

From Silence to Speech: A study of How Women Journalists of Khabar Lahariya Use New Media to Amplify Rural Women's Health Voices

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes a systematic review of scholarly literature published between 2020 and 2024 to examine the ways in which women journalists associated with Khabar Lahariya, a women-led rural media organisation in India, employ digital and new media platforms to communicate health-related issues affecting rural women. Drawing on a carefully selected corpus of twenty peer-reviewed articles and institutional reports, the review situates the discussion at the intersection of gender, rural journalism, health communication, and digital media practices.

Using thematic analysis, the study identifies several recurring analytical strands within the existing literature. These include feminist and participatory models of journalism, the capacity of digital platforms to amplify marginalised rural voices, and the persistent structural challenges posed by unequal access to technology and the digital divide. The review also highlights scholarly attention to health reporting practices, particularly in relation to misinformation, credibility, and community trust, as well as gendered dynamics within newsrooms that shape content production and editorial priorities.

The analysis reveals that most existing studies rely predominantly on qualitative methodologies such as case studies, interviews, and content analysis, offering rich contextual insights but limited empirical measurement of outcomes. Notably, there is a scarcity of research assessing behavioural change, policy influence, or long-term public health impact resulting from such media interventions. In response, the paper identifies key gaps and outlines future research directions, including the need for mixed-method impact evaluations, deeper examination of caste- and gender-based digital inequalities, and the development of scalable and replicable models of alternative rural media for effective health communication.

Keywords: Participatory media, women journalists, Marginalized communities, health communication, Gender and media.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Media systems play a decisive role in shaping how health concerns are recognised, interpreted, and prioritised within society, particularly among rural and socially marginalised populations. In the Indian context, women's health issues—including maternal care, reproductive health, sanitation, nutrition, and disease prevention—have historically received limited and uneven coverage in mainstream media discourse. These concerns are frequently framed as private or domestic matters rather than as structural public health challenges requiring sustained policy attention and institutional accountability (Thomas, 2014).

For several decades, traditional media platforms such as newspapers, radio, and television functioned as the primary channels for disseminating health-related information in rural India. Government-led awareness initiatives on immunisation, sanitation, maternal health, and nutrition relied heavily on print campaigns, radio broadcasts, and televised public service messages. While radio achieved relatively wide penetration due to affordability and accessibility, conventional media largely operated through linear, one-directional communication flows. This model restricted opportunities for dialogue, feedback, or local

contextualisation, positioning rural audiences mainly as passive recipients of information rather than active participants in health communication processes (Malik & Sinha, 2020).

The emergence of digital and new media has significantly altered this communication landscape. Digital journalism platforms, social media networks, mobile applications, and online video content have introduced participatory and decentralised modes of health communication. These platforms enable rural communities to access and circulate health information in regional languages and culturally familiar formats, thereby challenging the dominance of urban-centric narratives (World Health Organization, 2021). Importantly, new media environments facilitate community-driven storytelling, allowing women to articulate lived experiences related to healthcare access, sanitation, nutrition, and maternal well-being. Such participatory practices contribute to greater visibility of marginalised voices and encourage public engagement beyond institutional media boundaries (Couldry & Mejias, 2019).

Within this shifting media ecology, *Khabar Lahariya* (KL) represents a distinctive intervention. Established in 2002 as a women-led rural newspaper, KL is run by journalists from Dalit and economically marginalised communities. Its

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transition from print to digital platforms—including online news portals, video journalism, and social media dissemination—offers a critical case for examining how rural women journalists strategically use new media to transform silenced health concerns into public discourse (Khabar Lahariya, 2021).

1.2 Research Focus

This paper focuses on how women journalists associated with *Khabar Lahariya* communicated rural women's health issues from silence into public speech through new media platforms.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To review literature on women-led rural media and health communication
- To examine how new media platforms are used to amplify rural women's health voices
- To identify dominant themes and methodological trends in existing research
- To highlight research gaps and future directions in media and health communication studies

Theories

Khabar Lahariya India's grassroots, women-led rural news platform can be effectively analysed using the following communication and media theories:

Media Effects Theory – Magic Multiplier Effect

Contemporary media effects scholarship recognises that media messages rarely operate in isolation. Instead, their influence is amplified through social interaction, repetition across platforms, and collective discussion within communities. The Magic Multiplier Effect conceptualises media as a catalyst that initiates conversations, awareness, and action extending beyond the original message. Audiences are understood as active interpreters who circulate and reinforce media content through everyday social practices (Chakravarty & Roy, 2021).

