iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 11 **Issue:** VI **Month of publication:** June 2023

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2023.54435

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 11 Issue VI Jun 2023- Available at www.ijraset.com

Minorities in Mass Media: India

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Abstract: ***This research study investigates the depiction of minorities in Indian mainstream media, with a particular emphasis on religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. The purpose of this article is to examine how these minority groups are portrayed in various types of media, such as television, cinema, print, and digital media. This study intends to provide light on the problems, possibilities, and potential methods for fostering accurate and inclusive portrayal of minorities in Indian mass media by reviewing current literature, media content, and socio-political situations.***

The literature review section gives an overview of extant study on minority media representation in India. It looks at the patterns, trends, biases, and preconceptions that have been observed in media depictions of religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. Furthermore, the review investigates the influence of media coverage on minority populations' self-esteem, identity, and social integration. It also analyses and evaluates India's current media laws and regulations in terms of their efficacy in fostering diversity and inclusion. The research methodology section describes the procedures used in this study for data collecting and analysis. It explains the methods used to collect and analyse data, such as media content analysis, surveys, interviews, and a review of prior research. To acquire valid insights on minority representation in Indian mainstream media, the section emphasises the significance of adopting rigorous and extensive research methodologies.

The paper's ensuing parts go into particular topics of minority representation. The section on religious minorities looks at how Hindu-Muslim relations are portrayed in Indian media, as well as how Sikh, Christian, and other religious minority populations are portrayed. It identifies and analyses the prevalence of stereotypes, biases, and misrepresentations in media narratives, as well as their influence on social cohesion and conflict. The ethnic minorities section focuses on Dalits (Scheduled Castes), tribes (Scheduled Tribes), and other ethnic minority groups. It looks at how these groups are portrayed in various media channels and considers the problems and potential for more truthful and inclusive depictions. The part also looks at how the media might help to preserve indigenous cultures and promote societal awareness for ethnic minorities. The section on linguistic minorities looks into how linguistic diversity is represented in Indian mainstream media. It investigates the prevalence and impact of language-based media channels on linguistic minorities. The part also covers the difficulties that linguistic minorities experience in gaining access to media representation, as well as the possibilities for language-based media to foster inclusion and cultural interchange. Policy implications and recommendations are provided at the end of the study report. It emphasises the importance of media regulations and diversity standards that ensure accurate and inclusive minority portrayal. The section also emphasises the significance of fostering minority involvement in media creation as well as pushing for education and sensitization programmes to raise knowledge and understanding among media professionals and the general public.

This research article adds to our understanding of minority representation in Indian mainstream media. The study analyses gaps, obstacles, and potential measures for encouraging more accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible media representation in India by studying the portrayal of religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities.

Keywords: Minorities, Mass Media, Media, India, Modernity

I. INTRODUCTION

The media has a significant impact on moulding cultural perspectives, influencing public debate, and representing a country's variety. In a culturally rich and varied country like India, where many religious, ethnic, and linguistic communities coexist, minority representation in the media is critical for encouraging inclusion, social cohesion, and equal representation. Minority depiction in media channels such as television, cinema, print, and digital media not only reflects cultural acceptability but also has the capacity to change public thoughts and attitudes towards these populations..

Minority representation in the media has been a topic of intellectual and social debate on a national and worldwide scale. Religious communities (e.g., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs), ethnic communities (e.g., Dalits, tribal populations), and linguistic communities (e.g., speakers of regional languages) have all struggled to achieve accurate and fair representation in the media landscape. Stereotypes, prejudices, underrepresentation, and misrepresentation have been widespread, leading to minority populations' marginalisation and exclusion.

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Understanding the dynamics of minority representation in Indian mass media is critical for grasping the intricate interplay of media, society, and minority groups. The purpose of this research paper is to look at how minorities are portrayed in Indian media and how it affects societal views and inclusion. This research intends to shed light on the issues encountered by minority populations in media representation by reviewing current literature, media content, and socio-political settings. It also seeks to suggest ways for ensuring accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible media depictions.

This study's research objectives include analysing how religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities are portrayed in Indian mass media, investigating the impact of media representation on social perceptions, and investigating the policies and regulations that shape minority representation in media platforms. By addressing these goals, this research article hopes to contribute to scholarly knowledge of minority representation in Indian mass media as well as give insights that can guide policy and advocacy initiatives aimed at building more inclusive and equitable media landscapes.

