Digital Media and Gender: A Review of Literature Review

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Introduction

I have chosen this topic because it is not limited to the unequal representation of women in the media industry, it has severe consequences which hamper the physical, social, financial growth of the female gender. Through this research, I want to look at the catastrophic effects on Indian society and its mindset.

It was the battle in the Indian subcontinent in the early 1900s about the unjust portrayal of women in the mass media that paved the way for the Asia Pacific region to speak up about gender equality. The earlier notions of the women's movement were to bring visibility to their issues in the mainstream media. It was more focused on providing a voice to the voiceless. The mere idea of watching a female character express true feelings of independence and emotion on-screen scared and disturbed the policymakers of the society and often led to the banning of such art forms and mass media content. Now the concept of media and gender has seen a massive shift. Working towards image construction, freeing the female characters from the "male gaze" and breaking the stereotypes created by society are the more pressing concerns. The media uses prejudiced and stereotypical images of women to sell their news or information like a commercial product. Such false representation of a woman's behavior and life choices often creates an ideal benchmark that suppresses the harsh reality. As creators and consumers of media messages, we must not miss the main point. "Women are human beings first, then consumers".

Relevance and Significance

Mass media plays an eloquent role in our life as it helps to shape our minds and opinions about the issues relevant to us. In our daily life, we come across numerous forms of media (print, TV, or digital) in which we find false and stereotypical portrayals of women. Indeed, the content of these media messages is often derived from the current mindset of society, but it is equally truthful vice versa. The portrayal of these images and their inequality in representation in the contemporary media often leads to a set frame of reference for the ideal characteristics and moral behavior in society. Any form of social conduct or lifestyle choice, made by a woman, deviating from the

concept of ideal mannerisms, conspired and created in our minds by the media, leads to a change in the social dynamics and treatment towards that individual in society. Their passive and regressive appearance in mass media leads to major repercussions like reduction in job opportunities, public safety, and the chance of financial self-reliance. It also leads to violence and crime against women. All these factors hamper a woman's personal growth and upliftment in society as a dignified citizen.

I have chosen the topic of Media and Gender with a focus on the Effects of Gender inequality in contemporary media on society as a whole. Being a filmmaking student myself, I have seen the working of a film set more intricately in the past few years. My first encounter with this type of stereotypical and narrow-minded thinking was by working on a variety of film shoots for big production houses. The representation and roles given to the women employee on a working set is a true representation of the kind of portrayal we see on screen. All the bigger job titles and responsibilities are given to the male crew members and females are made to be the subordinates/assistants. The female to male ratio on a set is very alarming. Just by judging the disparity in treatment, respect, and representation behind and in front of the camera on a film set, it is evident that the media messages around us are creating a false narrative for the living and societal pattern for women everywhere in the world.

When we come across some information around us, however false it might be, we start believing it and applying it in our daily lives. This is what media messages are doing to us. They impose incomplete information in our minds. Therefore, when we see women in a more submissive role in the media around us, bound in the kitchen to fulfill the duty of a nurturer, we tend to associate these qualities in real life as well. I would like to evaluate the ill-effects of such Advertisements (Print/Digital); Films, and news articles on society. The impact on the behavior pattern, treatment, visualization, and the overall dynamic of the society towards women, when exposed to such stock characters for a long period.

Justification of the Study

Gender is a decision taken by society without the individual's choice. It depends upon the social and cultural responsibilities assigned to the individual. Gender is what determines the behavior and treatment of a person in a society. When we look at the power of "Gender" we can understand the importance of knowledge and information given to society. As the media plays a crucial role in providing first-hand information to the country, it becomes the agenda setter and the gatekeeper of perceptions and beliefs. Individuals subjected to AD, TV programs, news articles, and Films with weak women characters for a longer period are bound to form perceptions about the role of women in society accordingly.

When we want to note the effects of biased and prejudiced media messages in Indian society, we can simply look at how young girls and young boys are being brought up in every household. From the type of cartoon characters, they are subjected to, the role models in the TV, AD, and Film Industry, their boundaries, up to the teachings given to them individually about behavior, the disparity in their treatment is widely visible. This is a vicious cycle as our future generation gets

false and tampered with information through confusing media messages which jeopardizes our chances of breaking the cycle in the first place.