Khabar Lahariya illustrates this effect within rural India. Health-related reports published on digital platforms are frequently discussed within households, self-help groups, and village meetings, thereby extending their reach even to those without direct digital access. The circulation of content across YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and offline community spaces multiplies visibility and strengthens social impact.

Khabar Lahariya is a strong real-world example of the Magic Multiplier Effect in action, especially in rural India. As a women-led, grassroots news platform, it reports on health, governance, gender, and social justice issues affecting marginalized rural communities.

1. Trusted Source and Local Language

Khabar Lahariya's journalists belong to the same communities they report on. Their use of local dialects (Bundeli, Awadhi, Bhojpuri) builds credibility and trust. This trust allows health-related stories—such as maternal healthcare failures or lack of sanitation—to be taken seriously and discussed widely.

2. From Media Message to Community Conversation

When a health story is published online or shared via social media, it does not stop there. Villagers discuss it in homes, self-help groups, and local meetings. These discussions multiply the original media message, spreading awareness even to those without digital access.

3. Digital Platforms as Multipliers

By using YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and their website, Khabar Lahariya ensures repeated exposure across platforms. A single report on rural women's health may be watched, shared, commented on, and referenced in offline spaces greatly increasing its impact.

4. From Awareness to Action

Many reports have led to administrative responses, improved services, or public accountability. Here, media influence extends beyond understanding to **social change**, illustrating the multiplier effect at work.

People's Participation Theory

People's Participation Theory within development communication emphasises community agency in identifying issues, producing content, and shaping narratives. Rather than viewing audiences as passive recipients, participatory models position communities as co-creators of meaning and knowledge. Communication becomes most effective when it reflects local realities, languages, and experiences, fostering dialogue and collective problem-solving (Thomas, 2014).

Khabar Lahariya operationalises participatory communication by embedding journalists within the communities they report on. Rural women are not only sources of information but also active contributors to news production, particularly on health-related issues such as maternal care, sanitation, and nutrition. Reporting in regional dialects enhances accessibility and encourages wider community engagement, reinforcing a two-way communication process (Sinha & Malik, 2022).

According to this theory, media should:

- Enable community voices rather than dominate them
- Reflect local needs, languages, and experiences
- Encourage dialogue and collective problem-solving
- Support empowerment and social transformation

People's Participation Theory is closely linked with alternative media, community media, and grassroots journalism.

The case of *Khabar Lahariya*, is a clear and practical example of People's Participation Theory in action. Founded and run by rural women journalists, it challenges mainstream media structures by placing marginalized communities especially rural women at the centre of news production.

1. Community as Content Creators

The journalists of Khabar Lahariya come from the same rural communities they report on. They engage directly with villagers, encouraging women to share their experiences related to healthcare access, maternal health, sanitation, nutrition, and domestic challenges. This participatory approach ensures that health stories reflect lived realities rather than external interpretations.

2. Use of Local Language and Context

By reporting in regional dialects such as Bundeli, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri, Khabar Lahariya makes health information accessible and relatable. This linguistic inclusion enables wider participation, allowing rural women to understand, respond to, and contribute to public discourse.

3. Dialogue and Collective Engagement

Health-related stories published by Khabar Lahariya often spark discussions within villages, self-help groups, and local institutions. Community members engage with journalists, provide feedback, and sometimes collaborate in follow-up reporting, reinforcing a two-way communication model.

4. Empowerment and Social Change

Through participatory journalism, Khabar Lahariya empowers rural women not only as sources of news but as agents of change. Publicizing community concerns has led to administrative accountability, improved health services, and increased awareness of rights.

Social Responsibility Theory of the Press

Social Responsibility Theory argues that media freedom must be accompanied by ethical obligations to serve the public interest, represent diverse social groups, and hold power structures accountable. Journalism, under this framework, is expected to prioritise social welfare over commercial imperatives, particularly when addressing issues related to health, justice, and democracy (Fraser, 1990).

Khabar Lahariya aligns closely with these principles through its sustained focus on rural women's health, governance failures, and gaps in public healthcare delivery. By foregrounding marginalised voices and grounding reports in field-based verification, the platform fulfils its watchdog role and contributes to public accountability (Sharma & Sharma, 2023).

In this case *Khabar Lahariya* strongly reflects the principles of Social Responsibility Theory through its grassroots, women-led journalism focused on rural and marginalized communities.