The research questions guiding this study include:

1) How are religious minorities represented in Indian mass media, and what are the prevalent stereotypes and biases associated with these communities?
2) What is the portrayal of ethnic minorities in Indian media, and how do these portrayals affect social recognition and inclusion?
3) How are linguistic minorities represented in regional media platforms across India, and what role does language-based media play in promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity?
4) What is the impact of media representation on societal perceptions of minorities and the overall social fabric of the country?
5) How effective are the existing media policies and regulations in India in promoting diversity, inclusion, and accurate representation of minority communities?

This study article attempts to give a thorough knowledge of minorities' representation in Indian mass media by an examination of literature, media content, and empirical data. This study's results will aid in identifying gaps, obstacles, and possibilities for ensuring accurate, inclusive, and socially responsible depiction of minority populations. Finally, our study adds to the larger objective of creating a more inclusive and fair media environment that values the diversity and cultural richness of India's minority people.

A. How are religious minorities represented in Indian mass media, and what are the prevalent stereotypes and biases associated with these communities?

Religious minorities' depiction in Indian public media is a complicated and multidimensional topic. Despite efforts to promote diversity and accuracy, problems and prejudices exist in media narratives.

The representation of Hindu-Muslim relations in Indian popular media is one famous example. Historically, media portrayals have frequently perpetuated prejudices, escalating tensions and cementing religious differences. Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims have been sensationalised, contributing to the marginalisation and stigmatisation of both populations. Stereotypes can have a negative impact on societal cohesion and interreligious peace.

As a religious minority, Muslims have frequently experienced misconceptions and biases in media depictions. They are sometimes presented as monolithic, with only bad imagery linked with them, such as terrorism or religious conservatism. Such depictions ignore the different identities, accomplishments, and goals of individual Muslims and the Muslim community as a whole. Not only do these stereotypes lead to the marginalisation of Muslims, but they also promote social biases.

Other religious minority populations, such as Sikhs, Christians, and others, have also encountered difficulties in media portrayal. Sikh characters are frequently reduced to caricatures centred on their outward features, notably their turbans and beards, perpetuating prejudices and distortion. Christian communities have also been stereotyped, with many seeing them as exoticized or only in the context of conversions or foreigners/ foreign influence..

Religious minority prejudices and preconceptions prevalent in Indian popular media can contribute to social stigmatisation, exclusion, and discrimination. These depictions not only perpetuate misunderstandings, but also impede attempts to develop a more inclusive and pluralistic society.

It is also crucial to note that there have been some good advances. Some media projects have attempted to break down preconceptions and show more complex and varied stories. These efforts seek to humanise religious minorities by emphasising their contributions to society and bridging understanding gaps. Such projects, however, remain restricted, and the overall media environment frequently fails to portray the genuine variety and lived experiences of India's religious minority populations.

Taking on the issue of representation necessitates a diverse strategy. Through accurate and honest depictions, media practitioners, content creators, and industry stakeholders should seek to challenge stereotypes, prejudices, and misrepresentations.

Diverse viewpoints, outlets for minority voices, and intercommunity engagement may all contribute to more inclusive media depictions. Furthermore, media literacy programmes and awareness campaigns may assist consumers in critically engaging with media information, challenging prejudices, and promoting empathy and understanding.

Advocating for rules and norms that support fair and inclusive depiction of religious minorities in Indian public media is essential. This involves encouraging diversity in newsrooms, giving equitable chances for religious minority performers and professionals, and establishing an environment that fosters truthful and courteous depiction of all groups.

Indian mainstream media may play a critical role in encouraging social cohesiveness, promoting interreligious understanding, and establishing a more inclusive society that respects and celebrates the uniqueness of religious minority cultures by aggressively confronting preconceptions, prejudices, and misrepresentations.

The representation of ethnic minorities in Indian media is a complex and diverse environment that reflects the sociopolitical dynamics and problems that these populations experience. In mainstream media narratives, ethnic minorities like as Dalits (Scheduled Castes), tribes (Scheduled Tribes), and other marginalised groups have frequently suffered stereotyping, misrepresentation, and underrepresentation.

Dalits have long endured social and economic marginalisation in Indian society as an ethnic minority group. They are frequently portrayed via restricted lenses in the media, perpetuating stereotypes connected with poverty, physical labour, and vulnerability. Such portrayals not only promote stigma, but also limit the visibility of Dalits in many jobs and professions. Media depictions can add to social recognition issues and impede the overall inclusion and empowerment of Dalit people by offering a narrow and biased image.

