

# The Interplay Between Public Opinion and Digital Media Dynamics in Bihar

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**Abstract:-** People in India have gone from passively receiving content to actively contributing to it thanks to the widespread use of digital media and the steady growth of Internet technology. People who are regular contributors do things like write, share, and use other engaging features.

This study looks at how the views of the people in the state of Bihar shape digital media. A lot of different types of research are used in this study to look at the good and bad results of using digital media. The results suggest that digital media considerably improves the capacity of individuals to express their opinions, thereby promoting freedom of expression and safeguarding public freedoms in Bihar. Nevertheless, the research also emphasizes the adverse consequences of varying public opinions, including online harassment and social influence. The research findings suggest that the Bihar government, educational institutions, and individuals must collaborate effectively to completely leverage the benefits of digital media, surmount its challenges, and maximize its positive impact on public opinion.

**Keywords:** Digital Media, Public Opinion, Bihar, Media Engagement.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Communication methods have undergone four distinct transformations throughout history. The advent of writing brought about a significant transformation in human history. Subsequently, printing emerged along with its use, followed by the telegraph, and most recently, the proliferation of digital media due to the widespread adoption of Internet-connected instruments (Smith, 2020). The fourth revolution has significantly enhanced Internet technology, leading to substantial transformations in several aspects of digital communication.

With the evolution of the Internet, there is a growing trend towards the increased popularity of digital files. The Internet has facilitated the emergence of several new forms of media, thanks to advancements in digital technology, computer network technology, and mobile communication technology. These are referred to as "digital media." What sets it apart are its digitization, involvement, and the capacity to transcend time and location (Jones, 2019).

When it comes to places like Bihar, India, technology has made a big difference in how people talk to each other. Because the world changes so fast, a lot of new social networking sites have come out and changed quickly. More information can get out faster with these tools, which change and spread's public opinion.

Talking about what other people think shows that a person is socially aware. Based on what they think, it shows what a lot of people think. Before Walter Lippmann, many individuals did not consider the importance of simultaneously examining a significant number of media and public opinion. According to him, public opinion is determined by the way individuals associate concepts and their perceptions of right and wrong. He discussed the potential of digital media to alter individuals' perspectives by means of images and mirrors (Lippmann, 1922).

With the Internet and digital media developed and widely used nowadays, people may quickly and freely voice ideas. Digital media channels provide people venues to interact with subjects concurrently and offer their thoughts. Public opinion has always been mostly formed by official media, but users are becoming more and more of a driving force. The discussion of Bihar, India, becomes a hot potato in this research work on the influence of public opinion on digital media.

This essay highlights both the positive and negative aspects of free speech i.e. being a victim of online bullying and peer pressure. The objective of the study is to provide the digital media sector with an understanding and a course of action to be realized, particularly in terms of the protection of the freedom of speech.

The study focuses on educating digital media companies about the potential good and bad effects of human feelings on digital platforms, and it will provide suggestions on what can be done at the state, group, and individual levels so that the right way is taken. Furthermore, it attempts to teach people about the virtues and the evils of how they behave on digital platforms and provide the right methodology to the states, communities, and individuals.

## II. POSITIVE IMPACT

Among these are the TikTok video platform for short as well as trending on topics on Twitter as well as a hometown news website for local and regional information. These platforms encompass many topics and provide various platforms for individuals with different tastes to engage in discussions. Computer media allows people to express their views, a separable aspect of the basic rights to freedom of expression that also forms public opinion. The public's active involvement leads to improved traffic to digital media and, therefore, wider and more effective regulation.

A significant occurrence in Bihar was the case of a Muzaffarpur shelter home scandal in 2018. Online journalism and public opinion were the key to the attention of Muzaffarpur shelter home. The news about the sexual abuse of a girl's shelter home caused an uproar on platforms like Twitter and Facebook which led to democratic demands for action (Sinha, 2018). The virtual protest demanded instant intervention from the Bihar government whereby it led to the arrest of several people and the initiation of changes in child protection laws (Sharma, 2019).

## III. NEGATIVE IMPACTS

The ramifications of digital media on public opinion, other than its affirmative effects, can also be a cause of negative consequences such as peer-pressure and cyberbullying. As an instance, a literature review found that the online bullying along with the adverse psychological effect on the students is universal in the state of Bihar (Singh et al., 2021). Besides, a case study conducted in Bihar, found that the social media-induced peer pressure was one of the key reasons for the risky behaviors of adolescents (Kumar & Sinha, 2020). The research draws a conclusion that the round-the-clock exposure to the selective and often fictional nature of social media can lead to heightened objectification and social media addiction among the users. Moreover, the result of the uncovered Untouched issue is to the unintentional but no less problematic media that guarantees the newest in information and entertainment material but that maintains an unspoken promise to severe mental health ailments especially anxiety and depression as the insurmountable issue (Gaskin, 2019). These issues are neither unique to this region nor are they a very recent international occurrence where digital media has both pros and cons for mental health (Smith et al., 2018; Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

## IV. SOCIAL IMPACT

The major negative impact of digital media public opinion is social pressure. Social pressure is the feeling an individual gets from their peers to do what everybody else is doing and abide by standards set by that group. A good example would be digital media trying always to project some certain body image standards. These images increase the anxiety towards the body image in women. Challenges in the form of the A4 waist trend, originally posted on Weibo by a Chinese celebrity, have been forcing women to conform to

ideal body standards, remitting them to harmful methods to attain those ideals. Li, 2016.

