The Good, the Bad and the Ugly:

Media and Women's Rights

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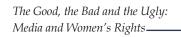
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GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENCE

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Trigger Warning: This report contains violence against women, especially the section titled THE UGLY. Please engage in self-care as you read this report.

INTRODUCTION

As technology has advanced greatly in the past century, the scope of media has expanded as well. Media encompasses various components of mass communication in society, from its beginnings in print media and publishing, to photography, broadcasting, news media, digital media, and more. As such, the media has and continues to play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions. It is commonly referred to as the fourth estate or power due to its explicit and implicit role in framing political issues and discussions. Alongside the evolution of media, various socio-political movements have also taken place, such as the women's rights and feminist movements. Though the two movements are at times very interconnected and used interchangeably, it is important to distinguish between the two; while the women's rights movement revolves around the legal and institutional aspect focusing on rights, feminism is the broader movement that includes women's rights but goes further to examine ideologies such as sexism, patriarchy, oppression, and gender.

The women's rights movement and ideologies have taken form in various media, such as newspaper, literature, radio, television, social media, film, and so on. Undoubtedly, the media has played a significant role in the success of women's rights and the distribution of its ideas; the first wave of feminism in the 19th and 20th century focused on women's suffrage and the right to vote and was primarily spread through newspapers and other printed media such as pamphlets and bulletins. Though newspaper readership has declined, they played an important role in circulating feminist ideas and women's rights issues in Western society. American writer and activist Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, was integral to the second-wave movement due to its discussion of the unhappiness of typically white, middle-class women who struggled with their limited gender roles and isolation due to the suburban nuclear family. The third wave of feminism relies heavily on social media to spread its goals and ideas. In the words of the Council of Europe:

Never before in history have the media played such a major role in the socialisation of human beings and become such an integral and constant part of people's everyday lives. The media have the power to transmit messages and images of the world. They are not simply mirrors of the world; they are active shapers of perceptions and ideas. Over the past 20 years, the media have become powerful and central actors in constructing and making sense of local and global social affairs. As institutions, they shape cultural and social attitudes, impact on politics and public policy, and even influence journalism. (Council of Europe, 2013).

As such, this report aims to highlight the effects of media, as well as social media, on women's rights in the present day.

WOMEN IN MEDIA

Feminism & its Impact on Media Evolution

Media content and output has long been a mirror for societal values, reflecting fundamental discrepancies or patterns of discrimination. In their article, Cancian and Ross (1981) depict almost a century of female representation in media and its correlation to the women's rights movement. They found that higher support for the movement equates to higher media coverage; not only of the civil rights movement itself, but also of women-inclusive stories in total. The societal push against the patriarchy was and still is reflected in the media. This becomes evident when for example looking at women's right to vote. While in the 1850s newspapers talked about abandoning a dress code for women, led to the first Women's Right Convention in 1870 and to the formation of the American Woman Suffrage Association (Johnson, 2017). Through the publication of feminist research and deeply personal experiences of discrimination, the movement was able to gain support for their causes.

This first wave of feminism was soon followed by a second one in the mid 20th century, accompanied by other social movements of the time, and women again used books and print media platforms to demand child care support, equal pay, or reforms regarding workplace harassment. Books and print media especially have formed this part of the feminist movement. Literature such as *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) by Friedan opens the eyes of readers to their own oppressive state and encourages support for the movement. The last and third wave of feminism, the current and broadest one so far, is characterised by the use of social media, as well as its intersectionality and individuality. It also sparked widespread criticism and awareness regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment (Johnson, 2017). Importantly, what defines feminism in the media in today's age is principally that there is no one-size fits all definition for it.

Reinforcement of Traditional Gender Roles

In this article, the positive and negative aspects of media will be depicted. However, it is vital to firstly understand the general reinforcement of gender roles and its extent. Cancian and Ross (1981) found that higher support for the movement resulted in higher media coverage, not only of the civil rights movement itself but also of women-inclusive stories in total. Television, film, and advertising consistently reinforced, and continues to reinforce, traditional gender norms, impacting how women were perceived and how they perceived themselves (Cancian and Ross, 1981). Traditional gender norms are reinforced when women are consistently portrayed as nurturing, emotional, and focused on relationships, while men are depicted as strong, stoic, and career-oriented. This portrayal fosters the belief that individuals must conform to these predefined gender roles to be socially acceptable.

