

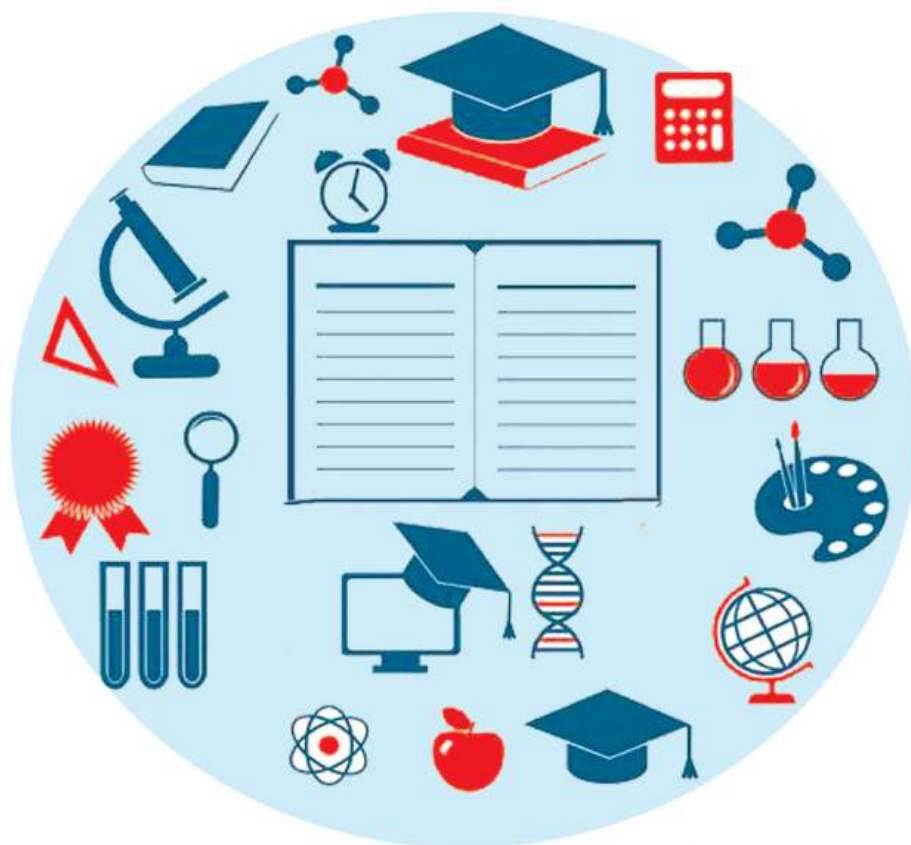
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Conference Proceedings

**Growing Regional Voices
Indian Regional Languages in Creator Economy
TMV-JMC National Conference 2025**

21 AND 22 JAN 2025



MARCH 2025

Editorial Board

Conference Proceedings

TMV-JMC National Conference 2025

“Growing Regional Voices:

Indian Languages in the Creator Economy”

January 21–22, 2025

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TMV-JMC National Conference 2025

Growing Regional Voices
Indian Languages in Creator Economy

Jan 21 and 22, 2025

Organised by
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

Day 1: Jan 21, 2025

9.30 am to 10 am	Registration	
10 am to 11.30 am	Inaugural Session	Hon. Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and other dignitaries "Empowering Regional Voices in the Digital Landscape" Key Note Address by Vinayak Pachalag <i>Creator, entrepreneur, digital strategist</i>
12 noon to 1.30 pm	Session 1	"Content Creation: From concept to success" Speakers: Omkar Jadhav and Shardul Kadam <i>Founders, Amuk Tamuk Podcast Network</i> Rohit Konkane <i>Podcaster and Strategist</i>
2.15 pm to 3.30 pm	Technical Session 1	Research papers by students
3.30 to 4.30 pm	Session 2	"Creator Labour Precarity" Speaker Dr. Smit Mehta <i>Researcher and Asst Professor</i> <i>Rejksuniversiteit Groningen, The Netherlands</i>
4. 45 pm to 6 pm	Panel Discussion	"Economic Model of Content Creation" Panelists: Niranjan Medhekar <i>Podcaster and entrepreneur</i> Swapnil Narke <i>Digital Marketing Specialist</i> Mukta Chaitanya <i>Social Media Analyst</i>

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Day 2: Jan 22, 2025

9.30 am to 10 am	Networking	
10 am to 11.30 am	Session 3	<p>"Local Stories, Global Impact: Indian Languages in the Digital Creator Space"</p> <p>Speaker: Prof. Dr. Uma Shankar Pandey <i>Associate Professor, Surendranath College for Women, Kolkata</i></p>
12 noon to 1.30 pm	Technical Session 2	<p>Research papers by faculty and research scholars</p> <p>Chairperson: Prof. Dr. Keshav Sathaye</p>
2.15 pm to 3.30 pm	Technical Session 3	<p>Research papers by faculty and research scholars</p> <p>Chairperson: Prof. Dr. Keshav Sathaye</p>
4 pm to 5.30 pm	Valedictory Session	<p><i>Hon. Vice Chancellor and other dignitaries</i></p> <p><i>"Influencers, creators, celebrities - The changing face of India's media and entertainment business "</i></p> <p>Valedictory address by Vanita Kohli-Khandekar <i>Senior business journalist and author</i></p>

Venue: Indutai Tilak Auditorium, Library Building 3rd Floor.

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Mukund Nagar, Gultekadi, Pune

Growing Regional Voices

Indian Regional Languages in Creator Economy

TMV-JMC National Conference 2025

Concept Note

Introduction

India, a land of linguistic diversity, is witnessing a rapid rise of the creator economy. While initially English language dominated the digital space not before long it had to give way to a flood of content in Indian regional languages (IRL in short) and dialects. Regional language creators understood the burgeoning opportunity to harness the power of the digital medium to reach a wider audience and foster cultural richness.

The content and the presenters quickly appealed to the audiences. What they found the most appealing was the fact that the presenters not only spoke their language, they also shared the same socio-cultural space. The audiences felt an emotional connect with the presenters turning some creators into stars, influencers and entrepreneurs. Lists of Top 10 Marathi/Bengali/ Tamil are being made, their success stories are becoming popular making the creators even more popular. Between them the IRL creators cover a vast range of topics right from cookery to finances to politics. To them goes the credit of taking such topics to the masses.

The TMV-JMC National Conference 2025 aims to explore the intersection of the creator economy and Indian regional languages, it attempts to decode the content, dig deep into the audience psyche, and also intends to chronicle the development of IRL content, document its impact and further identify the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for growth.

Objectives

To understand the current landscape of the creator economy in India, with a specific focus on Indian regional languages.

To identify the potential of Indian regional languages in driving the creator economy.

To discuss the challenges faced by regional language creators and explore solutions.

To formulate strategies for promoting and supporting regional language content creation.

To gauge the social, political and cultural impact of IRL content in the digital media.

The broad thematic areas that will be covered in the conference are as follows:

1.The Rise of Regional Language Content:

Analyzing the growth of regional language content on various platforms.

Identifying the most popular content formats, genres, topics and creators.

Understanding the audience demographics and preferences.

2. Opportunities and Challenges:

Exploring the potential of Indian regional languages in reaching untapped markets.

Discussing the challenges faced by Indian regional language creators, such as lack of resources, technology, and audience.

Identifying opportunities for monetization and sustainable livelihoods.

3. Leveraging Technology:

Exploring the role of technology in content creation, distribution, and monetization.

Discussing the use of AI and machine learning for content creation and language translation.

Identifying the need for digital infrastructure and internet connectivity in rural areas.

4. Policy and Support Systems:

Analyzing existing government policies and initiatives supporting regional languages and the creator economy.

Identifying gaps and recommending policy changes.

Discussing the role of educational institutions and cultural organizations in promoting regional languages.

5. Building a Sustainable Ecosystem:

Exploring the potential of collaborations between content creators, platforms, advertisers, and policymakers.

Discussing the importance of audience development and community building.

Identifying opportunities for creating sustainable business models for regional language content.

Expected Outcomes

A comprehensive understanding of the creator economy landscape in the context of Indian regional languages.

Development of actionable recommendations for policymakers, platform providers, and creators.

Creation of a platform for networking and collaboration among stakeholders.

Increased awareness of the potential of regional languages in driving economic growth and cultural preservation.

Navigating the Creator Economy:

Mr. Vinayak Pachlag

Creator, Entrepreneur,
Digital Strategist

In a recent talk, Vinayak Pachlag, a prominent figure in the creator economy, shared his insights on the evolution of content creation, the importance of distribution, and the role of trust in building a successful media presence. Drawing from his extensive experience, he provided a comprehensive overview of the shifts in content consumption patterns and the challenges faced by aspiring influencers and media professionals. The Evolution of the Creator Economy Pachlag began by reflecting on his journey in the creator economy, noting that he considers himself a "grandfather" of this evolving landscape. He traced the origins of the creator economy back to significant milestones, such as the introduction of affordable smart phones by companies like Micromax in 2014 and the widespread availability of free internet through Jio in 2016. These developments shifted content consumption from traditional screens to personal mobile devices, marking the beginning of a new era in media. He categorized the creator economy into generations, highlighting how the first generation of influencers emerged around 2017-2018, primarily focusing on entertainment and sketches.

As regional language content gained traction in 2019-2020, the landscape evolved further, with influencers blending information and entertainment—what he termed "infotainment." The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift, making digital content consumption a necessity for many. While mentioning the importance of distribution and discovery, Pachlag opined that the distribution always play a critical role in the creator economy. He emphasized that while "content is king," distribution is "God." He explained that even established media channels invest heavily in distribution to reach their audiences, and aspiring influencers must leverage platforms like YouTube and Instagram to gain visibility. Pachlag pointed out that YouTube is the second-largest search engine globally, making it essential for creators to understand how to optimize their content for discovery. He noted that without effective distribution, even the best content can go unnoticed. This understanding of algo-

rhythms and audience behavior is crucial for anyone looking to succeed in the digital space. Building trust and authenticity, trust emerged as a central theme in Pachlag's discussion. He stressed that influencers must cultivate trust with their audiences, as this is the foundation of their credibility. He shared his own experience of avoiding brand endorsements for the first five years of his channel to build that trust. Pachlag warned that once trust is broken, it is challenging to regain, making authenticity vital for long-term success. He also addressed the misconception that being an influencer is a quick path to wealth. While some influencers may earn substantial incomes, Pachlag urged aspiring creators to consider their motivations and the sustainability of their careers. He highlighted the importance of having a clear purpose or "why" behind their content creation efforts.

As technology continues to advance, Pachlag discussed the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on content creation. He acknowledged that while AI tools can assist in generating content, the final 5%—the human touch—remains essential. He cautioned that relying solely on AI could lead to a loss of authenticity and trust, emphasizing the need for creators to maintain their unique voice and perspective.

Pachlag concluded his talk by encouraging aspiring influencers to adopt a long-term perspective. He reminded them that the digital landscape is constantly evolving, and success requires adaptability and resilience. By understanding the dynamics of the creator economy, focusing on distribution, building trust, and leveraging technology wisely, creators can navigate the challenges ahead. In a world where content consumption patterns are rapidly changing, Pachlag's insights serve as a valuable guide for anyone looking to make their mark in the creator economy. As the landscape continues to evolve, those who prioritize authenticity, trust, and strategic distribution will be best positioned for success.

“Content Creation: From Concept to Success” Insights from

Omkar Jadhav

Shardul Kadam

Founders, Amuk Tamuk Podcast Network

Rohit Kokane

Podcaster and Strategist

In the conference, we had the privilege of hearing from three dynamic professionals in the podcasting and content creation space: Omkar Jadhav, Shardul Kadam, and Rohit Kokane. Each of them brought unique perspectives and experiences that shed light on the evolving landscape of media and the importance of regional voices in podcasting.

The Journey of Amuk Tamuk, Omkar and Shardul began their presentation by sharing their personal journeys, emphasizing that the creation of Amuk Tamuk was not a spontaneous decision but rather a culmination of their experiences in the media industry. Omkar recounted his early days as an intern at Bhardipa, where he honed his skills in content creation and eventually became the content head. His passion for storytelling and content led him to seek new opportunities, ultimately leading to the formation of Amuk Tamuk with Shardul. Shardul shared his background in marketing and research, highlighting the importance of understanding market dynamics and audience behavior. He emphasized that successful content creation requires a blend of creativity and business acumen. Together, they recognized a gap in the Marathi podcasting space and decided to create a platform that would resonate with local audiences.

The Importance of Content Creation both Omkar and Shardul stressed the significance of content creation as a serious profession. They likened it to navigating the crowded Mumbai local trains—essential yet challenging. Omkar noted that while many aspire to be influencers, true impact comes from genuine content creation. He emphasized that the reach and influence of content must be earned through dedication and hard work. The duo also discussed the importance of understanding the audience's journey in content consumption. They highlighted the need to know when, why, and where audiences engage with

content. This understanding is crucial for crafting relevant and impactful narratives. Crafting the Amuk Tamuk Experience As they delved deeper into their journey, Omkar and Shardul shared insights into the operational aspects of Amuk Tamuk. They emphasized the importance of planning and discipline in content creation. Before launching their first video, they meticulously planned their content calendar and ensured they had a clear vision of their goals. They also discussed the significance of adaptability in the ever-evolving media landscape. The duo recognized that while they started with a focus on audio podcasts, their strengths lay in video content. This realization led them to pivot towards video podcasts, leveraging their expertise in the medium.

A key takeaway from their discussion was the importance of audience engagement. Omkar and Shardul shared how they actively sought feedback from their viewers and used it to refine their content. They emphasized that understanding audience positioning is vital for creating meaningful connections and fostering trust.

Rohit Kokane added to the conversation by sharing his own journey in podcasting. He highlighted the significance of regional voices and the emotional connection they create with audiences. Rohit emphasized that podcasting is not just about sharing information; it's about fostering genuine conversations that resonate with listeners. The Future of Podcasting as the discussion progressed, the trio explored the future of podcasting in India. They acknowledged the rapid growth of the medium and the increasing demand for diverse content. Rohit pointed out that while video content is on the rise, audio remains a powerful tool for storytelling and connection. The speakers encouraged aspiring podcasters to embrace their unique voices and share their stories. They emphasized that the journey of content creation is not just about achieving success but also about enjoying the process and making a positive impact on others. In conclusion, the insights shared by Omkar Jadhav, Shardul Kaddam, and Rohit Kokane at the conference provided valuable perspectives on the evolving landscape of podcasting and content creation. Their emphasis on authenticity, audience engagement, and adaptability serves as a guiding light for aspiring creators. As the podcasting industry continues to grow, the importance of regional voices and meaningful conversations will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the future of media. The journey of Amuk Tamuk is a testament to the power of collaboration, creativity, and a genuine passion for storytelling. As they continue to navigate the dynamic world of podcasting, their commitment to delivering impactful content will inspire many in the industry.

Panel Discussion: Economic Model of Content Creation

Niranjan Medhekar

Podcaster and entrepreneur;

Swapnil Narke

Digital Marketing Specialist

Mukta Chaitanya

Social Media Analyst

In a recent panel discussion, industry experts gathered to explore the evolving landscape of content creation and its potential as a reliable source of income. The event featured esteemed guests, including Mr. Niranjan Medhikar, Mr. Swapnil Narke, and Mrs. Mukta Chaitanya, who shared their insights on the various economic models that underpin the creator economy. The rise of Content Creation as a Career Content creation has emerged as a viable career path for many, with creators earning through diverse models such as platform revenue sharing, customer sales, brand sponsorships, and crowd funding. The panelists emphasized that while many individuals enter the field with the intention of making money, true success often stems from passion and dedication to the craft. Mr. Niranjan Medhikar, an assistant journalist and founder of Sound Great, a Pune-based podcast production company, highlighted his extensive experience in the industry. With 17 years under his belt, he has hosted popular podcasts like "Marathi Crime Katha" and has a deep understanding of crime novels and psychological thrillers. Mr. Swapnil Narke, an established marketing strategist with over 15 years of experience, discussed his role in leading digital transformations for healthcare institutions. His expertise in omni channel marketing and data-driven strategies has made him a respected figure in the field. He also serves as a faculty member at top business schools in Pune. Mrs. Mukta Chaitanya, a freelance writer and researcher with 20 years of experience, shared her journey as a passionate trainer and traveler. As a founder member of Cyber matra, she has conducted training workshops across various platforms, emphasizing the importance of digital well-being. The Economic Model of Content Creation The discussion delved into the economic aspects of content creation, with a focus on how creators can monetize their work. The panelists agreed that while making money is a significant motivation, it should not be the sole reason for entering the field. Passion for content creation is essential for long-term success. As Mr. Medhikar pointed out, the primary

motivation for many creators is to share their passion and knowledge.

However, he acknowledged that the financial aspect cannot be ignored. The panelists discussed the importance of consistency and dedication in building a successful content creation career. They emphasized that creators must be willing to invest time and effort into their craft to see meaningful returns. The Role of internet penetration Mr. Narke introduced the concept of internet penetration, explaining how it has dramatically increased in India over the years. In 2011, only 10% of the population had internet access, but that number has now risen to approximately 60-65%. This surge in internet users has created a vast audience for content creators, making it an attractive field for those looking to monetize their work. He noted that even if a creator does not initially seek financial gain, the growing number of internet users means that advertisers will inevitably seek to reach these audiences. As a result, content creators will benefit from this increased demand for advertising, even if they do not actively pursue it.

The Importance of Quality Content the panelists stressed that quality content is crucial for success in the creator economy. While many may view content creation as an easy way to make money, the reality is that it requires significant effort and skill. Consistency, creativity, and a deep understanding of the audience are essential components of successful content creation. Mrs. Chaitanya shared her experience in the podcasting space, emphasizing the need for creators to focus on delivering valuable content. She highlighted that while financial success is important, the joy of creation and the impact of the content should be the primary motivators.

As the discussion concluded, the panelists encouraged aspiring content creators to embrace the opportunities available in the creator economy. They emphasized the importance of finding a niche, understanding the audience, and being adaptable in a rapidly changing landscape. The insights shared during the panel discussion provided valuable perspectives on the economics of content creation, highlighting the potential for success when passion and dedication are combined with strategic thinking. As the creator economy continues to evolve, those who prioritize quality content and audience engagement will be well-positioned to thrive in this dynamic field.

In summary, the panel discussion underscored the importance of viewing content creation as a serious profession, one that requires commitment, creativity, and a willingness to adapt to the ever-changing digital landscape.

The Rise of the Creator Economy in India: A New Age of Communication and Opportunity-

Dr. Uma Shankar Pandey

Associate Professor

Surendranath College for Women, Kolkata

In the hyper connected world of today, how we communicate, express, and earn has been entirely revolutionized. At the center of this revolution is the ‘creator economy’—a virtual ecosystem where people leverage technology to share ideas, entertain, teach, and create livelihoods. India, with its cultural diversity and growing digital reach, is becoming one of the world's leaders in this new world.

Communication has always been central to human life. From spoken words to written texts and visual expressions, our need to connect, share, and tell stories define us. Today, thanks to mobile phones, the internet, and artificial intelligence (AI), the nature and reach of communication have evolved dramatically. While AI is perceived to threaten work, in real life, it functions as an enabler. It helps content creators perform tasks ranging from scriptwriting and video editing to audience preference analysis. In this new digital world, technology complements human creativity and not substitutes it.

A Journey through Economies: From Farms to Phones

Human economies have always developed. We started with agriculture, went through the Industrial Revolution, adopted a service-oriented model, and entered the knowledge economy during the late 20th century. Today, we are experiencing the emergence of the ‘creator economy’. This new economic paradigm is driven by low-cost smartphones, cheap internet, and universal digital literacy—even in rural and semi-urban pockets. Today, a homemaker in a tier-3 town or a farmer in a small village can be a content creator, go global, and monetize on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Mojo.

India: A Perfect Launch pad for Creators

India's distinct strengths provide it with fertile soil for the creator economy:

1. **Mass Rural Market:** Over two-thirds of India's revenues are generated in rural areas, where internet penetration is increasing very fast.
2. **Diversity of Language:** Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, and numerous other regional languages' content currently rules the digital space.
3. **Cheap Internet:** Having some of the world's lowest mobile data prices, internet penetration in India is very much democratized. This is an environment where creative individuals from all spheres of life are able to connect with a multitude of people.

Content Creation: A Two-Way Street

The days when newsrooms, studios, or production houses were the only ones dictating what people viewed or read are long gone. Content creation today is heavily shaped by audience comments, engagement rates, and social media trends.

Indian content creators such as 'Bhuvan Bam', 'Ashish Chanchalani', and 'Nisha Madhulika' have achieved huge audiences by producing relevant, high-quality, and locally flavored content. Their success illustrates how story-telling, coupled with consistency and knowledge of audience requirements, can be very effective.

What Does It Take to Be a Successful Creator Today?

Consistent Content:

Uploading content regularly ensures visibility and trust. Reliability: Content representing local cultures and day-to-day life is more relatable.

Platform Savviness:

It's all about how algorithms and trends operate. Authentic Storytelling: Real emotions and personal anecdotes draw loyal fans.

Storytelling: The Heart of Human Connection

Fantastic content is not about great graphics or great tunes. It's about sharing a story that evokes people. Whether it's a comedy skit, a recipe tutorial, or an inspirational speech, what binds most together is the narrative behind it. From village-based cooking shows in Tamil Nadu to tech reviews in local languages, Indian creators are employing storytelling to create strong emotional bonds with viewers.

Even with the boom, the creator economy is not without challenges:

Audience Retention: With increasing competition, creators have to innovate continuously.

Legal and Ethical Issues: Ownership of content, copyright, and misinformation are becoming increasing issues.

Platform Dependence: Platform policies or algorithm shifts can affect visibility and income overnight.

Nevertheless, the opportunities outweigh the challenges by far. Resilient, flexible, and authentic creators continue to succeed.

The creator economy is a strong move away from the traditional way of people connecting, communicating, and earning. It enables any person with a voice, a story, or a skill to develop a community and generate value. In order to thrive in this arena, one needs to: do what they love, believe in their uniqueness, be consistent and adaptable, prioritize deep connections over viral popularity.

As tech keeps developing, the creator economy will only expand. But through the algorithms and metrics, the essence of content creation is still the same: genuine human stories. And in a country like India, where there are millions of stories yet to be heard, the journey has just begun.

