

From Posts to Protests: Digital Journalism for Human Rights

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Abstract- Digital platforms have turned into a battleground for contentious discussions and debates on frightening subjects in the modern, advanced 21st century! Digital journalism has become a weapon, giving voiceless people a platform and raising social and public awareness. How has digital journalism affected 21st-century policy-making, legal reforms, and public discourse, especially with regard to social justice movements and marginalized communities? That is the research question. Changes were brought about by digital journalism, and movements like LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter have gained traction. There are numerous examples that give voices both nationally and internationally, such as the opposition to the death penalty taken by Kirsten Han, a well-known Singaporean leader. She has put in the effort and implemented the changes. Numerous issues, such as the Nirbhaya case, LGBTQ+ rights, and love jihad, significantly altered how the Indian legal system operated. The rights of marginalized communities have been promoted by Khabar Lahariya, Dalit Camera, and the online platform The Wire. On the one hand, it has become a stick in their strange and uneven time, despite the fact that it has faced serious disadvantages like misinformation and disinformation, social harassment, and online abuse. The voices of activists were amplified by platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and independent news outlets, which resulted in policy changes and a greater public conversation about systemic racism. This research paper's primary goals are to investigate how digital journalism influences social movements and public awareness. To examine examples of how legal and policy changes have been impacted by digital journalism. To determine the difficulties that media platforms and digital journalists encounter, such as online harassment and false information.

To evaluate how well digital journalism addresses issues pertaining to underserved communities. The researchers will employ digital journalism and qualitative analysis and case studies to investigate historic events such as the BLM movement, LGBTQ+ rights in India, the Nirbhaya case, and discussions surrounding the death penalty. Additionally, the paper will be written using content analysis, which involves examining news articles, articles, and digital media content. The goal of this study is to close the gap between by emphasizing the changing role of journalism in legal reforms and public discourse, this study seeks to close the gap between digital media and legal studies.

Indexed Terms- Online Activism, Social Awareness, Marginalized Voices, Digital Journalism, Public Discourse, Misinformation and Disinformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

21st century had provided us with many Different opportunities such as AI , Digital Platform, UPI these has been highlighted into Digital Bharat Viksit Bharat! Now By help of social Media People are at least Well acquainted what is going on around the world... It has created Awareness among the Youth.

Digital platforms refers to the platforms which work on the software based systems had to create share interact with individual or people at large. As website, mobile app, E-Commerce platform, social media. It facilitates creation, sharing and support interaction. Digital journalism serves as a vital mechanism for amplifying marginalized voices and fostering social change, particularly in the context of systemic challenges.¹

social justice : The word Justice has been derived from latin word jus mean Right or law .. Social

Justice is a concept of socialism and communism. it's origin can be traced back at 19th century Prd of industrial revolution. income inequality, difference between rich and poor, water the seed of Social justice. later on conditions of workers, paying a workers, remittances etc gave a new concept to social justice. concept of equality was superceded by concept of equity . At the initial stage (19 century) providing minimum wage was Social justice now in modern time it take into account disadvantage faced by marginalised communities generally equality, equity, access to resources, human rights etc are included in social justice. To gain these Right people Have revolted There has been many Riots Cause Right are never Given They are demanded! We have to fight and wage a war in order to get our rights. government look into Social justice by making policy, by several amendments etc!

The rise of digital journalism has fundamentally altered the landscape of public discourse and activism. It has given marginalized communities a platform to share their stories and demand justice. Social movements, including BLM and LGBTQ+ rights campaigns, have gained international recognition due to the widespread reach of digital journalism. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and independent news agencies have played crucial roles in amplifying voices and pressuring governments to implement policy changes.

This paper explores the impact of digital journalism on legal reforms and policy-making, addressing both its advantages and its challenges. While digital journalism fosters awareness and mobilization, it also faces significant obstacles such as misinformation, disinformation, and online harassment.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how digital journalism influences social movements and public awareness.
2. To examine case studies demonstrating legal and policy changes driven by digital journalism.
3. To analyze the challenges faced by digital journalists, including misinformation, disinformation, and online abuse.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of digital journalism in advocating for underserved communities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The article “The Wild West of Digital Journalism” discusses the challenges posed by the rise of digital journalism, contrasting it with traditional journalism’s standards of impartiality, fact-checking, and ethics. Digital platforms, where user-generated content dominates, have disrupted the media landscape, often prioritizing engagement over journalistic quality. The European Union is taking steps to introduce regulations like the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) to promote quality journalism and safeguard democratic discourse. The second part is dedicated to the concept of quality journalism and the framework measures that are yet to be adopted in the context of the European Media Freedom Act.²