Secondly, the media's perpetuation of unattainable beauty ideals exacerbates gender role enforcement. Women are frequently depicted as thin, flawless, and youthful, while men are portrayed as muscular

and dominant. Such portrayals contribute to a culture of body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and a relentless pursuit of unrealistic physical standards, as individuals internalise the notion that their worth is determined by their appearance, reinforcing traditional gender roles that prescribe women's value as primarily based on aesthetics. In essence, these mechanisms collectively contribute to the media's perpetuation of traditional gender roles. By consistently portraying individuals in ways that conform to gender norms, imposing unrealistic beauty ideals, and marginalising or stereotyping those who deviate from these norms, the media reinforces societal expectations and behaviours aligned with traditional gender roles. These representations have real-world consequences, shaping the way individuals perceive themselves and others, impacting self-esteem, and contributing to ongoing struggles for gender equality and acceptance.

Representation of Women in Media

Media plays an important role in the formation of identities, social norms and values, especially in regards to gender. From an early age, children are influenced by gendered stereotypes present in the media. As such, it is alarming that mainstream media has been found to perpetuate gender inequality as women remain underrepresented and news stories do not challenge gender stereotypes (GMMP, 2020: 32). According to the 2017 Women's Media Center report, women receive only 38 percent of by-lines in print, TV, Internet, and wire news. Certainly, the increase in women's rights and feminist movements led to greater media coverage, as well as an increase of women in media, giving them a voice to speak on women's rights issues and why they are important. However, it remains that the media as a whole is created by men, for men, and according to their interests and tastes. When women are poorly represented in the media, it can have a negative impact on the formation of values surrounding gender. Research found that while 40 percent of journalists are female, only 23 percent of the top editors across the 200 major outlets are women (Reuter Institute, 2020). It remains debated whether or not a higher percentage of female representation in media outlets would also contribute to a more gender-sensitive content output.

Male and female journalists tend to think about their work in largely similar terms. They suggest that the lack of difference means that newsroom culture will not necessarily change if more female journalists are employed, as the professional culture is maintained by both sexes. They do note that the reason for similarities may be that female journalists are forced to adopt male values and are judged by male standards (GSDRC 2015).

While women remain underrepresented in the media as a whole, social media offers a more equal playing field, as it allows women of a variety of backgrounds and countries to be heard. Indeed, social media has opened a new frontier for women's rights.

THE GOOD

Positive Impacts of Media in Advancing Women's Rights

Media, especially social media, has demonstrated its significant capacity to spotlight women's rights concerns to a broader audience and inspire policymakers to reinforce their dedication to achieving gender equality. Recent cases of women's online activism such as Malala Yousafzai, Tarana Burke, or Nina Totenberg, and numerous women's rights campaigns on social media, such as #MeToo, #HeForShe, or #BringBackOurGirls have brought gender equality and women's rights matters to the forefront of both policy making and the media's spotlight (Loiseau & Nowacka, 2015).

Since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the international recognition of the positive impacts of media on women is gradually increasing with a more conscientious plan to make use of the potentials of media for the advancement of women's rights and fight against the potential threats for women (Loiseau & Nowacka, 2015). In paragraph 234, the Beijing Platform for Action recognised that "[e]verywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women". Moreover, in the subsequent conferences of Beijing +5 and Beijing +10, the Commission on the Status of Women issued further declarations which drew attention to necessary changes and established objectives related to women's representation in media leadership roles, their access to and utilisation of media technologies, and the promotion of women's literacy (Sarikakis, 2013).

The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) also recognises the important role of media in achieving gender equality and combating violence against women. Article 5 of the Convention obliges State Parties to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary [...] practices", which means that States have the obligation to fight against the projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications (Sarikakis, 2013).

Lastly, a proposed target under Goal 5 of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals urges the international community to "[e]nhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women" (UNGA, 2015, p. 18).