Similarly, tribes have encountered difficulties in media depiction as ethnic minority. Tribal cultures are frequently exoticized in media narratives, limiting them to superficial characteristics such as traditional costume, ceremonies, and music. This simplistic representation has the potential to perpetuate stereotypes and devalue the depth and diversity of tribal identities, as well as their difficulties and contributions to society. Furthermore, tribes' underrepresentation in mainstream media marginalises their views and restricts prospects for social acknowledgment and understanding.

Other ethnic minority groups, such as migrants and communities in the Northeast, have also experienced distortion and prejudice in Indian media. Migrants are frequently seen negatively, as being connected with crime, congestion, and cultural difficulties. Northeastern communities have faced stereotyping and prejudice as a result of their physical features and different cultural practises, leading to a sense of isolation and marginalisation.

These depictions have a tremendous influence on social recognition and inclusion. Biassed or restricted media depictions can amplify existing prejudices and stymie attempts to build a more inclusive and fair society. When ethnic minority populations are stereotyped or marginalised, it can perpetuate prejudice, impede social mobility, and diminish their feeling of belonging.

Accurate and inclusive media depictions of ethnic minorities, on the other hand, have the ability to challenge preconceptions, raise exposure, and encourage societal recognition and understanding. By emphasising the variety, accomplishments, and contributions of various communities, the media may help to dismantle prejudices and create social cohesiveness.

Efforts are being made to enhance the representation of ethnic minorities in Indian media. There have been examples of media efforts, independent filmmakers, and content creators attempting to give more realistic and inclusive storylines that challenge prejudices and present nuanced depictions. However, the reach and impact of these programmes are frequently limited, and more ongoing efforts are required to promote broad and significant change. It is critical to encourage diversity and representation across media channels in order to improve social recognition and inclusion. This includes boosting ethnic minorities' engagement and representation in media production, promoting material that represents their lived experiences, and giving channels for their views to be heard. Media literacy programmes that teach viewers the value of accurate portrayal and challenge preconceptions can also help to create a more inclusive media landscape. To develop social recognition and inclusion, media practitioners, industry stakeholders, governments, and society as a whole must work together. We may contribute to a society that accepts and cherishes the variety and contributions of all ethnic minority populations by actively advocating fair and inclusive media depictions.

B. How are linguistic minorities represented in regional media platforms across India, and what role does language-based media play in promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity?

Linguistic minorities in India confront distinct media representation issues since language is so important in creating cultural identity and social inclusion. India has a rich linguistic landscape, with several regional languages spoken in various states and areas. The presence of linguistic minorities in regional media platforms varies, and language-based media plays an important role in fostering linguistic diversity and inclusiveness.

Linguistic minorities are frequently represented in material created in their native languages on regional media platforms. These forums enable linguistic minorities to share their cultural heritage, tales, and opinions. They are vital conduits via which linguistic groups may interact, engage, and preserve their language and cultural heritage.

Language-based media plays an important role in encouraging linguistic variety by allowing minority languages to thrive. It provides linguistic communities who have been marginalised or eclipsed by dominant languages a voice. These platforms help to preserve and revitalise languages while also allowing linguistic minority to declare their linguistic and cultural identity.

Furthermore, language-based media contributes to diversity by meeting the linguistic demands of various populations. It guarantees linguistic minorities access to information, entertainment, and cultural content in their own tongue. This access is essential for language minorities to fully engage in social, economic, and political arenas. Language-based media platforms enable linguistic minorities to interact with media material that represents their experiences, concerns, and goals.

However, there are still issues with the portrayal of language minorities in regional media. Dominant languages frequently receive more attention and resources, resulting in an imbalance in representation and possibilities for linguistic minorities. Some regional media outlets may prioritise material in dominant languages, reducing linguistic minority populations' exposure and reach. This might lead to feelings of isolation and marginalisation.

To solve these issues, efforts should be made to promote inclusive language policy, assist minority language content development, and encourage collaboration between mainstream and minority language media outlets. Collaboration may help various linguistic groups share resources, knowledge, and material, creating cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Furthermore, media literacy programmes aimed at linguistic minorities can improve their capacity to engage critically with media information. Such programmes can assist linguistic groups in analysing media narratives, challenging prejudices, and advocating for positive depictions of their languages and cultures. Linguistic minorities can actively shape their own media portrayal by obtaining media literacy skills. Policy structures and legislation should also encourage linguistic diversity and inclusiveness. This involves assuring equal access to media platforms, supporting the creation and transmission of material in minority languages, and encouraging linguistic minorities to participate in media decision-making processes.

