender identity is not in full alignment with sex assigned at birth in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood.

His struggle then begins and it is a long journey of psychological and physical transformation. Gerda was surprised to the new development in her husband. Einer becomes very much obsessive with feminine things and activities. He begins to develop a sensual attachment to feminine touch and smell. He touches and smells again and again female clothing. He becomes interested with female hair style. His challenges come forward as he first confronts Gerda and then his social surroundings. His challenges lead him to sufferings revealed through his tear drops and sometimes sobs. He confesses that he is inherently a woman. He wants to be Lili leaving behind his Einer self. He plays the role of a woman mostly taking the name of Lily. For this he gets taunted by the people at public places. He was beaten when he protested. But he never loses courage. He continued expressing his female self. His mental agony led him to consult several doctors. He never stops until his surgery is done for transformation of his male self into female. The doctor tells him about the dangerous aspect of the surgery but Einer is determined to undergo the surgery. The moment he undergoes surgery he expresses his feelings. He felt so happy as if he has really left his Einer self (man's self) and has become Lili (woman's self). Throughout Einer's journey his wife Gerda supported her. Einer's case is represented resembling that of George Jorgensen who

> approached Christian Hamburger, a Copenhagen surgeon, complaining of severe depression brought on by what might now be called gender dysphoria. He felt himself to be a woman and was convinced that he could not continue his life as a man (Hamburger, Sturup, & Dahl-Iversen, 1953). Nature had simply made a cruel mistake in giving him a male body. He told Hamburger that he had acquired a set of female clothes, secretly put them on, and shaved his pubic hair to shape it more like that of a female.

Conclusion

The Danish Girl and *Romance in Chandigarh* offer compelling narratives that challenge traditional gender stereotypes, contributing to

a broader discourse on gender identity and expression in cinema. This literature review underscores the importance of critically examining how popular culture, particularly film, can be a potent tool in reshaping societal perceptions of gender. These films serve as examples of how storytelling can disrupt entrenched norms and promote more inclusive and nuanced understandings of gender, ultimately fostering a more equitable and accepting society. Further research and analysis in this area are vital for a deeper understanding of the evolving role of cinema in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting gender diversity.

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