Online Activism in Advancing Women's Rights

Online activism or cyberactivism is one of the biggest advantages of media and social media usage for advancing women's rights. Online activism provides a platform to empower marginalised voices, build up online communities, realise a cross-boundary dialogue, as well as spread a message within and beyond country borders. Online activism has become a means to raise awareness on both individual and collective scales. Feminist activism has also entered the online sphere, aiming to build a bigger community and challenge the regional and national spheres of discrimination and oppression by

speaking out. For feminist and women's rights organisations, these online spaces are already quite accessible and cost-effective with modern day technology and thereby enable greater engagement and participation (Sarrats, 2022). Additionally, cyberactivism has proved to be a powerful tool for grassroots political mobilisation, offering fresh avenues for engaging protestors. Moreover, in nations where public spaces are tightly regulated or under military control, at times these online actions prove to be a safer alternative to potentially perilous offline actions (Fuentes, 2023).

Successes of Hashtag Activism

"Hashtag activism is the act of building up public support through social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) with the help of relevant hashtags" (Razo, 2020). It originates from 2009 when Twitter adopted the hashtag symbol. The first successful example of hashtag activism began in January of 2012, when the Susan G. Komen Foundation declared its discontinuation of its annual donation of $680,000 to the non-profit organisation, Planned Parenthood, for breast exams and mammograms. The decision was primarily driven by political factors, causing outrage among supporters of Planned Parenthood. Over 100,000 individuals expressed their support through the hashtag #standwithpp on social media, leading Komen to restore the funding (Dewey, 2014).

Since then, hashtag activism on social media is blooming and has helped to mobilise public awareness and support for women's rights by increasing the legitimacy of those matters often overlooked in the mainstream media. It has become a powerful tool to disseminate information and bring women's rights issues to the attention of a wider public as hashtags are associated with a particular case, but usually they receive substantial backing from a widespread social movement, thereby elevating an individual instance into a broader societal issue (Park et al, 2023; Sarrats, 2022). In the following paragraphs, this report presents the most notable examples of hashtag activism that prompted widespread social media movements, encouraged solidarity, forged communities, exercised pressure on decision-making, and eventually contributed to the advancement of women's rights.

In 2013, the #BringBackOurGirls campaign reached over one million tweets, effectively increasing awareness among both domestic and international stakeholders about the urgency of rescuing kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls. In response to the terrorist group Boko Haram's kidnapping of 276 teenage girls from their school hostel, parents and community members took to social media and used hashtags to raise awareness. The campaign was gradually co-opted by outsiders and it quickly went viral. However, before the hashtag activism, the case received little media attention. Due to the emergence of the #BringBackOurGirls movement, the United States, United Kingdom, and France have all pledged assistance to Nigeria in its quest to locate the abducted girls. Over 100 of the kidnapped girls have now been located or set free (UN Women, 2019; Dewey 2014).

In 2014, the UN Women's successful and high-profile #HeForShe campaign further emphasised the capacity of social media in captivating broader and larger audiences. The actress and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson took part in the campaign and by delivering a powerful speech at the UN Headquarters, she invited men to join the movement for gender equality. The campaign reached out to over 1.2 billion individuals, putting a worldwide spotlight on the imperative of involving men and boys in the pursuit of gender equality (Loiseau & Nowacka, 2015; UN Women, 2019).

One of the largest hashtag movement around women's rights was the #MeToo campaign, a powerful an international hashtag activism against sexual harassment and assault. It went viral in October 2017 on Facebook and Twitter to help demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault among women, encouraging survivors to share their stories (UN Women, 2019). The movement was founded by Tarana Burke to amplify marginalised voices through social media and to create a global conversation about sexual misconduct in order to ignite widespread changes in how society addresses these issues (Murhula, 2022).

#TimesUp or #NiUnaMenos are also noteworthy hashtag campaigns aiming to advance gender equality. #TimesUp was launched by women from the American film, TV, and theatre industry to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace with the idea of using the loudest voices in service of the most marginalised, fostering unity to shatter the silence surrounding sexual harassment, eradicate gender discrimination, and champion gender equality. #NiUnaMenos (Not One Less) movement was born out of the dissatisfaction of a group of journalists and writers about the passiveness of the public on daily news about murdered women and gender-based violence. While the campaign started as a protest in Argentina in 2015 to fight against femicides and gender-based violence crimes, it rapidly expanded throughout Latin America and has evolved into a feminist alliance (UN Women, 2019). In 2018 the movement transformed into the Green Wave protests, advocating for legal and secure abortion access in Latin America. As of December 2020, the movement reached a historic success: the predominantly Roman Catholic Argentina legalised abortion (Diaz, 2021).