Language-based media platforms serve an important role in fostering linguistic diversity and inclusion while also portraying linguistic minorities. Language-based media helps conserve languages, develop social recognition, and enable linguistic minorities to actively engage in society by offering venues for linguistic groups to express their cultural identities and opinions. Efforts to resolve inequities, encourage collaboration, and empower linguistic minorities in media production and consumption are critical for creating an inclusive media environment that celebrates India's linguistic variety.

C. What is the impact of media representation on societal perceptions of minorities and the overall social fabric of the country?

Media coverage has a significant influence on society attitudes of minorities and helps to shape a country's overall social fabric. Minority representation in the media can impact public opinions, reinforce stereotypes, and either contribute to social cohesion or prolong societal differences. For starters, media exposure is critical in moulding public opinions of minority populations. Images, narratives, and storylines offered through media platforms have the potential to affect viewers' perceptions and opinions about various minority groups. Positive and realistic portrayals can build empathy, understanding, and respect for the diversity of minority experiences, but negative or stereotyped depictions can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and marginalisation.

When the media portrays minorities in stereotypical ways, it reinforces social prejudices and promotes unfavourable opinions. Stereotypes can oversimplify complicated identities and propagate negative generalisations, resulting to minority populations' marginalisation and exclusion. For example, portraying specific religious or ethnic groups as dangers or criminals on a frequent basis might fuel prejudice and lead to social tensions. Furthermore, media depictions affect a country's entire social fabric through moulding intergroup relations and supporting or inhibiting social cohesiveness. Accurate and inclusive media depictions help develop intercommunity understanding, empathy, and respect in varied cultures such as India. They can help to develop social relationships by recognising shared ideals, sharing experiences, and celebrating cultural variety. Media depictions that promote prejudices and biases, on the other hand, can cause or worsen societal tensions and divisions. When media narratives portray minority populations as "the other" or promote unfavourable stereotypes, it can foster a "us versus them" mentality and impede social integration. This can exacerbate social bias, discrimination, and even intergroup conflict. Furthermore, minority community members' self-perception and identity development are influenced by media coverage. When minorities are frequently underrepresented or depicted in unfavourable stereotypes, it can have a detrimental impact on their self-esteem, feeling of belonging, and social mobility. Positive and empowering media images, on the other hand, may inspire and uplift individuals, promoting a sense of pride and cultural affirmation.

It is critical to recognise that media portrayal is not the only factor that influences public views and social dynamics. Other influences on individual attitudes and views include education, personal experiences, and intergroup contacts. However, the media wields considerable power due to its broad reach, capacity to generate narratives, and ability to impact public conversation.

Media practitioners, content creators, and legislators must provide accurate, fair, and inclusive depictions of minority populations in order to limit negative effect and encourage good change. Promoting diversity in media production teams, participating in discussions with minority populations, challenging stereotypes, and giving forums for minority perspectives to be heard are all part of this. Media literacy programmes may also teach consumers how to engage with media information critically, identify biases, and challenge prejudicial narratives.

The depiction of minorities in the media has a significant influence on public opinions of minorities and the entire social fabric of a society. It may either promote societal cohesiveness, understanding, and inclusion or it can reinforce prejudice, discrimination, and divides. We can promote a more equal and cohesive society that respects and welcomes the variety of all its members by supporting truthful, inclusive, and socially responsible media depictions.

The usefulness of India's existing media rules and regulations in encouraging diversity, inclusiveness, and truthful depiction of minority populations is being debated. While there have been some encouraging achievements, there are still obstacles and limitations in providing complete and effective measures.

The media industry in India is governed by many regulatory authorities, including the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), the Press Council of India (PCI), and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). These organisations are in charge of developing policies, providing recommendations, and monitoring media practises. Furthermore, special legislation such as the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act and the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) Code help to regulate media content.

Affirmative action policies, such as reservations for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in government jobs and educational institutions, are one of India's key policy achievements. These regulations seek to promote opportunities for underrepresented groups, particularly those in the media. However, it is questionable whether these measures have effectively addressed the media representation gap.

India's media rules and regulations have recognised the necessity of diversified representation in terms of encouraging diversity and inclusion. For example, the PCI has produced recommendations emphasising the need of media organisations respecting and reflecting the country's diversity. It promotes accurate depiction of various socioeconomic, cultural, and religious groups in media production.