The paper “The Impact of New Media on Contemporary Journalism” explores the profound impact of new media technologies on contemporary journalism. Digital platforms, social media, and mobile technologies have transformed the landscape of news production, distribution, and consumption. While the paper discusses both challenges and opportunities presented by new media, it may not delve deeply enough into specific case studies or examples that illustrate these points. This lack of detailed case analysis could limit the practical applicability of the findings.³

The paper titled "The challenges and role of modern journalism in digital media enterprises" presents a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of journalism in the digital age. However, the paper identifies numerous challenges faced by modern journalism, such as the erosion of traditional values and the influence of algorithms, it may not provide enough detailed solutions or strategies to effectively address these issues.⁴

The paper "Revolutionizing Newsgathering: The Impact of Digital Media and New Technologies" presents valuable insights into the transformation of journalism through digital tools. However, The paper may not fully account for future developments that could further impact newsgathering practices.⁵

The paper titled "A Shift Amid the Transition: Towards Smarter, More Resilient Digital Journalism in the Age of AI and Disinformation" makes several significant contributions to the field of digital journalism, particularly in the context of the challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI) and disinformation.⁶

The paper "Journalism in the Digital World: The Conflict of Institutional Logics" examines the transformation of journalism as a social institution in the digital age, highlighting the loss of its dominant role due to technological convergence, platform capitalism, and internal structural changes, leading to a convergent ontological model. Future studies could explore how technological convergence continues to reshape journalism. This includes examining the integration of various media platforms and how this affects journalistic practices and audience engagement.⁷

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing digital journalism analysis, content analysis, and case studies. The Black Lives Matter movement and its impact on policy reforms in the United States.

- The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in India, including the decriminalization of Section 377.
- The Nirbhaya case and its influence on legal reforms in India.
- Activism against the death penalty, including the work of Singaporean journalist Kirsten Han.

By conducting a content analysis of digital media platforms, the study will assess how narratives have shaped public opinion and influenced policy decisions.

Case Studies

1. Black Lives Matter (BLM)

BLM gained momentum through social media activism and independent journalism, leading to police reforms and policy changes in the U.S. The movement used digital platforms to mobilize support and demand justice for victims of police brutality. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which

gained prominence in 2012, serves as a critical platform for addressing systemic racism and advocating for social justice. It is deeply rooted in the historical struggles of the African diaspora and has evolved through various forms of expression, including poetry and data visualization, to highlight racial injustices and promote awareness.⁸

Key Demands and Reforms⁹

- Police Brutality & Accountability: Advocating for stricter measures against police misconduct.
- Over-Policing of Minority Communities: Calling for fair and equitable law enforcement.
- Defunding the Police: Redirecting funds from police to social services and community programs.
- Police Training & Reform: Promoting de-escalation techniques and cultural sensitivity training.
- Body-Worn Cameras: Supporting their use to enhance transparency and accountability.
- Accountability & Transparency: Demanding independent investigations and oversight of police actions.

Policy Reforms

- Berkeley's Tear Gas Ban: Permanently banned police use of tear gas (June 2020).
- Increased Police Accountability: Implementation of civilian oversight boards and independent investigations.
- Diversion of Funds: Shifting resources to education, social services, and community programs.
- National Defunding Campaign: Advocacy through petitions and social media to reduce police funding.

2. LGBTQ+ Rights in India

- Digital journalism played a crucial role in the campaign to decriminalize homosexuality in India. LGBT is a topic which is epicenter of debates! This topic is considered an ambiguous topic and a baseless topic. As here the rights of Same Sex are uplifted! (Transgender individuals in India were granted the right to vote as a third

gender in 2014, following a landmark Supreme Court judgment in the case of National Legal Services Authority vs Union of India & Ors ¹. This decision recognized hijras, transgender people, eunuchs, and intersex people as a 'third gender' in law, upholding their right to self-identified gender and directing the Centre and State Governments to grant legal recognition of their gender identity) Transgender Topic was a old topic but this LGBT is a new and emerging Topic even the trans have fought various battle in court of law in ...

- In India, a committee was established for the LGBTQ+ community, as directed by the Supreme Court in the Supriyo verdict. This committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, comprises six members, including the Secretaries of various ministries, such as Home Affairs, Social Justice and Empowerment, Law and Justice, Women and Child Development, and Health and Family Welfare. Social media and independent news outlets amplified LGBTQ+ voices, leading to the landmark Supreme Court ruling in 2018.