Success Stories of Women Using the Media

Besides hashtag activism and online campaigns, several women used media to share their personal stories and experiences that have inspired many and reached significant progress in gender equality and women's rights. A prominent example is Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani advocate for female education who achieved global recognition through her tireless efforts for speaking out against the Taliban's oppressive restrictions on female éducation, even after she had been shot by them. She has become a worldwide icon for girls' education after having co-authored a memoir *I Am Malala*. Her narrative has received extensive media attention, and she remains committed to utilising her platform to champion education and women's rights. In December 2014, Malala received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for her activism and she became the youngest-ever Nobel laureate. In collaboration

with her father, she established the Malala Fund with the objectives to expand access to education for girls and women, especially those hardest to reach and who are affected by conflict and disaster, as well as improve the quality and relevance of education, ensuring that content, teaching practices, and learning environments are gender-sensitive (Malala Fund, 2023; UNESCO, 2021). To demonstrate the effectiveness of the Fund, in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Malala Fund allocated nearly USD$14 million to organisations in nine pivotal program countries and eight supplementary regions. The official Instagram account experienced a 200 percent surge in average reach and diversified its short-form video content, sharing over 40 videos that garnered over 1.6 million views (Alfi, 2023).

Another feminist icon who used the media to advocate for women's rights and gender equality is Gloria Steinem, an accomplished American feminist, political activist, and journalist who has played a pivotal role in advocating for women's rights since the mid-20th century. In 1972, she co-founded Ms. magazine, which served as a vital platform for feminist voices and discussions. Throughout her career, Steinem has been a driving force behind several influential organisations, including the Women's Action Alliance in 1971, dedicated to promoting non-sexist, multi-racial children's education, and the Women's Media Center in 2004, aimed at fostering positive portrayals of women in the media. Her best-selling book *My Life on the Road*' is an insightful memoir that has been featured in numerous anthologies and textbooks, leaving a lasting impact on feminist literature (Michals, 2017; Burkett, 2023).

These women, among many others, have used their voices, platforms, and media expertise to drive meaningful change, disrupt entrenched societal norms, and champion the cause of women's rights and gender equality on a global stage. Their stories stand as compelling illustrations of how the media can serve as a powerful tool for empowerment and catalysing transformative social progress.

Role of Social Media on Women Entrepreneurship

Another positive application of social media by women is to unlock their potential for business success (Ukpere et al., 2014). Several women entrepreneurs who have gained success through media have been identified as role models for upcoming women entrepreneurs today. For example, Oprah Winfrey, the American television personality, actress, and entrepreneur whose talk show (Oprah Winfrey Show) was among the most popular of the genre, has become one of the most influential and richest women in the United States (Grant, 2023). Another inspiring women entrepreneur is Sheryl Sandberg, an American technology executive who was chief operating officer of Facebook. She created an advertising strategy for the social media company that allowed Facebook to become profitable. She later became an outspoken advocate for women to adopt a more assertive approach in pursuing success within the business realm. Sandberg conveyed her philosophy through *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (2013), a book released in conjunction with the establishment of Lean In, an organisation focused on education and fostering a community for women in the business world (Gregersen, 2023).

However, the rising women entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon of the 21st century and the positive result of widespread social media usage. If we examine the historical perspective of women in entrepreneurship, it starkly contrasts with the present landscape. Prior to the 20th century, women were often excluded from the business industry in many countries and were primarily expected to contribute to household income. They were primarily confined to domestic roles, regarded as homemakers, and their economic or commercial roles were largely disregarded. Now we see many accomplished business women and entrepreneurs whose success was strongly linked to media, especially social media platforms. Social media has brought significant changes in the life of a woman, especially in terms of business opportunities. It facilitated women's ways to be more creative in their business activities by making a safe environment to buy and sell products through online sources with no interactivity with men in the physical market (Merza, 2019). It also allowed them to leverage their multitasking abilities by being procreators, home managers, and entrepreneurs running their own ventures at the same time. Social media has provided women with the convenience of effectively managing their time and daily responsibilities, enabling them to engage actively in all facets of their family and business activities (Ukpere et al., 2014).

