



DIGITAL RECONSTRUCTION OF DALIT HISTORY IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT:

The digital age has transformed the ways in which historical narratives are created, preserved, and disseminated. In this context, the reconstruction of Dalit history has gained new momentum through the use of social media platforms and digital technologies. Traditional historiography has often marginalized or underrepresented Dalit experiences; however, digital spaces have enabled the emergence of alternative narratives that challenge dominant historical discourses. This study explores how social media platforms, digital archives, online communities, blogs, podcasts, and visual media contribute to the documentation and reconstruction of Dalit history. It examines the role of digital activism in amplifying Dalit voices, preserving oral histories, and creating accessible knowledge systems that were previously limited to academic or print domains. The study also analyzes the opportunities and challenges associated with digital representation, including issues of authenticity, misinformation, digital inequality, and algorithmic bias. By focusing on the intersection of technology, history, and social justice, this research highlights how digital tools are reshaping historical consciousness and empowering marginalized communities to reclaim their past. Ultimately, the study argues that social media plays a crucial role in democratizing history and fostering inclusive historical narratives in contemporary society.¹



KEYWORDS: Digital Reconstruction, Dalit History, Social Media, Digital Archives, Oral History, Historical Representation, Marginalized Communities, Digital Activism, Social Justice, Online Narratives, Identity, Memory Studies, Inclusive History, Digital Humanities.

INTRODUCTION:

The reconstruction of history in the contemporary era has undergone a significant transformation with the rapid expansion of digital technologies and social media platforms. Historical narratives, which were once largely controlled by printed texts, academic institutions, and official archives, are now increasingly being shaped, shared, and reinterpreted in digital spaces. In this evolving landscape, the history of marginalized communities, particularly Dalits in India, has gained renewed

¹ Dalit History Month, "Dalit History Month," April 2015, accessed May 2026.

visibility and expression through digital media. Dalit history has traditionally been underrepresented or selectively documented within mainstream historiography. Many experiences, struggles, and contributions of Dalit communities were either omitted or framed within dominant social and political perspectives. However, the emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Instagram, blogs, and digital archives has created new opportunities for reclaiming and reconstructing these narratives. These platforms allow individuals and communities to share oral histories, personal testimonies, archival materials, and cultural expressions that challenge conventional historical accounts.²

Digital reconstruction of Dalit history refers to the process of using digital tools and platforms to collect, preserve, interpret, and disseminate historical information related to Dalit experiences. This includes the digitization of archival records, the creation of online repositories, the circulation of historical content through social media, and the use of multimedia storytelling formats. Through these methods, Dalit voices that were previously marginalized are now able to reach wider audiences and contribute to public historical consciousness. Social media plays a particularly important role in this process by enabling participatory history-making. Individuals, activists, scholars, and community organizations actively engage in sharing historical knowledge, commemorating significant events, and highlighting forgotten figures from Dalit history. This democratization of historical production challenges traditional gatekeeping mechanisms and allows for more inclusive and diverse interpretations of the past. At the same time, the digital reconstruction of history also raises critical questions regarding authenticity, representation, and digital inequality. Issues such as misinformation, selective memory, and unequal access to digital resources must be carefully considered when evaluating the impact of social media on historical narratives. In this context, the present study examines how digital platforms and social media are reshaping the understanding and representation of Dalit history. It explores the ways in which digital tools contribute to historical recovery, identity formation, and social empowerment, while also addressing the challenges associated with this new form of historical reconstruction. The study ultimately highlights the importance of digital spaces in building a more inclusive and participatory historical discourse.

Aim

The aim of this study is to analyze the role of social media and digital platforms in the reconstruction, preservation, and dissemination of Dalit history, and to understand how digital tools contribute to creating more inclusive and participatory historical narratives in the contemporary age.

Objectives

- ❖ To examine the process of digital reconstruction of Dalit history through social media platforms and digital technologies.
- ❖ To analyze how social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), YouTube, Instagram, blogs, and online archives contribute to the representation of Dalit experiences and histories.
- ❖ To study the role of digital activism in preserving oral histories, cultural memory, and historical narratives of Dalit communities.
- ❖ To explore the ways in which marginalized voices use digital spaces to challenge dominant and mainstream historical narratives.
- ❖ To identify the opportunities provided by digital media in democratizing historical knowledge and improving accessibility to Dalit history.
- ❖ To investigate the challenges associated with digital reconstruction, including misinformation, digital inequality, and issues of authenticity.