However, these regulations and principles have been inconsistently implemented and enforced. There are no standardised monitoring methods or accountability procedures in place to guarantee compliance. As a result, media organisations adhere to diversity and inclusion policies to varied degrees, and minority populations are frequently underrepresented.

The concentration of media ownership and influence, which can limit varied representation, is one of the issues. Many media sources are owned by a few powerful companies, and their editorial decisions can have a significant impact on how minority populations are portrayed. This concentration of ownership has the potential to limit the voices and perspectives of marginalised people while strengthening the influence of dominant narratives.

Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive data on representation across various media channels makes assessing the impact of existing rules challenging. There is a lack of openness in data gathering and reporting on minority community representation. It is difficult to monitor progress and hold media organisations responsible for their representation practises without reliable and accessible data.

Several efforts may be done to improve the effectiveness of media rules and laws in encouraging diversity, inclusiveness, and truthful depiction.

These include:

1) Strengthening enforcement mechanisms: Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure compliance with diversity and inclusion guidelines and taking action against violators.

2) Promoting media literacy: Enhancing media literacy programs that educate individuals about media biases, stereotypes, and the importance of diverse representation. This can empower audiences to critically engage with media content and demand more accurate and inclusive representations.

3) Enhancing diversity in media organizations: Encouraging media organizations to actively diversify their workforce, particularly in decision-making roles, by promoting equal opportunities for individuals from minority communities.

4) Encouraging self-regulation: Encouraging media organizations to adopt self-regulatory measures that prioritize diversity, inclusion, and accurate representation. This can involve adopting voluntary codes of conduct and best practices.
5) Facilitating data collection: Establishing a comprehensive and transparent system for data collection on representation across different media platforms. This can provide a baseline for measuring progress and identifying gaps in representation.

Policymakers, regulatory entities, media organisations, and civil society must work together to create an inclusive media environment that respects and correctly depicts India's minority populations. Greater progress in encouraging diversity, inclusiveness, and accurate portrayal may be accomplished by resolving current issues and increasing the execution of media rules and regulations.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Finally, this dissertation investigated the depiction of minorities in Indian mainstream media, with an emphasis on religious, ethnic, and linguistic minority populations. The findings offer insight on the common misconceptions, prejudices, and issues that these populations confront in media depictions.

The representation of religious minorities, such as Dalits and tribes, frequently promotes prejudices and marginalisation. Similarly, ethnic minorities, migrants, and communities in the Northeast face distortion and prejudice in media narratives. Linguistic minorities confront distinct obstacles, yet language-based media platforms can help promote linguistic diversity and inclusiveness.

The influence of media coverage on society opinions of minorities and the country's broader social fabric is substantial. Biassed portrayals can strengthen preconceptions, obstruct social recognition, and maintain societal differences. Accurate and inclusive depictions, on the other hand, can develop understanding, empathy, and social cohesiveness.

In India, existing media norms and regulations have made some strides in promoting diversity, inclusion, and truthful depiction. Affirmative action policies and regulatory requirements emphasise the necessity of diversity representation. However, implementation, enforcement, and data openness remain issues.

Various methods may be made to improve the efficacy of media policy. These include improving enforcement procedures, developing media literacy, increasing diversity in media organisations, supporting self-regulation, and making extensive data collecting easier.

A more inclusive media environment may be developed by addressing these difficulties and increasing the execution of media rules and regulations. This will assure truthful depiction, combat prejudices, and improve minority populations' social acknowledgment and inclusion.

Finally, promoting diversity, inclusiveness, and correct representation in the media needs a collaborative effort on the part of media practitioners, industry stakeholders, legislators, and society as a whole. We may contribute to a more equal and cohesive society that respects and celebrates the variety and contributions of all minority populations by actively working towards these ideals.

III. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I I'd want to offer my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who helped me finish this research paper on "Minorities in Mass Media: India."

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the various academics, scholars, and specialists in the fields of media studies and minority representation whose ideas and work have served as a firm foundation for this study. Their invaluable contributions have aided in the investigation of India's complicated relationships between mainstream media and minority populations.

I am really grateful to my supervisor and faculty colleagues who guided, supported, and advised me throughout the study process. Their excellent input and recommendations helped shape the direction and substance of this work.

I would also want to thank the individuals who took part in interviews and expressed their experiences and viewpoints on minority representation in Indian public media. Their openness to share their perspectives has enhanced the study and provided depth to the conclusions offered in this work.