.Vanita Kohli Khandekar

Senior Business
Journalist and Author

Vanita Kohli-Khandekar, an esteemed journalist, columnist, and author, has been a keen observer of the Indian media and entertainment industry for over two decades. Writing for leading publications like Business Standard and Singapore-based Content Asia, and hosting her video podcast Beyond the Box on Film Companion, Vanita has established herself as a leading voice in the field. Her books—The Indian Media Business and The Making of Star India—are acclaimed works that offer deep insights into the evolution of India's media landscape.

In a recent discussion, she shared her perspective on the changing dynamics of the Indian media industry, especially focusing on the creator economy and its profound impact.

India's media and entertainment sector has traditionally reflected the country's demographic size and socio cultural diversity. With its market size of almost ₹2.1 trillion (USD \$27 billion), it ranks among the world's largest in audience reach. But the industry contributes less than 1% to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which indicates a contradiction between economic size and influence. The sector has registered immense change in recent times, especially post-2020, due to tech disruption, consumption patterns influenced by the pandemic, and the proliferation of digital content creation platforms. Pre-pandemic, the Indian M&E sector was registering growth. Traditional forms such as newspaper, television, and cinema commanded consumption of the media. Pandemic, though, unleashed unprecedented disruption. Print circulation fell 70%, and industry revenues fell to levels not seen since 2016. This decline was a mirror of an international trend, as consumer habits changed to favor digital and on-demand content. The industry has been recovering since 2021, though with a reoriented emphasis towards hybrid and digital-first. Language is a significant factor in determining media consumption in India. Hindi, which is understood by close to 500 million individuals, still holds sway over popular media, including television, print, and film. In the last ten years, consumption of regional language content has seen a significant surge. Telugu,

Tamil, Malayalam, and Marathi languages are becoming increasingly popular through films and online portals. The popularity of regional cinema such as ‘Munjya’ and the growth of Malayalam and Marathi content on digital platforms mark a paradigm shift. Not only does this regionalization democratize content, but also enables more complex representations of local cultures and stories, thereby increasing media's social and geographical reach. The video streaming age, led by platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar, has radically reshaped content viewing in India. Hindi-language web series like ‘Inside Edge’ and ‘Sacred Games’ broke the trend by targeting city-based, internet-enabled audiences. Streaming services have introduced new ways of watching—on-demand, personalized, and mobile—thus dissolving distinctions between national and regional markets. But though they are growing fast, regional language streaming ecosystems are still underdeveloped compared to their Hindi counterparts. Localized streaming services and dubbing/subtitling of regional content are the next frontier for inclusive digital growth.

One of the most revolutionary shifts in India's media scenario has been the growth of the creator economy. Digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and ShareChat have enabled solo content creators to create direct relationships with the audience. This creator-centric media co-exists with conventional professional media, creating two parallel ecosystems:

1. Professional Media:

Conventional forms like movies, television series, and web series produced by well-established studios and media houses.

2. Creator-Led Media:

Content created by independent individuals or small groups using digital platforms and tools. These creators are not entertainers alone; they are influencers who influence consumer behavior, political beliefs, and social trends. As media analyst Vanita Kohli-Khandekar points out, creators in industries such as agriculture, construction, and education are reaching niche audiences—previously unreachable through traditional advertising.

Although the creator economy has opened up access and innovation in content creation, it presents great regulatory and ethical challenges.

Conventional media institutions function within established legal frameworks that impose accountability, editorial control, and ethical adherence. Content creators, on the other hand, tend to function in a less regulated context, raising issues of misinformation, quality of content, and consumer protection. In addition, the incorporation of AI algorithms and big data analytics into content recommendation systems poses difficult ethical issues. Content personalization based on behavioral data can produce echo chambers and shape public opinion without sufficient transparency or protection.

The Indian M&E sector stands at the cusp of change. Regional language content is redefining audience interaction, streaming services are redefining access, and the creator economy is pushing the limits of influence. These signs point to a transition from mass to micro—a shift from centrally-created, homogenous content to heterogeneous, decentralized stories.

But for long-term growth, policy measures must be taken to create regulatory parity between media types, provide assurance of content authenticity, and protect user information. Media literacy education and ethical principles for digital platforms are necessary to reconcile innovation with responsibility. India's media and entertainment sector is a dynamic, changing industry that mirrors the country's cultural diversity, technological progress, and democratic spirit. As Marshall McLuhan once quipped, "All media are extensions of human senses." Media, in our time, is not just expanding our sensory reality but also transforming our economic and cultural realities. From the transition of traditional narration to algorithm-based content curation is a path yet to be walked—and India's media space is poised to guide this evolution across the Global South.

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Government Policies and Initiatives Supporting Indian Regional Languages Content and the Creator Economy

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the role of government policies and initiatives in supporting the development and promotion of Indian regional language content, and their influence on the growing creator economy. With the digital revolution empowering individuals to generate and share content, regional language content has gained significant traction, bridging cultural and linguistic divides. The paper explores key government strategies, such as initiatives under the National Policy on Education (NPE), Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), and Digital India, which foster content creation in diverse regional languages. It further investigates the challenges faced by regional content creators, including digital literacy, access to technology, and market reach. The study highlights the intersection of language, technology, and entrepreneurship, providing insights into how government efforts can stimulate innovation in the regional creator economy. The findings offer policy recommendations for enhancing support for regional language creators to ensure a more inclusive, diverse, and sustainable digital content ecosystem.

Keywords:

Government policies, regional languages, content creation, creator economy, Digital India, digital literacy, language diversity, entrepreneurship, National Policy on Education, content creators, regional content, technology access.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rise of digital platforms and social media has fundamentally transformed how content is created, consumed, and monetized. The creator economy—an ecosystem where individuals produce and distribute content independently—has emerged as a global phenomenon. India, with its rich cultural diversity and a vast array of regional languages, is uniquely positioned to contribute significantly to this economy. The rapid proliferation of internet access, the advent of affordable smartphones, and the surge in digital literacy have made it possible for millions of individuals, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, to participate in the content creation process. However, a significant gap remains between the dominant languages like Hindi and English and the regional languages in terms of content availability, reach, and monetization potential.

The Indian government has recognized the critical role that language plays in shaping the nation's digital landscape. Over the past decade, several initiatives have been launched to bridge the digital divide, promote regional language content, and empower creators from non-metropolitan areas. These initiatives are part of broader policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Education (NPE), Digital India, and the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), all of which emphasize improving digital infrastructure, enhancing digital literacy, and promoting content creation in vernacular languages. These government efforts aim to support linguistic diversity while also encouraging entrepreneurship and economic participation in the digital world.

Despite the government's support, regional language creators still face numerous challenges. Issues such as limited access to advanced technology, the digital divide, and a lack of structured training in content creation and monetization methods continue to impede growth. Furthermore, there is often a mismatch between the content that creators produce and the platforms that can effectively distribute this content to target audiences. These gaps highlight the need for a more robust policy framework that not only encourages content creation in regional languages but also supports creators in monetizing their efforts sustainably.

This paper seeks to explore the intersection of government policies, regional language content, and the creator economy. It examines how govern-

ment initiatives have fostered an environment conducive to the growth of regional language content and what further steps can be taken to overcome the existing challenges. By analyzing key government schemes, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how policy can help unlock the potential of the regional creator economy, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and diverse digital content ecosystem.

Through a detailed exploration of existing policies, this study also offers an analysis of the emerging trends within India's creator economy, focusing on how regional language content is shaping the future of digital entrepreneurship in the country. The research further emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive ecosystem for regional creators, one that promotes innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability while ensuring that India's linguistic diversity is celebrated and preserved in the digital age.

The research will not only examine the governmental perspective but also delve into the experiences of regional content creators who are at the heart of this transformation. By identifying their challenges, successes, and needs, the paper aims to contribute valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders to better support the growth of regional language content and the creator economy in India.

1. The Rise of Regional Language Content in India

As internet access becomes increasingly widespread, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, a larger share of India's population is coming online. This new digital demographic prefers to consume content in their native languages, creating a surge in demand for regional language content. A 2021 KPMG report projected that internet users preferring Indian languages would surpass English-language users, highlighting the need for a multilingual internet landscape.

Recognizing the opportunity, the Indian government and digital platforms are investing in policies, programs, and initiatives to promote regional languages. These efforts are key to making the internet more inclusive and supporting local content creators who can address this demand.

2. Government Policies Promoting Indian Languages

a. National Language Translation Mission (NLTM)

The NLTm was introduced by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in 2021 as part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The mission aims to break language barriers in education, healthcare, e-governance, and justice by providing translation and localization resources.

The project focuses on using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to translate content into Indian languages. By creating datasets and building translation tools, the NLTm empowers regional content creation, making information accessible in languages that are often underrepresented online.

b. BharatNet Initiative

BharatNet, India's ambitious rural broadband project, seeks to connect India's villages to high-speed internet. This initiative has a direct impact on the consumption and creation of regional language content by providing connectivity to rural areas, where the majority of regional language speakers reside.

Through BharatNet, the government aims to empower content creators from rural areas, enabling them to create and share content in their native languages. This initiative not only expands the audience base for regional content but also fosters a creator economy in underserved areas.

c. Digital India Program

The Digital India program, launched in 2015, aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society. It has multiple components, including skill development and digital literacy, which benefit regional content creators by offering resources and training.

Digital India also prioritizes the localization of online services and applications, encouraging Indian language content on government portals, e-governance platforms, and digital education resources.

d. Prasar Bharati's Digital Push

Prasar Bharati, India's public broadcaster, has taken steps to digitize and promote Indian language content. Through initiatives like YouTube channels in multiple languages, Prasar Bharati is helping bring regional stories, news, and

cultural content to the digital realm, which reaches the Indian diaspora as well.

This initiative provides content creators with platforms for regional storytelling and helps make local voices more accessible to wider audiences.

3. Government Support for the Creator Economy

a. Atmanirbhar Bharat and the Creator Economy

The Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) mission promotes home-grown digital platforms and services, encouraging Indian entrepreneurs to build products for India’s local markets, including regional language platforms.

Initiatives under this mission offer funding, technical support, and incentives for startups and creators working in regional languages, giving them the tools they need to expand their audiences.

b. Indian Language Internet Alliance (ILIA)

Supported by MeitY, the ILIA is a coalition of tech companies and government bodies aimed at promoting the Indian language internet ecosystem. The alliance advocates for digital tools and platforms that support regional language content, helping creators and businesses reach Indian language users.

ILIA's collaborations with tech companies have led to the development of Indian language keyboards, search tools, and AI-enabled content moderation in local languages, which enhance content creation and accessibility.

c. E-commerce and Digital Payment Initiatives

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and other digital payment initiatives have made online transactions more accessible in regional languages, benefiting regional language creators who use these platforms for monetization.

With the increased accessibility of e-commerce and digital payments, content creators in local languages can engage with and sell to their audiences more efficiently, helping to monetize their efforts and create a sustainable income stream.

4. Training and Skill Development for Regional Content Creators

a. Digital Literacy Programs

Through the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) and other digital literacy programs, the government is educating citizens on digital skills. These programs help regional creators acquire the technical skills needed to create, publish, and promote digital content.

This emphasis on digital literacy extends to local languages, making it easier for creators from diverse linguistic backgrounds to participate in the creator economy.

b. Support for Regional Language Tech Startups

To encourage tech innovation in regional languages, the government offers financial and logistical support to Indian startups focused on natural language processing (NLP) and AI-driven translation services. These startups enable regional language creators by providing tools that help them publish and promote content effectively.

5. The Impact and Future Potential

The government's commitment to supporting Indian regional languages and the creator economy is fostering an inclusive digital ecosystem where creators from diverse linguistic backgrounds can thrive. This not only boosts local content consumption but also strengthens India's linguistic heritage and cultural diversity.

Looking ahead, the integration of advanced AI and NLP technologies promises to further enhance regional language support. For instance, speech-to-text and automatic dubbing tools in regional languages could open up new avenues for creators, making content more accessible to all.

6. Cultural Impact and Regional Identity through IRL Content

The growing demand for IRL content is not just about meeting the language preferences of audiences but also about reflecting their unique cultural identities. As regional content continues to thrive, it allows for the promotion

and preservation of diverse local cultures, traditions, and languages. This deepens the emotional connection between content creators and their audiences, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. Content such as local folklore, regional cuisines, festivals, and music can empower communities to showcase their heritage while connecting to global audiences. For example, Tamil and Marathi language films, music, and web series are gaining significant traction not only in India but also internationally, reflecting the power of regional cultural exports.

Businesses that support and invest in content that celebrates local identity will not only contribute to preserving cultural diversity but also tap into a market that values authenticity. By offering content that speaks to the audience's heritage, brands can build stronger, more loyal customer bases.

7. Leveraging Data Analytics for Enhanced Content Strategy

As content consumption shifts towards regional languages, data analytics plays a crucial role in shaping content strategies that are both relevant and appealing to the target audience. By analyzing user behaviour, viewing patterns, and engagement metrics, digital platforms can better understand the preferences of their regional audiences. This allows content creators to tailor their offerings to meet specific demands, ensuring that regional language content resonates deeply with viewers.

For example, platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime use sophisticated algorithms to recommend regional films and series based on past viewing preferences. Similarly, content creators can use data insights to predict trending topics, allowing them to stay ahead of the curve and produce content that meets the audience's evolving tastes.

Moreover, businesses can use this data to fine-tune their marketing and advertising strategies, ensuring they reach the right demographic with the right content at the right time.

8. Government Support and Policy Framework for IRL Content

As the demand for regional language content grows, government intervention can further catalyze the development of sustainable IRL content models. India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting can help by creating a

favourable policy environment that incentivizes regional content creation and distribution. For example, providing grants and subsidies to independent filmmakers, writers, and content creators can encourage more people to explore regional storytelling.

Additionally, government initiatives can promote regional language content on a national and global scale by facilitating collaborations between regional content creators and international distribution networks. This can help create global recognition for local talents while providing creators with new avenues for monetization.

Collaborations with telecom companies can also help provide affordable data packages that support the growing consumption of IRL content, further democratizing access to high-quality regional language content.

9. Building Cross-Regional Collaboration for Expanding Audience Reach

While regional language content primarily caters to specific linguistic groups, there is significant potential for cross-regional collaboration. Content creators, brands, and platforms can partner across linguistic and cultural boundaries to create content that appeals to a broader audience. For instance, cross-regional collaborations in film, music, and television can help bring regional stories and perspectives to national and international platforms. Such partnerships can lead to the creation of multilingual content, allowing creators to tap into markets beyond their immediate linguistic reach. For example, a Marathi web series could be dubbed or subtitled in Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada, increasing its potential audience base and enabling it to reach viewers across multiple states in India.

Regional collaborations can also create joint marketing campaigns that target audiences from various backgrounds, thus leveraging a broader demographic while maintaining authenticity and relevance to each cultural group.

10. The Role of Social Impact in IRL Content Creation

IRL content has the potential to go beyond entertainment and education to drive social change. Regional language content can amplify voices from marginalized communities, raising awareness on important issues such as gender equality, mental health, rural development, and environmental sustainability.

ty. Creators who produce content addressing social issues in native languages can foster community empowerment and spark meaningful conversations. For example, a YouTube creator from rural India discussing sustainable farming practices in Hindi can educate and inspire millions of farmers across the country. Similarly, regional TV shows highlighting mental health issues in Kannada or Marathi can provide much-needed awareness to local communities where such topics are often stigmatized.

This socially impactful content model not only creates positive change but also helps content creators connect with audiences on a deeper emotional level, leading to increased trust and loyalty.

11. The Future of Artificial Intelligence and Automation in IRL Content

Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are transforming the landscape of IRL content creation. AI tools for content generation, voiceovers, and dubbing in regional languages are making it easier for creators to produce high-quality content at scale. Automated translation tools are improving rapidly, enabling content to be localized efficiently for different dialects and regions. This helps break down barriers and makes it easier for creators to share their work with audiences from across the country and the world.

AI-powered editing software and content recommendation systems are also making it easier for creators to curate their work and optimize distribution. For example, AI can predict what content is likely to engage the target audience based on previous interactions, allowing creators to adapt and refine their strategies to increase viewership and engagement.

As these technologies evolve, they will further streamline the process of content creation and distribution, allowing regional creators to scale their work and reach audiences more effectively.

The evolution of IRL content presents immense opportunities for both creators and businesses, enabling them to reach diverse audiences across India's varied linguistic and cultural landscape. By focusing on local content, fostering collaborations, and leveraging emerging technologies, businesses can create a sustainable and thriving ecosystem for regional content, which not only supports economic growth but also preserves and celebrates India's rich cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the rapid growth of the digital ecosystem in India has provided unprecedented opportunities for individuals to participate in content creation, leading to the emergence of the creator economy. However, the full potential of this economy, particularly in the context of regional languages, has yet to be fully realized. This research highlights the crucial role that government policies and initiatives play in promoting regional language content, empowering creators, and fostering economic participation. The Indian government has made significant strides in supporting this transformation through initiatives like Digital India, the National Policy on Education (NPE), and the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), which have contributed to improving digital literacy and access across diverse linguistic communities.

Despite these efforts, regional content creators continue to face several challenges, including limited access to advanced digital tools, inadequate monetization opportunities, and insufficient training in content creation. The digital divide between urban and rural areas, compounded by disparities in technological infrastructure and digital literacy, remains a major barrier. Furthermore, while regional language content is thriving in certain niches, it still struggles to find widespread visibility and reach on mainstream platforms. These challenges underscore the need for a more holistic and supportive ecosystem that not only fosters content creation but also ensures that creators have the resources, training, and platforms to succeed.

The findings of this study suggest that a multi-pronged approach is needed to address these issues. Policymakers must continue to invest in improving digital infrastructure, enhancing regional language content on digital platforms, and developing more inclusive and accessible training programs for creators. Furthermore, there is a need for better collaboration between the government, technology companies, and regional content creators to build platforms that cater specifically to regional languages, providing a more equitable space for creators to thrive.

As the creator economy continues to evolve, government policies must adapt to support new business models, monetization strategies, and technological advancements that are relevant to regional language content creators. Initiatives should also focus on bridging the skills gap by providing content creators with knowledge about content marketing, audience engagement, and

digital entrepreneurship, thereby empowering them to turn their creative efforts into sustainable businesses.

The regional creator economy holds the potential to significantly contribute to India's digital future, driving both economic and cultural growth. By promoting linguistic diversity and providing a platform for regional voices to be heard, the government can help shape an inclusive digital ecosystem that not only reflects India's rich cultural heritage but also ensures that creators from every part of the country can thrive. As digital content creation continues to expand, policies must evolve to keep pace with technological advancements, ensuring that regional creators are equipped to navigate and capitalize on the evolving digital landscape.

Ultimately, the success of the regional language content ecosystem in India will depend on the collaborative efforts of the government, industry stakeholders, and the creators themselves. By fostering an environment of innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, India can build a vibrant, diverse, and thriving creator economy that supports the growth and recognition of regional languages on a global scale.

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Presence of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi in the Digital Space

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Abstract

Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi, key varieties spoken in Vidarbha region of the State of Maharashtra, are thriving in the digital space, bridging traditional oral culture with modern technology. This study examines their representation across platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, alongside contributions from regional cinema and mobile apps. Data analysis highlights content categories such as comedy, lifestyle, tourism, education, and political discourse, with creators like Neha Thombre and Phoenix Academy Wardha gaining significant traction.

Films like Naal showcase authentic Varhadi Marathi, while tools like the Varhadi Bible cater to cultural and religious contexts. Messaging platforms further enhance these varieties' presence, enabling informal communication and cultural exchange.

This research emphasizes how Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi use digital media to preserve linguistic identity, promote cultural richness, and engage wider audiences, reflecting the potential of regional varieties to thrive in the era of digital transformation.

Keywords:

Varhadi Marathi, Nagpuri Marathi, digital media, regional varieties, Vidarbha, linguistic identity.

1. Introduction

Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi are two significant varieties of the Marathi language spoken in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. According to the 2011 Census of India, Marathi, as a broader linguistic entity, is the mother tongue of over 83 million people, making it one of the most widely spoken languages in the country. Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi, as prominent regional varieties, are predominantly spoken in districts like Akola, Amravati, Nagpur, Buldhana, Chandrapur, Gondia, Bhandara, Yawatmal and Wardha. These varieties are known for their unique linguistic features, including distinctive phonetic, syntactic, and lexical characteristics (Mhaiskar 2016, 2020, Pandharipande 2003), which set them apart from Standard Marathi.

The geographical distribution of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi aligns with the cultural and linguistic identity of the Vidarbha region. While Standard Marathi has gained prominence as the language of education, administration, and media in Maharashtra, these varieties retain their vitality in everyday communication, folk traditions, and regional arts. This grassroots presence has started finding expression in the digital space, where regional content creators are increasingly using Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi to engage with audiences. The promotion of regional languages and mother tongues has gained renewed focus under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of preserving linguistic diversity. The NEP advocates for primary education in mother tongues and regional languages, reinforcing the cultural and linguistic identity of children. For Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi speakers, this policy underscores the need to document and promote their varieties in educational resources, digital content, and mainstream media. This approach not only aligns with the cultural heritage of Vidarbha but also creates opportunities to bring these varieties to wider audiences.

The entry of Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi into popular culture has been evident through television shows, films, and online content. Shows like Chala Hava Yeu Dya, Fu Bai Fuand Maharashtrachi Hasya Jatra have become platforms where regional varieties, including Varhadi, are celebrated. Actors like Bharat Ganeshpure, a prominent face of Marathi comedy, have popularized Varhadi Marathi through his performances, adding humour and relatability to the dialect's portrayal. These shows bring the essence of Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi to millions of viewers, creating a connection between urban and rural Maharashtra.

Similarly, Marathi cinema has embraced the cultural ethos of Vidarbha in movies like Naal (2018). This critically acclaimed film, set in a rural Vidarbha backdrop, captures the linguistic nuances of the region, with characters speaking in authentic Varhadi. The success of such films demonstrates the audience's appetite for stories rooted in local cultures and languages.

The digital space has further amplified the reach of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi. Content creators on platforms like YouTube and Instagram are using these varieties to produce relatable and entertaining videos, resonating with younger audiences. Podcasts, memes, and blogs are other avenues where Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi is finding new relevance.

As regional varieties carve their space in mainstream media and digital platforms, Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi exemplify how linguistic diversity can thrive in a connected world. By blending traditional cultural expressions with modern digital tools, these varieties continue to enrich the Marathi linguistic landscape.

