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Cyberfeminism: A Relationship between Cyberspace, Technology, and the Internet

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Abstract

The current of cyberfeminism has been active for 30 years now, also referred to as the "third wave" of feminism. Despite being an ambiguous and multifaceted movement involving multiple instances, cyberfeminism is represented in the imagination by women with strong knowledge of media and digital technologies. The purpose of this article is to analyze the socially and culturally constructed value that the media assume in this movement. The very concept of identity is undergoing a phenomenon of control whereby it is redefined by "control grids" (D. Haraway) that prevent free access to participation in life on the web. The utopian theories of feminists actually alternate with fundamental gender analyses within cyberspace that determine the amount of access to resources. The last phase of this phenomenon is instead characterized by the intent to break down gender inequalities through a series of digital products that produce changes in common perceptions: online magazines, YouTube channels, webinars, and entrepreneurship actions on the web. New media and, more generally, access to information are fundamental to social and political participation, in which the phenomenon of exclusion or production of inequalities is more visible. Gender divisions on the web also reinforce sociocultural barriers and sometimes create regressive and destructive forms of social bonds. Globalization also affects these dynamics and accentuates exaggerated forms of individualism and cognitive stiffening, which further accentuate the distinctive traits of gender inequalities in cyberspace.

Keywords: cyberfeminism; digital technologies; new media.

Introduction

In 1994 in Britain, the director of the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit, Sadie Plant, invented the term Cyberfeminism Unit at the University of Warwick to define the work done by feminists with interest in exploiting, critiquing, and theorizing the cyberspace, the Internet, and in general, new-media technologies (Tazi & Oumlil, 2020). Thus, "third-wave" feminism grew from cyberfeminism, followed by the "second-wave" feminist movement, which is the contemporary feminist movement we see today. According to Tazi and Oumlil (2020), the "second-wave" feminist movement started in 1970. It concentrated on women's equal rights, but as an antecedent of the, 20th century's "first-wave" feminism focused on women's suffrage. Cyberfeminism was motivated mainly by helping younger technologically savvy women and those from middle-class, western, and white backgrounds. Today, the ranks of cyber feminists are growing, but and along with the increase is the growth of divergent ideas about what includes cyber feminists' thoughts and actions (Tazi & Oumlil, 2020).

Before the invention of cyberfeminism, the study of technology among feminists tended to develop technology as constructed culturally and socially. During this period, the main argument was that technology belongs to the masculine culture because it perceived men as good at, interested in technology, and engaged in it more than women (Moghaddam, 2019). Even today, feminists still argue that technology is looked at as a masculine invention, yet, throughout history, women have been actively involved in developing new technologies. For instance, Moghaddam (2019) highlights that, though women were involved in creating and developing the computer, their contributions were greatly marginalized. Their involvement was often written off or ignored in history. Hence, feminists like Judy Wacjman, an Australian professor in sociology at the Canberra national university, and Cynthia Cockburn, London's activist, and independent scholar, argue that technology should be re-conceptualized interrogated continuously. Women need to become more involved in technology fields as well (Moghaddam, 2019).

However, Richard and Gray (2018) say that Donna Haraway, the History of Consciousness program professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, paves the way for cyberfeminism for women through her groundbreaking essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs". In her essay, Haraway defends feminist and socialist cyborgs facing challenges of single "grids of control" and identity that prevent them and other marginalized groups from fully participating in things technology. Haraway establishes that women need to become more proficient technologically to challenge these

systems and engage with the "informatics of domination". Most importantly, Haraway argues that women need to be users who are and savvy of the technological systems because only using them was not simply enough (Richard & Gray, 2018). As such, this paper examines the background of cyberfeminism, its development, theories, its technical analysis based on Gender, and its criticism. The article also discusses how women have become savvy users and how gender inequality can be changed through Information Technology.