Review of Literature

Arceo-Gómez, E. O., Campos-Vázquez, R. M., Salas, R. Y. B., & López-Araiza, S. (2020). Gender Stereotypes in Job Advertisements: What Do They Imply for the Gender Salary Gap?. In Mexico. Retrieved from http://conference. iza. org/conference files. The pay difference between male and female employees, doing the exact same job is prevalent even in today's time. The gender stereotypes in society associate certain attributes to an individual and thus restrict the division of salary in an equal manner. Men are subjected to masculine tasks which are automatically preferred in a hiring process above women. A descriptive statistics of 2.5 Million job advertisements was conducted. The result that came out of the data collected proved their hypothesis. The female-oriented jobs requirements favored young and attractive candidates whereas male candidates were hardly judged on physical criteria.

Chudleigh, H. E. (2019). The New Face of Business: Comparing Male and Female Gender Stereotypes in Multi-Level Marketing Facebook Posts in India. This article talked about the prevalent stereotypical advertisement on digital media platforms like Facebook. They used a content analysis method to study 733 images on Facebook for indications of sexist portrayals. The results proved that in some ways, stereotypical gender roles are still very present in Indian Multi-Level Marketing on Facebook. They studied the use of sexualized content for the portrayal of women's products and a macho effect to sell male-oriented products online. The overuse of Asian actors and models to sell products related to the technology sector puts the entire population in a prejudiced box and this article successfully proves this hypothesis.

Das, A. The# MeToo Movement in India and Gender Stereotypes in the Creative Media Industries; Department of publications, 87 (2019). This article talked about the ripple effect created by the Metoo Movement around the world. It aims to study the gender stereotypes prevalent in the Indian media. The research was conducted through qualitative, thematic, and narrative analysis. It tried to bridge the gap between gender stereotypes in the media industry and sexual assault towards women. Media messages portraying women as care-takers and softer individuals lead to larger issues like pay gaps, gender bias, and unequal status in society. The article concluded with prominent participants sharing their experience of gender bias and inequality in the workplace due to backward media messages spread in society.

Dhar, D., Jain, T., & Jayachandran, S. (2019). Intergenerational transmission of gender attitudes: Evidence from India. The Journal of Development Studies, 55(12), 2572-2592. This article talked about the effects of discriminatory parents on a child's mental development. They proved that a mother's influence on the child is much more effective than a father's therefore, a mother with gender-biased and stereotypical thoughts results in their children having a distorted view of the status of women in society. The researchers conducted surveys in 314 secondary schools in remote districts of Haryana. After talking to more than 5483 child-parent pairs, they concluded that a girl child is more likely to remain uneducated due to the effects of the parent's biased mindset of women being the care-taker and not the provider of the family.

Dundes, L. (2020). Elsa as Horse Whisperer in Disney's Frozen 2: Opportunity "Nokk" s to Quash Gender Stereotypes. Social Sciences, 9(5), 86. The article talks about the use of empowered female characters in Disney movies. In the movie Frozen 2, The main character Elsa beats all society's written stereotypes. She runs away from her home to find her true identity, rides horses (which is considered a male-dominated sport), and fights the patriarchal system by vowing to never marry. This article explored the relationship between Elsa and her pet horse (Nokk) and compared it to many Disney characters shown in movies. Their relationship has lots of sexual connotations carefully designed by Disney to cater to all types of audiences around the world.

Flores, P., Gómez, N. R., Roa, A. F., & Whitson, R. (2020). Reviving feminism through social media: from the classroom to online and offline public spaces. Gender and education, 32(6), 751-766. The article talks about the need for females to be educated about their feminist rights to break the patriarchal system of society. Using social media platforms like Facebook, women feel heard and appreciated. Social media platforms provide a voice to the voiceless. Through thematic and qualitative analysis, the researchers observed Female university students through a 48-hour confession drive on Facebook. By talking online about their issues, they felt like a part of a community. This experiment provided a tool for women to speak their hearts out without being judged. It helped the women participants to express their reality with complete openness.

Govindarajan, A. INDIAN ADVERTISEMENTS BREAKING STEREOTYPES IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ERVING GOFFMAN (2020). The article talks about the stereotypical portrayal of women in Indian advertisements. Advertisements are a powerful tool of communication. By spreading backward ideas in society, the growth of women gets limited. This article examined famous Indian ads which break the stereotype and got more than 1 million views on youtube. After a critical analysis of these advertisements, the researchers concluded that it is the role of the media industry to help break the chains of patriarchy for women in society. Through cultivation theory, society will eventually change its perspective when subjected to powerful and empowered media messages.

