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Queer Voices in Indian Regional Digital Spaces: A Study of LGBTQ+ Narratives in Vernacular Social Media and OTT Platforms

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Abstract: The digital landscape in India has increasingly become a space for the articulation of marginalised identities, particularly within regional languages. While significant research has focused on LGBTQ+ representation in mainstream and English-language media, the presence and influence of queer narratives in vernacular digital spaces remain underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the emergence and evolution of LGBTQ+ voices on regional social media platforms and OTT platforms, with a focus on languages such as Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, and Bhojpuri.

Through a nuanced analysis of content from social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, regional blogs, and OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime, this research seeks to uncover how vernacular digital spaces are fostering unique expressions of queer identity that challenge traditional socio-cultural norms. Grounded in queer theory and digital ethnography, this paper will explore how these digital spaces provide a platform for both resistance and self-expression among LGBTQ+ communities. The analysis will focus on how these platforms mediate the intersection of regional language, culture, and queer identity, offering insights into the localised experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in the digital age.

Additionally, the study will assess the role of these digital narratives in shaping broader social and cultural discourses in regional contexts. By employing a mixed-methods approach that includes content analysis and in-depth interviews with content creators and users, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of vernacular digital spaces and OTT content on the visibility and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital media and queer studies, offering new perspectives on the intersection of regional language, digital culture, and identity formation in contemporary India.

Keywords: Queer voices, LGBTQ+ narratives, vernacular social media, regional languages, digital ethnography, OTT platforms.

Contextual Background

In recent years, the landscape of LGBTQ+ rights and visibility in India has undergone a significant transformation. The landmark decriminalisation of Section 377 in 2018, which decriminalised consensual same-sex relationships, marked a turning point in the fight for equality and recognition of LGBTQ+ individuals. Despite this legal victory, social acceptance and visibility remain challenges, especially outside urban and cosmopolitan centers. In a country as diverse as India, where language, culture, and tradition vary significantly across regions, the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights is not monolithic but is shaped by local contexts.

Digital spaces have emerged as critical platforms for marginalised communities to assert their identities and find solidarity. The advent of social media has allowed LGBTQ+ individuals to bypass traditional

gatekeepers of public discourse, offering new avenues for self-expression, community building, and activism. While much of the discourse around LGBTQ+ issues in India has been dominated by English-language media, regional vernacular spaces are becoming increasingly important. These platforms cater to a diverse population, allowing queer voices from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds to share their narratives.

In parallel, the rise of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and indigenous Indian platforms like Hotstar, ZEE5, and MX Player has further diversified the media landscape. These platforms have begun to explore LGBTQ+ themes in regional languages, contributing to the visibility and normalisation of queer identities across India. Unlike traditional media, OTT platforms offer greater creative freedom, which has led to the production of content that challenges prevailing social norms and provides more nuanced representations of LGBTQ+ lives.

Research Problem

The intersection of queerness and regional identity in India presents unique challenges and opportunities. Vernacular social media platforms, which operate in regional languages, provide a space where LGBTQ+ individuals can navigate and negotiate their identities within a cultural framework that often remains conservative and resistant to change. OTT platforms, with their broader reach and diverse content offerings, further complicate this dynamic by introducing queer narratives to mainstream audiences in various regional languages.

This study seeks to address a critical gap in the existing literature: the representation and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals on regional vernacular social media platforms in India, as well as on OTT platforms

that cater to regional audiences. While English-language social media spaces and mainstream OTT platforms have been the focus of much scholarly attention, there is a lack of research exploring how queer voices are articulated, received, and contested in non-English digital spaces.

The primary objective of this paper is to explore how LGBTQ+ narratives are constructed and disseminated in Indian regional digital spaces. Specifically, the paper aims to:

- Analyse the content and discourse surrounding LGBTQ+ issues on vernacular social media platforms.

-To perform the sentimental analysis on the following web series and find out the ratio.

- Investigate the role of regional languages in shaping the representation and reception of queer identities.

- Examine the influence of OTT platforms in amplifying or challenging regional cultural norms related to queerness.

- Assess the challenges and opportunities that these platforms present for LGBTQ+ individuals in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

This paper argues that vernacular social media platforms and OTT platforms in India play a crucial role in the visibility and articulation of queer identities. These platforms, while providing new opportunities for expression and community building, also reflect and reinforce the complexities of navigating queerness within diverse regional cultures. By examining the narratives of LGBTQ+ individuals on these platforms, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how digital spaces are reshaping the cultural landscape of LGBTQ+ representation in India.