1. Background to cyber feminism

Richard and Gray (2018) continue to build on the work of Donna Haraway of 1997 by writing that, in 1990, cyberfeminism started and acquired an international impact. During this time, Donna Haraway started "cyborg feminism", a specific feminist branch that helped women use new technologies to profit themselves and fight against patriarchy (Richard & Gray, 2018). Haraway established A Cyborg Manifesto that involved technology, Socialist-Feminism, and science but echoed Karl Marx's 1847 "Communist Manifesto". Haraway disapproved the second-wave feminism and echoed feminism that substituted identity from affinity. Haraway deployed the cyborg metaphor to challenge feminists to participate in politics that is beyond essentialism and naturalism. Within which she called the "Informatics of Domination", Haraway's manifesto aimed at justifying feminists' hesitance to acknowledge their situation (Richard & Gray, 2018). Haraway noted that people lived in a period where circuits and wire were gaining ground instead of flesh. It was time they appreciated the cyborgization that was holding ground in different fields of advancing technology. According to Haraway, a cyborg represented a postmodern utopia of a world without Gender that has no beginning (Richard & Gray, 2018).

Following the prelude to cyberfeminism, cyberspace was coined by William Gibson in 1982 and became a descriptor of the prevalent virtually constructed mental environment from where computer network activities take place (Puente, 2018). Cyberspace can be used as a symbol to define computers' non-physical crafted environment. Relatively, cyberspace and the Internet are becoming doors through which women will have the opportunity for liberation (Colley & Maltby, 2018). Cyberfeminism is concerned with opposing the accepted and recognized men dominance in the advancement and employment of online technology.

Cyberspace, on the other hand in is involved in allowing women to use the Internet technology to share, interact, swap information, and

take part in recreation while taking part in social forums and carrying out loads and businesses for other enterprises, as stated by (Puente, 2018). Therefore, the Internet, cyberspace, and other information galaxies are no longer viewed as masculine tools or spaces because women can not only reframe and negotiate themselves within the social structure using cyberspace, they have also embraced it. Hence, women are considered producers and consumers of the Internet and cyberspace. In contrast, cyberspace acts as a social capital that enables women to embrace the cyber-social communities and networks to expedite their requirements and ventures (Puente, 2018).

2. The development of cyberfeminism

From the above beginnings, cyberfeminism began to develop. Richard and Gray (2018) resonate with the writings of Sadie Plant, an early proponent who coined cyberfeminism who says that women are naturally suitable to use the Internet because, in nature, women and the Internet are similar. Both women and the Internet are self-replicating and are non-linear systems aimed at making connections. Richard and Gray (2018) continue to report that Plant argues that even though earlier feminists believed that computers essentially belonged to men, intellectuals should instead see the Internet and computers as an avenue for women to play and engage in new forms of work. It is a place where women are set free from traditional constraints and can gain and experiment with new avenues for demanding authority and power. Plant's view for cyberspace is a familiar and welcoming space where women can and must grab opportunities to challenge male supremacy and advance themselves (Richard & Gray, 2018).

Richard and Gray (2018) think that, as younger feminists begin to work on the Internet, they begin not to identify with the masculinity theoretical arguments or the similarities between computers and women. They begin to see the Internet as the main space for women to use technology to claim their territory, gain power and authority in the current society. Today, some women in the feminist group can reject the name "feminist" altogether but still view the Internet as a key tool for women to engage with and learn about (Richard & Gray, 2018). That is why groups and individuals have coined discussion groups, websites, and other online means to advance technological ends for women concerned with learning more about technology and those already employed in areas of information technology. Moreover, these groups believe that women can achieve superior knowledge in emerging technologies through empowerment and

exceptional understanding of emerging technologies and creating extra opportunities to advance their working areas (Richard & Gray, 2018).