2. Objectives

- i.To analyze the demographic reach and representation of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi in digital media.
- ii.To study the content strategies and audience engagement employed by creators using these varieties.

3. Methodology

Data collected from online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, regional cinema, and mobile applications. And were analyzed for their content focus, audience engagement, and representation of these varieties. The analysis focused on two main aspects: linguistic and content. Linguistic analysis identified phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features unique to Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi. Content analysis evaluated audience metrics, such as views and subscriber counts, and examined the themes and authenticity of the varieties' representation.

A comparative approach highlighted the distinctiveness of these varieties compared to Standard Marathi

This methodology offers a comprehensive understanding of how Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi are adapting and thriving in the digital era, emphasizing their cultural and linguistic identity.

4. Linguistic Analysis of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi

4.1. Reduplication

One of the key linguistic features in Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi is the use of reduplication, where the base form of a word is repeated with a slight modification. This phenomenon is observed in forms like bigad-gigad ([b~g]), where the first part of the word undergoes phonetic variation for emphasis.

Reduplication often serves to intensify or modify the meaning of the root word, making it more expressive and adding an emotional or emphatic tone to the speech.

4.2. Preverbal Negative Construction

Another notable feature is the preverbal negative construction, which is unique to Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi. The sentence A pottepanyatnokojauuwa-padtindoksyat demonstrates the preverbal negation structure. This construction involves placing the negating word "noko" (not) before the verb phrase, creating a syntactic pattern that is distinctive to these dialects. It highlights how Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi speakers employ preverbal negation to express absolute or definitive negation, in contrast to Standard Marathi, which typically uses post-verbal negation.

4.3. Progressive Marker -rah

The use of -rah as a progressive marker is another distinguishing feature. This marker indicates the ongoing nature of an action, similar to the use of the present progressive tense in English. The example radunraylaasanbhandan gin jhalaasan demonstrates this grammatical structure:

The marker -rah (in its variant asan) attaches to the verb to signify the ongoing, incomplete nature of the action. This usage of the progressive marker reflects a fluidity in time expression in the dialect, where the action's continuity is emphasized through specific morphological changes.

5. Representation of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi in the Digital Space

Platform	Name/Channel	Content Type	Subscribers/Followers	Videos/Posts	Notable Details	Links
YouTube	Neha Thombre	Comedy, Lifestyle	110K	637	5.2M views on one video; notable videos include <i>Bigad-gigad</i> and <i>A pottepanyatnokojaau wapadtindoksyat</i> .	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7ju8cj5NHU
	YFP Film	Comedy reels	164K	119	Focus on humor and relatable content in regional language.	https://www.youtube.com/@Yfpfilm
	Phoenix Academy Wardha (Nilesh Karale)	Educational, political speeches	1.06M	1.6K	Covers a range of educational topics, especially political awareness, with a significant regional following.	https://www.youtube.com/@phoenixacademywardhanitesh6253/shorts
Facebook	Vijay Khandare Page	Comedy reels, lifestyle	491K	Reels	Popular for humorous and relatable videos in Varhadi Marathi.	https://www.facebook.com/vijaykhandareofficial/reels/
Instagram	Neha Thombre	Comedy, Lifestyle	145K	1168	Personal Instagram showcasing Varhadi content.	nehathombre
	Vidarbh. kida	Lifestyle, tourism, comedy reels	27.2K	654 posts	Focuses on historical places, tourism, dance edits, and lifestyle content.	vidarbh.kida
Marathi Movies	<i>Naal</i> (2018) <i>Naal</i> (2023)	Drama Drama	31.3 crore Worldwide 19 Lac	N/A	Highlights the emotional bond between a child and his mother, incorporating authentic Varhadi	Movie
			in 10 Days		dialect.	
Mobile App	Varhadi Bible	Religious texts	50+ Downloads	N/A	The Bible written in Varhadi style, catering to religious readers in the region.	app

6. Type of Content

Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi, primarily oral varieties, have limited presence in formal domains dominated by Standard Marathi but thrive on social media.

Comedy and humour dominate, with creators like Neha Thombre and YFP Film producing relatable content featuring regional humor and expressions.

Platforms like vidarbh.kida promote lifestyle and tourism, showcasing Vidarbha's cultural richness.

Educational and political content, delivered by channels like Phoenix Academy Wardha, make complex topics accessible in local varieties.

Films like Naal integrate Varhadi Marathi for authentic storytelling. Social media's audio-video formats provide a dynamic space for preserving and popularizing these varieties , ensuring cultural continuity and accessibility.

7. Notes on Emerging Trends

The increasing use of messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook groups has contributed to the growing presence of Varhadi/Nagpuri Marathi in digital communication. These platforms are widely used to share jokes, cultural anecdotes, poetic expressions, and conversational messages in these varieties.

8. Conclusion

The digital presence of Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi highlights the evolving role of these varieties in bridging traditional oral communication with modern technology. While Standard Marathi remains dominant in formal domains like education and administration, Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi have carved a niche in informal and creative spaces such as social media, regional cinema, and messaging platforms.

Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are pivotal in amplifying the reach of these varieties , with creators producing relatable content that resonates with diverse audiences. Comedy and humor domi-

nate, while lifestyle, tourism, educational, and political content showcase the cultural and intellectual depth of the Vidarbha region. Films like Naal and mobile apps like the Varhadi Bible further reinforce the cultural authenticity and linguistic significance of these varieties.

Emerging trends on WhatsApp and Facebook groups indicate the varieties growing relevance in everyday digital communication, preserving their identity in informal exchanges. Varhadi and Nagpuri Marathi exemplify how regional varieties can thrive in the digital era, emphasizing their cultural richness and linguistic diversity while creating pathways for wider recognition and preservation.

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Fostering Linguistic Heritage: The Role of Educational Institutions and Cultural Organizations in Promoting Regional Languages

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ABSTRACT

The preservation and promotion of regional languages are pivotal to maintaining cultural diversity and fostering a sense of identity among communities. This research paper explores the significant roles played by educational institutions and cultural organizations in revitalizing and sustaining regional languages. Educational institutions act as vital platforms for language education, developing structured curricula that integrate regional languages and offering specialized programs to train educators in these languages. Meanwhile, cultural organizations contribute through workshops, festivals, and initiatives aimed at engaging the community and creating interest in linguistic heritage. The paper examines case studies highlighting collaborative efforts between academia and cultural bodies, showcasing how policies like the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) in India encourage bilingual and multilingual education to strengthen linguistic diversity. It also discusses challenges such as the digital divide and resource constraints, proposing strategies for innovation, such as leveraging technology for digital preservation and dissemination of regional languages. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for synergy among stakeholders to ensure the vibrancy and longevity of regional languages in the face of globalization.

Keywords:

Regional languages, educational institutions, cultural organizations, linguistic heritage, NEP 2020, multilingual education, language preservation.

INTRODUCTION:

The preservation and promotion of regional languages is a cornerstone of cultural identity and diversity. In a world increasingly dominated by global languages, the role of regional languages becomes pivotal in ensuring the survival of indigenous knowledge, traditions, and cultural values. Educational institutions and cultural organizations play a vital role in nurturing and promoting regional languages, acting as custodians of this invaluable heritage. These entities serve not only as mediums for imparting education but also as platforms for fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride among communities. Educational institutions are at the forefront of this movement, embedding regional languages into their curricula, facilitating academic research, and encouraging linguistic proficiency among students. Through structured programs, literary activities, and collaborations, these institutions cultivate an environment where regional languages thrive. On the other hand, cultural organizations complement these efforts by hosting festivals, workshops, and seminars, ensuring the active engagement of the public with their linguistic roots. Together, they contribute to the revitalization of endangered languages and the dissemination of cultural richness across generations.

In the context of globalization, where uniformity often overshadows diversity, the synergy between educational institutions and cultural organizations is indispensable. Their collective efforts not only safeguard linguistic diversity but also bridge cultural gaps, fostering a deeper understanding of the regional ethos. By doing so, they contribute to nation-building, strengthening the cultural fabric of society while maintaining global relevance.

Importance of Promoting Regional Languages through Educational Institutions and Cultural Organizations

The promotion of regional languages holds immense significance in preserving the cultural, social, and intellectual diversity of a nation. In the context of globalization, where linguistic homogenization is often a byproduct of economic and cultural exchanges, the importance of sustaining regional languages has become more pronounced than ever. Educational institutions and cultural organizations serve as the primary drivers of this mission, ensuring that regional languages do not become relics of the past but thrive as living entities.

1. Preservation of Cultural Identity

Languages are the bedrock of cultural identity. Regional languages encapsulate the history, traditions, and ethos of a community. Promoting them fosters a sense of pride and belonging, allowing individuals to stay connected to their roots. Institutions and organizations play a critical role in safeguarding these intangible heritages for future generations.

2. Transmission of Indigenous Knowledge

Regional languages often serve as repositories of indigenous knowledge, including folk medicine, local governance, agriculture, and oral traditions. Educational institutions and cultural organizations act as bridges for transmitting this knowledge to younger generations, ensuring its survival and relevance in modern contexts.

3. Strengthening Social Cohesion

The promotion of regional languages nurtures inclusivity and unity within a community. By celebrating linguistic diversity, these efforts help break down societal barriers, fostering harmony and mutual respect among people of different linguistic backgrounds.

4. Enriching Linguistic Diversity

Linguistic diversity is as vital to humanity as biodiversity is to nature. Each regional language contributes to the global tapestry of communication, thought, and expression. Institutions and organizations dedicated to promoting these languages ensure the survival of this diversity, countering the threats posed by dominant global languages.

5. Enhancing Educational Outcomes

Research suggests that children learn better when taught in their mother tongue or regional language. Educational institutions that incorporate regional languages into their pedagogy provide a strong foundation for cognitive and emotional development, particularly in early childhood education.

6. Boosting Employment and Economic Opportunities

The promotion of regional languages can open up economic opportunities in fields such as translation, publishing, media, tourism, and cultural industries. By equipping individuals with linguistic skills in regional languages, institutions and organizations contribute to their employability and economic empowerment.

7. Revitalizing Endangered Languages

Many regional languages are on the brink of extinction due to neglect and the dominance of global languages. Initiatives led by educational and cultural entities are crucial for revitalizing these endangered languages, ensuring they remain a vibrant part of the linguistic ecosystem.

8. Supporting National Unity and Heritage

A nation rich in linguistic diversity is better positioned to represent its pluralistic identity. Promoting regional languages strengthens national unity by recognizing and valuing the contributions of all linguistic communities to the nation's heritage.

9. Encouraging Creative Expression

Regional languages offer unique ways of thinking and expressing ideas. By promoting them, institutions and organizations encourage creativity in literature, arts, and media, enriching the cultural landscape.

10. Facilitating Policy Advocacy and Global Dialogue

Efforts to promote regional languages often intersect with policy-making and advocacy. Institutions and organizations play a pivotal role in influencing policies that protect linguistic rights and promote regional languages on national and international platforms.

By emphasizing the importance of regional languages, educational institutions and cultural organizations not only preserve linguistic heritage but also contribute to building an inclusive, diverse, and culturally vibrant society. Their efforts are instrumental in striking a balance between embracing global trends and safeguarding local identities.

Objectives

The research paper aims to explore the multifaceted roles of educational institutions and cultural organizations in promoting regional languages. The specific objectives include:

1. To analyze the role of educational institutions in integrating regional languages into formal education systems, including curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and co-curricular activities.
2. To evaluate the contributions of cultural organizations in preserving and popularizing regional languages through events, literature, art, and media.
3. To investigate the impact of these initiatives on the cultural identity and linguistic proficiency of communities.
4. To examine successful case studies and models where collaboration between educational institutions and cultural organizations has led to significant advancements in regional language promotion.
5. To identify challenges and barriers faced by these entities in their efforts to preserve and promote regional languages.
6. To recommend strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of educational and cultural initiatives in promoting regional languages in the age of globalization.
7. To assess the role of technology in supporting the efforts of educational and cultural organizations, particularly in the creation of digital resources and online platforms for regional languages.
8. To highlight the significance of policy frameworks and government support in empowering these institutions to achieve their goals.

Significance of the Study

The study of the role of educational institutions and cultural organizations in promoting regional languages is of profound importance in today's globalized world, where the dominance of a few major languages often marginalizes regional and minority languages. This study holds significance for multiple reasons, as outlined below:

1. Addressing Linguistic Erosion

Many regional languages are on the verge of extinction due to reduced usage, lack of documentation, and the preference for globally dominant languages like English. This study sheds light on how educational and cultural entities can play a proactive role in reversing this trend, ensuring these languages are not only preserved but also actively used.

2. Enhancing Educational Equity

Regional languages often serve as the medium of communication for marginalized communities. Promoting these languages in education ensures that children from such communities have access to quality education in their mother tongue, thereby enhancing learning outcomes and reducing the educational divide.

3. Strengthening Cultural Heritage

Regional languages are carriers of rich cultural traditions, folklore, and indigenous knowledge. The study emphasizes the importance of preserving this heritage and explores the means by which institutions can pass it on to future generations, fostering a sense of cultural pride.

4. Encouraging Multilingualism

By promoting regional languages alongside global ones, this study supports the development of multilingual individuals who can navigate both local and global contexts. Multilingualism is an asset that enhances cognitive skills, communication, and cultural understanding.

5. Policy Formulation and Implementation

This study provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners. It highlights best practices and successful models that can inform the development of effective policies to integrate regional languages into education and cultural programs.

6. Contribution to National Development

Languages are integral to the socio-economic development of a nation. Promoting regional languages can boost tourism, media, and cultural industries, contributing to economic growth while enhancing national identity.

7. Encouraging Community Engagement

The study underscores the role of community participation in preserving languages. It explores how institutions can involve local communities in their initiatives, fostering a collective sense of responsibility toward linguistic heritage.

Literature Review

1. Role of Educational Institutions

Educational institutions are widely recognized as primary agents in the promotion of regional languages. Several studies have highlighted the integration of regional languages into the curriculum as a critical strategy. For instance:

UNESCO's Reports on Education emphasize the importance of mother tongue-based multilingual education, citing improved learning outcomes and cognitive development when children are taught in their first language.

Mohanty (2009) explored the role of regional languages in Indian education and pointed out that the absence of adequate regional language instruction in schools often leads to linguistic alienation among students.

Benson (2004) reviewed bilingual education models worldwide, demonstrating that regional language inclusion fosters literacy and numeracy, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

2. Role of Cultural Organizations

Cultural organizations have been instrumental in preserving and popularizing regional languages through creative and community-driven approaches. Relevant studies include:

Fishman (1991) introduced the concept of "Reversing Language Shift," highlighting the crucial role of cultural movements and organizations in revitalizing endangered languages.

Srivastava (2018) documented the role of Indian cultural festivals like Jashn-e-Rekhta in promoting Urdu, demonstrating how events can rekindle interest in regional languages.

Crystal (2000) emphasized the impact of media and literature promoted by cultural organizations in keeping languages alive, particularly through digital storytelling and publishing.

3. Challenges in Regional Language Promotion

Numerous challenges in promoting regional languages have been identified in the literature, including lack of funding, inadequate teacher training, and the overshadowing presence of global languages. Key references include:

Pattanayak (1981), who discussed the socio-economic and political barriers to implementing regional language education policies in multilingual nations.

Romaine (2006) examined global language hierarchies and their impact on regional language vitality, urging the need for grassroots efforts.

4. Collaborative Models of Education and Culture

Several studies have highlighted the synergy between educational institutions and cultural organizations:

Hinton and Hale (2001) presented successful models of language revitalization through community-based initiatives that integrate cultural practices into educational frameworks.

Hornberger (2008) introduced the "Continuum of Biliteracy" model, emphasizing the interconnected roles of formal and informal educational platforms in promoting linguistic diversity.

5. Role of Technology in Language Preservation

The literature also explores the impact of technology in bridging gaps:

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) discussed how digital tools and online platforms are revolutionizing the way regional languages are taught and documented.

O'Hagan (2012) explored the role of crowdsourcing in the creation of digital resources for less widely spoken languages, highlighting the importance of cultural organizations in leveraging technology.

Literature Review in the Indian Context

India is a linguistically diverse nation with 22 scheduled languages and hundreds of regional and tribal languages. The promotion and preservation of these languages are crucial for maintaining India's cultural and linguistic heritage. Various studies and initiatives have explored the role of educational institutions and cultural organizations in this endeavour. This section reviews the relevant literature within the Indian context.

1. Educational Institutions and Regional Languages National Language Policies

The Three-Language Formula, introduced in the National Education Policy of 1968 and reinforced in the NEP 2020, emphasizes the teaching of regional languages alongside Hindi and English.

Agnihotri (2009) analyzed the implementation of this formula, highlighting its success in promoting linguistic diversity in southern and northeastern states but pointing out challenges like inadequate teacher training and resistance in certain regions.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Mohanty (2006) studied multilingual education in India, emphasizing the importance of mother-tongue instruction in improving literacy and educational outcomes, especially for tribal and marginalized communities. His research showed that students taught in their regional language in early grades performed better academically.

Annamalai (2001) investigated the integration of regional languages into the school curriculum and found that while urban schools leaned toward English-medium education, rural schools were more inclined to use regional languages, fostering inclusivity and cultural connection.

Role of Universities

Universities in India, such as Banaras Hindu University, Osmania University, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, have dedicated departments for regional languages. Sethuraman (2010) highlighted the role of these institutions in conducting research, publishing regional literature, and organizing language-centric conferences to promote linguistic scholarship.

**2. Cultural Organizations and Regional Languages
Preservation and Revival Initiatives**

The Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, has been instrumental in promoting regional literature by publishing works in various Indian languages and organizing literary events. Rajan (2015) documented how the Akademi's translation and awards programs have brought lesser-known regional languages into the national spotlight.

The Bhasha Research Centre, founded by Ganesh Devy, has played a significant role in documenting tribal and endangered languages. Devy's People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) is a landmark initiative that maps and documents the linguistic diversity of India.

Festivals and Events

Events like Jashn-e-Rekhta (for Urdu) and Kerala Literature Festival (for Malayalam) highlight the role of cultural organizations in celebrating regional languages. Kumar (2017) emphasized that these festivals create spaces for dialogue and public engagement, thus revitalizing interest in regional languages among younger audiences.

Digital and Media Platforms

Cultural organizations like Prasar Bharati and private entities have used digital platforms to promote regional languages through regional language TV channels, radio programs, and online content. Gupta (2019) analyzed the role of All India Radio in promoting regional languages and folk traditions through programs tailored to local audiences.

3. Government Initiatives

Language Preservation Schemes

The National Translation Mission (NTM), part of the Ministry of Education, works to translate knowledge resources into regional languages. Chandramouli (2018) evaluated its impact, noting that it has improved access to higher education materials for non-English speakers.

The Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL) by the Ministry of Education aims to document and preserve India's endangered languages. Devy (2011) argued that such initiatives are crucial for sustaining linguistic diversity, especially in tribal areas.

Support for Cultural Institutions

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and the National School of Drama (NSD) have actively supported projects that incorporate regional languages into performing arts and visual storytelling. Nair (2014) highlighted how these organizations bridge the gap between language and culture through innovative programming.

4. Challenges in the Indian Context

Socio-Economic Pressures

Pandit (1989) discussed how the growing preference for English-medium education among urban elites marginalizes regional languages, creating a divide between rural and urban populations.

Endangered Languages

India is home to many endangered tribal languages. Mishra (2012) examined the challenges faced in preserving these languages due to urban migration and lack of institutional support.

Technology Divide

While technology has been a boon for many regional languages, Sundar (2020) pointed out that digital initiatives often fail to reach remote communities due to infrastructural gaps.

5. Collaborative Efforts

The National Mission on Manuscripts (NMM) collaborates with universities and cultural organizations to preserve manuscripts in regional languages. Sharma (2016) emphasized the importance of these collaborations in bridging academic research with cultural preservation.

Private-public partnerships, such as the one between Google and Indian organizations for digitizing regional language content, were highlighted by Mehta (2019) as transformative for regional language accessibility.

Trends and Challenges in Promoting Regional Languages

Trends

1. Increased Focus on Multilingual Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has rejuvenated interest in multilingual education, emphasizing the importance of teaching in the mother tongue or regional language up to at least Grade 5. This policy trend aligns with global research on the benefits of mother-tongue-based education for cognitive and emotional development.

2. Digital Technology and Regional Languages

The rise of digital platforms has democratized access to regional language content. Platforms like YouTube, regional OTT channels, and social media are increasingly hosting content in languages like Tamil, Bengali, and Marathi, catering to diverse audiences.

Tech companies such as Google and Microsoft have integrated regional language support into their products, enabling users to interact with technology in their preferred languages.

3. Growth of Regional Media and Literature

Regional cinema, television, and publishing are experiencing a renaissance. Movies in regional languages are gaining international recognition (e.g., RRR for Telugu cinema), and regional literature is being translated into other languages, increasing its reach.

4. Community-Based Language Revitalization

Grassroots movements and community-driven initiatives are gaining momentum. Organizations like Bhasha Research Centre are actively documenting and revitalizing endangered languages, particularly among tribal communities.

5. Rise of Regional Language Learning Apps

Mobile applications like Duolingo, HelloTalk, and Indigenous platforms are offering courses in Indian regional languages, fostering interest among non-native speakers and diasporic communities.

6. Cultural Events and Festivals

Literary festivals, film festivals, and cultural events dedicated to regional languages are growing in popularity. Events like Jashn-e-Rekhta (Urdu), Kolkata Literary Meet (Bengali), and Kerala Literature Festival (Malayalam) are bringing languages to the forefront of cultural discourse.

Challenges

1. Dominance of English and Global Languages

English continues to dominate as the preferred medium of education, business, and social mobility, creating a bias against regional languages. This often leads to regional languages being perceived as less valuable.

2. Urbanization and Migration

Urbanization and migration to cosmopolitan cities result in reduced usage of regional languages among younger generations. Families often switch to the dominant language of the region or English for convenience.

3. Insufficient Resources and Infrastructure

Schools and colleges often lack trained teachers, textbooks, and other resources for teaching regional languages effectively. This gap is more pronounced in tribal and rural areas.

4. Endangered Languages

Several tribal and minority languages are at risk of extinction. According to the People's Linguistic Survey of India, over 220 Indian languages have disappeared in the last 50 years, and many more are critically endangered.