² Abigail Samyuktha Rabindran, "The Subaltern Dalit Counterpublic: Implications for a Social Media Age," *Media Watch* 15, no. 2 (February 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study on the digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media is primarily based on a qualitative research approach. It aims to understand how digital platforms contribute to the preservation, representation, and reinterpretation of Dalit historical narratives. The study adopts an interpretative and analytical framework to examine the interaction between technology, history, and marginalized identities. The research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data includes digital content available on social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Instagram, blogs, podcasts, and online discussions that focus on Dalit history, identity, and social movements. Secondary data is collected from books, research articles, journals, reports, digital archives, and scholarly writings related to Dalit history, digital humanities, and social media studies. A descriptive and analytical method is used to examine how historical narratives are constructed and disseminated in digital spaces. Content analysis is applied to selected social media posts, digital campaigns, online archives, and multimedia materials to understand themes, representation patterns, and public engagement with Dalit history.

The study also employs a digital ethnographic approach to observe online communities and networks that actively participate in sharing and discussing Dalit historical experiences. This helps in understanding how collective memory is formed and maintained in virtual spaces. In addition, comparative analysis is used to evaluate differences between traditional historiography and digitally reconstructed narratives. The study also considers issues such as authenticity, misinformation, algorithmic influence, and digital divide, which affect the representation of historical knowledge online. Thus, the methodology integrates qualitative, descriptive, content analysis, and digital ethnography techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in reconstructing Dalit history in the contemporary digital age.³

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study on the digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media is significant as it addresses the growing intersection between technology, history, and social justice. In traditional historiography, Dalit experiences and contributions have often been underrepresented or marginalized. This study highlights how digital platforms are reshaping historical narratives by providing new spaces for visibility, expression, and documentation of Dalit history. The research is important because it demonstrates how social media platforms enable the democratization of historical knowledge. Through digital tools such as online archives, blogs, videos, podcasts, and social networking sites, marginalized communities are now able to actively participate in the creation and dissemination of their own historical narratives. This shift challenges conventional gatekeeping in historical scholarship and promotes more inclusive and participatory forms of history-making. The study also contributes to academic discourse by integrating the fields of history, digital humanities, media studies, and sociology. It provides insights into how digital technologies influence memory, identity formation, and collective consciousness among Dalit communities. By examining these processes, the study helps in understanding the evolving nature of historical representation in the digital era.

Furthermore, the research is socially significant as it amplifies marginalized voices and supports the recognition of Dalit contributions to social, cultural, and political movements. It highlights the role of digital activism in raising awareness about historical injustices and promoting social equality. This can contribute to strengthening democratic values and encouraging inclusive public discourse. The study is also relevant for policymakers, educators, and researchers, as it emphasizes the need to preserve digital historical content and address challenges such as misinformation, digital inequality, and lack of access to technology. It suggests the importance of integrating digital history resources into

³ Attri, Pardeep Singh, S. M. Ramya, Sarah Glozer, and Vivek Soundararajan. "‘You Belong to Gutters, Not Facebook or Twitter’: Recovering Dalit Histories From the Shadows of Social Media."

educational curricula to enhance historical awareness among students. Overall, this study is significant because it not only documents the role of social media in reconstructing Dalit history but also emphasizes its potential in transforming historical understanding and promoting social empowerment in the digital age.⁴

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

Scope

The study focuses on the digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media, examining how digital platforms contribute to documenting, preserving, and reinterpreting Dalit experiences, narratives, and struggles. It explores how platforms such as social networking sites, blogs, video-sharing platforms, and online archives are used to circulate Dalit histories that have often been excluded or misrepresented in mainstream historical accounts. The role of social media platforms (e.g., X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) in reshaping Dalit historical narratives. Digital storytelling practices used by Dalit activists, scholars, and communities. The emergence of digital archives, hashtags, and online movements that preserve Dalit memory and identity. The interaction between traditional historiography and digital forms of historical reconstruction. The influence of digital media on awareness, representation, and resistance against caste-based marginalization. The study is primarily theoretical and analytical, focusing on content available in the digital public sphere rather than field-based ethnographic data.