Ramsey and McCorduck (2005) note that, Anna Munster a professor from the University of New South Wales, and Susan Luckman, an Australian feminist from the University of Queensland, comprise another branch of cyber feminists that are of the idea that it is reductive and simplistic for women to merely gain power and authority through the use of new media technology. Munster and Luckman believe that technology is permanently ingrained in the power structures that are not positive (Ramsey & McCorduck, 2005). Therefore, in their opinion, demands on girls and women to uphold and advance the use of new technologies uncritically do not critically evaluate the role of technology in cultures and whether culture wishes to see technology develop or not. Munster and Luckman agree that women must and should be part of the future of technology. However, they argue that women's involvement must advocate for engagement in technology use and advocate for more awareness of the promises and perils that new technologies propose (Ramsey & McCorduck, 2005).

More critiques of the earlier work of cyber feminists suggest that calling on more women to involve themselves with new technologies is founded on wrong assumptions about actual living environments. Simply said, not all women have access to the Internet or the computer and will not likely access it in the probable future (Ramsey & McCorduck, 2005). So, cyber feminists who simply make declarations that all girls and women need laptops or modems are ignorant of the living conditions for those who are not yet privileged like those of the Western (mostly white) and middle-class background that are often referenced according to Ramsey and McCorduck (2005). Hence, when considering how best to advance online feminist ideas or otherwise, it is best to take account of women's material conditions. Additionally, though cyberfeminism is a growing area of thought and study, its set of ideas concerning new technology and women are not unified beyond the main idea that gender equality, mostly on new technology, is a wanted goal (Ramsey & McCorduck, 2005).

3. Cyber feminism theories

According to Milford (2015), cyber feminists explore theories expansively: they say women are naturally suited to use the Internet as they equally share significant commonalities. Secondly, women are best at empowering themselves to acquire expertise in technology and become fluent in online communication. Lastly, women are best positioned to study how

knowledge and power are built in the systems of technology and how feminists can change and disrupt such practices for the progression of all society members (Milford, 2015).

Critiques of these theories say that, despite their utopian look, it is apparent that online spaces are places where the manifestation of feminists' issues occurs. Kieswetter (2020) notes that frameworks of early cyber feminists reduce the inequality problem to a problem of access to training on wiring and other technicalities and other equipment. Matters of online inequality extend to broader contexts of sociopolitics that influence the betterment of cyberspatial environments on cultural grounds where narrative dissertations of capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal routines are advanced within these constructs. Therefore, these dissertations have the power to limit the agency of women online, possibly discouraging them from participating equally in digital societies (Milford, 2015).

Milford (2015) further accentuates that political and policy discourses that handle issues of online inequality, plus many other current cyberfeminist discourses, also portray tendencies to embrace these narratives of linear progress. While adopting these narratives of linear progress, simplistic secondary notions related to virtual space and Gender get accepted regularly instead of being critiqued.

Rather than complicating the connection of cyberspatial and Gender environments, according to McAdam *et al.* (2020), critiques of cyber feminists and lawful responses to web-based gender issues have stagnated more often, investing in yet another artificial contrast. They say online spaces are either dystopian (fantasy lands) or utopian (ideal spaces), but nothing amidst them. The foreseen "brave new world" by earlier cyber feminists is becoming a troubled anti-utopia (anti-ideal) with risks of Gender used to justify the contemporary tendencies in lawful reactions that comprise of surveillance, criminalization, and taking responsibility of women online (McAdam, Crowley, & Harrison, 2020). Still, the same critiques that equalized views of early cyber feminists of cyberspaces as innately utopian can likewise be equalized as enclosing virtual spaces is the framing of innately dystopian; it is not that simple, says (Kieswetter, 2020).

4. Analysis technology based on Gender

Presently, online platforms have become the key ways women are connecting worldwide. The Internet has thoroughly revolved to be consid-

ered an outstanding balance; nonetheless, accessing it is not uniformly shared. In connection with women, disputes related to gender rights to use the Internet are found in several studies and investigations; concerning access to technology, there are gender distinctions as technology is often regarded as masculine (Rossetti & Frade, 2018). Thus, there are more Internet-savvy men as compared to women because of masculinization. Additionally, there is gender division based on who participates in the production and design of technology.