THE BAD

Online Harassment

Although social media has certainly had a positive effect for women's rights in regards to raising awareness and connecting women around the world, it also produces significant online harassment and abuse against women, as well as disinformation regarding certain women's rights issues. Nagarajan (2016) found a "rising trend is the use of the internet, social media and other forms of technology to harass, intimidate, humiliate and control women and girls". In 2020, the emergency help requests of female journalists to the Free Press Unlimited's Reporters Response fund increased by 170 percent compared to 2019, with the effect of causing significant emotional and mental distress, as well as scaring off and silencing female journalists. This can then lead to self-censorship of female journalists who feel unsafe in the public sphere due to the harassments, intimidations, and attacks they face, all of which can constitute an attack on democracy itself. Female politicians also experience a higher rate of harassment and abuse than their male counterparts, which can also inhibit their professional, political, and civic participation. This is incredibly relevant given the joint statement by the UN Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women and Freedom of Expression who highlight that online violence and abuse against women can "chill and disrupt the online participation of women journalists, activists, human rights defenders, artists and other public figures and private persons" (OHCHR, 2017). The normalisation and mainstreaming of misogyny poses a threat to women and girls on social media, especially due to the technological possibilities of social media.

Amnesty International (2018) conducted a report on Twitter and the violence and abuse many women experience on the platform. The report found that Twitter had a detrimental effect on women's right to express themselves, both equally and freely. In this instance, the social media platform does the opposite of strengthening women's voices due to self-censorship and other discriminations. According to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Twitter, as a company, has a responsibility to respect human rights such as the right to expression and non-discrimination, and to not contribute to such abuses. Various UN Resolutions have explicitly recognised the risk of violence and abuse and against women's rights activists online. The UN General Assembly Resolution 68/181 affirms online violence and abuse against women as a form of gender discrimination, as it states that:

information-technology-related violations, abuses, discrimination and violence against women, including women human rights defenders […] with a view to discrediting them and/or inciting other violations and abuses against them, are a growing concern and can be a manifestation of systemic gender-based discrimination.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has stated that

the same rights people have offline must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression, which is

applicable regardless of frontiers and through any media of one's choice, in accordance with articles 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Women have the right to live free from discrimination, in real life and online. In order to address the root of the problem, our attitudes in society must first change, so that violence against women in all forms is eliminated and that the necessary measures are taken to ensure women's safety in digital spaces.

Weaponisation of False Information

Misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information are also examples of threats to women's digital experiences. Misinformation is the sharing of false or misleading information, whereas disinformation refers to the use of misinformation deliberately, and mal-information is the use of true, correct information to inflict harm. Misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information are forms of online violence that are disproportionately gendered in nature and which often target high profile women in politics and journalism as well as women's rights activists in order to discredit them. Then there is gendered disinformation, which Di Meco, a gender equality expert, defines as the spread of deceptive or inaccurate information or images used against women in public life. A study conducted by Demos in 2020 noted that gendered disinformation is not just false information, it also uses "highly emotive and value-laden content to try to undermine its targets," and "seeks impact primarily at the political level, though can also cause serious harm at the personal level," leading to hate campaigns that come with terrifying, and sometimes lethal, consequences for women in politics (Rajvanshi, 2023). Gendered disinformation erodes women's ability to take part in public life in a safe and effective manner, and discourages them from pursuing public office. When women are underrepresented in legislative bodies, issues such as gender-based violence and reproductive health often lose their biggest promoters and advocates. In recent years, gendered disinformation has even come to present problems in terms of national security as autocratic leaders will use misogyny as a means to connect with voters who feel threatened by women's rights. Information as a form of violence is certainly not new, but the above mentioned examples increasingly pose threats to democratic institutions and women's rights and safety.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines an infodemic as the proliferation of false or misleading information that leads to confusion, mistrust in health authorities, and the rejection of public health recommendations, all of which exacerbate a public health crisis (WHO, 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed and felt the devastating impacts of an infodemic on public health. Now, a new infodemic is occurring around abortion, especially in the US. On June 24th, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization resulted in the reversal of Roe v. Wade, which had previously protected a woman's right to abortion. The reversal of Roe v. Wade has given way to an abortion infodemic that is being exacerbated by a confusing and rapidly changing legislative landscape, the proliferation of abortion disinformants

