

Introduction

Hi I'm Anju and I represent All India Dalit Women Rights Forum in New Delhi, India. I am a Dalit woman activist working with young women from my community in reclaiming our rights and dignity. I travel across the country mobilising youth towards amplifying our voices to end caste apartheid. My work involves leadership building, survivor support and extensive grassroots level campaigning.

whether digital media can be an efficient tool to empower and protect minorities.

your work with digital media in the context of Dalit women in India. It will be useful to hear about your experience leading workshop on digital media, and what you think worked and didn't work for these workshop.

I have conducted several social media trainings for our people as its very much needed for us to enter this online space to high light our issues, for spreading awareness, mobilise our people and build networking cross the world.

As we all know Mainstream media doesn't cover our issues issue because its own my dominant caste people and that's why it has always been unresponsive or misrepresentative of caste and gender issues. Hence, social media is a space that we feel we can make use of to mobilise voices for our campaign. The available digital tools give us the access and freedom to write from our own perspective. This is the way to break dominant hegemony and create our own-story. And we have also created our own media by our own people like Dalit camera, Round table India and Dalit Caravan and Savari. But as we see though they have many followers on youtube and social media etc. and they also faced so much challenges by the government and dominant caste people in power. For example, Dalit Camera a community run youtube channel focussing on anti caste issues was pulled off the web by right wing forces recently but after a lot of protest on social media, it came back

As we know everything has two sides, positive and negative, social media gives us power and freedom to express our feeling but in another hand, young women like us who are on social media, face many peculiar challenges. When I started tweeting from my handle @dalitawaz, I had a lot of trolls attacking me, making threats on my life and sexually harassing me online. In my experience I have seen that our people face so many challenges on these online spaces. Lack of access for majority of marginalised people is a main issue as these online spaces are highly dominated by dominant caste and English-speaking people, Language is another hurdle that divides us and keep us from sharing ideas across regions. In a country like India which has more than 2000 languages you can only imagine the complexity of navigating the digital space!

Though some of us have entered the digital domain, we still need a huge push for more women from my community to be active on social media with the needed security and confidence. For this advanced training on new innovative tools is very necessary.

If we see the survey India has highest user on Facebook worldwide which is 241 million. But who are they 241 million people that is biggest question. And how social can be used to further the cause of anti caste work? How can women like me, be able to gain more efficient access? In spite of all these challenges, we must use social media so that the whole world can know and see what is happening with dalit communities, that's why we decide not to leave but take measure to overcome these challenges. We have to use these social media to reach out to the world, so we included basic digital security tips in our social media training, like how to protect our password, privacy settings, use of picture and videos, and how to stop someone bothering you or threatening you etc.

explain the opportunities and limits of digital media to help society be more diverse and inclusive (i.e: Can digital media promote minority identity?)

Digital media is very open and public space which gives equal opportunities to all, but here also we face more exclusion, whenever we talked about our rights for our issues, immediately we got bad bad trolls this online backlash level is very high and also the issue of access is very crucial. Majority of our dalit communities struggle with issues of basic access to food, land, water, sanitation, education, employment etc. So the use of social media among our communities is restricted to the few people who have managed to gain some amount of upward mobility, which means access to a smartphone and basic internet connection.

What are the limits of Digital media when it comes to mobilisation of people for action?

#Dalitwomenfight campaign and **Dalit History Month** as examples of how we can use social media in the digital age to reach a larger global audience. Initiatives like this have increased visibility to the issues and builds momentum to the campaign. However, once again the challenges related to access limits the outreach to a large number of people from the community.

is digital media effective in changing the way minorities are perceived in wider society?

Since caste is a colonisation of the mind more than anything else, social media provides a space for opening up a discussion and educating and mobilising people against such a brutal system. The youth on social media have information at their finger tips and it is important for us to put out our counter histories because official histories are always written from the perspective of the dominant caste.

Can digital media sensitize young people to the cause of Dalits in India?

Social media is a good space to use for sensitize people by highlighting the issues, whenever any incident happened with our people, we go for investigation or fact finding and we put all the information with facts on social media with picture and videos it helps the audience to understand the intensity of the crime with dalits but by doing this our intension is not to show case our pain but we want to make all people and state government accountable and more active towards our issue. But in my experience, I have seen whenever we spoke about caste or caste crime on social media non dalit people especially young people start argue about Reservation, (affirmative action) which is our constitutional right, this is the one thing which they see first, but they didn't realise what we faced or what we are facing till now, or that affirmative action is a small step to correct a grave historical injustice done to our communities.

to bring some positive results achieved so far and to formulate concrete recommendations and way forward on issues relevant to digital media and minority youth.

Access to language and technology

Security training to protect oneself from sexual harassment and trolling

Online networks to share information about local struggles and build solidarity globally.