

Chapter 5: Women content creators in India: Representation, challenges and empowerment in the digital era

Dr. Harsha V. Patil¹,

¹*Department of Computer Application, MAEER's MIT Arts Commerce and Science College Alandi(D), Pune, Maharashtra, India*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6519-9987>

Abstract: The growth of the digital communication platforms has altered the nature of media participation and a creator-based ecosystem has emerged with women in more visible and influential positions. This chapter discusses the feminine portrayal of women content creators in India in a comparative approach by taking global studies of gender, digital labour and media empowerment. Scholarly research highlights, policy reports and industry reports form the secondary data that is synthesized to draw trends in the participation, economic opportunities, perception of audience and media visibility. Other key structural and socio-cultural issues which are identified in the chapter are algorithmic discrimination, gendered online harassment, occupational precarity and unequal revenue distribution. The theoretical background is based on feminist media approaches, participatory culture and digital labour theories to examine both empowering and exploitative aspects of women digital content production critically. The examples of the leading Indian creators demonstrate new opportunities of career development, assertion of cultural identity, and cultural influence. The analysis indicates that the digital media economy requires gender-sensitive regulation frameworks and governance of supporting platforms to have equal opportunities.

Keywords: Women content creators, Digital media, Gender representation, Influencers, Creator economy, India

1 Introduction

Digital media has become a decentralised domain of cultural activity whereby individuals independently create and share content as opposed to the use of traditional institutions of broadcasting. However, in India, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and short-video apps have developed rapidly to have a large creator economy where millions of users actively create [1,2]. The female population has increasingly used these platforms to express creativity, become financially independent and refute old gender capitalism, which has been a major aspect of the mainstream media industries [3]. In spite of the participation increase, online presence of women is influenced by the existing inequalities. Research shows that visibility and monetisation practices tend to impact male creators more positively, and women receive more critical and stereotypical