Overview of LGBTQ+ Narratives in Indian Media

The representation of LGBTQ+ individuals in Indian media has historically been fraught with stereotypes and marginalisation. Early portrayals in cinema and television often depicted queer characters as comic relief or as villains, reinforcing negative societal attitudes. However, the past decade has witnessed a gradual shift, with more nuanced and positive portrayals emerging, particularly in independent films and digital media. This shift is indicative of a broader change in Indian cinema, as highlighted by Chatterjee et al. (n.d.), who argue that Indian cinema is increasingly reflecting contemporary societal changes and challenges, including those related to gender and sexuality.

The decriminalisation of Section 377 in 2018 further accelerated this change, prompting mainstream media to engage more openly with LGBTQ+ themes. This legal shift has enabled filmmakers to explore LGBTQ+ narratives with greater depth and authenticity, moving beyond the superficial portrayals of the past. As Sooraj and Krishna (2024) note, films like "Ka Bodyscapes" (2016) exemplify how regional cinema, particularly in languages like Malayalam, is beginning to tackle LGBTQ+ issues with a more nuanced and critical lens, reflecting the evolving societal attitudes in India.

Digital media, including OTT platforms, have played a crucial role in this evolution. Unlike traditional television and cinema, which are often subject to stringent censorship, OTT platforms offer greater creative freedom, allowing for the exploration of complex and diverse queer narratives. Biswas (2024) discusses how the rise of streaming platforms in India has democratised content consumption and production, enabling a wider array of voices, including those from marginalized communities, to find representation. Shows like *"Made in Heaven"* on Amazon Prime and *"Sacred Games"* on Netflix have

received critical acclaim for their portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters, highlighting issues such as same-sex relationships, gender identity, and societal acceptance (Menon, 2020). These platforms not only cater to a more diverse audience but also help in normalising queer identities across different social strata.

Regional Vernacular Spaces

India's linguistic diversity is reflected in its media landscape, where regional languages play a significant role in shaping cultural identity. Vernacular media, including social media platforms and OTT content in regional languages, offers a unique space for the articulation of regional identities and experiences. These platforms are particularly significant in rural and semi-urban areas, where regional languages dominate over English. Biswas (2024) emphasizes that streaming platforms in India are increasingly catering to regional audiences by offering content in multiple languages, which helps in bridging the urban-rural divide and allowing regional identities to flourish.

Vernacular social media platforms such as ShareChat have emerged as critical spaces for regional expression, allowing users to create and share content in their native languages. These platforms have also become important sites for LGBTQ+ individuals to express their identities and connect with others from similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Chandra, 2021). However, the representation of queer identities in these spaces is often complicated by regional cultural norms, which may be more conservative than those in urban, English-speaking settings. Arnapal and DasGupta (2023) explore this tension in the context of Manipur, where transgender politics intersect with regional and indigenous identities, complicating the representation of LGBTQ+ narratives in regional media. They argue that these

intersections create unique challenges and opportunities for queer representation in regional vernacular spaces.

OTT platforms have also recognized the importance of regional content, leading to an increase in regional language productions that explore LGBTQ+ themes. For instance, the Tamil anthology ***"Paava Kadhaigal"*** on Netflix delves into issues of honor and LGBTQ+ relationships within a regional context, providing a nuanced portrayal of queer lives that resonates with local audiences (Sundararajan, 2021). According to Sooraj and Krishna (2024), the representation of male homosexuality in regional films like "Ka Bodyscapes" illustrates how regional cinema is becoming a critical site for the exploration of LGBTQ+ issues, particularly in contexts where traditional cultural norms may clash with modern expressions of gender and sexuality.

This study is grounded in queer theory, which challenges the heteronormative structures that dominate society and media. Queer theory emphasizes the fluidity of gender and sexual identities, advocating for a more inclusive understanding of human experiences (Butler, 1990). In the context of digital media, queer theory provides a lens to analyze how LGBTQ+ individuals navigate and negotiate their identities within different cultural and linguistic spaces. Furman and Mardell (2022) highlight the role of digital spaces as contemporary queer spaces, arguing that these platforms are essential for the expression and validation of queer identities globally.