1. Public Interest-Oriented Journalism

Khabar Lahariya prioritizes issues often ignored by mainstream media, such as rural women's health, sanitation, domestic violence, caste discrimination, and failures in public healthcare systems. By highlighting these concerns, the platform fulfils its social responsibility to inform citizens about matters that directly affect their lives.

2. Representation of Marginalized Voices

The platform gives visibility to rural women, Dalit communities, and economically disadvantaged groups. By reporting in local languages and dialects, it ensures inclusivity and accessibility, aligning with the theory's emphasis on representing diverse social groups.

3. Ethical and Accountable Reporting

Khabar Lahariya practices ethical journalism by grounding stories in lived experiences, field reporting, and verification. Its focus on accuracy and context helps prevent misinformation, particularly in sensitive health-related reporting.

4. Watchdog Role and Accountability

Through investigative reports on healthcare negligence, lack of facilities, or administrative failures, Khabar Lahariya holds local authorities and institutions accountable. Several reports have prompted official responses and corrective actions, demonstrating responsible use of press freedom.

2 Research Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a systematic literature review design to synthesise existing scholarship on women journalists, rural media, health communication, and digital journalism. The review follows the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and methodological rigour in study selection and reporting (PRISMA Group, 2020).

Academic literature published between 2020 and 2024 was identified primarily through Google Scholar, supplemented by institutional reports and practitioner publications. Search terms included combinations of *Khabar Lahariya*, women journalists, rural media, health communication, feminist journalism, digital inclusion, and health misinformation. Studies were included if they focused on women-led rural media initiatives and addressed health-related communication practices. Publications lacking clear methodological descriptions or relevance to health and rural women's media representation were excluded.

The final sample comprised twenty studies, predominantly qualitative in nature, including case studies, interviews, and content analyses. Extracted data were analysed using thematic synthesis to identify recurring conceptual patterns, methodological trends, and research gaps across the literature.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

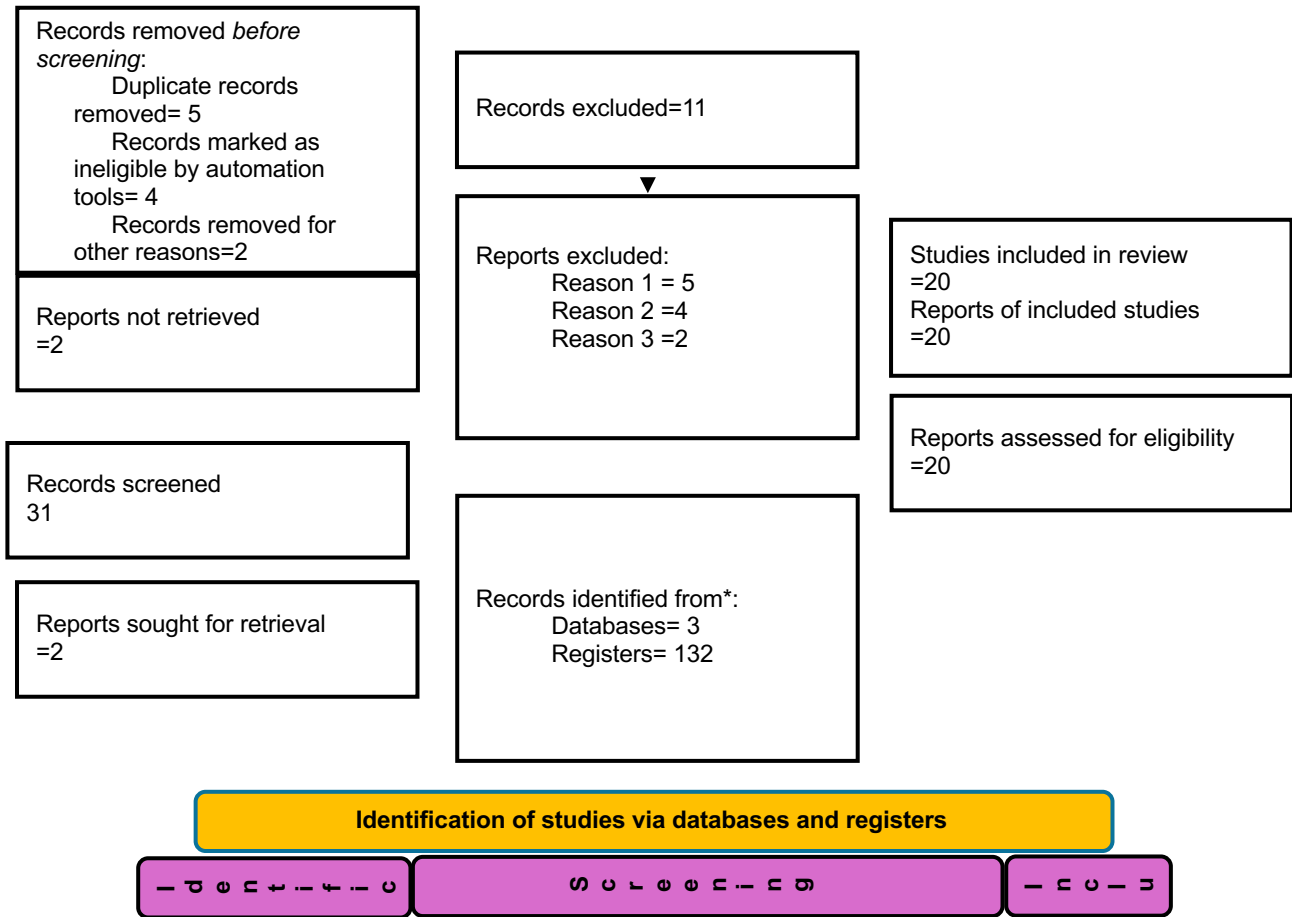
- Publications between 2020 and 2024
- Studies focusing on *Khabar Lahariya* or comparable women-led rural media
- Research addressing health communication, media practices, or digital journalism