Heathy, B. H. (2020). Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: A Critical Discourse Analysis. Language in India, 20(1). The article talks about gender-biased Print advertisements in our country. Even with the changing scenarios of society, some brands still prefer to stick to a traditional viewpoint of portraying women as sex objects or ideal housewife material. Through critical discourse and qualitative analysis of numerous print ads, the researchers concluded that the female characters were given a lower position with their postures and body language. The taglines used by Indian products create a sense of mockery of an empowered woman. These ads showcase women in Indian attire only, with the primary duty of pleasing her husband.

Hopkins-Doyle, A., Sutton, R. M., Douglas, K. M., & Calogero, R. M. (2019). Flattering to deceive: Why people misunderstand benevolent sexism. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 116(2), 167. This article categorized men into 2 different sections, Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS). Men with HS favor sexist decisions made around them as they consider females to be manipulative and conniving. Men with BS appreciate the kinder nature of females and believe that men must protect them. They support the traditional roles that women are stuck in as it comforts the male to feel more powerful. The researchers created a report based on

content analysis. They found out that women are more likely to report a sexist incident due to HS. They tend to ignore BS around them as they feel it is how society works.

Jethwaney, J. Portrayal of Women: An Empirical Study of Advertising Content in India from 1991-2019. Indian Institute of Mass Communication, 3. This article talks about the set patterns that Indian advertisements follow concerning female representation. The pre-production process of these advertisements comes from various departments like Editors, casting directors, writers, and directors all collectively making these stereotypical decisions to sell their product. Through empirical data collection and content analysis of 700 ads on predetermined indicators, the researchers concluded that advertisements, being the most powerful form of spreading a message to people, should not be misused just to sell a product. It can have a catastrophic effect on a large section of the population.

Livingstone, S. (1994). Watching talk: Gender and engagement in the viewing of audience discussion programmes. Media, Culture & Society, 16(3), 429-447. This article talks about why public places like social media platforms are crucial for women to share their sexual assault experiences. It gives women a sense of belongingness with each other as other audience members can empathize better and share without any judgment. Through empirical analysis of 12 focus groups, questionnaires, and a survey of 500 participants, they concluded that people like to watch TV programs with live confessions as it gives the audience sitting at home and in the studio, the courage to come out and speak their truth. These programs motivate and inspire many to be courageous.

Pain, P. (2020). "It took me quite a long time to develop a voice": Examining feminist digital activism in the Indian# MeToo movement. new media & society, 1461444820944846. This article talks about why digital literacy is crucial for women to beat the patriarchal system in today's time. Regarding the #Metoo movement that trended on social media platforms, women got the opportunity to speak their truth and point out their perpetrators in front of the entire world. The internet penetration in India has only 39% women participants. Collective analysis of hashtags used on platforms like Twitter and Facebook concluded that out of 40,356 tweets, feminist issue-related tweets got fewer retweets and mentions compared to others. The researchers found that many people used tweets for a variety of purposes.

Pereira, S., Fillol, J., & Moura, P. (2019). Young people learning from digital media outside of school: the informal meets the formal. Comunicar. Media Education Research Journal, 27(1). This article researched how young children aged 12-16 use the internet these days. The curriculum we have should coincide with the digital media knowledge available as education is not restricted to schools anymore. Children learn an equal amount of new things through their smartphones, ICTs, and digital media. 78 teenagers were selected by a process of ethnographic-based selection. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to get to the result. All the participants confirmed that most of their studying was done through online services on their mobile phones. They spent most of their time on social media platforms like Facebook and Youtube.

Rahang, J. Gender Marginalisation, Media and Identity in the Indian Politics. This article talks about the prevalence of gender inequality in politics. The media plays a crucial role in

widening the gap by reinforcing gender stereotypes which eventually limit women from getting equal opportunities. This article is descriptive and analytical research on the ways women are in media. The kind of roles set by the media makes it difficult for women to accept their individuality and speak up in front of others about their issues. Media should use their platform to empower women, give them access to information to uplift themselves in society. Instead, such media messages take back the development of the entire nation for 50 years.

Sandhu, N. (2019). Fueling gender stereotypes: A content analysis of automobile advertisements. Business Perspectives and Research, 7(2), 163-178. This article talks about the breakdown of an average Indian advertisement. The researchers studied all commercials on four criterias, ad orientation; gender of voice-over; gender of product user, and gender of the main character of the ad. After collecting data based on common methodologies of qualitative analysis, they concluded that mostly all advertisements favored the male gender. The ads were formulated keeping an average male of the product. The most outdated is the automobile advertisements which had both the elements, an overly macho male protagonist and a female sex object to sell the product.