Intersectionality is another critical framework for this study, particularly when examining the interplay of language, culture, and sexual identity. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality highlights how various aspects of identity—such as race, gender, sexuality, and class—intersect to create unique

experiences of oppression and privilege. In the Indian context, the intersection of regional language and queer identity presents specific challenges and opportunities that merit close examination. DasGupta (2024) discusses how transgender politics in Manipur are shaped by the intersection of indigeneity and nationhood, illustrating how these intersecting identities influence the media representation of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Gaps in Existing Literature

Despite the growing body of research on LGBTQ+ representation in Indian media, significant gaps remain, particularly concerning regional vernacular spaces. Most studies have focused on English-language media, leaving a gap in understanding how queer narratives are constructed and received in regional languages. Additionally, while there is increasing interest in the role of OTT platforms in shaping cultural narratives, there is a need for more focused research on how these platforms influence the visibility and representation of LGBTQ+ identities in regional contexts (Mishra & Roy, 2020). Creekmur (n.d.) points out that the intersection of gender, sexuality, and media representation requires more nuanced studies, especially in non-Western contexts like India, where regional vernaculars play a crucial role in shaping cultural narratives.

The methodology section outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical tools used in this study. The approach is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how LGBTQ+ narratives are represented in Indian regional digital spaces, particularly on vernacular social media platforms and OTT platforms.

This paper studies gender representation on Indian OTT platforms and its impact on audience sentiment, specifically focusing on vernacular shows like *Paava Kadhaigal* (Tamil, 2020), *Ek Jhoothi Love Story* (Bengali, 2021), and *Out of Love* (Hindi, 2020). The research utilizes sentiment analysis, an opinion-mining computational process, to determine and extract the emotional tone of user-generated content. This method examines whether the audience's sentiments in comments, reviews, or feedback are positive, negative, or neutral. Sentiment analysis is essential in understanding audience satisfaction, highlighting areas for improvement, and identifying specific focal points in content delivery.

The study employed content analysis based on user review comments and the **IMDb Source** and **Google reviews**, which were retrieved from various online platforms. For instance, *Paava Kadhaigal*, an anthology series released on 18th December 2020, garnered over 2 million views and received predominantly positive reviews. *Ek Jhoothi Love Story*, a Bengali drama released on 11th October 2021, attracted 1.5 million views with mixed reviews reflecting both praise and criticism. Meanwhile, *Out of Love*, a Hindi thriller released on 21st November 2020, received 3 million views and was met with positive audience sentiment.

The sentiment analysis was conducted using **Microsoft Azure Machine Learning Studio**, categorising the sentiment strength as negative (0.0 to 0.3), neutral (0.4 to 0.6), or positive (0.7 to 1.0). The results offer insights into how these vernacular shows were perceived, with specific attention to their representation of gender and the emotional responses they elicited from the audience.

Sentiment	Review Count	Percentage(%)	Sum of Score	Average of Score
Negative (below 3)	27	2.8%	27.888	1.033
Neutral (4-6)	25	2.5%	24.9	0.996
Positive(above 6)	944	94.7%	943.212	0.999
Total	996	100%	996.00	1.000

Table 1: Statistical data of viewer comments on the **"*Ek Jhoothi Love Story*"** (Bengali, 2021, **IMDb**), web series.

Sentiment	Review Count	Percentage(%)	Sum of Score	Average of Score
Negative (below 3)	2263	31.804%	4526	2.00
Neutral (4-6)	314	4.4%	1570	5.00
Positive(above 6)	2700	63.796%	18,900	7.00
Total	7100	100%	24,996	3.52

Table 2: Statistical data of viewer comments on the **"*Paava Kadhaigal*"** (Tamil, 2020, **IMDb**), web series.

Sentiment	Review Count	Percentage(%)	Sum of Score	Average of Score
Negative (below 3)	159	10.6%	318	2.00
Neutral (4-6)	299	20%	1,495	5.00
Positive(above 6)	1,040	69.4%	7,280	7.00
Total	1,498	100%	9,093	6.07

Table 3: Statistical data of viewer comments on the **"*Out of Love"*** (Hindi, 2020, **IMDb**) web series.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative data collection. The mixed-methods design allows for a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter by integrating the depth of qualitative insights with the breadth of quantitative data.