5. Lack of Policy Implementation

Despite policies like the Three-Language Formula and the NEP 2020, implementation remains inconsistent across states. Political, social, and logistical challenges hinder the integration of regional languages into mainstream education.

6. Technological Divide

While digital technology offers opportunities, rural and tribal areas often lack internet access or familiarity with digital tools, leaving these communities out of the regional language revival movement.

7. Economic Pressures

Parents often perceive regional languages as limiting career prospects compared to English, leading to reduced emphasis on teaching these languages at home or in schools.

8. Translation and Accessibility Gaps

A significant body of knowledge in science, technology, and higher education is unavailable in regional languages, creating a barrier for students who study in their mother tongue during early education but face challenges at higher levels.

9. Social Stigma

Speaking in regional languages is sometimes associated with being uneducated or unsophisticated in urban and elite circles, creating a social stigma that discourages their use.

10. Fragmentation within Regional Language Communities

Dialects within the same language often create divisions, complicating efforts to standardize and promote the language at a broader level.

Research Gap

Despite significant efforts in promoting regional languages, several gaps persist in the existing body of research:

1. Limited Studies on the Implementation of Policies

While policies like the Three-Language Formula and NEP 2020 have been introduced, there is insufficient empirical research on their effectiveness and ground-level implementation across diverse regions.

2. Inadequate Focus on Tribal and Endangered Languages

Research on mainstream regional languages like Hindi, Tamil, and Bengali is abundant, but there is a lack of studies addressing the challenges faced by tribal and endangered languages.

3. Overemphasis on Formal Education

Most studies focus on the role of educational institutions, neglecting the contributions of non-formal educational setups, community-based initiatives, and cultural organizations in promoting regional languages.

4. Insufficient Examination of Digital Interventions

The role of digital platforms in promoting regional languages has gained momentum, but research on their impact, challenges, and sustainability remains limited.

5. Lack of Comparative Studies

There is a dearth of comparative analyses between India and other linguistically diverse countries, which could offer valuable insights into best practices for language promotion.

6. Neglect of Socio-Cultural Dynamics

The socio-cultural factors influencing the decline or resurgence of regional languages, such as urbanization, migration, and social stigma, are not adequately explored.

7. Economic Impact Analysis

Few studies analyze the economic implications of promoting regional languages, such as their role in job creation, tourism, and cultural industries.

Future Directions for Promoting Regional Languages

Promoting regional languages requires a forward-looking approach that integrates traditional methods with innovative strategies to address current challenges and adapt to evolving societal needs. Here are some potential future directions:

1. Policy Reforms and Strategic Implementation

Strengthening Policies:

Revise policies such as the Three-Language Formula and ensure alignment with the NEP 2020, emphasizing implementation at the grassroots level.

Local Governance Involvement:

Delegate more authority to local institutions to design and implement region-specific language promotion programs.

Incentivizing Regional Language Education:

Offer scholarships, awards, and employment opportunities for students pursuing education in regional languages.

2. Integration of Technology

Digital Resources Development:

Create and promote apps, e-books, audiobooks, and online courses for learning regional languages.

AI and Language Translation:

Invest in AI-based translation tools to bridge communication gaps and increase the accessibility of regional languages.

Digital Archives:

Develop comprehensive digital archives for regional literature, folk tales, and historical documents.

3. Curriculum Innovation

Regional Language as a Medium of Instruction:

Expand the use of regional languages as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools.

Skill-Based Programs in Regional Languages:

Introduce vocational courses in regional languages to connect language learning with employability.

Inclusion in Higher Education:

Mandate the inclusion of regional language courses in universities and technical institutions.

4. Strengthening Cultural Organizations

Collaborative Projects:

Foster partnerships between cultural organizations, NGOs, and educational institutions to co-create impactful programs.

Community Engagement:

Conduct festivals, workshops, and competitions to celebrate regional languages and encourage active community participation.

Global Outreach:

Promote regional languages internationally by organizing cultural exchange programs and participating in global cultural festivals.

5. Leveraging Media and Popular Culture

Regional Content Creation:

Encourage filmmakers, writers, and artists to produce content in regional languages for television, cinema, and online platforms.

Use of Social Media:

Employ social media campaigns to reach younger audiences and create awareness about the importance of regional languages.

Gamification:

Develop interactive games and quizzes in regional languages to attract digital natives.

6. Grassroots Initiatives

Community-Led Language Schools:

Support community-driven efforts to establish informal language schools in rural and tribal areas.

Preserving Oral Traditions:

Record and document oral traditions, folk songs, and storytelling practices to keep them alive for future generations.

7. Research and Development

Linguistic Studies:

Invest in research to study the evolution, usage patterns, and socio-economic impacts of regional languages.

Language Preservation Projects:

Develop projects focusing on endangered regional languages to document and revive them.

Data Analytics in Policy Making:

Use big data and analytics to assess the effectiveness of language policies and adapt them accordingly.

8. Awareness and Advocacy

Public Campaigns:

Run awareness campaigns emphasizing the cultural and historical significance of regional languages.

Engage Influencers:

Involve local and national influencers to advocate for the use of regional languages.

Educational Workshops:

Conduct workshops for parents, teachers, and policymakers on the importance of preserving linguistic heritage.

9. Financial Support

Increased Funding:

Allocate higher budgets for language promotion initiatives in both educational institutions and cultural organizations.

Public-Private Partnerships:

Encourage collaborations between governments and private entities to fund large-scale language preservation projects.

10. International Collaboration

Global Showcasing:

Exhibit regional languages at international forums and cultural festivals to enhance their global visibility.

Cross-Border Research:

Collaborate with linguistic experts and researchers globally to share knowledge and best practices for language preservation.

CONCLUSION

The role of educational institutions and cultural organizations in promoting regional languages is pivotal in preserving cultural heritage, fostering linguistic diversity, and empowering communities. This study has highlighted the multifaceted challenges and opportunities associated with language promotion efforts in India, underscoring the importance of a coordinated approach to address these issues effectively.

Regional languages face significant hurdles, including inconsistent policy implementation, limited financial resources, socio-cultural biases, and a digital divide that impedes access to language learning resources. However, these challenges are not insurmountable. By adopting a proactive stance, embracing innovative strategies, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, educational institutions and cultural organizations can play a crucial role in reversing language decline and revitalizing regional languages.

Future directions for promoting regional languages include strengthening language policies, integrating regional languages into mainstream education, enhancing digital resources, and fostering community involvement. Additionally, recognizing the economic and cultural value of regional languages and aligning promotion efforts with contemporary global trends can enhance their relevance and appeal.

Collaboration between government bodies, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and communities is essential to create a supportive environment that encourages language learning and usage. By leveraging technology, enhancing curriculum frameworks, and engaging local communities, the sustainable promotion of regional languages can be achieved.

In conclusion, while the path to revitalizing regional languages is fraught with challenges, the commitment of all stakeholders to work collaboratively and innovate offers a promising future. By making strategic investments in language education, enhancing digital access, and preserving linguistic diversity, India can continue to celebrate and enrich its cultural heritage.

through its regional languages. This study calls for a collective effort to preserve linguistic diversity and ensure that regional languages thrive in the face of modern challenges.

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Regional Language Advertising in India: A Case Study Analysis of Surf Excel and Britannia Good Day Campaigns

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Abstract:

A multilinguistic country such as India, where consumer behavior is highly influenced by regional and cultural identities, is increasingly using regional language advertising to connect with audiences in more profound scale. This approach goes beyond only translation of languages, and incorporates with local holidays, traditions and cultural characteristics into the storytelling. Regional language advertising is an efficient tool to compete in this diverse market, where local appeal blends with universal brand value for success. Regional language advertising has the advantages of cut through linguistic barriers and enables firms to speak directly to consumers in their native tongues, which makes an advertisement impactful and memorable.

This study focuses on the effectiveness of regional language advertising through analysis of two of the most popular campaigns: Britannia Good Day's "Smile More for Every Region" and Surf Excel's "Daag Achhe Hain." Both advertisements are excellent examples of how companies may modify their central themes to appeal to local audience while preserving a strong sense of national identity. These advertisements have effectively engaged a variety of audiences by using language, imagery and storytelling to align with regional traditions and customs. This has increased market penetration and brand loyalty.

This study explores how those advertisements used local dialects and cultural quirks in order to establish a stronger bond with their target consumers. The study seeks to show the potential of regional advertising in creating deep emotional connections and influencing customer behavior in a diverse market

like India by looking at the strategies, implementation, and success of these campaigns.

Keywords : Regional language, Advertising, India, culture, content

Introduction:

Earlier, the primary language used for national advertisement campaigns in India was Hindi or English. However, as India's regional market influence and purchasing power grew, companies realized that speaking their language, both physically and culturally, was essential to winning over customers.

Regional advertising is now a mainstream necessity rather than a supplementary strategy due to the growth of regional television channels, hyper-local digital platforms and local print media. India has over 1,600 dialects and 22 official languages. No English slogan can ever replicate the emotion a Tamilian feels when he hears the jingle of his home state in his mother tongue. Regional advertising overcomes language barriers and serves as a conduit for driving deeper meaningful messages. States in India have very distinct festivals, customs and practices. An advertisement of Pongal in Tamil Nadu will surely make it a success. But Durga Puja ads can do magic in West Bengal.

This helps regional advertising let firms absorb the nuance. A celebrity has a community following within regional areas, but in Bollywood, it cuts across all regions. More realistic and aspirational ads can come in using regional icons – for example, Mahesh Babu in Andhra Pradesh, Nayanthara in Tamil Nadu. Regional advertising should create a local narrative that stands for the place – not just translation from the mainstream version into local language. In Punjab, an ad targeting the rural audience would focus on how it enhances agriculture; in Maharashtra, it would highlight metropolitan ambitions. Regional media sources, which have become essential for reaching diverse audiences, are largely responsible for the rise of regional advertising in India. Regional TV networks, such as Zee Bangla in West Bengal and Sun TV in Tamil Nadu, control most of the TRP ratings in their states, offering businesses unmatched reach and close ties with local audiences. For example, regional OTTs like Aha—which primarily produces content in Telugu—and Hoichoi—which reaches Bengali-speaking people—have ushered in a new era of advertising and can give marketers a perfect opportunity to target the right customer precisely and creatively. Hyper-local engagement has also changed with the growing power of local influencers and regional social media on sites like Facebook,

Instagram and YouTube. These influencers, usually well established within their niche, add a realistic and relatable perspective to advertising; Hence, ensuring that a business connects with customers on a local basis. Taken as a whole, these regional media outlets and platforms are able to give the advertiser the option to reach an incredibly diverse base of consumers throughout India.

Subramani Ramachandran, executive creative director of Asia Pacific, McCann Erickson, quoted, “The brief was to appropriate smile to the brand. So we relied on cultural truths. Culturally in India we are taught not to unnecessarily smile or talk to strangers. In fact, the usual narrative is 'am I mad to smile at people I don't know' □ but in the west people always greet you and never blankly stare at you. We wanted to □ change that here hence if you see the film we have used real life situations that we have either gone through or seen sometimes in life. It's a film that's very close to my heart as it's not just product selling but a statement a brand is making. And no other brand except Good Day can do it”.

Theoretical Framework: AIDA Model in Regional Advertising

An established framework for advertising and marketing, the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) describes how consumers respond to promotional communications and ultimately decide what to buy. The approach shows how brands can effectively engage diverse linguistic and cultural audiences by customizing their messaging when applied to regional advertising in India. This framework is very relevant when examining the success of the Britannia Good Day “Smile More” and Surf Excel “Daag Hai Hai” campaigns, both of which cleverly set their stories in different locales while maintaining a universal emotional appeal.

Attaining audience attention within this crowded media landscape is the objective of the first phase of the AIDA model, ‘Attention’. Both Britannia and Surf Excel were able to achieve this by using strong visual storytelling and emotionally relevant narratives. Britannia Good Day's campaign leveraged Deepika Padukone's national and regional appeal to create instant brand awareness and establish it as a recognized and preferred choice for Indian consumers. In this regard, Surf Excel's kid-centric storytelling strategy, which has been repeated several times in different editions of the “Daag Hai Hai” campaign, works wonders to engage the audience with a believable and endearing story. The regional adaptation of the campaign, which included festival-based ver-

sions such as Holi, Ramadan and Pongal, helped draw attention to culturally specific situations.

After attention, the next stage is 'Interest', which involves keeping the customer engaged by making the ad relevant and relatable. This is where both campaigns rely on regional adaptation. For example, Surf Excel's Holi and Ramadan editions created regional interest by creating cultural touchpoints that resonated strongly with consumers in North India and South India respectively. Similarly, regional versions of Britannia were created with the aim of making them more relevant to audiences in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra, etc. through localization of language, visual and cultural settings. Both brands have ensured higher customer engagement and increased ad retention as viewers find their lives, customs and language reflected in the ad.

While Surf Excel emphasized acts of kindness, generosity and childhood innocence, Britannia Good Day kept its biscuits as a symbol of everyday happiness and smiles. These emotional narratives ensured that consumers viewed advertisements not just as promotional material but as stories they could relate to on a personal level. In addition, local versions of the campaign have become more emotionally relevant in line with the specific aspirations, traditions and values of different regional communities. 'Desire', the third stage, focuses on an emotion that compels consumers to interact with the product.

It is commercial development driven by emotional and cultural engagement. The final step is the 'Action' where customers go out to purchase the product. Britannia and Surf Excel's multichannel distribution strategies led to interactions for sales. Limited-edition packs with regional television networks, local social media influencers, in-store promotions and local language branding were employed to sell Britannia Good Day Biscuits. Surf Excel, for example, adopted the same strategy of influencer-led campaigns in regional Indian languages, festival-based internet marketing, and regional TV ads. All this has ensured that not only consumers are motivated but can easily find and locate products in their local markets.

Both – Britannia and Surf Excel – combined local storytelling with interaction strategies led by AIDA to prove the importance of region-specific advertising for brand loyalty and market penetration in India. Their success is a reminder of how important multilingual campaigns, culturally relevant images, and content are to India's heterogeneous consumer base. The AIDA model

clearly assumes that it is not possible to translate a campaign into another language for successful regional advertising; It actually requires deep assimilation into the fabric of each region's emotions and culture.

Objectives of the Study:

The objective of this study is:

- 1.To study the use and importance of Indian regional languages in Adverting
- 2.To analyze the influence of regional languages on consumer behavior

Review of Literature:

Ankush (2022) in his paper “Digital marketing in indian regional languages: an overview” described Digital marketing is a reliable means of reaching potential customers in the modern age. Brands can increase user engagement and responsiveness by using local languages in their online content. Businesses and brands can gain a great deal of customer feedback by using vernacular in digital marketing. India is a nation with many languages, many religions and a rich cultural heritage. Thus, brands can gain market share through the right regional language marketing approach that appeals to consumers emotionally. Regional language should be used in digital marketing to reach a larger audience and take advantage of technical SEO techniques. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp have started using regional languages for marketing. First-mover advantage goes to the brand that first endorses the product. Since the launch of the Digital India campaign, the number of Indians using social media has increased by 179.8% and by 2023, they predict it will increase by 12%. Organizations need to start building their digital marketing strategies. At last count 54.9% of the top 10 million websites used English but that is expected to change soon. Indian SEO methods need to consider the growing interest in regional languages.

The study titled “Exploring the Impact of Language in Advertising on Consumers’ Purchase Intentions: A Thematic Literature Analysis” by Yusuf and Abas (2024) investigated how advertising language influences consumer purchase decisions and, in this regard, provides the essential effects of language as a persuasive tool that can evoke emotion, build trust, and persuade perceptions of a business. There are also different spoken and written language styles used in advertising, which can greatly influence consumer behavior and purchase

decisions. According to research, communication can increase product retention and recall, thus influencing its purchasing power. Besides, ways to persuade the audience through emotional storylines are addressed as those that increase the interest of customers and provoke rapid behavioral responses. Emotional appeals, such as joy or nostalgia, can reinforce positive brand perceptions among consumers and increase the likelihood of purchase. The research also explored the effectiveness of certain linguistic devices, including metaphors, figurative language, and narrative storytelling, that enhance clarity and memorability while building strong relationships with customers. Another important issue discussed is the impact of code-switching and multilingual advertising in multicultural markets. The use of multiple languages in advertising appeals to bilingual consumers, reinforcing personal connections and cultural relevance. It has been shown to increase purchase intent and engagement across various consumer segments.

The paper “Use and Usage: Dealing with Language in the Digital Marketing World” by Oza (2019) explored how important language and localization are in digital marketing, especially for millennials. Consequently, the study suggests the need for localization as it plays an important role in building trust in regional markets and helping businesses with international expansion. It also speaks to local languages and their cultural context in creating marketing materials and delivering stakeholder experiences in general. The aim of this study is to explain different types of hyper-local and global language marketing strategies. The researcher argued that there are no language boundaries in the virtual world, thus debunking the claim that English is the most popular language on the Internet. Millennials, who are the first generation to grow up with technology, have changed the way people use language, especially because of their dialect and Internet-specific vocabulary. The creative ways of communication of this generation have changed the traditional linguistic conventions, such as the mixing of English with regional languages. The study puts a lot of emphasis on how digital marketing has progressed from sites like Twitter, which require brevity, to blogging, where informal communication styles first emerged. The change ushered in new rhetorical styles in millennials, who often used fragmentary sentence structures to show cohesion and reject accepted conventions of language.

Shaina, Sharma, Kaur (2021) in their paper “Rising impact of Hindi language on internet sites” discussed how Hindi has influenced English on the Internet in the digital age, taking into account online shopping, social media and networking, keyword search and voice search. India pursues social media

marketing in its local languages and has many languages and dialects. English is the official language used in the business world and is also recognized as the official language. In the field of digital marketing, language is used as a tool for communication. The product must be well informed so that the customer trusts it and buys it. In communicating important information about the product, the language used is significant. Product descriptions, payment methods, and shipping information should all be very clear and not a hindrance to online sales. Top brands started using regional languages to advertise and sell their products, while technological advancements boosted online sales. This in turn supports the economic activities of the country. Having a bilingual website and online shopping app is an absolute must for brands as people in most Asian and European countries value native speakers more than English speakers. According to an IMRB study, ten million rural inhabitants will prefer to use the internet if regional or local vernacular language content is available, and 45% of online shoppers consume regional language content.

Methodology:

Case Study:

Britannia Good Day's "Smile More" Campaign with Deepika Padukone – A Regional Advertising Success in India

“A smile is one of the simplest gestures known to mankind, an expression that denotes sociability and happiness. And yet why do we Indians smile so less? From that question arose the brand purpose of Good Day, which is to make people smile more. We believe it's a powerful idea, one that a large brand like Good Day which embodies Smiles right from product to logo, is well positioned to propagate.” - Ali Harris Shere, VP - marketing, Britannia Industries. India's most prominent biscuit company, Britannia Good Day, has rolled out the “Smile More” campaign with Bollywood star Deepika Padukone to further the brand's central theme of spreading joy through small moments of joy. Although the campaign had mass appeal, it was heavily dependent on localization variations, and that's where the need for localization in advertising arose. This case study examines how Britannia Good Day increased brand engagement within India's heterogeneous client base using regional advertising strategies.

Concept and Message

The concept behind the “Smile More” ad was simple but profound , people are less likely to smile in this fast-paced world, where everyone smiles publicly as a gesture of joy. Even small incidents like eating Good day biscuits make one happy. The reason for choosing Deepika Padukone as the face of the campaign was well calculated: that Deepika exudes warmth, positivity and a sympathetic personality that appeals to audiences across India.

Regional Advertising Strategy and Success

Britannia Good Day has not limited itself to a Hindi-language campaign since it recognized India's linguistic and cultural diversity. Instead, it used multilingual regional adaptation to customize execution and messaging for different markets. The ad featuring Deepika Padukone was dubbed into major regional languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali and Marathi, to maximize reach and emotional connect. Thus, non-Hindi-speaking audiences can relate to the campaign effortlessly, finding it personal rather than a translated version of a national ad. Britannia Good Day strategically placed their ads on local cable and regional television channels: Star Maa, for example, targeting Telugu-speaking states, Zee Bangla in West Bengal and Sun TV in Tamil Nadu. Brand associations also involve collaboration with local digital influencers who publish their “Smile More” moments on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube among other platforms to create native content interactions. Regional influencer partnerships generated millions of social media views and engagement. Therefore, it has expanded beyond conventional advertising to reach a large group of people. Customer feedback shows an emotional attachment to the campaign and many customers appreciate that they are part of a national story through a local strategy.

Surf Excel’s “Daag Achhe Hain” – A Regional Advertising Success in India

Surf Excel, one of India's top-selling detergent brands owned by Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), consistently uses emotional storytelling to create powerful advertising campaigns. Among its most enduring and most successful commercials is “Dag Acche Hai,” or “Dag Good.” It has changed throughout time, yet maintains its core message: urging children to embrace messiness as a sign of love, well-being, and learning. Although the movement was a nationwide campaign, Surf Excel later realized that regional personaliza-

tion was crucial to achieving a deeper connection with India's linguistically and culturally diverse population.

Concept and Message

The “Dag Achhe Hai” campaign redefines traditional detergent ads by focusing on a positive view of stains rather than cleanliness. The ad shows dirt as a result of kindness, good deeds and childhood pursuits rather than something to be avoided. Thus, Surf Excel elevated their detergent from just a cleaning agent to representing parental support for children's development and morals.

Regional Advertising Strategy and Success

Surf Excel translated the ad into Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi and Malayalam to ensure that the “Dag Acche Hai” theme resonated with audiences across India. These adaptations were thoughtfully created versions that included regional accents, phrases, and cultural cues rather than just literal translations. Surf Excel has broadened its audience through influencer marketing, social networking and other regional channel operations. Advertisements are shown seasonally on Sun TV, a popular network in Tamil Nadu; popular regional news channel Zee Maharashtra in Marathi; And finally, the popular network ETV Bangla has appeared in West Bengal to further reach out to the audience. As more people started promoting surf brands in different state-specific languages with regional scripts, communication naturally became warmer, more engaging and personalized. The regional adaptation of the “Dag Achhe Hai” campaign resulted in strong brand growth, high consumer engagement and enhanced emotional recall. In both the South and East, where multilingual advertising helped bridge the linguistic divide, the campaign dramatically increased detergent sales. The utility of regional content was demonstrated by higher YouTube interaction rates for the Tamil and Telugu versions of the ad compared to their Hindi counterparts. The concept of local advertising with a universal message is very motivating for marketers, and especially because they want to build an emotional long-term relationship with consumers, as the regional market is expanding in India.