Exclusion criteria:

- Studies published before 2020 (except for background)
 - Articles without clear methodological description
- Studies unrelated to health or rural women's media representation

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases and registers only

RESEARCH PAPER



The Reasons for exclusion of reports include:
Reason 1 Few reports were duplicated

Reason 2 Records doesn't fit the study
Reasons 3 Records has been found with errors

Table 1 Approaches to literature reviews.

Dimension	Systematic Review	Semi-systematic Review (Narrative Review)	Integrative Review
Typical Purpose	To synthesize and compare empirical evidence in a transparent and replicable manner	To provide an overview of a research area and trace its development over time	To critique, synthesize, and integrate diverse literature to generate new perspectives
Research Questions	Specific and narrowly focused	Broad	Narrow or broad
Search Strategy	Highly systematic, explicit, and reproducible	May or may not be systematic	Usually not systematic
Sample Characteristics	Primarily quantitative research articles	Research articles	Research articles, books, reports, and other published texts
Analysis and Evaluation	Quantitative (e.g., meta-analysis, synthesis)	Qualitative and/or quantitative	Qualitative (conceptual and thematic synthesis)
Examples of Contribution	• Evidence of effect • Inform policy and practice	• State of knowledge • Key themes in literature • Historical overview • Identification of research gaps	• Development of research agenda • Theoretical model or framework • Taxonomy or classification

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Data Extraction

From each selected study, the following information was extracted:

- Author(s) and year
- Context and focus
- Methodology
- Key findings related to health communication and digital media

Sr. No.	Research Paper	Author(s) & Year	Aim of the Study	Objectives	Research Methodology	Key Findings	Conclusion	Research Gap
1	Role of Community Newspaper in Women Empowerment: A Content Analysis of <i>Khabar Lahariya</i> Newspaper of India	Garima Sharma & Lokesh Sharma (2023)	To examine the role of a community newspaper in promoting women's empowerment	To analyse content related to women's issues, representation, and empowerment	Qualitative content analysis of <i>Khabar Lahariya</i> newspaper	Women-centric reporting highlights health, rights, governance, and empowerment; local language enhances accessibility	Community newspapers act as powerful tools for women's empowerment at grassroots level	Lacks assessment of audience impact and long-term empowerment outcomes
2	Women Journalists of <i>Khabar Lahariya</i> and <i>Namaskar</i> : Enabling Gendered Media Ecology in Rural India	Annapurna Sinha & Kanchan K. Malik (2022)	To understand gendered media ecology created by women journalists	To explore lived experiences and participatory practices	Qualitative case studies, interviews, field observations	Women journalists reshape news agendas by prioritising health, gender, and survival issues	Women-led journalism fosters participatory and inclusive media spaces	Limited empirical measurement of social and policy impact
3	Community Media Coverage of Gender Issues: Struggles and Successes in Rural India	Annapurna Sinha (2022)	To examine gender issue coverage in community media	To analyse challenges and successes in rural reporting	Qualitative analysis of community media cases	Community media provides space for marginalised gender narratives	Community journalism strengthens gender visibility and advocacy	Does not focus on digital transition or new media tools
4	#MeToo and the Troubling of the Rural Public Sphere in India	Disha Mullick (2021)	To analyse feminist media reporting of #MeToo in rural India	To examine how rural feminist media negotiates public discourse	Qualitative textual and discourse analysis	Rural feminist media challenges silence around sexual violence	Feminist rural journalism expands the rural public sphere	Limited focus on health-related communication outcomes
5	The View from the Hinterland	Subin Paul & Ruth	To examine press	To analyse newsroom constraints	Qualitative interview	Caste and gender significantl	Structural inequalities restrict	Does not explore alternative