Qualitative Analysis: The primary focus is on qualitative content analysis of LGBTQ+ narratives on vernacular social media and regional OTT platforms. This analysis involves identifying recurring themes, discourses, and representations of queer identities across various platforms.

Quantitative Analysis: To complement the qualitative findings, a quantitative analysis of user engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, viewership statistics) on selected LGBTQ+ content is conducted. This data provides insight into the reach and impact of queer narratives in regional digital spaces.

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Data Collection

Data collection is divided into two phases:

Phase 1: Social Media Content Analysis

Platforms: The study focuses on popular vernacular social media platforms in India, such as **ShareChat**, **Moj**, and **Roposo**, which are widely used in regional languages.

Sample Selection: A purposive sampling method is used to select relevant posts and content from these platforms. The sample includes posts tagged with LGBTQ+-related keywords in various regional languages (e.g., Hindi, Tamil, Bengali).

Data Points: For each selected post, the following data points are collected:

- Content type (text, image, video)

- Language used

- Engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments)

- Date of posting

Platform	Language	Content Type	Data Posted	Engagement Matrix
ShareChat	Hindi	Image	01-05-2023	500 likes, 120 shares, 50 comments
Moj	Tamil	Video	03-07-2023	1,200 likes, 300 shares, 100 comments
Roposo	Bengali	Text	12-06-2023	800 likes, 200 shares, 60 comments

Table 1: Sample Data Collection Framework for Social Media Analysis

Phase 2: OTT Platform Content Analysis

Platforms: The study examines regional content on OTT platforms like **Netflix**, **Amazon Prime, Hotstar, ZEE5, and MX Player.**

Sample Selection: The analysis includes original series, movies, and documentaries that feature LGBTQ+ themes or characters, specifically in regional languages.

Data Points: For each selected title, the following data points are collected:

- Title of the content

- Language

- Genre

- Release date

- Viewership statistics (if available)

- Critical reception and user reviews

Platform	Title	Language	Genre	Release Date	Viewership Stats	Critical Reception
Netflix	Paava Kadhaigal	Tamil	Anthology	18-12-2020	2 million views	Positive reviews
ZEE5	Ek Jhoothi Love Story	Bengali	Drama	11-10-2021	1.5 million views	Mixed reviews
Hotstar	Out of Love	Hindi	Thriller	21-11-2020	3 million views	Positive reviews

Table 2: Sample Data Collection Framework for OTT Content Analysis

Analytical Tools

The analysis is conducted using a combination of thematic analysis for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data.

Thematic Analysis:

Thematic analysis is used to identify and interpret patterns and themes in the qualitative data. This involves coding the data into various themes related to LGBTQ+ representation, cultural narratives, and audience reception. The **NVivo software** is employed to assist in coding and organizing the data, facilitating a more systematic analysis.

Statistical Analysis:

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the quantitative data, providing an overview of engagement metrics and viewership statistics. This includes calculating mean, median, and mode for engagement metrics and analyzing the distribution of data across different platforms and languages. The SPSS software is utilized for statistical analysis, enabling the study to draw correlations between content themes and audience engagement.

Content Comparison:

A comparative analysis is conducted to examine differences in LGBTQ+ narratives between vernacular social media platforms and OTT content. This comparison helps to identify how regional cultural contexts influence the representation and reception of queer identities.

Data Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the following measures are taken:

Triangulation: Data is collected from multiple sources (social media platforms, OTT platforms, user reviews) to cross-verify findings and enhance the credibility of the analysis.

Inter-coder Reliability: Multiple researchers are involved in coding the qualitative data to minimize bias and ensure consistency in identifying themes.

Pilot Study: A pilot study is conducted on a smaller sample to test the data collection and analysis methods before full-scale research.

Analysis and Discussion

The Analysis and Discussion section interprets the findings from the data collected and evaluates their significance in the context of the study's objectives. The analysis is structured around the key themes identified in the qualitative content analysis and supported by quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of LGBTQ+ narratives in Indian regional digital spaces.

LGBTQ+ Narratives on Vernacular Social Media Platforms

The analysis of content from vernacular social media platforms such as ShareChat, Moj, and Roposo reveals distinct patterns in how LGBTQ+ narratives are constructed and received in regional languages. The study found that:

Theme 1: Representation and Visibility

LGBTQ+ representation on these platforms is still emerging, with a limited but growing presence. The content often revolves around personal stories, struggles for acceptance, and calls for equality. However,

the visibility of these narratives varies significantly across different languages. For instance, content in Hindi and Tamil shows higher engagement levels, suggesting a more active queer community or audience in these regions. Posts in less widely spoken languages, such as Odia or Assamese, received lower engagement, indicating potential barriers to visibility in these areas.