Conclusion

The popularity of regional advertising in India, as seen with Surf Excel's “Dag Acche Hai” and Britannia Good Day's “Smile More”, featuring

Deepika Padukone, strikes one with emotive culturally relevant marketing tactics. Such advertising campaigns are great examples of how companies can successfully reach diverse consumers in India's vast and diverse market through regional adaptation, linguistic localization, and culturally appropriate storytelling. The case studies demonstrate that vernacular advertising is a process of deep cultural integration rather than mere translation. A one-size-fits-all marketing strategy does not work in a country as diverse as India. Instead, companies will be more likely to penetrate local markets and gain customer loyalty if they invest in community-focused storytelling, emotionally engaging messaging, and regional personalization. The power of regional advertising lies in its ability to give global brands a sense of personal significance for each consumer. Lessons learned from these campaigns offer a road map for future advertisers seeking to balance a strong national brand identity with locally relevant engagement strategies.

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An Analysis of Viewer Preferences for OTT Platform Selection

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Abstract

Investigating audience preferences while choosing their favorite Over-The-Top (OTT) platform among different OTT platforms is the goal of this study. Understanding the elements influencing audience preferences is essential given the abundance of streaming providers providing a vast array of material. This study looks at viewer preferences in an effort to give platform operators, distributors, and content producers useful information to improve customer satisfaction and optimize services. This study attempts to identify the fundamental factors influencing audience choices in the digital streaming market by thorough data gathering and analysis, covering topics like content genres, user experience design, subscription models, and exclusive content offerings. To provide a better understanding, the study will also investigate audience preference variations by demographic, geographic, and cultural factors.

Keywords:

Audience preferences, Over-The-Top platforms, Streaming services, Content selection, User satisfaction, Digital streaming landscape.

Introduction

A new age in entertainment consumption has been ushered in by the emergence of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, which give users unmatched access to a wide variety of digital media material. Consumers are now in the vanguard of a change in content consumption, from platforms that house documentaries and original programming to streaming services that offer movies and TV series. Given this changing environment, it is critical for those involved

in the entertainment sector to comprehend audience preferences when choosing an over-the-top (OTT) platform.

The way people interact with digital media material has changed significantly as a result of the emergence of OTT platforms. OTT platforms give viewers the flexibility to select what they want to watch, when they want to watch it, and on the device of their choice, in contrast to traditional media channels. The entertainment sector has been severely disrupted by this change in consumer behavior, forcing platform operators, distributors, and content producers to modify their business plans in order to satisfy the changing demands and tastes of their target markets.

The idea of audience preferences, or the distinct combination of standards and variables that affect a person's choice of information to consume, is at the core of this change. These preferences might differ greatly from person to person depending on a variety of factors, including socioeconomic level, cultural background, and personal interests. In order to effectively cater their services to the requirements and preferences of their target audience, content providers and platform operators must have a thorough understanding of these preferences.

Streaming services have proliferated in the OTT market in recent years, each competing for customers' attention with distinctive user experiences and content offerings. Customers now have more options than ever before, ranging from specialized platforms that target certain genres or demographics to global behemoths like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. In light of this, researching audience preferences while selecting OTT platforms across various OTT platforms becomes more intricate and subtle.

By exploring the complicated world of audience preferences across multiple OTT platforms, this study aims to resolve this complexity. This study attempts to identify the fundamental forces that influence audience choices in the digital streaming market by looking at elements such content genres, user experience design, subscription models, and exclusive content offerings. Furthermore, this study attempts to offer a thorough grasp of the dynamics at work in the OTT market by taking into account demographic, geographical, and cultural variations in audience preferences. Streaming services have proliferated in the OTT market in recent years, each competing for customers' attention with distinctive user experiences and content offerings. From international behemoths like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video to specialized websites that

focus on particular genres orCustomers now have more options than ever before, ranging from specialized platforms that target certain genres or demographics to global behemoths like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. In light of this, researching audience preferences while selecting OTT platforms across various OTT platforms becomes more intricate and subtle.

Essentially, this study aims to clarify audience preferences when choosing content across various OTT platforms, providing insightful information to content producers, distributors, and platform operators that want to improve user satisfaction and optimize their offerings. This project intends to advance knowledge of the changing nature of entertainment consumption through meticulous data collecting, analysis, and interpretation.

Aim

Studying and analyzing the variables that affect audience preferences while selecting Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms for digital content consumption is the goal of the research paper

Objective

To investigate and comprehend the elements that affect audience preferences while choosing Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms to consume content.

To investigate how audience preferences for OTT services are influenced by the quality and diversity of the content.

To look into how word-of-mouth referrals and social media affect platform choice.

To investigate how subscription plans and pricing structures affect user decisions.

Literature Review

Considering the advent and growth of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, the media consumption environment has changed dramatically. These platforms have grown in popularity among customers all over the world because they provide audio, video, and other media content online without requiring tradi-

tional cable or satellite subscriptions. Research on OTT platforms has therefore increased dramatically, with a focus on understanding everything from customer tastes and habits to the effects of OTT on traditional media businesses.

The study Exploration explores how the emergence of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms has changed customer tastes. The study looks into what makes over-the-top (OTT) platforms more popular than traditional television services. Convenience, accessibility, diversity of material, and tailored suggestions are highlighted as important elements influencing customer choices. Research highlights how OTT platforms have a transformative effect on consumers' media consumption patterns, indicating a move toward tailored, on-demand content experiences. (Jain, 2021) With an emphasis on entertainment consumption and paid over-the-top (OTT) video-streaming services, this qualitative study investigates audience preferences during the COVID-19 lockdown.

With a focus on OTT platform usage, the study investigates how lockdown measures affected viewers' decisions and actions. The study uses qualitative analysis to pinpoint the main elements influencing audience preferences, including convenience, diversity of content, and the escapism provided by OTT platforms. The results shed light on how entertainment consumption has changed during the epidemic and emphasize the value of paid over-the-top (OTT) platforms in addressing audience demands during times of social isolation. (2020, D. Brindha).

Consumer trends and preferences for OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms are examined in this study. It investigates the elements affecting viewers' viewing habits and decisions while choosing over-the-top (OTT) services. The goal of the study is to comprehend how users interact with OTT platforms and the factors that contribute to their popularity. It explores a number of topics, including device compatibility, pricing models, user interface experience, and diversity of content. Research illuminates consumer preferences and behaviors in the context of over-the-top (OTT) platforms and offers insightful information on the changing landscape of digital media consumption. The factors impacting Indian customers' propensity to sign up for Over-The-Top (OTT) video streaming services are examined in the Chodhary (2023) study. It looks at the main factors that influence customers' choices of OTT subscriptions. The goal of the study is to shed light on the variables that influence customers' subscription decisions, including user experience, platform features, pricing, and content quality. In addition to providing useful data for OTT service providers looking to draw in and keep consumers, the study advances our understanding of consumer behavior in the Indian OTT industry. Nagraj (2021).

The study examines OTT platform content consumption trends and subscriber preferences. Understanding subscribers' attitudes, tastes, and habits around content consumption is the goal of the study. The study investigates customer thoughts and comments using opinion mining techniques in order to pinpoint trends and preferences in the OTT market. The study gives OTT platform providers useful information to improve their services and successfully customize content to user preferences. A research by P. Yawalkar (2022) explores how consumers view over-the-top (OTT) platforms. It seeks to comprehend how users see and assess OTT services with regard to pricing, user experience, content quality, and other aspects. The study investigates customer attitudes, preferences, and satisfaction levels with regard to over-the-top (OTT) services through qualitative analysis. Research offers insightful information on consumer attitudes, which can help OTT platform companies improve their services and draw in new users. A study by S. Sowmiya (2022) looks at how Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms affect watching experiences.

It looks on how audience engagement and traditional viewing habits have changed as a result of OTT platforms. The study investigates how the viewing experience is influenced by elements including convenience, tailored recommendations, and variety of information through qualitative analysis. The report sheds light on how OTT platforms are changing the dynamics of media consumption and improving consumer happiness. Nair (2021) The study explores how customers behave when it comes to subscribing to internet streaming platforms. It seeks to comprehend the elements affecting customers' choices to sign up for these sites. The study investigates how factors including user experience, brand reputation, cost, and content variety affect subscription decisions through qualitative analysis. The survey offers insightful information on customer preferences in the online streaming sector, which helps providers better customize their products to satisfy subscriber demands.

(SRIVASTAVA, 2022) Examine online entertainment incentives to review the antecedents of OTT subscription aspirations. They look at things like social influence, user experience, affordability, convenience, and variety of information. Understanding why people sign up for OTT platforms for entertainment is the goal of the study. The significance of user experience, social impact, price, convenience, and variety of information in influencing subscription intentions are among the main conclusions. By being aware of these variables, OTT providers can better customize their products to suit customer preferences. (RR Sharma, 2023)

Netflix and Hotstar are the main subjects of a comparative study that looks at user preferences on OTT platforms. The purpose of the study is to determine how the two platforms differ in terms of user preferences, usage trends, and satisfaction levels. The study investigates elements like pricing, user experience, platform features, and content selection using both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The study offers insightful information on the different preferences of Netflix and Hotstar users, which helps both services improve their products to better serve their target markets. Measuring consumer involvement with Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms is the main goal of this study. The goal of the study is to measure and examine how involved, engaged, and loyal customers are with OTT platforms.

The study evaluates a number of variables and approaches, including user interactions, frequency of usage, time spent on the platform, and patterns of content consumption. The study offers useful insights into the mechanics of customer interaction in the OTT environment, which helps platforms improve user experiences and retention tactics. OTT streaming service usage is on the rise, according to a study by Hooda on measuring customer level engagement with OTT platforms. The goal of the study is to identify the elements that are causing consumers' use of OTT to increase.

The study investigates factors such as shifting watching patterns, content choices, price, and convenience that are fueling the growing use of OTT platforms through quantitative analysis and surveys. The study sheds light on the factors contributing to the rising popularity of over-the-top (OTT) streaming services and offers insightful information on how media consumption is changing. In contrast to traditional pay television services, the investigation by S. Parnami (2021) examines how young customers are engaged by Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. The study looks at how gamification features are incorporated into OTT platforms and how consumer tastes are evolving. More varied content, on-demand viewing choices, and tailored suggestions are some of the main elements propelling the change.

The study emphasizes how user engagement is improved through gamification. All things considered, it sheds light on the changing nature of media consumption and the tactics employed by OTT platforms to draw in younger users. Comparative research comparing small- and large-scale web streaming services examines consumer expectations and preferences (M Sadana, 2021). The goal of the study is to comprehend how these two kinds of platforms differ in terms of user preferences, satisfaction, and perceived value.

The study investigates elements including pricing, platform dependability, user experience, and content quality using both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Research offers important insights into the particular opportunities and difficulties that both large and small web streaming providers confront in successfully satisfying customer expectations. (- S. G., 2020) The study forecasts the success rates of OTT platforms and investigates the effect of content ratings on them. The goal of the study is to comprehend how viewer choices and the performance of the content that follows are influenced by ratings.

In order to predict the performance of content on OTT platforms, the study looks at elements including user ratings, reviews, and engagement metrics using data analysis and predictive modeling. The results help OTT providers with content selection and decision-making by shedding light on the importance of ratings in influencing audience preferences and the possibility of content success. Singh, KK (2024).

In summary, every study adds to the expanding corpus of information on OTT platforms and offers insightful information to scholars, policymakers, and industry participants. OTT platform providers may successfully traverse the changing landscape and keep providing audiences around the world with captivating and engaging content experiences by keeping up with developing trends and consumer preferences.

Research Methodology

The researchers' mixed-method approach in this paper includes a secondary research review of prior research papers to give background and references for our study, as well as quantitative research methods through surveys to collect public opinions.

Without focusing on any particular age or occupation, the study used random sampling to choose participants from the broader public who use OTT platforms.

Qualitative Research

The researchers' mixed-method approach in this paper includes a secondary research review of prior research papers to give background and references for our study, as well as quantitative research methods through surveys to collect public opinions.

Without focusing on any particular age or occupation, the study used random sampling to choose participants from the broader public who use OTT platforms.

Quantitative Research

Numerical data is systematically gathered and analyzed as part of quantitative research. It places a strong emphasis on using statistical analysis, measurement, and quantification to look at patterns, trends, and relationships.

Primary Research

The process of gathering original data straight from the source is known as primary research. To answer particular research questions or aims, researchers plan and carry out investigations.

Secondary Research

Analyzing and synthesizing previously obtained data and information is known as secondary research. To obtain information, researchers consult a variety of sources, including books, journals, databases, official documents, and websites.

Analysis and Findings

Survey Questions

- What is your age?
- What is your gender?
- What is your employment status?
- How frequently do you use OTT platforms for entertainment purposes?
- Which OTT platforms do you currently subscribe to?
- What types of content do you typically watch on OTT platforms? (e.g., movies, TV shows, documentaries, original series)
- Which genres do you prefer? (e.g., action, comedy, drama, thriller, sci-fi)
- How important are factors such as content variety, quality, and exclusivity when selecting an OTT platform?
- How satisfied are you with the user experience provided by your current OTT platforms?
- What factors influence your decision to subscribe to an OTT platform? (e.g.,

pricing, free trials, bundled packages)

Are you willing to pay for ad-free content, or do you prefer platforms with ads but lower subscription costs?

How important are recommendations from friends, family, or online influencers in your platform selection process?

What devices do you use to access OTT platforms? (e.g., smart TV, smartphone, tablet, computer)

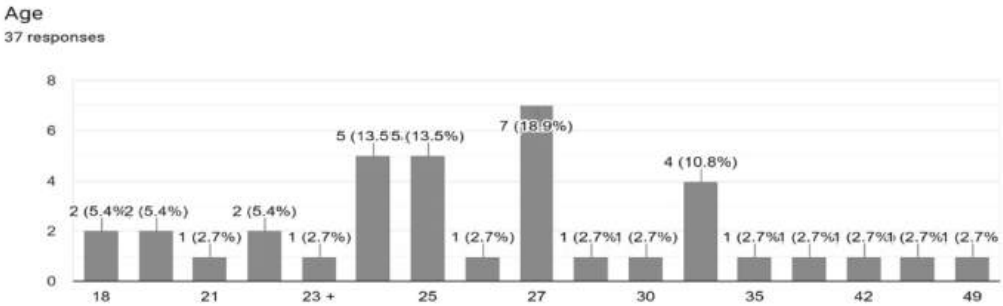
What features do you consider essential when choosing OTT platform ?

What are the factors that influence u select Your Preferred OTT platforms

Write a descriptive answer

Findings

3) What is your age?

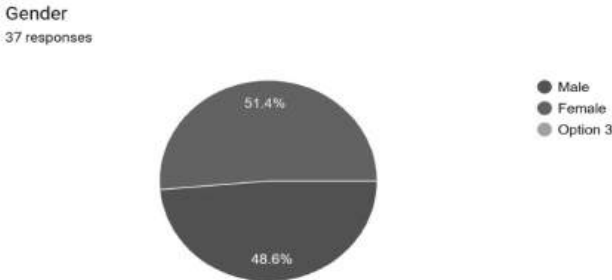


The provided data includes the Age of participants who have responded to the survey.

Highly represented age groups: 25 and 27

Less represented age groups: 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 35, 40, 42, 48, and 49

4) What is your gender?

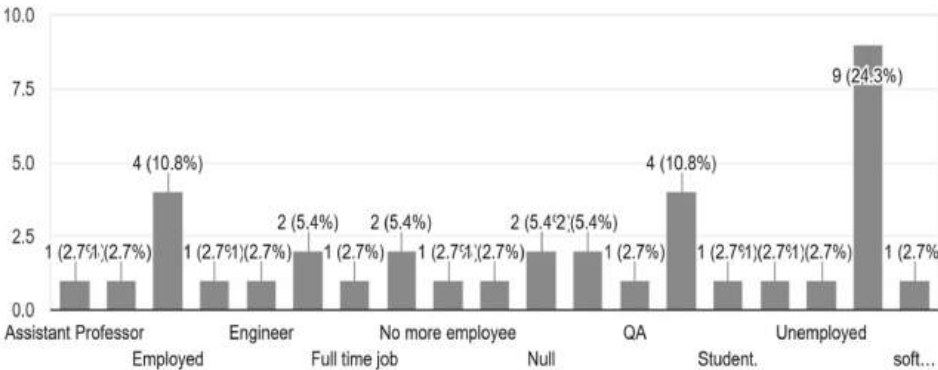


The data considers gender information categorized into "Female" and "Male."

There are 18 occurrences of "Male" and 16 occurrences of "Female" as per the data

This suggests that the dataset contains slightly more males than females

5) What is your employment status?

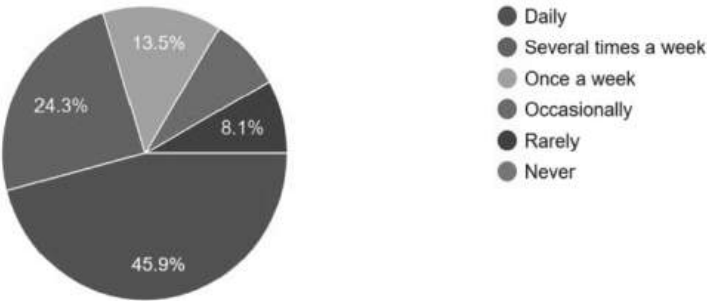


Working" is the most frequently occurring category in the data-set, with 7 occurrences.

Categories such as "Full-time job," "Software Engineer," "Not employed," and others have the lowest occurrence, each appearing only once in the data-set.

The data suggests that the majority of participants are from the working class and likely have a stable income.

6) How frequently do you use OTT platforms for entertainment purposes?



Daily: This response occurs frequently, with participants engaging in the activity on a daily basis.

Several times a week: Participants also commonly engage in the activity several times a week.

Once a week: Some participants engage in the activity once a week.

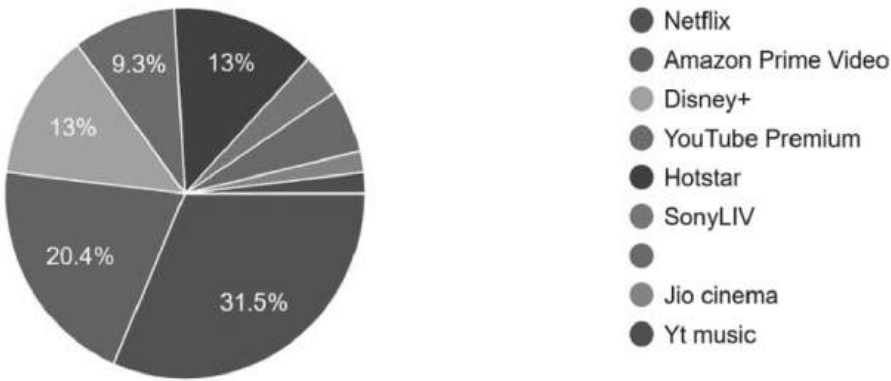
Rarely: This response is less common, indicating that only a few participants engage in the activity rarely.

Occasionally: A small number of participants engage in the activity occasionally.

In summary, participants' engagement in the activity varies from daily to occasionally, with the majority engaging daily or several times a week.

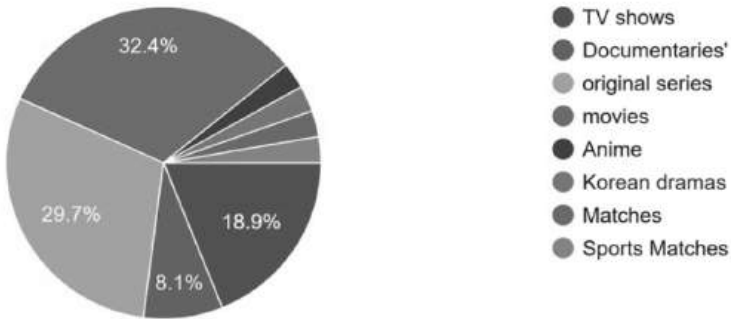
Fewer participants engage once a week, while rare and occasional engagement is less common among the respondents.

7) Which OTT platforms do you currently subscribe to?



According to the data, Netflix is the most subscribed platform among the respondents, followed by Amazon Prime Video and Hotstar. Other platforms such as Disney+, SonyLIV, YouTube Premium, Jio cinema, and YouTube Music have fewer subscriptions in comparison.

8) What types of content do you typically watch on OTT platforms

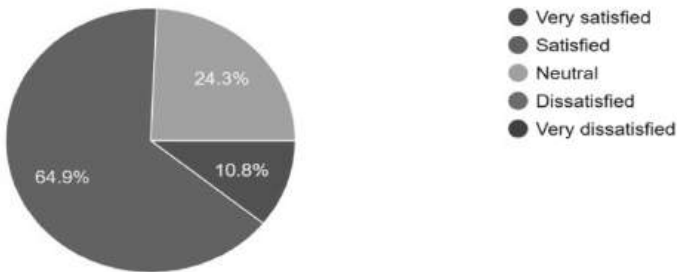


According to the data, "Movies" and "Original series" are the most frequently mentioned categories.

"TV shows" also have a significant number of mentions. Other categories such as "Documentaries," "Anime," "Korean dramas,"

"Matches," and "Sports Matches" have fewer mentions, indicating relatively lower interest or consumption in these genres.

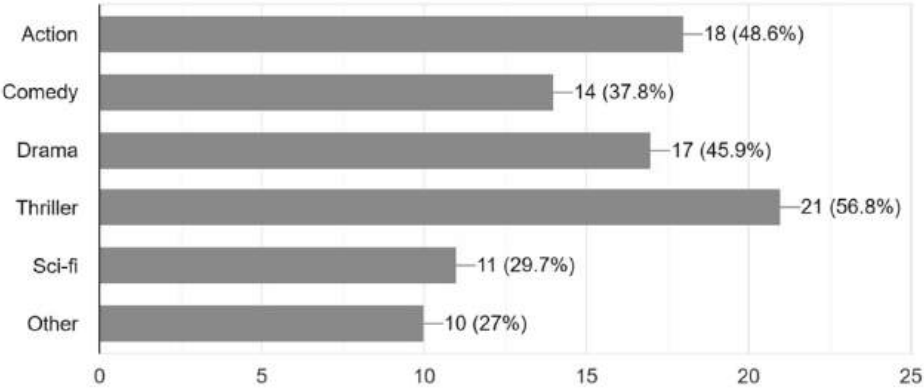
9) How satisfied are you with the user experience provided by your current OTT platforms?



