

# Bridging Intersectional Gaps in Digital Infrastructures

## Feminist Content Creation as Feminist Infrastructure

This visualisation maps some of the intersectional gaps in digital infrastructures as the ecosystem of feminist publishing and content creation in India navigates both the affordances and challenges of the digital transition. It explores the motivations of feminist publications and content creation spaces in building a space for creative expression, advocacy and research, especially for and by women and marginalised communities, but encountering various challenges in sustaining these interventions due to limitations in existing infrastructures.

The visualisation is based on the learnings from a study on digital feminist publishing and content creation/curation spaces in India. It can be read using the six overarching questions that discuss the state of feminist content creation as feminist infrastructure. The visualisation also highlights the infrastructural interventions and gaps in various areas including access, safety, inclusion, ownership and sustainability, across the different sections.

### TECHNOPOLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF INFRASTRUCTURE

- ACCESS
- SAFETY
- INCLUSION
- OWNERSHIP
- LANGUAGE
- LABOUR
- FUNDING
- PRIVACY
- FREE SPEECH
- HATE SPEECH
- DIGITAL ACCESS
- POLICY
- IMPACT ON MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES
- VISUAL DESIGN

- INFRASTRUCTURAL GAPS
- POTENTIAL/EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURAL INTERVENTIONS

### 3 What are the motivations for some of these feminist publications and content creation spaces?

The objectives range from creative expression, capacity building and knowledge production to creating inclusive spaces for network building and sharing experiences. Several publications and content creation spaces are a result of social movements, advocacy and mobilisation in India related to gender rights, identities and inclusion.

#### COMMUNITIES FEMINIST CONTENT CREATION SPACES ENGAGE WITH

WOMEN	Located in
LGBTQIA+	RURAL AREAS
DALIT, BAHUJAN, ADIVASI	INDIA
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	GLOBAL SOUTH
PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES	
PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESSES	

### 1 What are the motivations for the transition to digital spaces?

Several print publications and content creation spaces transformed or extended into digital formats owing to the opportunities and flexibility that it allows. Some examples of this include an independent feminist publication house, a women-run rural media network, and a magazine on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

#### DIGITAL SPACES

- Opens new avenues
- Cost-effective compared to traditional publishing
- Wider distribution, reaching diverse audiences
- Allows for self publishing
- Allows for multimodal content creation
- Increasing rights based conversations on the internet which foster participation from diverse communities

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Allows engagement with audience
- Enables sharing of personal narratives including intimate content
- Enables building networks of care

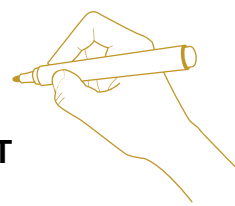


Social media platforms are often owned by large corporations that rely on data collection for profitability

### 2 What are the barriers in digital spaces?

The affordances of digital spaces allow for diverse voices and forms of content. However, while the use of digital media is seen to enable access, it also entails several barriers for women and marginalised communities.

- Lack of online availability of intersectional work with vulnerable groups
- Lack of representation of people from marginalised communities in digital discourse
- Remote areas/rural spaces are not represented
- Lack of effective regulations that safeguard digital rights
- Lack of representation in local languages
- Lack of network for people from marginalised communities
- People from marginalised communities are faced with several layers of barriers



### A SNAPSHOT OF PUBLICATIONS AND CONTENT CREATION PLATFORMS INTERVIEWED

- A An independent feminist publication house that publishes academic books, fiction, memoirs, and popular nonfiction
- B A digital intersectional feminist media platform that provides information on gender and feminism to the youth
- C A digital platform that shares information for women with disabilities on body, sexuality, and intimate relationships
- D A multimedia project that shares information and stories on intimacy and desire
- E A women-run digital media network that practises feminist rural journalism
- F A digital magazine that generates knowledge and discussion on issues of sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights in the global South
- G A social media account that runs crowdsourced discussions on gender, sexuality, and feminism
- H An alternative social media network for legal, health, and safety support and resources
- I An online women's magazine that produces writing on caste, gender, development, and environment
- J An Instagram handle run by an artist and illustrator sharing people's experiences and stories through visual art
- K Individual writers, researchers, and activists working on caste, gender, and sexuality