	: Caste, Gender and Press Freedom in Hindi News Reporting	Palmer (2021)	freedom through caste and gender lens	in Hindi journalism	ws and content analysis	y shape journalistic freedom	inclusive journalism	or community media solutions
6	Supporting Female Empowerment Through Visual Arts and Social Media	Peggy Ann Spitzer (2022)	To explore visual arts and social media as empowerment tools	To examine digital creativity and activism	Qualitative case-based analysis	Visual and digital storytelling enhances women's agency	Digital platforms offer alternative empowerment pathways	Lacks rural and journalism-specific focus
7	Narratives and New Voices from India: Cases of Community Development for Social Change	Alankar Kaushik & Abhir Suchian g (2022)	To document community media narratives for social change	To analyse grassroots communication models	Case study-based qualitative research	Community narratives support participatory development	Alternative media strengthens democratic communication	Limited health communication-specific analysis
8	Understanding Feminism on Online Platforms	Ankita Chatterjee (2021)	To analyse feminist discourse on digital platforms	To study representation and engagement patterns	Qualitative platform analysis	Online platforms facilitate feminist visibility	Digital feminism expands public discourse	Neglects rural and vernacular media contexts
9	Counted Out or Taken In: Mapping Diversity of Journalists in Indian Digital Newsrooms	Aquil Ahmad Khan & M. S. M. Haneef (2021)	To map diversity in digital-native newsrooms	To analyse inclusion of marginalised journalists	Mixed-method newsroom study	Digital newsrooms show limited diversity	Structural exclusion persists despite digital shift	Does not study community or feminist rural media
10	The Persistence of Untouchability: Working Conditions of Dalit Journalists in India	Kailash Koushik & Madhuri Gupta (2020)	To examine caste-based discrimination in journalism	To analyse labour conditions of Dalit journalists	Qualitative interviews and secondary data	Dalit journalists face systemic exclusion	Caste remains a barrier to press freedom	Limited focus on women and health journalism
11	Hold Your Story: Reflections on News of Sexual	Sreedharan, Thorsen & Singh (2020)	To reflect on media reporting of sexual violence	To evaluate narrative framing	Qualitative narrative analysis	Media framing affects public perception of violence	Ethical reporting is essential for justice	Does not focus on rural or community media

	Violence in India							
12	Gender Justice through Ethical Algorithms	Hameed a Syed (2022)	To develop AI-driven support systems against misogyny	To explore ethical digital solutions	Design-based and policy analysis	AI can support digital gender justice	Technology can complement feminist activism	Lacks journalistic and rural application
13	Media Discourses and Representation of Marginalized Communities	Sadia Jamil & Jessica Retis (2022)	To analyse media representation of marginalized groups	To examine multicultural media discourses	Comparative qualitative analysis	Media often reproduces marginalisation	Inclusive narratives are needed	Does not address health or community journalism
14	Communicating for Social Justice in Health Contexts (Editorial)	Vinita Agarwal (2022)	To foreground inclusivity in health communication	To frame health as social justice issue	Conceptual editorial analysis	Health communication must centre marginalized voices	Inclusive communication improves equity	Lacks empirical case studies
15	Health Journalism : A Bibliometric Analysis	Shi Feng (2024)	To map trends in health journalism research	To identify dominant themes and gaps	Bibliometric and quantitative analysis	Growth in health journalism research observed	Emerging need for interdisciplinary studies	Minimal focus on gender and rural contexts
16	Making Health Public	Charles L. Briggs & Daniel C. Hallin (2023)	To analyse how media shapes health discourse	To study media–medicine–society interface	Qualitative and theoretical analysis	Media plays central role in public health meaning-making	Health is socially constructed through media	Limited focus on Global South and rural media
17	Teaching Journalists About Violence Against Women	Patricia Easteal et al. (2021)	To evaluate journalist training on VAW reporting	To assess best reportage practices	Case study-based evaluation	Training improves ethical reporting	Capacity building is essential	Focuses on Australia, not India
18	Silenced Voices: Gender-based Violence Against Women Journalists in Libya	Miral Sabry AlAshry (2023)	To investigate violence against women journalists	To document legal and social challenges	Qualitative investigation	Women journalists face severe risks	Protection mechanisms are necessary	Does not address media production outcomes
19	Why Aren't Women Part of the Conversation?	Rathi et al. (2022)	To study gender gap in social media use in India	To analyse causes and implications	Mixed-method policy research	Digital gender divide limits empowerment	Access and literacy are critical	Does not examine journalism-led interventions