Men are known to have higher Internet skills and spend more time online than women. But many critics believe that the reasons women in India are gradually falling out of Internet users are less secure due to cyber harassment, cyberbullying, and cyber teasing (Kieswetter, 2020). Studies also indicate that to study online pages and acquire information, literacy skills among women are important. Still, many women fear using computers because of technophobia and should be taught ICT skills. The gender divide in the use of the Internet is particularly salient in developing countries and sets women at the threat of lagging. In India, the uneven gender ratio is reflected in its access to the Internet. As many citizens are active online, the Indian government plans to provide Internet connections to 1.30 billion residents as research shows that women still lag behind men in accessing the Internet (*Figs. 1-2*) (Consalvo, 2002). In India and the world at large, there is an observation that women using the Internet in different parts of society is consistently declining.

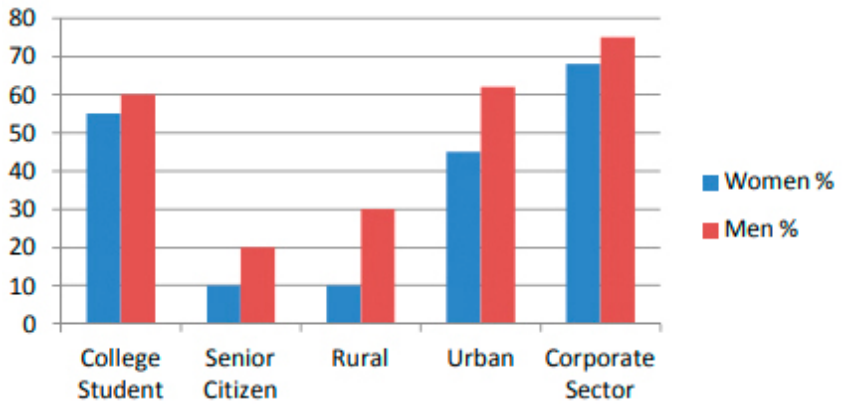

Figure 1. – Use of Internet in India (men vs women).

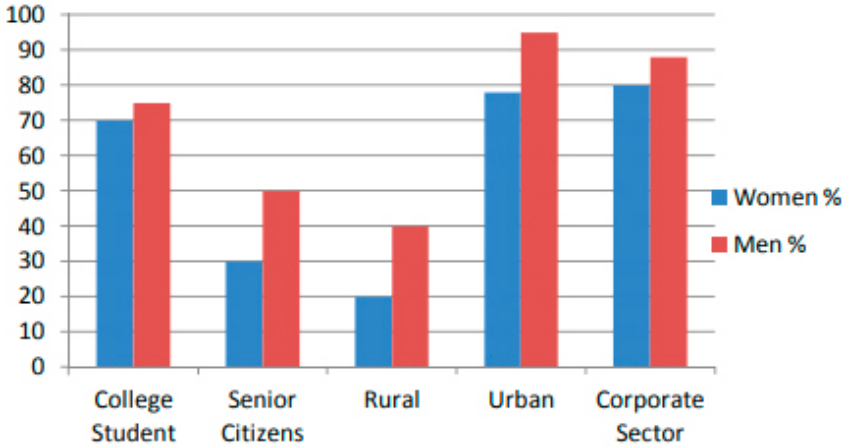

Figure 2. – Use of Internet globally (men vs women).