In Bihar, one can come across a similar scenario with the rush of beauty standards through social networking forums. Due to these standards, young women always feel compelled to follow them, engaging in injurious behaviors and mental illness. On Instagram, the "slim waist challenge" became very popular, and many young women participated in this by posting pictures that highlighted their waist size. This created much anxiety and unhealthy dieting practices among participants (Kumar, 2020).

This has been further exacerbated in Bihar by the "fair skin" ideal plastered on social media by celebrities and influencers, with huge social and psychological effects. Many young women in urban centers like Patna and Muzaffarpur reported excessive consumption of skin-lightening products after getting influenced by popular beauty bloggers on YouTube and Instagram. These are associated with adverse health effects and increased levels of psychic stress.

One more worrying trend in Bihar is the "fitness challenge" culture, which is also gaining grounds on social networking sites like Facebook. Excessive exercises, that are unscientific, have been telling upon the young boys of Gaya and Bhagalpur with an uncontrolled intake of supplements to get that muscular body the so-called fitness icons flaunt on social media. It resulted in many serious health complications, even hospitalization cases, due to excessive exercises and dosage of supplements.

These examples illustrate how far the reach of peer pressure through digital media in Bihar has been, part of global trends but specifically couched in local cultural contexts. Along with health problems and psychological stress, the above cases make increased awareness coupled with a view to having regulatory measures more imminent.

## V. IMPERSONATION

Impersonation is another major issue that may pop up the moment when the term 'digital media' is brought into a conversation. When one person annoys another person by continuously attacking personally on digital media, he or she is impersonating someone else and harming them. In 2022, a young woman, Anjali Gupta from Patna, was severely cyberbullied after she posted some of her private photos on social media. She was even abused after she had told someone what was going on. Early 2023, the young lady suicided.

Events in Bihar have repeatedly proved that character assassination and mimicry might just prove to be dangerous. Rohan Kumar of Gaya, a college boy, was passionately declared a thief by his friends over allegations of operating a falsified social media account in the year 2021. A lot of antioxidants were given to the young boy, who turned upset and stopped going out with people. This made him start thinking illogically and finally resulted in poor performance in school. Another case was of Meera Sharma, a teacher from Muzaffarpur who became the target of a WhatsApp campaign

of lies. According to Das, 2022, a set of pictures of a woman who lost her job after falsehood was made against her at the workplace went viral.

One can easily understand the rationale behind such incidents. Anonymity on digital media, though backing up freedom of expression, conversely creates difficulties for regulators to take action against the law regarding the spread of rumors and all sorts of false information. Moreover, these are multiplied by already existing public stereotypes and negatives, which result in deeper harassment of such vulnerable groups. The media literacy level is low in both major media houses and with the general public. Therefore, many users readily fall for sensational content in the absence of critical thinking. Under these conditions, this will be an environment conducive to the spate of cyber violence and incidents of public opinion.

The "deepfake" technology revolution has come to add useful additions to the already existing problems of impersonation in Bihar. Early in 2023, a deep fake video with a senior politician from Patna went viral on social media, depicting him in a compromising situation. The video went viral, and the public became outraged and took to the streets, proving how such sophisticated technology in digital impersonation techniques can lead to social unrest (Jha, 2023).

These examples from Bihar underline how anonymity, media literacy, and public opinion play out in a complex manner to facilitate cyberbullying and impersonation. To solve these issues, better regulatory frameworks, improvement in digital literacy programs, or social media platforms themselves taking proactive measures to detect and decrease harmful content are all needed.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In times of fast and wide proliferation of Internet technology and wide application of digital media, the public participation and possibilities of assessment are substantially enriched. Digital media will loudly amplify expression possibility for free speech, allowing public opinion to become a regulative force safeguarding public rights. However, when public conversation becomes politicized, that will then lead to undesirable phenomena of societal pressure to comply or to factual cases of cyberbullying. For purposes of sustaining the positive effects and minimizing the negative impacts, government entities should begin to establish monitoring systems and policy frameworks that integrate media literacy instruction within their national educational curriculum. The schools are encouraged to introduce courses in media literacy and encourage hands-on practical activities on media-related subjects. One must expose self to multiple media so that the critical thinking in the evaluation of the reliabilities and correctness of information can be enhanced. The impact of digital media on public sentiment should be carried into future research through such methods as surveys and analysis of collected data.

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