### 4 What are the challenges in feminist publishing and content creation?

#### SUSTAINABILITY

- Limited funding, lack of resources
- Content on gender and sexuality seen as less significant
- Difficulty in finding and retention of staff, finding women in technology
- Cultural and societal barriers restricting women in the workplace
- Challenges with visual design due to lack of resources and expertise

#### LANGUAGES

- No existing model for digital publications in regional languages
- Lack of staff for writing in local languages
- Difficulty in translation of specific and complex terminology
- Content Management System platforms not yet compatible for regional languages

#### HARASSMENT

- Online trolling and abuse, fear of attacks, and microaggressions
- Pushback on content from individuals and social media
- Drastic physical and psychological impact of hate speech
- Increased dangers and impact of online and physical threats, with no process of redressal
- Lack of community guidelines on safety and privacy
- Reliance on social media for diverse needs including work, which makes it difficult to exit these spaces completely (especially for marginalised groups)

#### CENSORSHIP

- Measured risks are taken due to fear of censorship
- Use of sensational language is avoided
- Content related to sexuality and pleasure difficult to promote, as imagery with nudity is not allowed on social media

Fundraising is also connected with labour in feminist content creation spaces as they are often self-financed, with a small team with many people taking on multiple roles

### 5 What are the infrastructural changes needed?

#### ACCESS

- Access to devices, internet connectivity, and training for use of technology
- Accessible discourse on feminism, beyond people with caste and class privilege
- Availability of publications for open access and/or unlimited downloads for subscribers
- Reducing jargon around feminism, gender, and sexuality

#### SAFETY

- Privacy preserving practices, and maintaining anonymity of people in published content
- Anonymising personal information of writers on public platforms
- Hell banning/shadow banning online trolls
- Privacy, surveillance, data protection, and freedom of expression laws to protect anonymity and safeguard free speech

#### INCLUSION

- Fair compensation for all content creators; writers, reporters, illustrators, etc.
- Equitable learning in educational institutions based on feminist principles
- Digitisation, archival efforts, documentation centres
- Visibility and inclusion in public spaces for marginalised communities
- Important to stay faithful to languages during translations
- Allowing code-switching and hybrid language use within multilingual content online

#### OWNERSHIP

- Critical analysis of ownership, regulation and control of platforms and content
- Creating/producing decentralised infrastructures
- Co-creation, and ownership of content by diverse communities

Significant power of phones in rural areas, more creative engagement with technology

- Open and free use availability of imagery
- Simple and engaging visuals
- Hand-drawn/handmade digitality to create a decolonised visual language



Several feminist content creation spaces are increasingly following feminist principles in visual design

- Multilingual aesthetic to accommodate local languages
- Diverging from stereotypical imagery, affirmative visual content
- Diverse representation of marginalised communities in images
- Depicting gender fluid and non-normative bodies
- More sensitive representation of gender based violence, sexuality and disability in media

Given the sustainability concerns, feminist content spaces also face the challenge of documenting and archiving their legacy in the digital medium



### 6 What could Feminist Infrastructures look like?

- Feminist institutions and complementary work between organisations
- Set of feminist practices that can be adopted by organisations
- Educational tools
- Community libraries
- Institutions and redressal mechanisms for online safety
- Well-funded feminist resource centre for research
- Safe spaces for women and marginalised communities to speak out
- Networking platform for marginalised groups to access resources and support
- Physical access to information, media, and time
- Moderators on online platforms trained based on feminist principles

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This visualisation uses icons from the **Noun Project** by Nitut786, Rifai, Asheeqa, Max Miner, Andri Graphic, Tezar Tantular, Travis Avery, Alice Noir, Annie Wang, Gan Khoon Lay, Joni, Dinosoftlab, Olena Panasovska, Oleksandr Panasovskiy, Nuricon, Marissa Coffey, Braja Omar Justico, ProSymbols, Nicole Hammonds, Cindy Clegane, Putri Afifah Octaviani, Tomas Knopp.