Notably, the existing difference between men and women with their socioeconomic statuses is one probable clarification of the gender gap. Consequently, in the ranks of Internet users, men outnumber women since job status, education, and income are connected with Internet use (Consalvo, 2002). On the subject of Gender and technology, most of the information has been derived from identity studies and culture. A better part of this work agrees that Internet characteristics of gender inequality have greatly favored men despite the growth of other online resources apart from chat rooms and websites that function in favor of women. The phenomenon that is Gender explicit can contribute to online gender gaps, given that these claims are founded (Bimber, 2000). Research indicates that India is the second-largest country with a huge online market, given that it has over 462 million Internet users, followed by China. Better still, it was estimated that by 2017, the statistics of those using the Internet by June would rise to 465 million and 635.8 million by the end of 2021 in India, where men are said to be dominant Internet users by 71% to women's 29% (www. statista. com). Recent reports also estimate that this gender gap will reduce in the coming years, where the Internet usage share by women may get to 40% (*Fig. 3*). A. T. Kearney, a consultancy and tech Google giant, conducted research that reported that one in every five online business customers is a woman in India. Google further predicts that this pattern will increase from the present, 20% to 40% in four years to come. The Google report also remarks that the online market will witness a 5x+ progress in the statistics of those women shopping online by 2023, as the significant non-adoption barriers are mitigated (Consalvo, 2002).

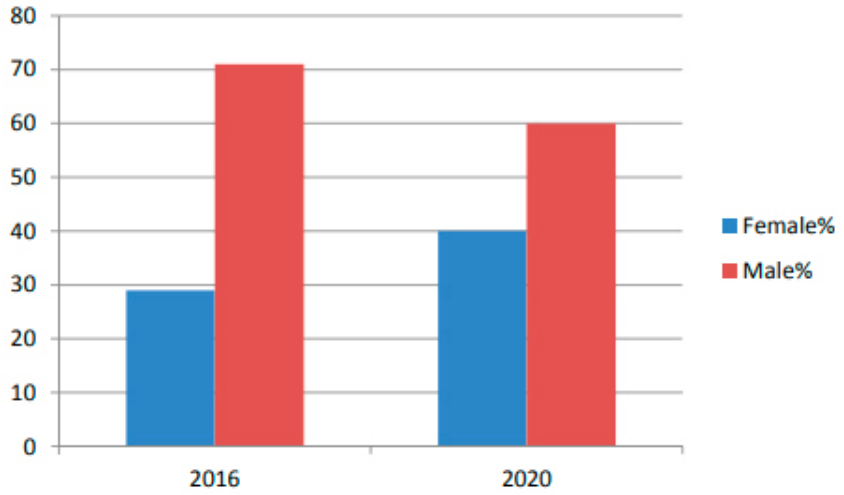

Figure 3. – The percentage of female and male Internet users in India.

Regarding the participation of women on Twitter, an analysis of 23,350 tweets by the Observer Research Foundation showed that, in microblogging sites and conversations about politics, women are underrepresented. These statistics reflect marginalization in the whole country's political processes (Bellman, 2017). Additionally, men's tweets were at 46%, with 8% less of tweets coming from women, as reflected by the report. The remaining tweets were from accounts and organizations where it was difficult to ascertain or access gender identity. Of the 23,250 sampled tweets under the trending topics about politics, 7.72% of the tweets were from women, 46.15% tweets were from men, 34.83 tweets from news outlets, organizations, and other groups, while 11.30% tweets were from users without gender specifications (Bellman, 2017). This means that, while the gender Internet use ratio was improving slightly in India's urban part, 40% of women are utilizing the Internet against 60% of men. In rural areas, there are 75% of men Internet users compared to 25% of women.

Globally, women seem to lead in Internet handling in dominant social network sites, although the trend is different in India. Recent reports from UK's consultancy firm "We Are Social" on social network sites like Facebook that consider India its extensive market, the ratio of women to men Internet users is 1:3. India's Facebook population comprises 24% of women than 76% of men (*Fig. 4*); these figures are more skewed by Gender for Bhutan and Nepal's bordering countries (www. statista. com).