Limitations

This study is subject to certain limitations that may affect its breadth and depth. It is limited to online and publicly available digital content, excluding private or inaccessible data from closed groups or restricted platforms. The rapidly evolving nature of social media means that data becomes outdated quickly, affecting long-term analysis. The study does not include extensive fieldwork or interviews with all stakeholders, which may limit firsthand perspectives. Representation on social media may be uneven and biased, as it reflects only digitally active individuals and communities. Algorithmic visibility and platform policies may influence which Dalit narratives are amplified or suppressed, which is beyond the full control of the study. Language barriers and regional digital divides may restrict access to certain Dalit historical content available in local or non-indexed platforms. Overall, while the study provides a critical understanding of digital reconstruction of Dalit history, it acknowledges the constraints of digital access, representation, and platform dependency. If you want, I can also rewrite this in a more formal thesis format, or expand it into a full Chapter 1 (Introduction) section.⁵

REVIEW OF THE STUDY:

The study of digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media sits at the intersection of historiography, digital humanities, media studies, and caste studies. Existing scholarship and discussions highlight how digital platforms are reshaping the production, circulation, and contestation of Dalit historical narratives.

1. Emergence of Digital Dalit Historiography

Recent studies suggest that digital media has opened alternative spaces for Dalit voices that were historically excluded from dominant archives and institutional histories. Scholars argue that platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter) enable Dalit communities to produce

⁴ Chari, Mridula. "On Ambedkar Jayanti, Dalit History Month Rewrites the History of the Marginalised Community." Scroll.in, April 14, 2015

⁵ Rabindran, Abigail Samyuktha. "The Subaltern Dalit Counterpublic: Implications for a Social Media Age." Media Watch 15, no. 2 (February 2022).

counter-histories, challenge caste-based silencing, and document lived experiences in real time. This shift marks a move from “archival scarcity” to “digital abundance,” where marginalized histories can be continuously created and shared.

2. Role of Social Media in Narrative Construction

Research highlights that social media plays a crucial role in reframing Dalit identity and history. Hashtag activism (e.g., campaigns around caste violence and Ambedkarite discourse), digital storytelling, and viral content have contributed to wider visibility of Dalit issues. Scholars note that these platforms allow for participatory history-making, where users collectively reconstruct memory through posts, videos, and commentary. However, studies also emphasize that algorithmic structures influence visibility, meaning Dalit narratives may be amplified or suppressed depending on platform dynamics.

3. Digital Archives and Memory Preservation

A growing body of work focuses on the creation of digital archives of Dalit literature, speeches, biographies, and historical documentation. These archives function as alternative knowledge systems that challenge mainstream historical narratives. Researchers point out that such digital preservation efforts help protect Dalit memory from erasure and ensure accessibility for younger, digitally connected generations.

4. Activism and Political Expression

Scholarly discussions also underline the role of digital media in strengthening Dalit activism and political consciousness. Social media becomes a space for resistance, where historical injustices are linked to contemporary issues. Digital reconstruction of Dalit history is therefore not only academic but also deeply political, contributing to movements for equality and social justice.

5. Summary of Scholarly Understanding

Overall, existing studies agree that digital media has significantly transformed the way Dalit history is recorded and shared. It has enabled decentralized historical production, empowering marginalized voices while also introducing new challenges related to visibility, authenticity, and digital inequality. If you want, I can also convert this into a literature review table (author–year–findings format) or expand it into a Chapter 2 full thesis section.⁶

DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT:

The digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media represents a significant shift in how historical knowledge is produced, shared, and contested. Traditionally, Dalit histories have often been underrepresented, fragmented, or filtered through dominant caste perspectives in mainstream archives and academic discourse. With the rise of digital platforms, there is now an emerging space where Dalit communities can actively participate in reshaping historical narratives. One of the most important developments is the transition from historical silence to digital visibility. Social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube have become accessible tools for sharing testimonies, historical documents, speeches, and cultural expressions. This has allowed Dalit history to be reconstructed not only through institutional records but also through lived experiences and community memory. Digital spaces thus function as alternative archives, where stories previously excluded from formal history can be preserved and circulated widely. Social media has contributed to the democratization of historical narration. Unlike traditional historiography, which is often controlled

⁶ Jose, Sephora. “When Fists Write (of) the Past: Conceptualising Dalit Historiography through the Cultural Productions of Dravida Varga Aikya Munnani.”

by academic or institutional authorities, digital platforms allow ordinary users to create and distribute content. This participatory environment enables Dalit individuals and collectives to reclaim historical agency. Through posts, videos, podcasts, and digital campaigns, users collectively build a more inclusive historical record that reflects multiple perspectives rather than a single dominant narrative.