According to the data, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the user experience provided by their current OTT platforms.

Only a small number of respondents expressed a neutral sentiment.

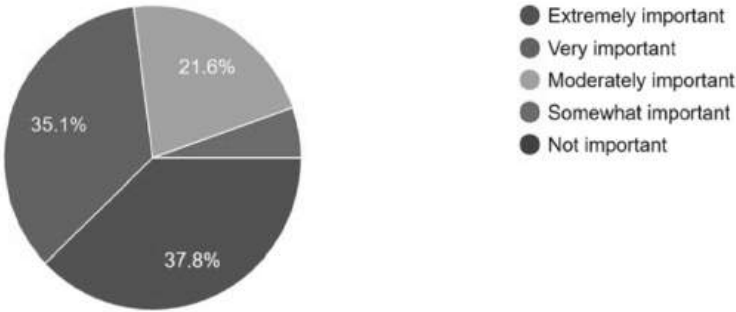
10) Which genres do you prefer ?



According to the data "Action" is the most frequently mentioned genre, followed by "Thriller" and "Drama."

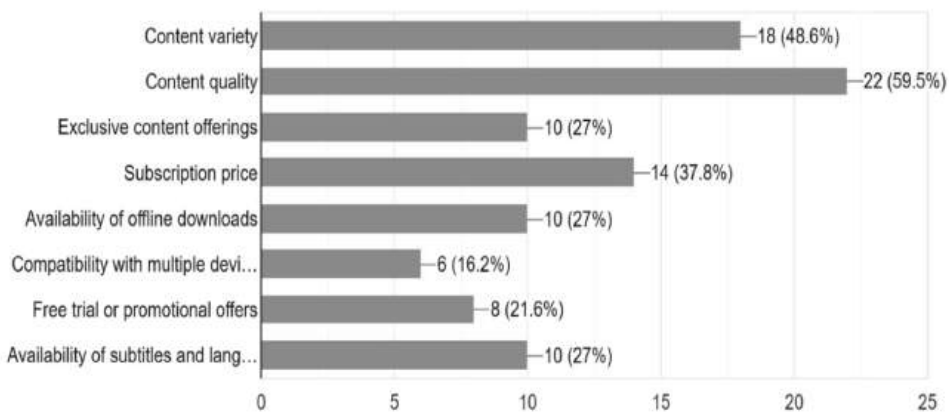
"Comedy" and "Sci-fi" also have notable mentions, while "Other" genres are mentioned less frequently.

11) How important are factors such as content variety, quality, and exclusivity when selecting an OTT platform?



According to the data, it's evident that the majority of respondents consider the aspect in question to be either very important or extremely important, with fewer respondents considering it moderately or somewhat important.

12) What factors influence your decision to subscribe to an OTT platform?

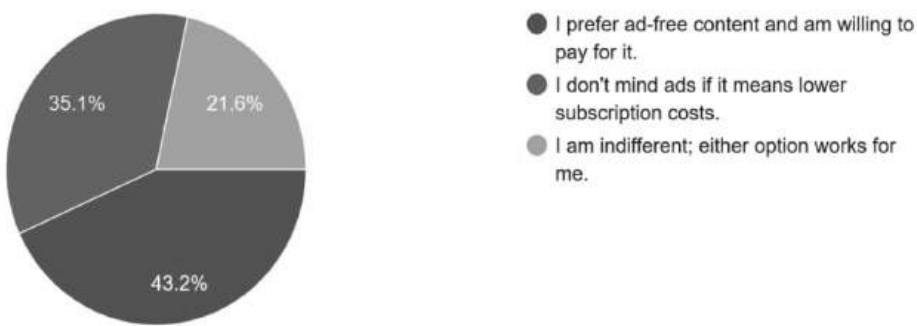


According to the data, content quality and variety are the most significant factors influencing subscribers' decisions.

Additionally, factors such as subscription price, exclusive content offerings, and availability of offline downloads are also important considerations for subscribers.

Other factors such as free trials, compatibility with multiple devices, and availability of subtitles and language options also play a role in subscribers' decisions, albeit to a lesser extent.

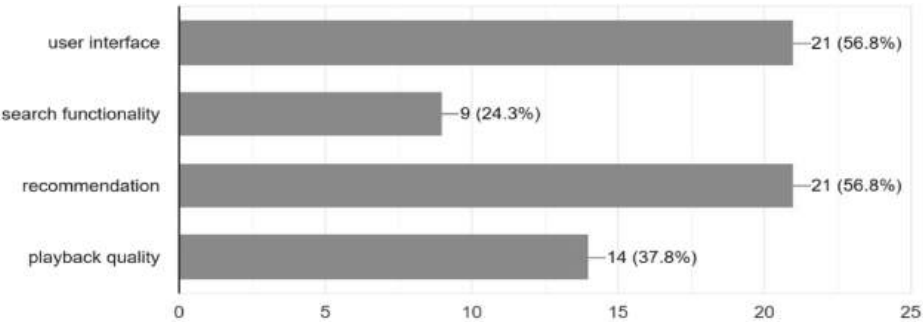
13) Are you willing to pay for ad-free content, or do you prefer platforms with ads but lower subscription costs?



According to the data, majority of respondents prefer ad-free content and are willing to pay for it.

However, a notable portion of respondents are also indifferent or don't

14) What device do you use to access OTT platform?

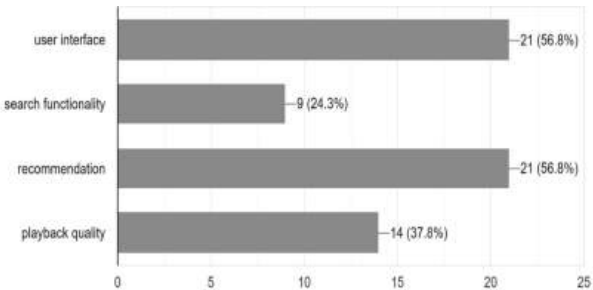


According to the data, smartphones are the most frequently mentioned devices, followed by smart TVs and computers.

Tablets have fewer mentions compared to the other devices.

15) What features do you consider essential when choosing OTT platform ?

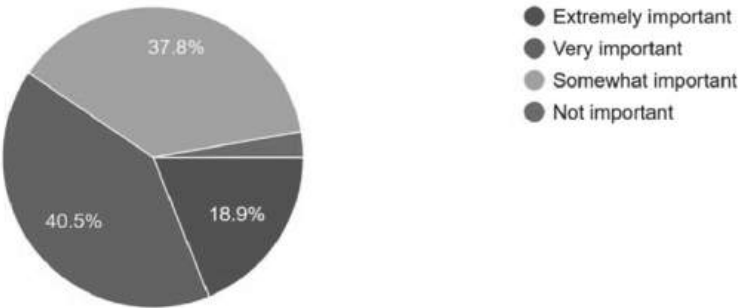
According to the data, recommendation is the most frequently



mentioned feature, followed by user interface and playback quality.

Search functionality has fewer mentions compared to the other features.

16) How important are recommendations from friends, family, or online influencers in your platform selection process?



According to the data, majority of respondents consider recommendations from friends, family, or online influence-rs to be somewhat or very important in their platform selection process, with a smaller number considering it extremely important and only one respondent considering it not important.

17) What are the factors that influence u select Your Preferred OTT platforms Write a descriptive answer

According to the data this are the factors that influence viewers to select their specific OTT platform

Variety and quality of content across multiple genres, including movies, TV shows, documentaries, and original programming, influences platform selection.

User interface and ease of navigation are important factors for choosing an OTT platform.

Cost of subscription plans is considered, looking for competitive pricing and flexible options.

High-definition and 4K streaming capabilities are preferred for an immersive viewing experience.

Compatibility with various devices such as smart TVs, smartphones, and tablets is essential.

Offline viewing options are appreciated for convenience, especially

during travel or in areas with limited internet access.

Content discovery and personalized recommendations play a role in exploring new content.

Original content and exclusives are attractive features that influence platform preference.

Entertainment value is a key consideration in selecting an OTT platform.

Availability of content with various genres is desired.

Audience targeting is considered in content selection.

Availability of particular content like movies, series, and live sports matches on the platform is important.

Duration of series and number of seasons affect watching preferences and platform selection.

Analysis

Demographics: The data includes answers from people of different backgrounds, such as housewives, professors, full-time workers, students, and job-less people. 18 to 49 years old is the range of ages.

Platform Usage Frequency: Depending on their schedules and personal preferences, respondents utilize streaming services anywhere from everyday to infrequently.

Preferred Streaming Services: According to the respondents, Netflix is the most widely used streaming service, followed by Jio Cinema, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, Hotstar, and YouTube Premium. There may be more than one platform that each respondent prefers.

Content tastes: Genres: The respondents' tastes for content range widely, encompassing documentaries, action, comedy, drama, thrillers, sci-fi, and more.

Variety of material: A large range of material alternatives, including as films,

TV series, original series, documentaries, and sporting events, are valued by the majority of respondents.

Content Quality: Many respondents place importance on high-quality content with an interesting plot, gifted actors, and a high production value.

Exclusive Content: Some respondents place a high importance on unique works and exclusive offerings.

Language alternatives: Some respondents believe that having subtitles and language alternatives is crucial, particularly when it comes to accessing content in their favorite languages.

Offline Viewing: Some respondents value the ability to download information offline so they can watch it without an internet connection.

Subscription Preferences: Ad-Free Experience: A large percentage of respondents said they would be prepared to pay for ad-free content.

Subscription Price: When selecting streaming services, price is an important consideration. In exchange for cheaper subscription fees, some respondents are willing to put up with advertisements.

Free Trials and Promotions: When selecting a streaming platform, some responders take into account promotional offers or free trial offers.

Preferences for the User Experience:
User Interface: The majority of respondents value an intuitive user interface with simple navigation and search capabilities.

Suggestions: For certain respondents, platform selection is influenced by personalized content recommendations.

Device Compatibility: Compatibility with multiple devices such as smart-phones, smart TVs, tablets, and computers is valued by many respondents.

Additional Factors: Reviews and Recommendations: Some respondents rely on external reviews and recommendations, to make decisions about what to watch.

Duration and Number of Seasons: The duration of series and the number of seasons available on a platform can influence watching decisions for some respondents.

Overall, the research findings suggest that individuals prioritize content variety, content quality, user experience, and subscription affordability when selecting their preferred streaming platforms. The availability of exclusive content, offline viewing options, and language preferences also play significant roles in platform preferences.

Conclusion

The study on audience preferences for choosing Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms to consume digital content offers important new information about how media consumption is changing. This study has provided insight into the dynamics impacting audience choices in the digital streaming world by carefully examining elements including content variety, quality, user experience, price strategies, and social influences.

The results imply that audience preferences are complex and impacted by a number of variables. Variety and quality of content were found to be important factors for viewers, underscoring the need of varied and superior offerings in drawing in and keeping subscribers. Furthermore, user happiness and platform loyalty are greatly impacted by the user experience offered by OTT platforms, which includes elements like interface design, ease of navigation, and personalized recommendations.

Pricing models are crucial in audience decision-making since subscribers balance the platform's value proposition against the cost of subscriptions. Some viewers are amenable to ad-supported models for lower costs, while others value ad-free experiences and are prepared to pay higher subscription fees.

The selection of platforms is also greatly influenced by social trends and suggestions, highlighting the significance of online influencer endorsements and word-of-mouth in influencing consumer behavior. Additionally, tastes may be influenced by demographic traits like age, gender, and work position, underscoring the necessity of focused content strategies to successfully reach a variety of audience segments.

To sum up, in order to maximize offerings and improve user happiness, content producers, distributors, and platform operators must have a thorough awareness of audience preferences when choosing OTT platforms. Stakeholders may successfully negotiate the competitive OTT landscape and provide audiences throughout the world with captivating and engaging content experiences by matching pricing strategies, user experiences, and content offers with audience preferences.

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Beyond National Narratives: Regional Content Creators and Electoral Influence in Multilingual India (2024 Elections)

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Abstract

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections witnessed a significant transformation in political communication through the growing influence of regional content creators on social media platforms. This study examines the role of these creators in shaping political discourse, voter awareness, and youth engagement across linguistically diverse states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. Drawing on qualitative analysis of news reports, digital content, and audience data, the research identifies key influencers, their content styles, thematic narratives, and collaborations with political actors and institutions. Findings reveal that regional creators—particularly in Tamil and Marathi—used colloquial humor, cultural references, and local dialects to engage young and first-time voters, often aligning with party narratives or civic campaigns. While Tamil creators amplified nationalist themes that resonated with BJP strategies, Marathi influencers focused more on civic education and development issues. The study also highlights how the Election Commission and political parties strategically collaborated with micro-influencers to drive voter turnout and sway public opinion. However, the influence varied across states: regions like West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh saw minimal independent influencer activity, with traditional party machinery remaining dominant. Overall, the research underscores the rising power of regional digital voices in India's electoral ecosystem and the need for regulatory scrutiny amid blurred lines between content and campaigning.

Keywords:

Regional Content Creators, Elections 2024, Digital Influence, Political Communication, Social Media, Misinformation, Voter Engagement

Introduction

1.1 Background

The 2024 Indian general elections, held from April 19 to June 1, led to a significant political shift. Prime Minister Narendra Modi secured a rare third consecutive term, becoming only the second Indian PM to do so. However, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fell short of a majority, requiring reliance on coalition partners from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The elections highlighted the increasing strength of the opposition bloc, INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance), which gained momentum under Rahul Gandhi's leadership. The elections revealed a deepening political divide, with the BJP promoting Hindu nationalism (Hindutva) while the opposition emphasized secularism. Despite BJP's success, the results reaffirmed India's robust democratic institutions and demonstrated the resilience of its political system. The NDA coalition's ideologies, including economic growth, national security, and Hindu nationalism, continue to shape India's political landscape.

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections in India were not only a monumental exercise in democracy but also a pivotal moment in the evolution of political communication in the digital age. While traditional media such as television, newspapers, and radio continued to play a role, it was social media that emerged as the dominant space for political discourse and voter engagement. Particularly noteworthy was the rise of regional content creators—digital influencers, podcasters, YouTubers, and Instagram personalities—who created content in local languages and dialects, engaging audiences often overlooked by mainstream national media.

In a country as linguistically and culturally diverse as India, regional creators hold unique power: they bridge the gap between political narratives and grassroots voters through culturally resonant communication. These creators often leverage humor, satire, storytelling, and regional identity to communicate complex political issues in accessible ways. Their content not only informs but often influences voting behavior, especially among youth and first-time voters who primarily consume information online.

While much of the scholarly and media focus has been on national influencers and urban-centric digital campaigns, there is limited research on the regional digital ecosystem and how it shaped electoral dynamics in specific states. The 2024 elections provided a valuable opportunity to examine how these content creators impacted political messaging, voter turnout, and digital mobilization in states such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. These states were selected due to their vibrant regional media cultures, high digital penetration, and political diversity.

This research explores the strategies, narratives, and influence of regional content creators in the 2024 elections. It also analyzes their affiliations—whether organic or sponsored—with political parties and institutions, including the Election Commission of India. By examining these trends, the study aims to offer insights into the evolving nature of political participation and communication in a regionalized digital India.

1.2. Theoretical Framework: Two-Step Flow Theory and the Rise of Regional Content Creators

The present study is grounded in the Two-Step Flow Theory of Communication, proposed by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in *The People's Choice* (1944). This theory challenges the simplistic view of direct media influence on mass audiences by proposing a mediated model of communication, wherein media effects are channeled through "opinion leaders"—individuals who actively consume media content, interpret it, and subsequently relay it to their social circles in a more relatable, contextualized form.

In the context of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, this theory offers a powerful lens for understanding the role of regional content creators across multilingual states such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. These digital influencers, functioning as modern opinion leaders, operated at the intersection of political messaging and cultural specificity. They translated complex national or regional political discourses into vernacular content, utilizing humor, local idioms, satire, and personal narratives to engage and influence their audiences—particularly youth and first-time voters.

This two-step communication process was especially significant in regions where traditional mass media lacked linguistic or cultural resonance. For instance:

In Tamil Nadu, regional creators aligned with nationalist narratives, amplifying pro-BJP sentiments using localized expressions of Hindu identity.

In Maharashtra, creators adopted a more civic-oriented tone, focusing on development issues and electoral literacy.

In contrast, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh saw limited independent influencer activity, where traditional party machinery still dominated political communication—signaling a weaker application of the two-step model in those contexts.

The research demonstrates that regional content creators not only disseminated political messages but actively shaped public opinion by customizing content for culturally diverse and linguistically specific audiences. Their collaborations with political parties, civil society organizations, and the Election Commission further legitimized their role as mediators of electoral knowledge.

Thus, the Two-Step Flow Theory serves as a robust conceptual framework to explain how influencers mediate between formal political structures and informal voter communities, reshaping the dynamics of political participation in a digital, multilingual India. It also underscores the need for critical scrutiny, as the line between independent commentary and partisan promotion becomes increasingly blurred in the influencer-driven political communication ecosystem.

1.3 Research Objectives-

The study is based on the following objectives

- 1.To identify key regional content creators and their content styles.
- 2.To analyze political themes and messages conveyed.
3. To measure audience engagement and reach.
- 4.To assess influence on regional voter behavior and turnout.

1.4 Methodology

The study is based on a qualitative approach, enabling an in-depth exploration of content trends, influencer strategies, and regional variations across linguistic and cultural contexts. A comparative case study framework was adopted to examine specific states and languages where regional content creators played a prominent electoral role.

2. Selection of Regions

Four Indian states were purposively selected based on linguistic diversity, digital media penetration, and the visible presence of regional content creators in the 2024 elections:

Tamil Nadu (Tamil)

Maharashtra (Marathi)

West Bengal (Bengali)

Andhra Pradesh (Telugu)

These regions were chosen to represent a spectrum of digital engagement and political communication through vernacular platforms.

3. Data Collection Methods

a. Content Analysis

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on social media platforms including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Spotify between January and May 2024. The focus was on regional content creators and podcasters who engaged in political commentary, civic awareness, election campaign promotion, satire, or interviews with political figures.

b. Case Studies

Prominent regional influencers and podcasts from each selected state were studied as individual case studies. Examples include:

Tamil Nadu: Influencers aligning with BJP narratives

Maharashtra: Creators focusing on youth awareness and voter education

West Bengal & Andhra Pradesh: Lesser engagement from independent content creators, with traditional media still dominating

1.5 Data Analysis-

The Rise of Regional Content Creators in Elections

Defining Regional Content Creators

Regional content creators are digital influencers who produce content in local languages and focus on region-specific issues. They operate on platforms such as **YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp**, using memes, short videos, podcasts, and live interactions to reach voters.

The growth of regional content in political campaigns has been significantly driven by increased internet penetration and widespread smartphone usage, which have empowered regional influencers to connect with rural and semi-urban voters more effectively. Political parties have strategically leveraged these local digital influencers to carry out targeted outreach in vernacular languages, ensuring their messages resonate with diverse linguistic communities. This trend was especially evident during the 2024 election, which witnessed a notable rise in influencer-led voter awareness campaigns aimed at enhancing political engagement and participation across regional demographics.

The Role of Social Media Influencers in Modern Politics

Social media influencers have become increasingly significant in shaping public opinion, particularly within the political sphere. With the rise of digital platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, influencers possess an unparalleled ability to reach specific demographics, connect with audiences, and engage people in meaningful ways. Influencers not only shape how audiences perceive political issues but also drive engagement through strategic campaigns that support political parties, policies, and causes. This study explores the role of influencers in modern political discourse, detailing how they shape public opinion, their demographic reach, and the strategies they employ in collaboration with political entities.

The term "influencer" traditionally refers to individuals who wield significant influence over their audience's preferences, behaviours, and decisions. They establish credibility in specific domains—whether lifestyle, fashion, fitness, or politics—and build loyal followings who trust their opinions. In the political realm, influencers use their platforms to discuss political issues, endorse candidates, and promote causes. Their opinions resonate with audiences because influencers are seen as relatable, trustworthy individuals rather than distant, unapproachable politicians or traditional media figures. This relationship enables influencers to impact public opinion on a grassroots level. Influencers' ability to shape opinions can be seen in their engagement with politically charged content, such as posting about social justice issues, climate change, or governmental policies. Their personal narratives and approachable communication styles foster trust, which is often absent in traditional media, making their opinions impactful. Influencers leverage emotional storytelling, personal experiences, and authentic conversations to connect with audiences, which in turn strengthens the resonance of their messages. For instance, influencers who advocate for climate change policy often share their own efforts to live sustainably, thus making the cause relatable and actionable for followers.

Moreover, influencers play a crucial role in framing political issues. By choosing to emphasize certain aspects of a political message or policy, they can shape how their audience perceives these issues. This power of framing can lead to significant shifts in public sentiment, especially when influencers highlight aspects that are particularly relevant or compelling to their followers. When political candidates or parties collaborate with influencers, they are tapping into this framing ability, hoping that influencers will present their message in a way that resonates with their audience's values and priorities.

One of the defining characteristics of social media influencers is their ability to reach and engage specific demographic groups. Influencers can be divided into various categories based on their follower counts (such as mega, macro, micro, and nano influencers) and the types of audiences they attract. This segmentation enables political campaigns to target specific demographics that align with their campaign objectives.

For example, a political party targeting young voters may collaborate with influencers who focus on youth-centric topics, such as popular culture, lifestyle, or technology. Younger audiences are particularly active on platforms

like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, where influencers with substantial followings can mobilize these voters by discussing key political issues that impact youth, such as education, employment opportunities, and climate change. By connecting with influencers who resonate with these groups, political campaigns gain a direct pathway to engage young voters, an often difficult-to-reach demographic through traditional media. Beyond reaching younger voters, influencers also provide access to niche audiences based on interests, identity, or social causes. For instance, an influencer who promotes environmental causes may attract followers who are deeply concerned about climate change. By partnering with such an influencer, political campaigns can engage environmentally conscious voters, ensuring that their messages on sustainability and environmental policy reach audiences who are likely to be receptive. This ability to target audiences based on both demographic and psychographic factors is a unique advantage that influencers offer, as they allow campaigns to deliver highly tailored messages to specific groups.