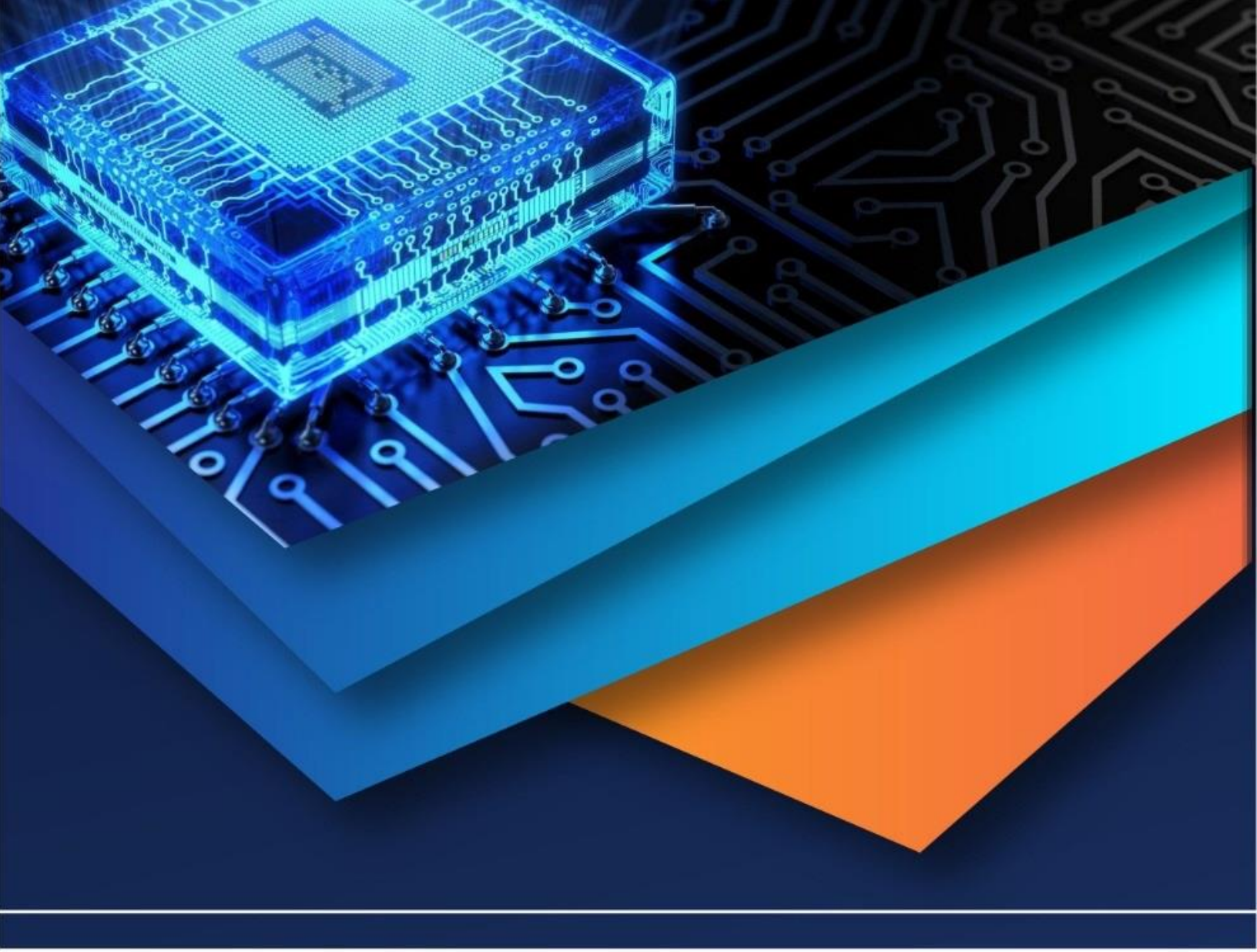
In addition, I'd want to recognise the work of different media organisations, regulatory authorities, and governments who have made steps to address the issue of diversity, inclusion, and correct portrayal in Indian mass media. Their rules, standards, and measures offered critical background and served as the foundation for debate in this study.

Finally, I would want to thank my friends and family for their continuous support and encouragement during the study process. Their faith in my ability and ongoing support have been a source of inspiration for me.

While it is impossible to mention everyone who has contributed to this research paper, I would want to express my thanks to everyone who has played a role, no matter how minor, in the completion of this work.
Thank you for your excellent contributions, advice, and assistance.

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