on the web, lax efforts by social media companies to abate abortion misinformation, and proposed legislation that threatens to prohibit the distribution of evidence-based abortion information (Pagoto et al, 2023). The abortion infodemic threatens to worsen the detrimental effects of the Roe v. Wade reversal on maternal morbidity and mortality. Big Tech platforms are blocking abortion-pill distribution information and permitting false narratives about abortion to spread. This has led to physicians and poison control officials say they are worried that people seeking abortions will turn to ineffective and dangerous methods shared online, potentially delaying or preventing safe, proven abortion care (Thomas, 2022). Internet companies need to stop accepting advertising money from groups that lie about abortion and to do a better job of removing posts with false information. Such information is not just confusing or a nuisance, but is also incredibly dangerous. Misinformation has been shown to influence people's decisions, and in this case the decisions being influenced are about reproductive health, with the potential to lead to tangible consequences such as shame around abortion decision-making, and complicated, unsafe abortions. Regardless of one's view on abortion, the provision of medically accurate information is a basic human right, as underscored by the WHO (2023). As such, social media platforms and companies must make sure they are not endangering women's health, lives, and rights through misinformation.

THE UGLY

Across social media platforms, there also exist truly horrific and disturbing content that violate women's rights. From illicit sexual surveillance to stalking, rape videos and photographs, doxxing, and extortion, the vulnerability of women in the online world and need for women's rights and protection in online spaces are made clear. A Pakistani group called Bytes for All released a study showing that social media is causing harm to women in the country, with "technologies […] helping to increase violence against women, not just mirroring it" (Buni and Chemaly, 2014). This is certainly the case as the internet has played an increased role in the trafficking of girls and women, making it easier for perpetrators to abduct and advertise the trafficked victims.

The lack of action taken by social media platforms not only greatly hinders the advancement of women's rights, but also allows for the continued violation of women's rights. For instance, a graphic video documenting the gang rape of a woman in Malaysia was live on Facebook for more than three weeks, during which Facebook moderators declined to remove it (Buni and Chemaly, 2014). Such content normalises the abuse of women not only in the online space but in real life too, as more people see the content and its following and think that they can also get away with such acts. This is especially the case when social media platforms do nothing to stop the spread of violence against women online. An Icelandic woman, Hildur Lilliendahl Viggósdóttir, created a page called 'Men who hate women', where she reposted examples of misogyny she found on Facebook to draw attention to the issue. Eventually, her page was suspended numerous times, not because of the offensive content depicting and glorifying rape and violence against women, but because she was reposting images without permission (Buni and Chemaly, 2014). Facebook did not have a problem with the content itself, but with copyright issues. Ultimately, a public letter signed by 160 organisations stated that Facebook's refusal to take down such content was "marginaliz[ing] girls and women, sidelin[ing] our experiences and concerns, and contribut[ing] to violence against us" while also hindering freedom of expression (Buni and Chemaly, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Long before social media and advanced telecommunication, any form of media has been a reflection of societal views. This article has depicted the positive and negative sides of this. It explained how the women's rights movement used the media to get support for their cause. Online activism has amplified women's voices, creating global movements that challenge injustice and demand change. Social media has provided a platform for entrepreneurs, helping women to showcase their businesses and connect with a wider audience, breaking traditional barriers in the business world. However, the digital age has also ushered in new challenges. Online harassment, misinformation, and gendered disinformation have become pervasive issues. Women, especially those in public life, face relentless online abuse that not only silences them but also hampers their participation in civic and political spheres. The weaponisation of false information, particularly in sensitive areas such as reproductive rights, poses significant risks, endangering women's health and well-being. The lack of swift and effective action by these platforms perpetuates a culture of violence and abuse against women. In conclusion, it is vital to further research and to be aware of the impact media has on not just women, but our society and its values in total. Media does not determine what we think, but it does determine which issues we recognise as important.

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