Sharma, S., & Das, M. (2019). Women empowerment through advertising. Eur. J. Soc. Sci. This article talks about "femvertising", female oriented advertising, and its impact on the future generation. Mass media plays an important role in shaping people's minds This article is based on a descriptive analysis of various advertisements like Ariel's share the load campaign;Lloyd – unisex washing machine;Havells Appliances: coffee maker – Respect for Women ad. The researchers concluded that if enough brands started making such empowered advertisements, women would not need to be scared to walk alone on the streets, be their original self or express their feelings openly.

Stotsky, J. G., Chakraborty, L., & Gandhi, P. (2019). Impact of intergovernmental fiscal transfers on gender equality in India: an empirical analysis. National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. This article talks about the effects that intergovernmental fiscal transfer can have on gender equality. When the government spends equal amounts of money on various sectors like education, healthcare, and infrastructure, it creates equal opportunity for both men and women to grow as individuals in society. The researchers have collected data based on theoretical and empirical analysis of standard demographics. For example, the amount of money invested in building public schools in remote locations would allow local girls to attend school without any geographical hindrances.

Tabassum, N., & Nayak, B. S. (2021). Gender stereotypes and their impact on women's career progressions from a managerial perspective. IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review, 2277-9752; 2097-5513. This article talks about the effects of gender stereotypes on women's careers and their progress in the workplace. This paper is conceptual research of existing literature on the consequences of traditional inside-the-box roles for today's women. In our society, men and women have to conform to their specialised gender roles. Outdated media messages make it difficult for women to break their former weaker and delicate image that overall hinders their chances to get a promotion in the workplace. The researchers factored in various reasons like socio-cultural, family, educational, individual, organizational, and cognitive.

Thomas, R. The Nirbhaya Effect and Media Sensationalism Revisited. urnal of o, 66. (2019) This article talks about the power of social media. After the devastating Nirbhaya incident, it was the power of social media that got justice to the victim's family. Social media makes people aware of their rights and helps them to exercise them. This paper analyzed media coverage on violence against women on various platforms like newspapers, news channels, and social media. After a thorough analysis of these platforms, the researchers concluded that although the media can change society's perspective towards victim-blaming, it chooses to stick to basic stereotypes to sensationalize women's issues.

Weisgram, E. S. (2019). Reducing Gender Stereotypes in Toys and Play for Smarter, Stronger, and Kinder Kids. American Journal of Play, 12(1), 74-88. This article talks about the importance of gender-neutral toys and TV shows for children. Buying gender-biased toys for boys and girls can create gender-based behavior from a very early age. Soft toys and fragile barbie dolls for girls create a sense of weakness in their minds as they idealize such behavior in their real life. The researchers analyzed various shows like Sesame Street, soft toys, and action figures sold in the market and their deep psychological effects on children's minds. The data concluded that young boys who are subjected to gender-neutral toys and TV shows are more sensitive to emotions around them.

Conceptual/ Theoretical Frameworks

1. Gender Bias in workplace-

The pay difference between male and female employees, doing the exact same job is prevalent even in today's time. The gender stereotypes in society associate certain attributes to an individual and thus restrict the division of salary in an equal manner. Men are subjected to more masculine tasks which are automatically preferred in the hiring process above women. The effects of gender stereotypes on women's careers and their progress in the workplace are a major issue. Media messages portraying women as a care-taker and softer individuals lead to larger issues like pay gaps, gender bias, and unequal status in society.In our society, men and women have to conform to their specialised gender roles.Anyone who deviates from their desired role gets instant revolt from the society.

There is a greater prevalence of gender inequality in politics as well. The media plays a crucial role in widening the gap by reinforcing gender stereotypes which eventually limit women from getting equal opportunities.

2. Gender Bias and its effects on a Child's growth

There are vast effects of discriminatory parents on a child's mental development. A mother's influence on the child is much more effective than a father's therefore, a mother with gender-biased and stereotypical thoughts results in their children having a distorted view of the status of women in society. Subjecting children to gender-neutral toys and TV shows can create gender-based behavior from a very early age. Soft toys and fragile barbie dolls for girls create a sense of weakness in their minds as they idealize such behavior in their real life.