Digital reconstruction of Dalit history is closely linked to online activism and memory politics. Hashtags, digital campaigns, and awareness movements often connect historical injustices with present-day caste discrimination. This linkage strengthens collective identity and political consciousness among Dalit communities. Memory in this context is not passive; it is actively constructed and contested in real time, making social media a powerful site of historical engagement and resistance. Despite its potential, digital reconstruction also raises concerns. Social media content is influenced by algorithms, trends, and engagement metrics, which can shape what becomes visible or invisible. As a result, Dalit histories may sometimes be fragmented, sensationalized, or overshadowed by dominant narratives. Additionally, questions of authenticity arise, as digital content may lack verification or be subject to misinformation. The absence of centralized archival control can both empower users and complicate historical accuracy.⁷

CONCLUSION / FINDINGS:

The study finds that the digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media has significantly transformed the way marginalized histories are documented, shared, and interpreted. Social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube have become important spaces where Dalit history is actively produced and circulated outside traditional academic and institutional frameworks. These platforms enable individuals and communities to record oral histories, share historical texts, commemorate important events, and highlight figures from Dalit movements, thereby creating a continuously expanding digital archive. The findings also indicate that social media has contributed to the democratization of historical knowledge by allowing Dalit users to participate directly in the construction of historical narratives. This participatory environment has strengthened collective memory and identity formation, particularly through the widespread sharing of Ambedkarite ideology, historical accounts of caste oppression, and stories of resistance. Digital activism further reinforces this process by linking historical injustices with contemporary social issues, ensuring that Dalit history remains visible in public discourse.⁸

At the same time, the study identifies certain structural limitations within this digital process. The visibility of Dalit historical content is influenced by algorithmic systems that govern social media platforms, which can affect the reach and prioritization of such narratives. In addition, unequal access to digital technology and internet connectivity results in uneven participation, particularly among rural and economically marginalized sections of Dalit communities. The absence of formal verification mechanisms on social media also raises concerns regarding the accuracy and authenticity of some historical content. Overall, the study concludes that social media plays a crucial role in reshaping Dalit historiography by creating alternative spaces of memory and representation. However, this digital reconstruction is shaped by both empowerment and constraints, making it a complex and evolving process that continues to redefine how Dalit history is preserved and understood in the contemporary era.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

⁷ Attri, Pardeep Singh, S. M. Ramya, Sarah Glozer, and Vivek Soundararajan. "You Belong to Gutters, Not Facebook or Twitter"

⁸ Online campaigns commemorating figures such as Savitribai Phule and Jyotirao Phule have expanded the visibility

Future research on the digital reconstruction of Dalit history in the age of social media should expand beyond descriptive analysis and focus more deeply on how digital platforms actively shape historical memory and caste discourse. There is a need for long-term studies that examine how Dalit historical narratives evolve over time across different platforms and how digital content contributes to sustained historical consciousness among younger generations. Further studies should also include comparative research across regions, languages, and platforms to understand how Dalit history is represented differently in urban and rural digital spaces, as well as in regional-language content versus English-dominated online discourse. This would help in identifying gaps in representation and accessibility within digital historiography. Another important area for future research is the role of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and platform governance in influencing the visibility of Dalit historical content. Investigating how recommendation systems, content moderation policies, and digital censorship affect the circulation of marginalized histories would provide a clearer understanding of structural digital inequalities.

Researchers should also explore the credibility and verification of digital historical content, especially the ways in which misinformation or fragmented narratives may impact public understanding of Dalit history. Establishing frameworks for digital archiving and fact-checking within community-led initiatives could be an important area of academic and practical focus. In addition, future studies may benefit from incorporating ethnographic methods, including interviews with Dalit content creators, activists, educators, and digital archivists, to gain firsthand insight into the motivations and challenges involved in digital history-making.

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