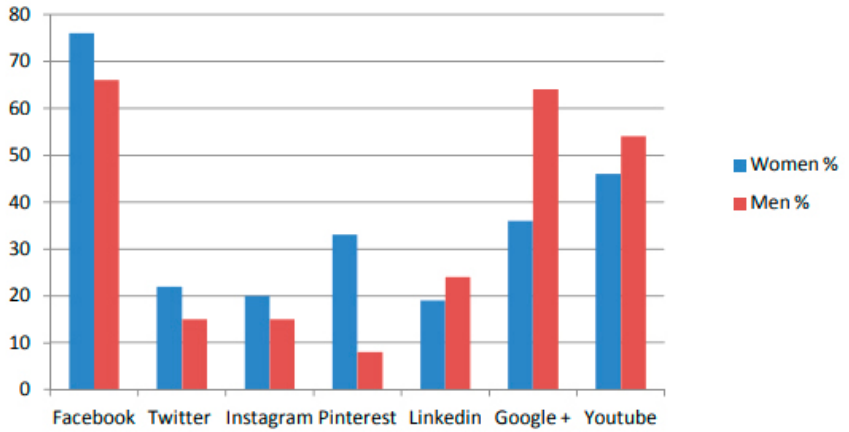

Figure 4. – Use of social networking sites globally (men vs women).

The nation of South Asia demonstrates uneven technology use. Cell phones are the primary tools that make women's lives more beautiful in middle-income countries and low-income countries. Unfortunately, in countries with middle-and low-income, the number of women without cell phones amounts to more than 1.7 billion; 72% or 440 million Indian females do not own cell phones as per GSMA, an association of mobile service companies worldwide (Moghaddam, 2019). Also, over 100 million more men than women have mobile phones in India, which is an enormous gender gap globally. Half of the worldwide gap of 200 million women accounts for those lacking phones in India. Hence, about 28% of women and 43% of men have cell phones, indicating that 36% of women are likely to have phones than men. But even those women owning phones in India can only use them for communication in most cases (Moghaddam, 2019). An estimated 55% of women with mobile phones in India by GSMA never have or cannot send a text message which relates with men in Indian who have never sent a text message though they have a cell phone at 33%. Likewise, 80% of women in India with cell phones are yet to connect to the Internet using their cell phones (Bellman, 2017).

According to Cater-Steel and Cater (2017), technology is considered an excellent equalizer and mode of communicating with individuals who it could not have been easy to connect with before. Most importantly, technology condones people's age, looks, color, Gender, and even economics. Even though cyberfeminism specified that women were not technophobic in the past, today, despite being ranked behind in decision-making in

society and fewer numbers of women in higher education, India indicates a relatively higher number of women in managerial and administrative positions at 28%. Additionally, in the IT field, 28% of the workforce are females, a higher ratio than other fields in the country and others (Cater-Steel & Cater, 2017). A 2016 report on industries ruled by companies such as Wipro Ltd and Infosys gave about 51% of IT jobs or entry-level tech sectors were given to women. Such actions show that cyber feminists are tasked with the need to employ insights that are theoretically female bound along with strategic resources that connect them with techniques in the cyber to combat disparity, militarism, and racism automated in the hardware and software of the Internet. Thus politicking the environment in the end (Lestari, Fadilah, & Wuryanta, 2020).

5. The opinion of critiques on the analysis of technology based on Gender

Online trolling usually targets women. On politically charged matters, women occupying online space are considered intruders of the male space. Regarding Gender-based exploitation, many female activists and bloggers who are well known have preferred to bring down their accounts (McAdam, Crowley, & Harrison, 2020). Critiques believe that men are believed to be the first to benefit from innovations, whereas women follow them and take over their vacated positions. Colley and Maltby (2018) state that jobs such as ICT that are technological are often regarded as masculine, and their control and proficiency usually belong to men. Further, Kieswetter (2020) indicates that women are deterred from accessing information on technology by such assessments. Nevertheless, in ICT empowerment areas, women also play a role that exceeds stereotypes, but prejudice hampers their significance and ability to learn and apply innovative technology.

