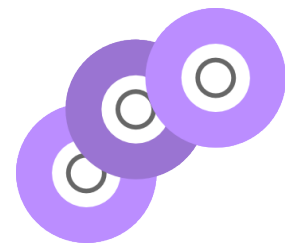


Digital Gender Gap Scorecard: India

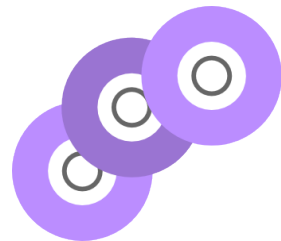


Access

- Only 17% women across India are connected.
- Internet users in rural India are “almost exclusively” men who make up 98% of the total connected users. Even in urban India, Internet use tends to be male-dominated, with 79% of users being male (Boston Consulting Group survey, 2016).

though

- India comes close to achieving the Alliance for Affordable Internet affordability target of 1 GB data priced at less than 2% of average monthly income, and smartphone prices are among the lowest in the world.

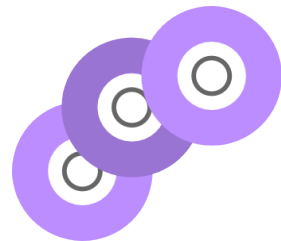


Why aren't falling connectivity costs translating into greater access for women?

- Household and Social controls
- Pervasive online violence and the lack of effective legal-institutional response mechanisms
(especially after repeal of Section 66A)
- Lack of investment in relevant content and services
- Inadequate scaling-up of digital literacy and digital rights literacy, specifically targeted at women.

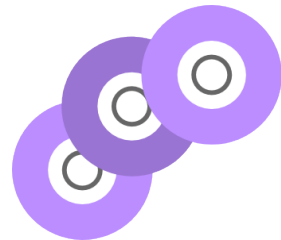
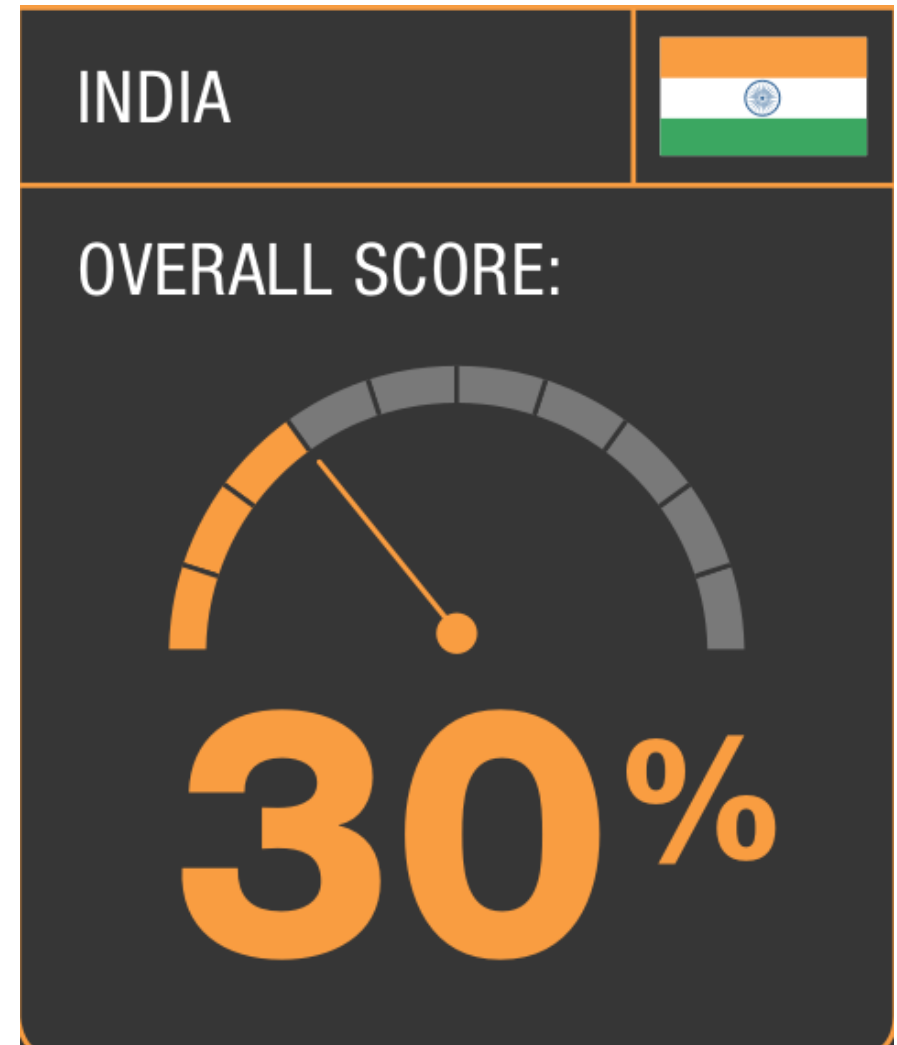
IT Act Section 66 A

- Punishment for sending offensive messages through communication services.
- Creating or forwarding any electronic mail message, images, videos etc for the purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience to a person.
- Non-bailable offence. Shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years or with fine not exceeding two lakh rupees, or with both.

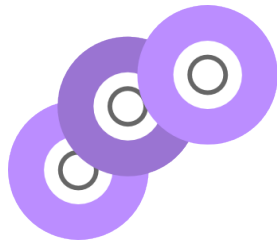


How India fares on the scorecard

- Internet access: 3/10
- Affordability: 5/10
- Digital skills and education: 3/10
- Relevant content and services: 2/10
- Online safety: 4/10



But is access enough? Does access equal empowerment?