20	Hyperlocal Media and Viksit Bharat 2047: A Case Study of Khabar Lahariya and Mobile Vaani	Bijale, M., Pawar, N., & Bijale, D. (2024)	To identify how hyperlocal media initiatives in India contribute to inclusive development and women's empowerment within the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047	The study emphasizes that both initiatives align with the principles of Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D).	qualitative analysis of case studies, reports, and existing scholarly literature	the paper also identifies persistent challenges, including financial sustainability, digital divides, and patriarchal social structures.	platforms like Khabar Lahariya and Mobile Vaani demonstrate that true national development depends on empowering marginalized communities through accessible and community-driven media ecosystems.	Focuses on Hyperlocal Media and Viksit Bharat 2047
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Data Analysis

The extracted data were analysed using thematic synthesis, identifying recurring themes across studies. Methodological patterns and outcome indicators were also coded to assess the strength of existing evidence.

3. OVERVIEW OF SELECTED STUDIES (2020–2024)

The final dataset comprised 20 studies, including qualitative case studies, content analyses, interviews, systematic reviews, and a limited number of quantitative evaluations. While several studies directly focused on *Khabar Lahariya*, others examined broader issues of digital health communication in rural or marginalized contexts.

4. THEMATIC SYNTHESIS

4.1 Feminist and Participatory Journalism

The literature consistently highlights *Khabar Lahariya* as a feminist media initiative that foregrounds women lived experiences. Journalists from marginalized communities report on issues such as maternal health, sanitation, menstrual hygiene, and access to healthcare, reframing them as public concerns rather than private matters. Participatory practices—such as community engagement and feedback—strengthen trust and relevance.

Sinha and Malik (2022) qualitatively examine women journalists associated with *Khabar Lahariya* and *Namaskar* to understand how a gendered media ecology is enabled in rural India. Through case studies, in-depth interviews, and field observations, the study focuses on the lived experiences of women journalists working in marginalized contexts. It highlights how these journalists prioritize health, gender, and everyday survival issues that are often

neglected by mainstream media, thereby reshaping news agendas from a grassroots perspective.

The study also documents participatory practices such as collective reading groups, which help bridge literacy gaps and strengthen community engagement. By using local languages and culturally embedded storytelling, the newspapers build credibility and trust among rural audiences. These practices demonstrate how women-led rural journalism functions not merely as information dissemination but as a participatory and empowering communication process.

While Sinha and Malik (2022) focus on the lived experiences and participatory practices of women journalists to explain how gendered media ecologies are produced at the grassroots level, Sharma and Sharma (2023) extend this discussion by examining how these practices are institutionalized through *Khabar Lahariya* as a community newspaper that actively advances women's empowerment in India.

Sharma and Sharma (2023) examine the role of *Khabar Lahariya* as a community newspaper in advancing women's empowerment in India. Using a qualitative content analysis of the newspaper along with interviews, the study explores how women-centric reporting reshapes local narratives and challenges patriarchal power structures. The analysis shows that *Khabar Lahariya* consistently foregrounds issues related to women's rights, governance, health, and livelihoods, thereby giving visibility to concerns that are largely absent in mainstream media.

The study further highlights the significance of *Khabar Lahariya's* recruitment and training of rural women as journalists. By enabling women from marginalized communities to participate in news production, the

newspaper creates spaces for self-expression, confidence-building, and professional identity formation. The journalistic practices adopted by *Khabar Lahariya*—such as reporting in local languages and focusing on lived realities—strengthen women's agency and social participation.