Furthermore, influencers' regional presence also allows for geographically targeted outreach. For example, an influencer from a particular state or city may have a strong local following, which can be useful for candidates seeking support in those regions. In such cases, influencers act as valuable connectors between local issues and broader political agendas, providing political campaigns with insights into regional voter concerns and enabling them to craft messages that are relevant to local audiences.

Key regional content creators and their content styles

Tamil: Influencers like Keerthika Govindaraj (YouTube channel “Keerthi History”, ~2.07 million subs as of Mar 2024) and channels such as Pesu Tamizha Pesu (~750K subs) have become prominent. Their content is in Tamil and often uses historical or cultural narratives with a right leaning slant – for example, “real history” exposés or discussions on issues like the Katchatheevu island dispute and Ayodhya temple. These creators blend education with opinionated commentary, effectively translating national BJP narratives into the Tamil context.

Marathi: Mumbai–Nagpur region saw micro influencers like Neha Thombre and Sarang Sathaye (BhaDiPa co-founder) gain notice. Thombre’s “Thombre bai” persona delivers humorous skits in the Varhadi dialect (Vidarbha Marathi), often parodying voter confusion or public grievances. Sathaye’s VishayKhol channel (YouTube: 343K subs; Insta: 126K) uses satire

(likened to John Oliver style) to explain civic issues (e.g., “What is the actual job of an MLA?”). Both employ songs, memes and colloquial humor to discuss politics and governance. Other regional creators (e.g. Kalpana Khansole) have made constituency-specific videos favoring particular candidates, though typically while claiming neutrality.

Bengali: Public reports of independent Bengali content creators influencing the 2024 campaign are scarce. West Bengal’s campaigns remained dominated by party machinery and mainstream media; no major non mainstream influencer emerged in English-language coverage. We infer that most Bengali-language online content came from party channels or local news outlets, rather than identifiable “influencers” with large followings. (No specific names or sources were documented.)

Telugu: Similarly, Telugu language election discourse was largely carried by party-affiliated channels and traditional media. There is little evidence of prominent independent Telugu influencer channels shaping the campaign. Regional parties in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana focused on their own digital wings and local news portals; any influencer content (for example, YouTube news channels or Facebook pages) appears limited in reach and not widely reported in secondary sources.

Political themes and narratives in their content

Tamil content: Creators emphasized nationalist and ideological themes. Keerthi History, for instance, foregrounded “real history” aligned with Hindutva perspectives, covering stories like the Ayodhya temple or Diwali traditions from a celebratory stance. Key BJP talking points (e.g. Modi’s criticism of Congress on Katchatheevu) were mirrored by Tamil YouTubers, who “raked up” such issues before parties did. In general, Tamil influencers have propagated subtle or explicit right wing narratives, effectively platforming BJP agendas in a state long dominated by regional parties.

Marathi content: The focus was on local governance and voter awareness. Influencers joked about inflation and development: one viral skit shows a housewife complaining about inflation and then praising a Congress candidate for fixing it, while another skit praises BJP development projects. Common motifs include informing voters about civic duties and demystifying politics; for example, explaining an MLA’s role or highlighting the importance of voting through humor. These narratives are non partisan on the surface: many Marathi creators insisted on neutral civic education. However, some did produce candi-

date specific content when approached (as with Kalpana Khansole promoting both a Congress and a BJP candidate in separate videos). In summary, Marathi influencers tended to stress local issues (development, public grievances, empowerment of rural voters) using comedy and dialect, rather than national ideological battles.

Other languages: Where noted, English/Hindi-language influencers (e.g. BeerBiceps, Curly Tales) conducted narrative framing by hosting politicians or running exposés, but these were national in scope. No comparable reports exist of Bengali or Telugu content emphasizing unique regional themes; we assume their narratives largely followed party lines.

Audience engagement and digital reach

Scale of followings: Top Tamil creators have multi million audiences (Keerthi History \approx 2.07M subs; Pesu Tamizha Pesu \approx 750K subs). In Maharashtra, Marathi channels had smaller but significant reach (e.g. VishayKhol: 343K YouTube, 126K Instagram; Neha Thombre: \sim 100K on YouTube/Facebook). By contrast, leading pan India influencers (e.g. BeerBiceps, 7M YT subs; Dhruv Rathee, 19.4M YT subs) show the upper bound of reach. These figures indicate digital influencers can potentially engage tens of thousands to millions of viewers per post.

Engagement metrics: Views, likes and shares on videos surged during the campaign. For example, Dhruv Rathee gained 2.5 million YouTube subscribers in April 2024 alone, and channels of journalists like Ravish Kumar saw \sim 175% increases in monthly views. While these are Hindi/English creators, they suggest how online political content was consumed at scale in 2024. Although we lack published engagement data for individual Tamil/Marathi videos, anecdotal evidence (e.g. viral status of election skits) indicates high social media traction in regional circuits.

Platform reach: Nationwide, digital platforms are ubiquitous: India has roughly 500 million active YouTube users (nearly matching WhatsApp's reach), and 886 million total internet users in 2024. Crucially, 57% of urban Indians prefer content in their native language, underscoring that regional language creators address a large and engaged audience. Youth demographics amplify this effect: a sizable fraction of the 210 million "Gen V" electorate consumes news via online influencers. Surveys (e.g. BBC profile of a 25 year-old voter) confirm that many young Indians follow political influencers, finding their posts more accessible than traditional news.

Influence on regional voter behavior (youth/first-time voters)

Youth outreach: Experts note that influencers are key to reaching young and disengaged voters. Political strategists lined up content creators “to play a crucial role in reaching the young, the disinterested and the disillusioned”. Many first-time voters turned to social media for election information: for instance, a 25 year old follower reported relying on Instagram/YT political influencers to “understand what’s going on” in politics, saying they “make it fun and easier to understand” complex issues. By lowering the barrier to entry, these creators likely shaped opinions and motivations among youth, who may otherwise ignore formal campaigning.

Campaign targeting: Parties and even the Prime Minister engaged influencers to sway Gen V voters. In March 2024, PM Modi appeared in a video with seven gaming influencers (average age ~25) and even learned “gaming lingo” to connect with this cohort. Leading youth oriented creators (e.g. Ranveer Allahbadia, Kamiya Jani) interviewed ministers on their channels, engaging young audiences in political discourse. Such efforts acknowledge the influence these figures hold over young electorates.

Behavioral impact: On-the-ground reports suggest these campaigns had real effects. For example, an Election Commission official praised micro influencers for speaking in relatable, colloquial ways that mobilize voters in non-metro areas. In Maharashtra, creators working with the EC explicitly urged first time voting (e.g. Nagpur chef Manohar’s voting-awareness cake event). In contrast, traditional voters (older or partisan) may be less swayed by online content, but among youth and swing demographics the effect appears pronounced. In sum, regional influencers likely contributed to higher engagement among young voters and informed some swing opinions, though quantifying vote swings remains complex and anecdotal.

Collaborations between creators and political actors

Election Commission partnerships: The EC proactively enlisted local influencers for voter education. Nagpur’s Neha Thombre was formally approached by the EC to produce voting-awareness content; she agreed and created skits encouraging turnout in native Marathi dialect. Likewise, chef Vishnu Manohar collaborated with the EC by making a giant voting awareness cake aimed at young voters. EC officials noted that such micro influencers, often from rural or lower income backgrounds, “speak in a colloquial way that

is more relatable” to average voters. These collaborations were strictly non partisan (content promoted voting, not candidates) but show formal alliances between creators and authorities.

Party-led initiatives: Political parties widely courted influencers to extend their campaigns. BJP leaders gave interviews on popular channels (e.g. External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, IT minister Chandrasekhar on BeerBiceps; PMO-organized video with Ranveer Allahbadia, Curly Tales awardees). Rahul Gandhi and other Congress figures appeared on youth focused platforms (e.g. dinner chat on Curly Tales). In Maharashtra, many micro creators offered paid promotions; one Pune food blogger posted a neutral reel with a BJP candidate while another launched a podcast featuring a Congress veteran, illustrating how personal networks intersected with politics. News reports even uncovered a BJP-created WhatsApp list of 43 Tamil YouTube channels (including official and semi official BJP/TN BJP channels) to encourage subscriptions.

Content production for campaigns: Some influencers produced overt campaign content. For example, a Marathi creator made separate videos lauding both a Congress and a BJP candidate (each in the local accent) when approached by candidates. These posts were captioned explicitly for campaign purposes (e.g. “shejari vs shejari”). Micro influencers are also reportedly offered lucrative fees by parties (up to ₹500,000 per campaign), making them informal arms of campaign outreach.

Regulatory note: Observers warned that such collaborations blur lines of accountability. Former Election Commissioner SY Quraishi advised the EC to work with platforms to remove influencer posts that violate poll rules, noting the need for oversight when parties and influencers coordinate messaging.

Comparative impact across regions and languages

Varying reach and content: States with prominent local influencers saw different patterns. In Tamil Nadu, well subscribed creators (millions of followers) injected BJP allied narratives into the regional discourse. Their reach suggests potential impact on public conversation, although Tamil Nadu’s final results (DMK led victory) imply limits to this influence. In Maharashtra, by contrast, influencers had more modest followings (hundreds of thousands) and focused on civic themes; their impact was more about awareness than shifting major party fortunes. No equivalent Bengali or Telugu digital influence was

reported, indicating that in West Bengal and Andhra/Telangana traditional party networks and local media remained dominant in shaping voter opinions.

Audience preferences: The effectiveness of creators depends on audience language preferences. Over half of Indian internet users favor content in their native tongues, so Tamil and Marathi influencers naturally have captive regional audiences. This dynamic was likely strongest in non-Hindi states (Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra), whereas in Hindi speaking regions or smaller states there may be fewer dedicated regional influencers, leading parties to use national influencers or local language news instead.

Campaign strategies: Parties adapted by region. In Tamil Nadu, where BJP lacked a vote base, the party pushed content via local creators and WhatsApp groups. In Maharashtra, both BJP and Congress leveraged micro creators: Congress even mobilized its own volunteers to create hyperlocal videos capturing householders' concerns. This reflects a pattern seen across India: in regions where regional creators are available and popular, they became election accelerators; where they were absent, parties relied on their official channels and mass media.

Youth and regional difference: The youth demographic is large everywhere (Gen V = ~210 million voters) and in all regions, young voters accessed influencers. For example, a Mumbai-based voter turned to Marathi influencers; a Delhi youth followed Hindi channels. Thus, while the specific language of content changed by state, the overall trend held: younger and first-time voters were more likely to be swayed by digital creators than by traditional parties.

Role in Spreading Political Awareness or Misinformation

Influencers have a dual role in the dissemination of political information: while they can educate and raise awareness, they can also inadvertently (or intentionally) spread misinformation. Many influencers, particularly those with a strong sense of civic duty, use their platforms to promote factual, informative content. For instance, during election cycles, they may share guides on voting procedures, breakdowns of policy positions, or analyses of political debates. By offering these resources, influencers contribute to an informed electorate and facilitate greater political engagement. The spread of misinformation and fake news is an increasingly prevalent issue on social media, and influencers can sometimes amplify these false narratives. With millions of followers, influencers who share unverified or misleading information can inad-

vertently cause falsehoods to spread quickly, influencing public opinion and shaping perceptions based on inaccuracies. For example, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, social media became a fertile ground for misinformation campaigns, with influencers, both knowingly and unknowingly, sharing content that was later proven to be misleading or false. These incidents highlight the potential for influencers to contribute to misinformation, particularly when they do not fact-check the information they share.

In India, similar challenges have arisen with the rise of “WhatsApp University”—a term referring to the unverified information shared widely on social media platforms, especially on WhatsApp. Influencers on other platforms sometimes amplify these messages, leading to the widespread dissemination of political rumors or fake news. For instance, misinformation campaigns around topics like citizenship laws, economic policies, or social reforms have occasionally gained traction due to influencers unknowingly sharing inaccurate content. These cases underscore the importance of media literacy among influencers, as their impact on voter behaviour can be significant, especially in regions where traditional media literacy is limited.

Ethics and Accountability in Political Campaigns: The Role of Social Media Influencers

As influencers take on greater roles in political discourse, ethical considerations regarding transparency, accuracy, and responsibility have become crucial. Their influence on voter behaviour raises important questions about the ethics of their political affiliations, their role in spreading information or propaganda, and the need for accountability within the digital sphere. Addressing these concerns requires an exploration of the ethical and social implications of influencers in political campaigns and the potential need for regulation to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process.

Transparency in Political Affiliations

Transparency is a fundamental ethical principle in influencer marketing, particularly in political campaigns. When influencers endorse a candidate or party, their followers have the right to know if the endorsement is paid or influenced by political affiliation. In many countries, laws require influencers to disclose paid partnerships. However, in political campaigns, these rules are often unclear or unenforced, leading to a lack of transparency. Without clear disclosures, followers may interpret endorsements as genuine personal opinions

rather than paid promotions, leading to potential manipulation of public opinion.

For example, influencers who endorse political candidates without disclosing financial incentives can mislead their followers into thinking that these endorsements are genuine. This lack of transparency undermines the integrity of the electoral process, as voters may be swayed by influencers' endorsements without understanding the motivations behind them. Therefore, enforcing transparency in political endorsements is crucial to maintaining an ethical and fair digital space for political discourse.

Misuse of Platforms for Propaganda or Fake News

The misuse of social media platforms for spreading propaganda and fake news is a significant ethical concern. Political campaigns sometimes engage influencers to spread negative or false information about opponents, leading to the spread of misinformation. This practice not only distorts the democratic process but also has long-term impacts on public trust in political institutions. Influencers who engage in such activities, knowingly or unknowingly, contribute to the erosion of democratic norms and fuel political polarization.

One of the most concerning aspects of this misuse is the targeted nature of propaganda on social media. Political entities can collaborate with influencers to reach specific audiences with tailored messages that reinforce biases and echo chambers. When influencers participate in these campaigns without disclosing their affiliations, it becomes challenging for followers to discern between genuine opinions and paid content. Such practices raise questions about the ethical responsibilities of influencers and the need for regulations that prevent the spread of propaganda through influential digital personalities.

Need for Regulation and Monitoring

To address the ethical concerns surrounding influencers in political campaigns, there is a growing call for regulation and monitoring. Governments and social media platforms have begun to implement policies aimed at increasing transparency and preventing the spread of misinformation. For example, in the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requires influencers to disclose paid endorsements. However, these regulations are still limited when it comes to political content, leaving room for potential misuse.

Social media platforms, too, play a role in monitoring influencer activity, but their efforts have faced criticism for inconsistency. Algorithms designed to detect misinformation and flag inappropriate content are often ineffective, allowing fake news to circulate. Additionally, influencers sometimes bypass platform policies through indirect methods, making it difficult to monitor their activities effectively. To address these challenges, there is a need for a coordinated approach that involves governments, social media platforms, and influencers themselves to ensure ethical practices in digital political campaigns. The impact of social media influencers on voter behaviour and political discourse is profound and complex. While influencers play a positive role in promoting voter engagement, raising awareness, and motivating young voters, they also contribute to the spread of misinformation and partisan biases. As digital influence grows in politics, ethical considerations around transparency, accuracy, and accountability become paramount. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines regulatory frameworks, social media platform policies, and influencer responsibility. By establishing ethical guidelines and promoting transparency, the influence of social media on politics can become a positive force in democratic processes, empowering voters to make informed decisions.

Conclusion

The role of social media influencers in Indian elections, particularly the Lok Sabha elections, represents a dual-edged impact on democratic processes. On one hand, influencers have brought an unprecedented level of engagement, accessibility, and awareness to political discussions. They serve as direct channels between politicians and citizens, bypassing traditional media filters and providing voters—especially younger ones—with a closer connection to political figures, issues, and debates. By engaging voters with relatable content and accessible language, influencers have made the electoral process more relevant to new generations, encouraging political participation and voter turnout among demographics that might otherwise remain disengaged.

However, the influence of social media personalities in politics also raises concerns about the integrity and reliability of information shared. While influencers can promote civic engagement, they also have the potential to spread misinformation, amplify partisan narratives, and contribute to polarized echo chambers. Their persuasive power is rooted in their trust with audiences, yet this trust can be misused, either intentionally or unintentionally, when they endorse unverified information or fail to disclose affiliations with political enti-

ties. Such practices not only risk misleading voters but also undermine the transparency that is fundamental to a healthy democratic process. The presence of paid endorsements and undisclosed political sponsorships further complicates matters, as followers may not always discern between genuine opinions and paid promotions, potentially skewing voter perceptions. The evolution of influencer involvement in Indian politics, from the 2014 Lok Sabha elections through to more recent campaigns, highlights both the innovative possibilities and ethical challenges within this dynamic. While influencers have the power to mobilize and engage, they must also recognize their role in shaping public opinion and bear responsibility for the content they share. Transparency is critical; when influencers disclose any affiliations or sponsorships, they uphold their credibility and help maintain the integrity of the information ecosystem. Moreover, responsible content sharing—based on verified facts and free of inflammatory rhetoric—can enhance the democratic process by fostering informed discussions among voters.

The importance of informed and responsible use of social media in politics cannot be overstated. For influencers, this means an awareness of their responsibility to share accurate, unbiased information and to respect the impact they wield. For policymakers and social media platforms, there is a need for clear regulatory frameworks and transparency standards that ensure influencers disclose political endorsements and limit the spread of false information. By promoting these standards, stakeholders can work to create a digital environment that supports informed voting decisions and discourages manipulation.

Social media influencers have reshaped political campaigning in India, offering both benefits and challenges to the democratic process. Their ability to connect directly with voters makes them powerful tools in promoting voter engagement, but it also necessitates accountability and ethical responsibility. For the future of Indian elections, fostering a culture of informed, responsible social media usage will be essential. Through collaborative efforts between influencers, platforms, and regulatory bodies, India can harness the positive aspects of digital influence while safeguarding its democracy against the risks of misinformation and unregulated political endorsements. By navigating this dual-edged impact thoughtfully, social media can serve as a powerful tool for democratic participation, empowering citizens to make well-informed choices in the political arena.

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The Impact of Digital Platforms on Regional Language Content

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Abstract:

The rise of digital platforms has revolutionized content creation and dissemination, profoundly influencing regional languages. This paper explores the impact of digital platforms, such as social media, streaming services, and content-sharing websites, on the production, preservation, and evolution of regional language content. Through a mixed-methods approach, including case studies, data analysis, and interviews with content creators and platform users, the research identifies key trends and challenges. Findings suggest that digital platforms have democratized access to regional language content, enabling its global reach and fostering new communities of speakers. However, they also highlight risks such as homogenization, content quality disparities, and the prioritization of dominant languages by platform algorithms. The paper concludes with recommendations for leveraging digital platforms to support linguistic diversity, promote regional language sustainability, and address equity concerns in the digital ecosystem. These insights are crucial for policymakers, platform designers, and cultural organizations seeking to balance innovation with cultural preservation.

Keywords:

Digital platforms, Regional language content, Linguistic diversity, Digital media, Language preservation, Content democratization, Algorithmic bias, Social media influence,

Introduction:

The rapid proliferation of digital platforms has transformed the way content is created, distributed, and consumed, reshaping global communication landscapes. Social media, video-sharing websites, and streaming services have emerged as powerful tools, breaking down geographical barriers and democratizing access to information. While these platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for content creators and audiences, their implications for regional languages a cornerstone of cultural identity and diversity remain complex and multifaceted. Regional languages, often overshadowed by dominant global languages, face unique challenges and opportunities in the digital age, making their survival and evolution an urgent area of study.

Digital platforms have enabled the unprecedented visibility of regional languages. Content creators can now reach audiences beyond their immediate communities, fostering global appreciation for linguistic diversity. For instance, regional language songs, movies, and educational materials have found millions of viewers across the globe. Platforms like YouTube and TikTok have allowed creators to monetize content in languages that were previously marginalized in traditional media. However, this new visibility does not come without complications, as digital spaces often privilege dominant languages through algorithms, limiting equitable opportunities for all linguistic communities.

The shift to digital platforms has also sparked debates about cultural authenticity and linguistic homogenization. The pressure to create viral content often leads to the dilution of traditional forms of expression, as creators blend regional languages with dominant languages to appeal to broader audiences. This trend raises critical questions about whether digital platforms contribute to preserving regional languages or inadvertently accelerate their erosion. Moreover, hybridized language forms, while innovative, may weaken traditional linguistic structures over time, altering the identity and cultural narratives embedded in these languages.

Compounding these challenges is the algorithmic design of digital plat-

forms, which frequently favors content in globally dominant languages. This algorithmic bias creates barriers for regional language content, limiting its visibility and potential reach. Additionally, disparities in digital infrastructure and access further marginalize creators and audiences from underrepresented linguistic communities. Without deliberate efforts to address these systemic issues, digital platforms risk perpetuating linguistic inequalities, undermining the diversity they have the potential to support.

Despite these challenges, digital platforms also serve as a lifeline for endangered languages, offering tools for documentation, education, and revival. Grassroots initiatives have successfully leveraged these platforms to archive and share linguistic knowledge, ensuring that younger generations have access to their heritage. Online communities of speakers and enthusiasts have emerged, fostering solidarity and collaboration across geographical boundaries. These examples underscore the dual role of digital platforms as both disruptors and enablers of regional language preservation.

This paper explores the nuanced impact of digital platforms on regional language content, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges they present. Through case studies, data analysis, and interviews with creators and users, it examines how these platforms influence the production, dissemination, and perception of regional language content. The findings aim to inform strategies for balancing innovation and cultural preservation in the digital era, contributing to the broader discourse on linguistic diversity in an interconnected world.

Research Problem and Significance:

Digital platforms have fundamentally reshaped how regional languages are used and shared, presenting both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, these platforms democratize content creation, allowing individuals and communities to produce and distribute content in their native languages without the constraints of traditional media. Creators can now reach global audiences, fostering greater awareness and appreciation of linguistic diversity. For instance, regional language music, films, and educational materials have gained widespread popularity through platforms like YouTube and TikTok. However, this accessibility is not universal. The visibility and success of regional language content are often influenced by platform algorithms, which tend to favor content in dominant global languages.