However, Channa (2004), while riding on the work of Sadie plant, a cultural theorist and British philosopher, is enthusiastic about her Zeroes + One's work which acknowledges the ability of Internet technologies to transform women's lives. Channa (2004) considers cyberspace as a liberating platform for women and female technology is advanced by the Internet. Moreover, the Internet worth is derived from the nurturing aspects of virtual communities, decreasing hierarchies, and the free exchange of information, which are women's values. Also, the final proof of networking technology is when the Internet epitomizes nothing but the death of patriarchy.

Moreover, Channa (2004) accentuates that the fundamental belief of Zeroes + Ones is that technology has liberated women, and the ongoing

gender tremor is only a part of the historical process. While discussing cyberfeminism (Melanie Stewart Millar) an advocate for women's rights, develops on the writings of Channa (2004) by stating that cyberfeminism facilitates a female-centered outlook that advocates for utilization of the latest communications and information technologies aimed for liberation. Miller adds that different cyber feminists view technology as liberating and are convinced that its growth can end superiority among men leaving room for women to live exceptionally in the era of technology.

6. How women have become savvy users

Mohanty and Samantaray (2017) says that the struggle for feminine identity is a phenomenon of social post-independence. The example of Kapilaben Vanka, an Executive Committee of Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) member who shares how a mobile device has changed her life, will help understand the phenomenon of social post-independence.

Vanka is a farmer who cultivates lily flowers. To sell the flowers, Vanka must wake up early to pick the flowers and later take them to the market. Before buying her cell phone, she moved from market to market and from one trader to the other, spending the whole day finding the best market. Today, Vanka uses her cell phone to call up different traders in different markets when still at the garden. The flowers are already in the market for sale by nine in the morning. The cell phone has saved Vanka tremendous time and money. She earned about 1500 to 2000 Rupees as an added income since she started using a cell phone to communicate (Mohanty & Samantaray, 2017).

Thus, although Vanka's example gives hope that women are still involved and benefiting from technology, gender inequality is vast in the way technology is used worldwide. The sizable forces or the socio-cultural factors within societies and cultures repeatedly impinge on the demeanor, judgment, mindset of individuals (Mohanty & Samantaray, 2017). Girls' rights are restricted in the public space when involved in domestic chores, beliefs, and masculine attitudes, prohibiting them from accessing Internet centers. For example, the Google educative initiative that offers the Internet Saathi program in India is trying to change the lives of girls and women with an aim to the divide in gender technology. Unfortunately, this initiative puts women at more risk of being marginalized in society (Mohanty & Samantaray, 2017).

Across the continent, as Asia witnesses the growth in Internet access, determining global conversations are emerging on electrical networks,

influencing ideologies, and creating fresh knowledge. Electronic journals, magazines, and e-books are being circulated on the global web where women share ideas; presently, online libraries are a reality for social honesty to quicken the activism process (Consalvo, 2002). Women clients get access to e-mail and the Internet, perform word processing through the computer and get entertained with instant communications digitally. Women also get help from computers when accessing their money from banks and when conducting banking activities. They are becoming the best tools for teachers and learning women. Through social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, blogs, e-mails, and Myspace, the Internet provides diverse ways for women to connect with others according to Consalvo (2002). Women often spend their time online to distract themselves by updating themselves with the news, watching online videos through YouTube, reading e-books, playing online games, and shopping (Mohanty & Samantaray, 2017).

According to Consalvo (2002), for those women who admire or want to work as freelancers, the Internet has created opportunities for them on online platforms. Technology has helped women balance hobbies, family, and work in several ways; naturally, women can now incorporate technology into their everyday activities. Women now utilize the telecommunication and work-from-home options. Consalvo (2002) further highlights that access to information through technology is an essential tool for development and transformation in a social way; it may be taken as the basic need for women. In conjunction with web entrepreneurship, there is a need for education and requisite skills for the digital world to empower women in the tech sector.

