

Chapter 3

Role of Information and Communication Technology in the Digitalization of Violence and Sexual Politics in the Indian Scenario

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ABSTRACT

The latter half of the 20th century witnessed rapid growth in the domain of science and technology especially information and communication technology (ICT). The impact of ICT can easily be seen in the different domains of humans like science, education, professional career, culture, and politics, explicitly and implicitly or negatively. There are different types of digital violence exercised against women. Some of the forms range from hacking, controlling, or manipulating information, doxing, dissemination of intimate photos or private information, use of spyware, surveillance, faking identity, cyberbullying like posting or sharing embarrassing or threatening pictures, defamation, harassment, stalking in the form of sending online unsolicited or unwanted sex-based materials, and rape threats. The chapter attempts to explore role of the digital technology and online platforms as intermediaries in rendering gender-based violence, digitalization of gender-based violence, verbal or nonverbal sexual assaults, and online sexual politics to prolong women's subjection in India.

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INTRODUCTION

In academia, the terms ‘digitalization’ and ‘digitization’ are often used interchangeably, but it is crucial to understand the distinction between these terms as they represent different processes. Mistaking one for the other leads to a confusion between a social process and a technological process. Digitization primarily involves the representation of sensory aspects of the social world through binary codification and decoding. On the other hand, digitalization encompasses the description of the social changes that accompany digitization. While digitization is predominantly controlled by the actors and knowledge involved in technological development, digitalization extends its reach to every member of society and encompasses a broader spectrum of forces, interests, values, and visions. It is important to note that digitalization carries significant implications for the concept of emancipation, as it introduces normative questions that are often overlooked in the process of digitization. (Duff, 2012).

Digitization serves as the technical aspect, involving the conversion of analog information into digital formats, enabling storage, manipulation, and transmission of data. It focuses on the transformation of physical or analog artifacts into digital representations, utilizing binary code as the medium. Conversely, digitalization transcends the mere technical conversion and delves into the social, cultural, and economic impacts of digitization. It encompasses the broader implications of the widespread adoption and integration of digital technologies in various spheres of life. Digitalization entails understanding the transformative effects, both positive and negative, that arise from the utilization of digitized information and technologies in society.

To comprehend digitalization fully, one must acknowledge its multidimensional nature. It involves not only the implementation of digital tools but also the reconfiguration of societal structures, norms, and practices. The scope of digitalization extends beyond the realm of technology developers and experts. It necessitates the active participation of individuals, communities, organizations, and policymakers to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital era. Furthermore, digitalization raises important normative questions related to ethics, privacy, power dynamics, access to information, and social equality. These questions require thoughtful consideration and collective engagement to ensure that digitalization serves the interests of all members of society. By addressing these normative aspects, digitalization can contribute to the advancement of societal well-being, empowerment, and inclusivity.

DISCUSSION

A widely acknowledged definition of cyberbullying characterizes it as a purposeful and aggressive act or behavior, executed by an individual or a group, utilizing electronic means of communication consistently and over an extended duration. The target of cyberbullying often faces significant challenges in defending themselves against these acts of aggression (Smith, 2013). It is crucial to recognize the various mediums and tactics employed in cyberbullying to fully comprehend its impact and develop effective strategies to combat this form of harassment.

According to Shivika Agrawal (2020), cyberbullying refers to deliberate and aggressive behavior targeted at another individual through electronic means. Agrawal highlights various manifestations of cyberbullying, such as ignoring, disrespecting, teasing, or harassing someone. Additionally, she notes more severe forms, including spreading rumors, stalking, or using technology-based devices and electronic communications to physically threaten others. Agrawal emphasizes that a key aspect of cyberbullying is

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