The dominance of global languages such as English and Spanish poses significant challenges for regional languages in the digital space. Algorithms

optimized for user engagement frequently prioritize widely spoken languages, sidelining smaller linguistic communities. This marginalization reduces the discoverability of regional language content, limiting its ability to attract large audiences or achieve financial viability. Additionally, creators often face pressure to incorporate dominant languages into their work, leading to hybridized forms of expression that can dilute the cultural and linguistic authenticity of regional languages.

These challenges highlight a critical issue: while digital platforms have the potential to promote regional languages, their design and structure can inadvertently contribute to linguistic homogenization. Understanding how these platforms influence regional language content production and accessibility is vital for addressing these disparities. This research seeks to explore these dynamics, providing insights into how regional languages can be preserved and promoted in the digital era.

Research Objectives:

1. To analyze the positive and negative impacts of digital platforms on regional languages:

This objective seeks to explore how digital platforms influence the creation, dissemination, and evolution of regional language content. It will examine the opportunities these platforms provide for visibility and accessibility, as well as the challenges posed by factors such as algorithmic bias and the dominance of global languages.

2. To evaluate strategies for preserving linguistic diversity:

This objective aims to identify effective approaches for sustaining regional languages in the digital age. It will assess initiatives by content creators, platform developers, and policymakers that promote linguistic inclusivity and address the risks of linguistic marginalization in digital spaces.

Research Methodology:

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of digital platforms on regional language content. The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative techniques, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the subject. The following methods and primary sources form the core of this research:

1.Case Studies

Case studies of specific digital platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, and regional-focused streaming services, will provide detailed insights into how these platforms facilitate or hinder regional language content. These case studies will include an examination of platform policies, content trends, and the performance of regional language creators.

2.Platform Analysis

A systematic analysis of platform algorithms and design features will be conducted to understand their role in promoting or marginalizing regional languages. This will involve analyzing data such as keyword search trends, content recommendation patterns, and audience engagement metrics for regional language content compared to global languages.

3.Primary Sources

The research will rely on a range of primary sources, including:

Analytics reports from digital platforms showcasing engagement and viewership trends for regional language content.

Content archives and databases from specific platforms to track the evolution of regional language representation.

Transcripts and recordings from interviews with key stakeholders, such a creators and platform moderators.

This combination of case studies, platform analysis, and user interviews will provide a nuanced understanding of how digital platforms influence the production, accessibility, and sustainability of regional language content. It will also inform recommendations for promoting linguistic diversity in the digital era.

Research statement:

Digital platforms have revolutionized the creation and dissemination of regional language content, offering unprecedented opportunities for visibility and preservation while simultaneously posing challenges through algorithmic biases and the dominance of global languages; this research examines the dual impact of these platforms and explores strategies to promote linguistic diversity and sustain regional languages in the digital era.

Historical Context:

A. Evolution of Regional Languages in Media

The representation of regional languages in media has evolved significantly over the last century, reflecting broader technological and cultural shifts. In traditional media, such as print, radio, and television, regional languages often struggled to gain equal footing with dominant national or global languages. Newspapers in regional languages served as important cultural hubs, but their reach was often limited to specific geographic areas. Similarly, radio programs in regional languages provided crucial platforms for local music, folklore, and news, yet they were constrained by broadcast limitations and competition from dominant languages.

Television marked a significant development, offering wider access to regional language content through dedicated channels and programming. State-owned broadcasters, such as India’s Doordarshan or China’s CCTV, played a pivotal role in promoting regional languages by producing shows in various dialects to cater to diverse linguistic communities. However, these efforts were often top-down and limited in scope, leaving many languages underrepresented. Despite their efforts, the centralized nature of traditional media often prioritized languages with larger audiences, sidelining smaller or endangered regional languages.

The advent of digital platforms marked a dramatic shift in the dynamics of regional language representation. Unlike traditional media, digital platforms are decentralized, allowing individual creators to directly produce and distribute content in their native languages. This transition not only expanded the reach of regional languages but also diversified the range of content available, including niche genres, educational materials, and localized entertainment. The

shift from traditional to digital platforms represents a fundamental change in the way regional languages are used and consumed in the media landscape.

B. Digital Platforms as Game-Changers

Digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming services have emerged as transformative forces for regional language content. YouTube and TikTok, for instance, have empowered creators from rural and underserved areas to share content in their native languages, bypassing traditional gatekeeping structures. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram have fostered community-building among speakers of regional languages, while OTT services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have begun offering subtitles, dubbing, and even original programming in regional languages to cater to diverse audiences.

One of the most significant impacts of these platforms is the democratization of content creation and access. Unlike traditional media, which required substantial resources and institutional backing, digital platforms allow anyone with internet access to create and distribute content. This shift has leveled the playing field, enabling regional language creators to reach audiences on a global scale. Viral videos, regional music, and localized memes have become cultural phenomena, proving that regional languages can thrive in the digital age. However, the accessibility of digital platforms also presents challenges. While they provide opportunities for visibility, the success of regional language content often depends on algorithmic recommendations that favor popular or widely spoken languages. Additionally, disparities in digital infrastructure and literacy can limit the participation of certain linguistic communities. Despite these challenges, the rise of digital platforms represents a turning point for regional languages, offering new avenues for preservation, innovation, and global recognition.

This historical context highlights the transformative journey of regional languages in media, from their limited presence in traditional platforms to their growing prominence in the digital age. The ongoing evolution underscores the need to balance innovation with strategies that ensure linguistic diversity and equitable representation in the digital ecosystem.

A. Accessibility and Reach

One of the most significant positive impacts of digital platforms on regional language content is the enhanced accessibility and global reach they offer. Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have provided creators from diverse linguistic backgrounds the ability to share their work with audiences far beyond their local communities. Unlike traditional media, which often had limited regional representation due to geographical or financial constraints, digital platforms offer a low-barrier-to-entry environment, allowing content in regional languages to reach a much broader and more diverse audience.

For example, viral regional language content has gained massive popularity on social media platforms, showcasing how these languages can resonate on a global stage. On platforms like YouTube, videos in languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, and regional dialects from around the world regularly accumulate millions of views. Regional language music videos, local comedy sketches, and even viral memes have gained international traction. Primary Source 1 could include case studies such as the rise of "Kolaveri Di" (a Tamil song that went viral globally) or TikTok videos in regional languages that received millions of views, illustrating how digital platforms amplify regional voices and bring their cultural products into the global mainstream. These examples underscore the potential for regional languages to expand their influence beyond geographic borders, creating cross-cultural conversations and connections.

B. Revival of Endangered Languages

Digital platforms have also played an instrumental role in the revival and preservation of endangered languages. Through crowdsourced efforts and the use of digital tools, communities are documenting languages that are at risk of disappearing. Social media groups, YouTube channels, and dedicated websites offer spaces where speakers of endangered languages can share stories, cultural practices, and educational content. This digital shift not only allows endangered languages to be preserved but also raises awareness about the importance of language revitalization.

For example, several regional language communities have turned to

platforms such as YouTube to document their languages, creating instructional videos, language lessons, and cultural content. Primary Source 2 could include case studies of communities like the indigenous Māori in New Zealand or the revitalization efforts of the Basque language in Spain, where digital tools are being used to engage younger generations. These communities have leveraged the global reach of platforms like YouTube to engage speakers in other parts of the world, creating collaborative projects and providing resources for language learners. In many cases, digital platforms have allowed endangered languages to gain new momentum and vitality, offering avenues for younger speakers to connect with their heritage and learn from native speakers.

C. New Opportunities for Content Creators

Digital platforms have not only expanded the accessibility of regional language content but have also created new opportunities for content creators. With the ability to upload videos, music, podcasts, and more, creators can now monetize their regional language content, turning their passion into a sustainable livelihood. This professionalization of regional language content has allowed many creators to build careers in previously underrepresented linguistic spaces.

Monetization options, such as ad revenue, sponsorships, and merchandise sales, are accessible to creators on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which have led to the emergence of regional influencers and content creators who can now sustain themselves through their craft. Creators who speak in regional languages can connect more deeply with their audience, fostering loyalty and cultural authenticity. In some cases, this has led to the rise of "regional influencers" who become key voices in their language communities, driving trends, shaping cultural movements, and even collaborating with global brands to reach new markets.

In conclusion, digital platforms have created significant positive impacts on regional language content by expanding its accessibility and reach, contributing to the revival of endangered languages, and providing new opportunities for content creators to professionalize and monetize their work. These platforms are pivotal in ensuring that regional languages continue to thrive in the digital era, connecting local communities with global audiences and offering creative and economic possibilities that were previously inaccessible.

Challenges and Risks:

A. Algorithmic Bias and Dominance of Global Languages

While digital platforms offer opportunities for regional language content, they also present significant challenges, primarily due to algorithmic bias that favors dominant global languages like English, Spanish, and Mandarin. Most platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, rely on algorithms to recommend content based on engagement metrics, including views, likes, comments, and shares. These algorithms are designed to maximize user engagement and often prioritize content in widely spoken languages that generate higher levels of interaction and broader reach. As a result, regional language content is often relegated to a smaller, niche audience, reducing its visibility and limiting its potential for broader recognition.

A clear example of this algorithmic bias can be observed on platforms like YouTube, where content in English or other major languages tends to appear more frequently in recommended feeds or trending sections, overshadowing regional language content. Primary Source 3 could include studies or reports that analyze how algorithmic curation on platforms such as YouTube or Facebook results in fewer recommendations for regional language videos or posts, even when the content is of high quality. This bias not only stifles the discovery of regional language creators but also affects their ability to gain financial or professional opportunities, ultimately marginalizing their work in the larger digital ecosystem.

B. Quality vs. Quantity of Content

Another challenge regional language creators face is the tension between quality and quantity in content production. Digital platforms, particularly social media, prioritize content that garners quick engagement, leading creators to tailor their work toward virality rather than cultural or linguistic authenticity. The pressure to produce content that appeals to broad audiences can often lead to the dilution of regional language and cultural expressions in favor of content that fits the format of trending or mainstream media.

For instance, creators might resort to incorporating global language elements, such as English, or producing content that follows popular global trends, sacrificing the richness of regional language and cultural nuances. This com-

promises the authenticity of the content, as it becomes increasingly hybridized or simplified to appeal to a wider audience. In a quest for likes and shares, the deeper meanings, traditional elements, and unique linguistic features of regional languages may be lost. This shift toward quantity over quality threatens the cultural integrity of regional language content, as creators may focus on what garners immediate attention instead of creating more meaningful, culturally significant works.

C. Linguistic Homogenization

One of the most concerning risks associated with the rise of digital platforms is linguistic homogenization, a process in which the diversity of regional languages is reduced in favor of a more universal or globalized form of communication. This occurs as regional languages increasingly incorporate digital slang, globalized expressions, and hybrid language forms that blend regional dialects with dominant languages. Digital platforms, especially social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, foster the use of hybrid languages—combinations of local and global language elements that may dilute the authenticity and richness of the regional language.

As regional language speakers engage in digital spaces, they often adapt their language to be more relatable or accessible to broader audiences, leading to a fusion of local dialects with English, for example. The result is the rise of “digital slang” or “text-speak” that mixes the original language with abbreviations, memes, and phrases borrowed from global languages. While this allows regional languages to remain relevant in the digital age, it also threatens to erode their linguistic purity.

Primary Source 4 could explore a case study of a specific community or region, such as the shift in language use among younger generations in places like India or Brazil, where a combination of Hindi/Marathi and English or Portuguese and regional dialects is becoming increasingly common. This blending of languages may lead to the eventual decline of purely regional languages in favor of more globally accepted forms of communication, particularly among younger digital-native populations. The shift could result in a loss of linguistic diversity over time, as younger speakers become more comfortable using hybrid languages than fully embracing their traditional regional languages.

In summary, while digital platforms have brought numerous positive changes to the accessibility and promotion of regional language content, they also present challenges that must be carefully navigated. Algorithmic bias and

the dominance of global languages limit the visibility of regional content, while the pressure to prioritize quantity over quality leads to a dilution of cultural and linguistic authenticity. Additionally, linguistic homogenization is a growing concern as regional languages increasingly merge with globalized slang, leading to the erosion of cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital space. Addressing these challenges will be key to ensuring the sustainability of regional languages in the digital era.

Case Studies and Comparative Analysis:

A. Regional Language Growth on Specific Platforms

Digital platforms have created unique opportunities for regional languages to thrive, particularly through specialized platforms or localized content offerings. Local OTT platforms, such as Hotstar (India), Viu (Southeast Asia), or Sling TV (U.S.), have been successful in promoting regional language content by catering to specific linguistic communities. For example, Hotstar has made significant strides by offering extensive content in regional Indian languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu. The platform has partnered with regional production houses, showcasing localized television shows, movies, and web series. It has become a leading example of how localized OTT services can create a flourishing digital ecosystem for regional languages, where audiences can enjoy content in their native dialects without relying on national or global languages.

Moreover, the success of local platforms often extends beyond just entertainment. OTT platforms are increasingly offering educational content in regional languages. For instance, platforms like Byju's or Vedantu, which offer educational videos in local languages, have had substantial success, reaching millions of students from non-English-speaking regions in India. These platforms help bridge the gap between traditional, often English-dominated, educational resources and the needs of regional language speakers, proving that digital spaces can serve as powerful tools for both entertainment and education in local languages. This trend exemplifies how regional language content can flourish on localized platforms, which prioritize linguistic inclusivity and meet the specific cultural needs of diverse communities.

B. Cross-Platform Comparisons

Despite the clear growth of regional language content on digital plat-

forms, the level of support for these languages can vary dramatically across different platforms. Comparing platforms like YouTube and TikTok provides valuable insight into how each platform handles regional languages differently, affecting content creation, visibility, and user engagement.

On YouTube, creators have the flexibility to produce content in any language and are often supported by features like subtitles, multilingual metadata, and community engagement tools that allow for greater visibility of regional content. Channels dedicated to regional languages often grow organically, as users can subscribe to specific language-based channels or videos. Moreover, YouTube's algorithm, though biased towards more popular content, allows regional language videos to be discovered by users based on user interests, search history, and content preferences. This has led to a proliferation of regional language content creators who produce everything from music and comedy to educational content in their local dialects.

TikTok, on the other hand, has its own unique dynamic. While TikTok does promote content based on engagement metrics (likes, shares, and comments), it also uses a more visual approach that encourages short-form content. Here, regional language content tends to perform well when it aligns with global trends, often mixing regional dialects with popular digital slang or memes. However, TikTok's algorithms may favor videos in widely spoken languages, which creates an uneven playing field for regional language creators. Despite this, TikTok has empowered many regional creators by enabling the rapid spread of their videos within niche communities, helping smaller languages gain visibility.

Thus, while both platforms offer opportunities for regional language content, they do so in distinct ways. YouTube tends to support longer-form, more diverse regional language content, whereas TikTok provides opportunities for quick viral success but may inadvertently marginalize regional languages due to its algorithmic biases.

C. Analysis of User Behavior

User behavior plays a crucial role in shaping content trends and determining which regional language content becomes popular. Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and watch time often dictate which videos are promoted or recommended by platform algorithms. As users increasingly engage with regional language content, platforms begin to recognize these lan-

guages as viable and attractive, prompting further recommendations. This reciprocal relationship between creators and audiences helps regional languages gain more visibility on digital platforms.

In particular, regional language content can spread virally when it resonates with cultural or emotional aspects of its audience. For example, local memes, language-based humor, and music rooted in regional traditions can create a sense of identity and belonging among users. As a result, even if these languages have smaller speaker populations, they can still experience rapid growth in digital spaces. Regional language content often appeals to audiences who seek authentic cultural representation, leading to high levels of engagement.

To gain deeper insights into the specific preferences and behaviors of regional language users, Primary Source 5 could include data from user interviews or surveys conducted with audiences across various platforms. These interviews would help identify factors that influence content consumption, such as language preferences, platform features that support regional language use, and perceptions of digital content creators. Understanding these user preferences can further illuminate the role of audience engagement in shaping content trends and influencing regional language content growth on digital platforms. In conclusion, digital platforms have had a profound impact on the growth and development of regional language content. Case studies of localized OTT platforms illustrate how region-specific services can cater to linguistic diversity, while cross-platform comparisons highlight the varying degrees of support for regional languages across different platforms. Additionally, user behavior data underscores the critical role that audience engagement plays in shaping the content ecosystem, driving visibility, and fostering the growth of regional languages in the digital era.

Policy and Strategic Recommendations:

A. Role of Governments and Organizations

Governments and organizations have a crucial role to play in promoting the growth and sustainability of regional language content on digital platforms. One of the first steps is the development of policies that actively incentivize the creation of content in regional languages. Governments can implement tax breaks, grants, or subsidies for content creators who produce high-quality media in regional languages. In addition, public funding for regional language

projects, including digital media productions, television shows, documentaries, and online educational content, would encourage creators to invest in linguistic diversity.

Supporting digital literacy programs in underserved communities is another essential strategy. Many regions, particularly rural or economically disadvantaged areas, face barriers to accessing digital platforms and tools, making it difficult for local language speakers to participate fully in the digital economy. Governments and organizations can collaborate with educational institutions, NGOs, and tech companies to fund initiatives that provide digital literacy training in regional languages. These initiatives would not only improve access to digital platforms but also empower individuals from these communities to create and consume content in their native languages. Through such policies, governments can ensure that the benefits of digital platforms extend to all linguistic groups, fostering greater inclusivity and representation in the digital space.

B. Platform Design Strategies

Digital platforms must take proactive measures to incorporate regional language-friendly algorithms and create an environment that supports regional content creation. One of the key recommendations for platform designers is the adjustment of algorithms to prioritize regional language content. Currently, many algorithms favor content in widely spoken global languages, often marginalizing regional languages despite their cultural significance. By adjusting algorithms to account for diverse language preferences, platforms can ensure that regional content is more easily discoverable, enhancing its reach and impact. Furthermore, providing customizable settings that allow users to filter content based on language preferences could help regional language creators attract dedicated audiences.

Another important strategy for platforms is to provide resources and support specifically tailored to regional language creators. This could include offering content creation tools, tutorials, and technical support in regional languages, as well as creating dedicated spaces for regional creators to collaborate, share best practices, and access monetization options. Digital platforms should also incentivize regional creators by offering monetization opportunities that are culturally appropriate and inclusive. For example, platforms can set up regional language-focused ad programs, ensuring that advertisers recognize the value of investing in content aimed at specific linguistic communities. These

strategies would ensure that regional language creators have the tools and resources they need to thrive and contribute to a diverse digital media landscape.

C. Public Awareness and Education

Promoting linguistic diversity as a societal value is an important step in ensuring the continued growth and preservation of regional languages on digital platforms. Public awareness campaigns can highlight the importance of linguistic diversity, not only as a means of preserving culture but also as a tool for economic growth and innovation. Governments, educational institutions, and advocacy organizations can collaborate on initiatives that emphasize the significance of regional languages in fostering inclusive digital communities. These campaigns can promote the idea that linguistic diversity enhances creativity, innovation, and cultural richness, positioning regional language content as integral to the future of digital media.

Furthermore, integrating language diversity into educational curricula can help future generations appreciate the value of their native languages. Educational systems should incorporate the study of regional languages alongside global languages, ensuring that students develop a deep understanding of their linguistic heritage. Online platforms can collaborate with educational institutions to provide language-learning resources in regional languages, encouraging younger generations to learn and use their native dialects. This approach would contribute to the continued use of regional languages on digital platforms and would create a broader pool of language creators and consumers.

Conclusion:

A. Summary of Key Findings

The rise of digital platforms has had a profound impact on regional language content, presenting both significant opportunities and notable challenges. On the positive side, platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and OTT services have expanded the accessibility and reach of regional languages, providing creators with a global audience and new avenues for content creation. These platforms have also played a pivotal role in the revival of endangered languages, enabling language communities to document, share, and preserve their linguistic heritage. Moreover, the democratization of content creation has opened doors for regional language influencers and creators to monetize their work, resulting in

the professionalization of regional language content.

However, these opportunities come with several challenges. The dominance of global languages, exacerbated by algorithmic biases on digital platforms, limits the visibility of regional language content, often relegating it to niche audiences. The pressure for content creators to prioritize quantity and virality over cultural and linguistic authenticity has led to the dilution of regional languages, with many creators adopting hybrid languages or digital slang in an effort to reach broader audiences. Additionally, linguistic homogenization is a growing concern, as younger generations increasingly shift toward global languages or hybrid forms of communication, potentially undermining the integrity of regional languages in the digital space.

B. Implications for Future Research

While this research has highlighted the dual role of digital platforms in both enhancing and challenging regional language content, there remain significant gaps in our understanding. Future research could explore the long-term effects of digital platforms on language evolution, particularly how regional languages may change as a result of digital slang and hybridization. Additionally, studies could examine the economic impact of regional language content on the digital economy, including how creators are monetizing their work in diverse linguistic communities. Research into user behavior and engagement patterns on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube could offer deeper insights into the types of content that resonate most with regional language audiences and the factors influencing their consumption habits. Moreover, there is a need for comparative studies that explore the effectiveness of different platforms in supporting regional languages, particularly in non-Western contexts, where linguistic diversity is especially pronounced.

C. Final Thoughts

The future of regional languages in the digital age depends on a concerted effort from governments, digital platforms, and content creators to foster a digitally inclusive world where linguistic diversity is celebrated and preserved. The potential of digital platforms to promote regional languages is immense, but this potential must be harnessed carefully to ensure that the challenges of algorithmic bias, quality versus quantity, and linguistic homogenization do not undermine the rich cultural heritage embedded in these languages. By implementing policies to support regional language content, adjusting plat-

form algorithms to favor linguistic diversity, and encouraging public awareness about the value of linguistic preservation, we can create a future where regional languages not only survive but thrive in the digital landscape.

Ultimately, the vision for a digitally inclusive world is one where all languages—no matter how widely spoken or regionally specific—have the opportunity to flourish in the global digital ecosystem. As digital platforms continue to shape cultural discourse, they hold the power to promote linguistic diversity, bridge cultural divides, and empower communities to celebrate their languages and traditions in the global marketplace. It is through collective effort, thoughtful policies, and creative innovation that we can ensure regional languages remain an integral part of the digital future.

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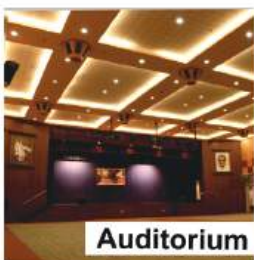
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