7. Changing Gender inequality through information technology

As full societal access to information technology gets more widespread, and technology gets more advanced, women are liberated from traditional patriarchal power structures surrounding and consuming them (Luckman, 2017). Luckman (2017) further illustrates that, in places where societal norms of being masculine, human, and feminine are transitioning, gender identity and roles are breaking down. Technology empowers women to express their ideas and develop new business models that have to be practical, visionary, and rational to get things in motion.

Additionally, communication and information technology let women escape categories and boundaries that have constrained their identities and activities in the past. E-media, which can be redesigned, recorded,

and reprogramed to exceed conditions, is a new technology that provides women chances to start a new, develop new programs, images, languages, platforms, multi-subject identities, and fluid identities (Wilding, 1998). Feminism is the starting point of cyberfeminism in its quest to concentrate on contemporary technologies while exploring the connection between technology, culture, and gender identity (McAdam, Crowley, & Harrison, 2020). Cyberfeminism struggles to increasingly be aware of the effects of new technologies on women's lives and gender fluidity in their daily lives. Fortunately, international cyberfeminism pursues to bring together women from several different fields of visibility and involvement in developing economies and policies of electronic communication networks and technologies. Finally, cyberfeminism must expand the critique about the media publicity concerning the world of technology as they offer important criticism of the medium, according to (McAdam, Crowley, & Harrison, 2020).

Conclusion

Communication and information technologies are meant for every person, and women must have equal beneficiaries of the benefits provided by technology and the processes and products that materialize from their use. Women need information on career advancement, research, matrimony, health, infant care facilities, sexual harassment, legal provisions, entertainment, social injustice, and domestic violence. Cyberfeminism emphasizes the impacts of technology on the subtle gendering of cultural technology and the lives of women in their everyday life. Internet is an online device linking women worldwide, and feminists utilize the web to defeat racial and Gender opportunities. Notably, a country that wishes for development and advancement must not ignore empowerment and capacity building among women. Likewise, since the Internet and cyberspace provide both men and women with access to the same information, women must also be associated with the lifecycle of technology advancement, as they are beneficiaries and negotiators of change. Cyberspace's gender division is enforced by socio-cultural barriers, which are very multifaceted and adversely affect women. It is improbable for gender differences that arise when using the Internet to naturally end on its own without targeting to involve stakeholders and policymakers. The government should provide financial support for women to easily access the immense information found on the web and support their ideas. Although overcoming these difficulties and obstacles has no 'silver bullet, ICT stakeholders have many actions they can take to possibly augment the access and usage of the Internet by

women; the image of technology must change to involve female views. In certain markets, increasing the use of the Internet for women might be the change needed among stable and increasing revenues and stagnant or shrinking income progression. Cyber feminists understand the new technologies as necessary for the economic and social restructuring that productively affects the state of women.

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Riassunto

La corrente del cyberfemminismo è attiva da ormai un trentennio, e viene definita anche come "terza ondata" del femminismo. Pur essendo un movimento ambivalente e poliedrico e coinvolgendo molteplici istanze, il cyberfemminismo è rappresentato nell'immaginario collettivo da donne con forti conoscenze dei media e delle tecnologie digitali. Lo scopo del presente articolo è quello di analizzare il valore socialmente e culturalmente costruito, assunto dai media in questo movimento. Il concetto stesso di identità subisce un fenomeno di controllo che viene ridefinito da "griglie di controllo" (D. Haraway), che impediscono il libero accesso alla partecipazione alla vita nel web. In realtà, le teorizzazioni utopiche delle femministe si alternano a fondamentali analisi di genere all'interno del cyberspazio, che ne determinano la cifra stessa dell'accesso alle risorse. L'ultima fase di questo fenomeno è connotata invece dall'intento di abbattere disuguaglianze di genere attraverso una serie di prodotti digitali che producano cambiamenti nelle percezioni comuni: riviste online, canali Youtube, webinar, azioni di imprenditoria nel web.

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