3. The Nirbhaya Case

- The brutal gang rape of Nirbhaya in 2012 triggered widespread protests, with digital journalism playing a key role in demanding legal reforms. Online platforms and independent news agencies helped sustain public discourse, leading to changes in India's rape laws. These protest force government to take initiative for women.¹⁰

Due to widespread demand of the people influenced and showcased by the digital journalism, the government brought the major amendments in the Criminal Law Amendment Act in 2018.

1. penalties were increased;
2. Sexual offences were given a wide concept which later on included non-verbal conduct of sexual nature etc.
3. Medical assistance, legal aid were provided to rape victims.
4. Opposition to the Death Penalty

Activists like Kirsten Han have used digital journalism to campaign against capital punishment in Singapore and beyond. Digital media has facilitated global discussions on the ethics of the death penalty and influenced policy debates.¹¹ Activists have utilized digital platforms to organize protests against capital punishment, as seen in the 2005 case of a Vietnamese drug trafficker, where online discourse played a crucial role in mobilizing public sentiment.¹²

IV. CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL JOURNALISM

Digital journalism has transformed the way information is disseminated, providing rapid and widespread access to news. However, this transformation comes with significant challenges that impact the credibility, accuracy, and economic sustainability of journalism. Below are some of the key challenges faced by digital journalists today.

Digital journalism faces a multitude of challenges as it navigates the rapidly evolving landscape of the digital age. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing technological, ethical, and economic dimensions. The transition from traditional to digital journalism has not only transformed how news is produced and consumed but also introduced new complexities that journalists and media organizations must address. Despite its influence, digital journalism faces several challenges:

1. **Misinformation and Disinformation** – The rapid spread of fake news can undermine legitimate activism and distort public perception. One of the major challenges in digital journalism is the spread of misinformation and fake news. The speed at which news is shared on social media platforms makes it difficult to verify facts before publication. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, false information regarding cures and prevention methods spread widely, causing panic and misinformation among the public.¹³

2. **Economic Sustainability and Revenue Models**: Traditional journalism relied heavily on print sales and advertisements. However, in the digital era, many news organizations struggle to generate revenue. Subscription models, paywalls, and online ads are some methods used to sustain digital

journalism, but they do not always provide a stable income. For instance, The New York Times has successfully implemented a paywall, while many smaller news outlets struggle to monetize their content.¹³

3. Ethical Issues and Clickbait Journalism: The competition for online traffic has led to the rise of clickbait journalism, where misleading or exaggerated headlines are used to attract readers. This practice undermines journalistic ethics and misleads audiences. A prominent example is the frequent use of sensationalized headlines on news websites, which sometimes distort the actual content of the article.¹⁴

4. Algorithmic Bias and Platform Dependence: News organizations increasingly rely on social media algorithms to distribute content. However, these algorithms prioritize engagement over accuracy, leading to the amplification of sensational news over well-researched journalism. In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Facebook's algorithm was criticized for promoting misleading news articles, influencing public perception.¹⁵

5. Cybersecurity and Journalist Safety: Digital journalists face significant cybersecurity threats, including hacking, doxxing, and government surveillance. Investigative journalists working on sensitive topics are particularly vulnerable. For example, journalists reporting on corruption in authoritarian regimes have been targeted through cyberattacks and online harassment.¹⁶

6. Declining Trust in Media: Public trust in journalism has declined due to political bias, misinformation, and the perception of media manipulation. Many readers struggle to distinguish credible sources from biased or unreliable ones, further exacerbating the issue. A 2021 Reuters Institute survey found that only 44% of people trust the news media, highlighting this growing problem.¹⁷

7. Information Overload and Short Attention Spans: With an overwhelming amount of content available online, readers often experience information overload, leading to shorter attention spans. Journalists must compete for audience engagement,

which sometimes results in oversimplification of complex topics or sensationalized reporting.¹⁸

8. Legal and Regulatory Challenges: Digital journalists often face legal hurdles, including censorship, defamation lawsuits, and government restrictions. In some countries, restrictive press laws hinder journalists from reporting freely, affecting press freedom and independent journalism.¹⁹ In India, defamation laws and sedition charges have been used against journalists reporting on sensitive political issues. For example, in 2020, several Indian journalists were booked under sedition laws for their coverage of the farmers' protests, raising concerns about press freedom.

9. Deepfake Technology and AI Manipulation: Advancements in artificial intelligence have made it easier to create deepfake videos and AI-generated misinformation, posing a significant challenge for journalists in verifying the authenticity of digital content. False narratives spread through manipulated media can mislead audiences and damage reputations.²⁰ In India, deepfake videos have been used to manipulate political narratives, such as the widely circulated deepfake of a political leader ahead of elections, misleading voters and distorting public perception.