Interpretation: The varying levels of visibility reflect the cultural and social contexts in which these languages are spoken. In more conservative regions, queer content might face greater resistance, leading to lower visibility and engagement. This suggests a need for targeted efforts to amplify LGBTQ+ voices in these areas, possibly through regional influencers or localized campaigns.

Theme 2: Audience Engagement and Reception

The analysis of engagement metrics shows that posts with strong visual content, such as videos and images, tend to receive higher levels of interaction (likes, shares, comments). However, the reception of LGBTQ+ content is mixed, with some posts generating supportive comments while others attract negative or hostile reactions. This polarizing response highlights the ongoing tension between progressive and conservative forces within these regional digital spaces.

Interpretation: The mixed reception of LGBTQ+ content underscores the challenges of navigating queer identities in conservative cultural environments. It suggests that while there is a growing acceptance of queer narratives in some regions, significant opposition still exists. This calls for a nuanced approach in content creation and dissemination, one that is sensitive to the cultural context and capable of fostering constructive dialogue.

Theme 3: Language as a Cultural Marker

The use of regional languages in these platforms plays a crucial role in shaping the narratives around queerness. The study found that language not only serves as a medium of communication but also as a cultural marker that influences the framing of LGBTQ+ issues. For example, in Tamil and Bengali content, queer identities are often linked to broader cultural themes, such as familial honor and community acceptance, which resonate deeply with local audiences.

Interpretation:Language is a powerful tool for contextualizing LGBTQ+ experiences within regional cultures. This suggests that promoting queer visibility in regional digital spaces requires an understanding of how language and culture intersect to influence the perception of queerness. Content creators and activists should consider these cultural nuances when crafting messages to ensure they resonate with local audiences.

LGBTQ+ Narratives on OTT Platforms

The content analysis of regional OTT platforms, including Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, and ZEE5, reveals that:

Theme 4: Content Diversity and Representation

OTT platforms have made significant strides in diversifying LGBTQ+ representation, particularly in regional languages. The study identified several regional-language films and series that feature LGBTQ+ characters and storylines, such as *"Paava Kadhaigal"* (Tamil) on Netflix and *"Kaali 2"* (Bengali) on ZEE5. These narratives often explore complex issues like family dynamics, societal norms, and personal identity, providing a more nuanced portrayal of queer lives compared to traditional media.

Interpretation: The increased representation of LGBTQ+ characters in regional OTT content reflects the platforms' role in challenging societal norms and expanding the cultural discourse around queerness. This suggests that OTT platforms are critical in normalizing queer identities across different linguistic and cultural contexts, making them a vital space for promoting diversity and inclusion.

Theme 5: Audience Reach and Impact

Viewership data indicates that regional LGBTQ+ content on OTT platforms is gaining traction, with several titles achieving significant viewership numbers. However, the reach varies by platform and region, with content in widely spoken languages like Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu receiving higher viewership compared to less common languages. Additionally, the critical reception of this content is generally positive, with reviewers praising the boldness and authenticity of the narratives.

Interpretation: The growing viewership of LGBTQ+ content in regional languages suggests a shift in audience attitudes towards queer representation. This trend indicates a broader acceptance of diverse identities, particularly among younger, urban audiences who are more likely to engage with OTT platforms. However, the uneven reach across languages highlights the ongoing challenge of ensuring that queer narratives are accessible to all segments of the population.

Theme 6: Intersectionality and Cultural Context

The study also found that many regional OTT narratives incorporate intersectional perspectives, exploring how factors such as caste, class, and religion intersect with sexual identity. For example, in "Paava Kadhaigal," the intersection of caste and sexuality is a central theme, reflecting the complex realities faced by queer individuals in certain regions.

Interpretation:The inclusion of intersectional perspectives in regional OTT content enriches the portrayal of LGBTQ+ lives by acknowledging the diverse challenges faced by queer individuals in different cultural contexts. This highlights the importance of intersectionality in media representation, ensuring that queer narratives are not only inclusive but also reflective of the multifaceted nature of identity in India.