Young children (aged 12-16) spend most of their time on the internet these days. Media contents online must be gender neutral to help create a vast outlook of the world. The curriculum we have in schools must coincide with the digital media knowledge available as education is not restricted to schools anymore. Children learn an equal amount of new things through their smartphones, ICTs, and digital media.

3. Gender Messages in Movies-

The article talks about the use of empowered female characters in Disney movies. Nowadays, filmmakers are more concerned with creating movies on gender neutral content to appeal to a wider audience. In the movie Frozen 2, The main character Elsa beats all society's stereotypes. She runs away from her home to find her true identity, rides horses (which is considered a male-dominated sport), and fights the patriarchal system by vowing to never marry.

4. Digital Media and Feminine Rights-

There is an urgent need for females to be educated about their feminist rights to break the patriarchal system of society. Using social media platforms like Facebook, women feel heard and appreciated. Social media platforms provide a voice to the voiceless. Public places like social media platforms are crucial for women to share their sexual assault experiences. It gives women a sense of belongingness with each other as other audience members can empathize better and share without any judgment.

This is why digital literacy is crucial for women to beat the patriarchal system in today's time. Regarding the #Metoo movement that trended on social media platforms, women got the opportunity to speak their truth and point out their perpetrators in front of the entire world. The internet penetration in India has only 39% women participants. The Metoo Movement around the world created a ripple effect.This was a great way to bridge the gap between gender stereotypes in the media industry and sexual assault towards women. There is immense power in social media. After the devastating Nirbhaya incident, it was the power of social media that got justice to the victim's family. Social media makes people aware of their rights and helps them to exercise them.

5. Gender Biased Advertisement-

Media platforms including digital media use sexualized content for the portrayal of women's products and a macho effect to sell male-oriented products. Advertisements are a powerful tool of communication. By spreading backward ideas in society, the growth of women gets limited.

We are surrounded by gender-biased advertisements (digital, AV and Print) in our country. Even with the changing scenarios of society, some brands still prefer to stick to a traditional viewpoint of portraying women as sex objects or ideal housewife material. There are set patterns that Indian advertisements follow concerning female representation. The pre-production process of these advertisements involves various departments like Editors, casting directors, writers, and directors all collectively making these stereotypical decisions to sell their product.The researchers divided all commercials on four criterias- ad orientation; gender of voice-over; gender of product user, and gender of the main character of the ad. In today's time,there is a new wave of advertisements called

"femvertising", female oriented advertising. Such commercials are required for the development of the future generation.

6. Types of Sexism-

This article categorized men into 2 different sections, Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS). Men with HS favor sexist decisions made around them as they consider females to be manipulative and conniving. Men with BS appreciate the kinder nature of females and believe that men must protect them. They support the traditional roles that women are stuck in as it comforts the male to feel more powerful.

7. Importance of Government policies-

This article talks about the effects that intergovernmental fiscal transfer can have on gender equality.For eg, the amount of money invested in building public schools in remote locations would allow local girls to attend school without any geographical hindrances.

Conclusion

The study drawn the pay difference between male and female employees, doing the exact same job is prevalent even in today's time. The gender stereotypes in society associate certain attributes to an individual and thus restrict the division of salary in an equal manner. The female-oriented jobs requirements favored young and attractive candidates whereas male candidates were hardly judged on physical criteria. It was also talked about the prevalent stereotypical advertisement on digital media platforms like Facebook. They studied the use of sexualized content for the portrayal of women's products and amacho effect to sell male-oriented products online. The results proved that in some ways, stereotypical gender roles are still very present in Indian Multi-Level Marketing on Facebook. The overuse of Asian actors and models to sell products related to the technology sector puts the entire population in a prejudiced box. Men are subjected to masculine tasks which are automatically preferred in a hiring process above women. The article talks about the need for females to be educated about their feminist rights to break the patriarchal system of society. Using social media platforms like Facebook, women feel heard and appreciated. Social media platforms provide a voice to the voiceless.

The researchers concluded that it is the role of the media industry to help break the chains of patriarchy for women in society. Through cultivation theory, society will eventually change its perspective when subjected to powerful and empowered media messages.

This article reveals about gender-biased Print advertisements in our country. Even with the changing scenarios of society, some brands still prefer to stick to a traditional viewpoint of portraying women as sex objects or ideal housewife material. Through critical discourse and qualitative analysis of numerous print ads, the researchers concluded that the female characters were given a lower position with their postures and body language. The taglines used by Indian products create a sense of mockery of an empowered woman. These ads showcase women in Indian attire only, with the primary duty of pleasing her husband.

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