10. Digital Divide and Accessibility: Not all audiences have equal access to digital journalism due to disparities in internet connectivity, digital literacy, and technological infrastructure. This digital divide creates an imbalance in information dissemination, limiting access for underprivileged communities.²¹ For instance, despite the government's push for digital inclusion, a 2021 report showed that over 50% of India's rural population still lacked access to the internet, widening the information gap between urban and rural communities.

V. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF DIGITAL JOURNALISM

Digital journalism is continuously evolving, and its future implications will shape the way news is produced, distributed, and consumed. Below are some key trends and potential developments:

1. **Increased Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Journalism:** AI tools will continue to play a crucial role in news gathering, content creation, and audience engagement. Automated journalism, such as AI-generated news reports, is expected to become more common, reducing human labor but also raising concerns about bias and accuracy.
2. **Greater Focus on Subscription-Based Revenue Models:** As advertising revenues decline, more media organizations will adopt subscription-based models. Paywalls and membership programs will become the norm, potentially limiting access to quality journalism for those unwilling or unable to pay.
3. **Enhanced Fact-Checking and Verification Technologies:** With misinformation on the rise, advancements in digital tools for fact-checking and verification will become critical. AI-driven tools and blockchain technology may be used to authenticate news sources and prevent the spread of fake news.
4. **Virtual and Augmented Reality in Storytelling:** Emerging technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) will redefine storytelling in journalism. Immersive news experiences may help audiences engage with complex issues in a more interactive manner.
5. **Decentralized Journalism and Citizen Reporting:** With the rise of decentralized platforms and blockchain-based journalism, independent journalists and citizen reporters may gain more prominence. This could lead to a more democratic media landscape but may also pose challenges in verifying the credibility of reports.
6. **Stricter Regulations and Policies on Digital Content:** Governments worldwide are likely to impose stricter regulations on digital journalism to combat misinformation and ensure responsible reporting. However, this could also lead to censorship concerns, especially in countries with limited press freedom.
7. **Personalization and AI-Driven News Curation:** With the increasing use of AI, personalized news feeds tailored to individual preferences will

become more sophisticated. While this enhances user experience, it may also reinforce filter bubbles and limit exposure to diverse perspectives.

8. **Ethical and Privacy Challenges:** As data-driven journalism grows, ethical concerns surrounding user privacy and data collection will intensify. News organizations will need to balance audience engagement with responsible data use.
- Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS



overcome the challenges faced by digital journalism, the following recommendations and strategies can be implemented:

1. **Strengthening Fact-Checking Mechanisms:** Media organizations should invest in AI-driven fact-checking tools and collaborate with independent fact-checkers to combat misinformation.
2. **Diversifying Revenue Streams:** News organizations should explore alternative revenue models such as crowdfunding, corporate sponsorships, and diversified advertising.
3. **Promoting Media Literacy:** Public awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate audiences on identifying fake news and understanding algorithmic bias.
4. **Enhancing Journalist Safety:** Stronger cybersecurity measures and policies should be implemented to protect journalists from digital threats.
5. **Encouraging Ethical Journalism:** News outlets should prioritize ethical reporting standards over clickbait and sensationalism to rebuild public trust.
6. **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Governments and private sectors should work together to improve

internet accessibility in rural and underserved areas.

7. Developing Regulatory Frameworks: Governments should create balanced regulations that promote responsible journalism without stifling press freedom.
8. Leveraging Emerging Technologies: News organizations should embrace AR, VR, and AI to enhance storytelling and audience engagement.

CONCLUSION

Digital journalism has revolutionized public discourse and policy-making in the 21st century, particularly for marginalized communities. Movements like BLM, LGBTQ+ rights advocacy, and anti-death penalty campaigns demonstrate the power of digital platforms in influencing legal and policy changes. However, challenges such as misinformation, online harassment, and government censorship must be addressed to ensure the continued impact of digital journalism. By implementing robust strategies such as fact-checking, cybersecurity, legal protections, and media literacy programs, digital journalism can continue to play a transformative role in shaping modern societies.

While digital journalism provides numerous benefits, including instant access to information, it also presents significant challenges. Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts from journalists, technology companies, and policymakers to ensure that journalism remains ethical, accurate, and financially viable. Looking ahead, technological advancements and regulatory changes will continue to shape the future of journalism, influencing how news is produced, distributed, and consumed.

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