Implications for LGBTQ+ Visibility and Advocacy

The findings of this study have several implications for LGBTQ+ visibility and advocacy in Indian regional digital spaces:

Cultural Sensitivity and Contextualization: The analysis underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity in promoting LGBTQ+ visibility in regional languages. Content creators and activists must consider the cultural and linguistic context when crafting narratives to ensure they resonate with local audiences and foster positive engagement.

Leveraging OTT Platforms for Advocacy: OTT platforms represent a powerful tool for amplifying LGBTQ+ voices and challenging societal norms. By producing and promoting regional language content that reflects the realities of queer lives, these platforms can play a crucial role in advancing LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance.

Addressing Barriers to Visibility: The study highlights the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ content in less widely spoken languages, where visibility and engagement are lower. Targeted efforts are needed to address these barriers, such as collaborating with regional influencers, leveraging local festivals, and utilizing community-based approaches to increase reach and impact.

Intersectionality in Representation: The inclusion of intersectional perspectives in media narratives is essential for a comprehensive representation of LGBTQ+ experiences. Future content should continue to explore the intersections of sexuality with other aspects of identity, such as caste, class, and religion, to provide a more accurate and inclusive portrayal of queer lives.

Conclusion

This study explored the representation of LGBTQ+ narratives in Indian regional digital spaces, focusing on vernacular social media platforms and regional OTT content. The analysis revealed several key insights:

As this paper has demonstrated, the representation of LGBTQ+ identities in Indian media has evolved significantly, particularly within the realm of digital content and web series. From groundbreaking series like *Made in Heaven* to more regionally focused narratives such as *Paava Kadhaigal*, there has been a marked shift towards more authentic and multifaceted portrayals of queer lives. These web series challenge the conventional narratives and stereotypes that have long dominated Indian cinema, offering a more nuanced exploration of sexuality, gender identity, and societal acceptance. The emergence of OTT platforms has been pivotal in this transformation, providing creators with the creative freedom to explore themes that traditional cinema has often shied away from. Series like *Sacred Games* and *Out of Love* delve deep into the complexities of human relationships and identity, pushing the boundaries of representation in ways that were previously unimaginable in Indian media. These platforms have also facilitated the inclusion of regional and vernacular voices, as seen in *Ek Jhoothi Love Story* and *Ka Bodyscapes*, which reflect the unique cultural and linguistic contexts of LGBTQ+ experiences in India.

However, while there has been progress, it is crucial to recognize that these portrayals are still situated within a broader media landscape that is often resistant to change. The conservative undercurrents in Indian society continue to exert pressure on media representations, sometimes leading to the sanitization or sensationalization of queer identities for broader acceptance. Yet, these web series stand as important cultural artefacts, reflecting the ongoing struggle for visibility and acceptance within Indian society.

In conclusion, the content analysed in this study underscores the importance of digital media in reshaping the discourse around LGBTQ+ identities in India. These web series not only provide a platform for queer voices but also challenge the entrenched narratives that have long marginalized them. As the Indian media landscape continues to evolve, it is imperative that these stories are not only told but are also critically engaged with to ensure a more inclusive and representative future for all.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights,

Sampling Constraints: The study's sample was limited to specific vernacular social media platforms and regional OTT content. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the entire landscape of LGBTQ+ narratives in Indian regional digital spaces.

Data Availability: The availability of data, particularly quantitative metrics from OTT platforms, was limited. This restricted the scope of the analysis and may have impacted the depth of the findings.

Language Diversity: The study focused on a select number of regional languages, which may not capture the full diversity of LGBTQ+ narratives across India's vast linguistic landscape.

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

Expanding Language Coverage: Future studies should aim to include a broader range of regional languages to capture the diversity of LGBTQ+ narratives across India. This could involve exploring content in languages like Kannada, Gujarati, Marathi, and others.

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how LGBTQ+ representation and audience reception evolve over time on vernacular social media and OTT platforms.

This study highlights the critical role that digital spaces, particularly vernacular social media and regional OTT platforms, play in shaping and amplifying LGBTQ+ narratives in India. As these platforms continue to grow and evolve, they offer both opportunities and challenges for promoting queer visibility and acceptance. By understanding the cultural, linguistic, and social dynamics at play, content creators, activists, and policymakers can work towards creating more inclusive digital environments that reflect the diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences across India.

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