Additionally, the research emphasizes the impact of *Khabar Lahariya's* digital transition on women's empowerment. The shift to digital platforms expands audience reach and enhances women journalists' decision-making power, technological skills, and public visibility. Overall, the study demonstrates that *Khabar Lahariya* functions not only as a community newspaper but also as an empowering institutional platform fostering social change and gender equity.

4.2 Digital Transition and New Media Use

KL's shift from print to digital platforms has expanded its reach beyond local villages. Video journalism, social media dissemination, and mobile-based content allow health stories to circulate widely. However, uneven access to smartphones, internet connectivity, and digital literacy limits the inclusiveness of this digital expansion.

4.3 Health Communication and Misinformation

Several studies indicate that community-based digital media can enhance health awareness and counter misinformation when messages are locally produced and culturally grounded. KL's reporting often challenges discrepancies between official health narratives and ground realities. Nonetheless, direct measurement of behavior change resulting from such reporting remains scarce.

4.4 Constraints: Gender, Caste, and Sustainability

The reviewed literature identifies persistent barriers including the digital divide, caste-based exclusion, safety concerns for women journalists, and financial sustainability of alternative media organizations. Dependence on donor funding and limited revenue models affect the long-term viability of health-focused reporting.

4.5 Methodological Trends

Most KL-focused studies employ qualitative methods such as interviews and content analysis. Quantitative impact evaluations and longitudinal studies assessing health outcomes are notably limited.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that women journalists of *Khabar Lahariya* play a significant role in transforming rural women's health issues from silence into public discourse. Their embeddedness in local communities, use of local languages, and adoption of digital media contribute to trust-based and participatory health communication.

However, the literature also reveals gaps in empirical evidence regarding actual behavioural change, policy influence, and long-term impact. While visibility and awareness have increased, structural inequalities in access and sustainability remain unresolved.

Research Gaps were

- Need for mixed-method and longitudinal impact studies
- Disaggregated analysis of digital access by caste, gender, and region
- Experimental studies addressing health misinformation
- Research on sustainable financial models for feminist rural media
- Comparative studies across regions and countries

Limitations of the Study

This review is limited to published and accessible literature between 2020 and 2024. The dominance of qualitative research constrains generalizability and causal inference. Some practitioner insights may not be fully documented in peer-reviewed sources.

Despite offering a comprehensive synthesis of literature on women-led rural media and health communication, this study has several limitations. First, the review is restricted to literature published between 2020 and 2024, which may exclude earlier foundational studies on Khabar Lahariya and community health communication that could provide important historical context. Second, although the study follows a systematic review approach, the reliance on Google Scholar and selected institutional reports may have resulted in the omission of relevant studies indexed in specialized academic databases.

Third, most of the reviewed studies employ qualitative methodologies, which limits the ability to generalize findings or draw causal conclusions about behavioural change, policy influence, or long-term health outcomes. The absence of large-scale quantitative and longitudinal studies constrains assessment of measurable impact. Fourth, while issues of caste, gender, and digital inequality are discussed, many studies do not provide sufficiently disaggregated data, limiting deeper intersectional analysis. Finally, as a literature-based study, this paper does not include primary fieldwork or audience-level data. Consequently, the findings reflect scholarly interpretations rather than direct measurements of community reception or health outcomes. These limitations indicate the need for future empirical and mixed-method research to strengthen evidence in this field.

CONCLUSION

The reviewed literature confirms that Khabar Lahariya represents a powerful model of feminist, participatory rural journalism that leverages new media to amplify rural women's health voices. This model demonstrates how inclusive, women-led reporting can transform local health discourse, raise awareness on critical issues, and challenge dominant narratives by foregrounding lived experiences from the ground.

While digital platforms have expanded reach and visibility, significant challenges related to impact measurement, digital inequity, and sustainability persist. Tracking concrete health outcomes, establishing robust metrics for audience engagement, and ensuring durability of operations

in resource-constrained settings remain essential areas for ongoing attention and refinement.

Addressing these gaps is essential for strengthening the role of alternative media in inclusive health communication and development. By enhancing impact assessment, closing digital divide gaps, and developing sustainable funding and

organizational practices, Khabar Lahariya can continue to serve as a transformative model for feminist, participatory journalism that supports equitable health outcomes in rural communities

media to advance women's empowerment and climate action.

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