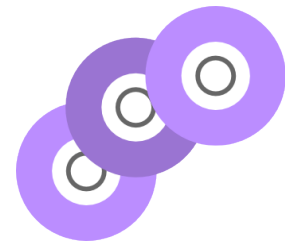
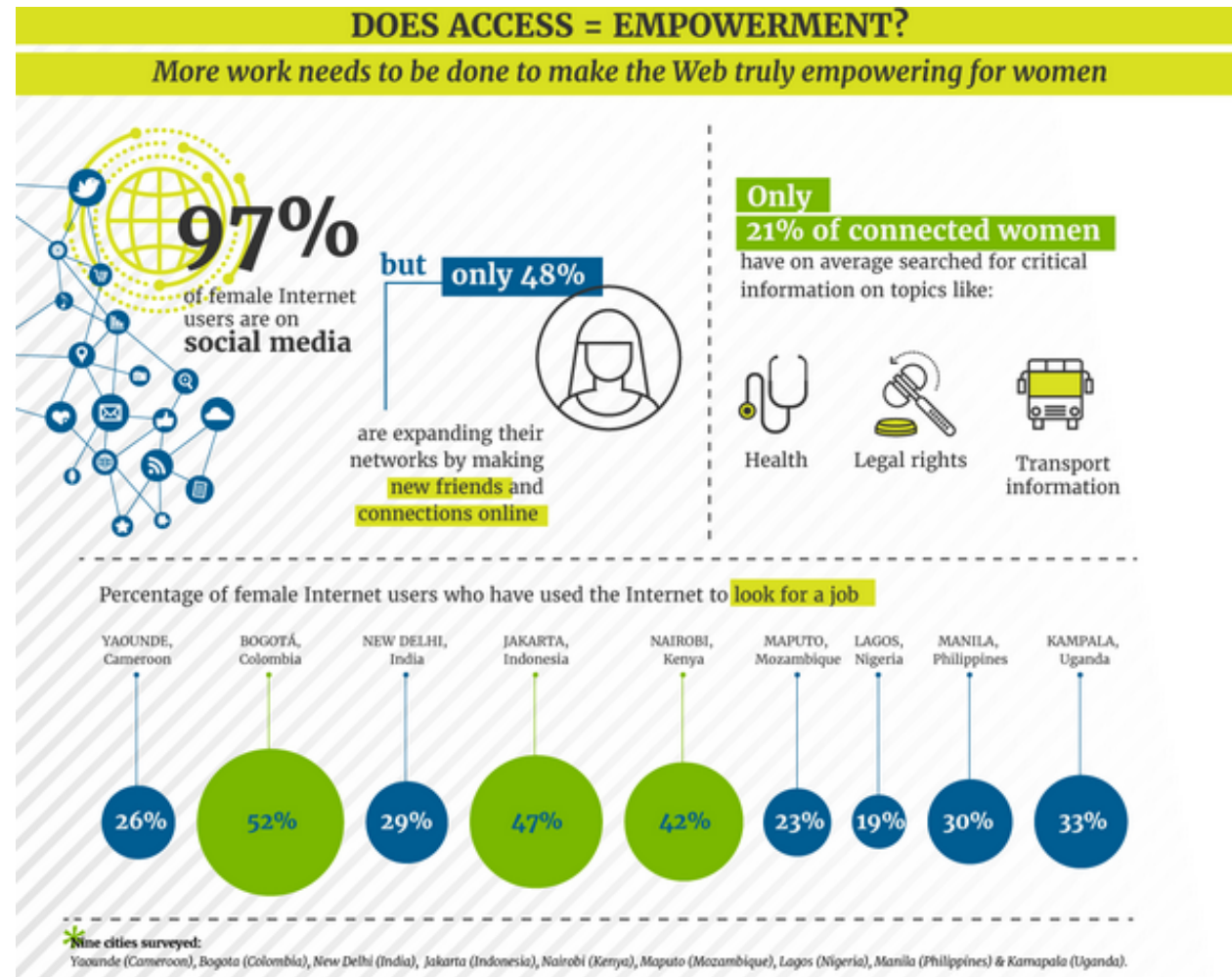
Connectivity does not automatically lead to inclusion into the benefits of connectivity...

- From Women's Rights Online Phase 1 research in India:

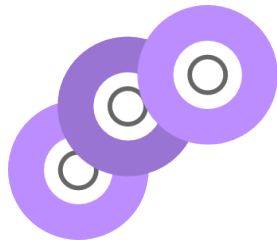
Over 46% of urban poor women surveyed in New Delhi were accessing the Internet; and 98% of female Internet users surveyed were on Facebook.

- But networking socially did not automatically lead to

- expansion of networks of social support (1%)
- access to critical information on rights, health, public services (17%)
- amplification of voice and opportunities for expression (with only 8% reporting this)

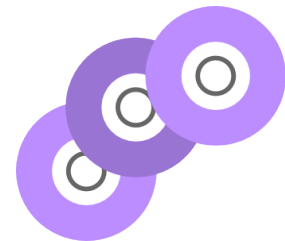


How can we ensure that access opens up pathways to empowerment?



Ingredient 1. Gender-responsive public access

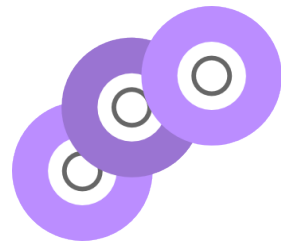
- Gender-responsive public access cultures as a 'permanent complement' rather than a temporary substitute, in the context of developing countries (Sey et al 2013)
- **Introducing a gender budget in National Broadband Plans/ USOF for:**
 - Supporting innovative last-mile connectivity models, developed by women's organisations and women's collectives
 - Targeted data allowance to women, just like universal food rations.



Ingredient 2. Use-cultures that promote cognitive justice

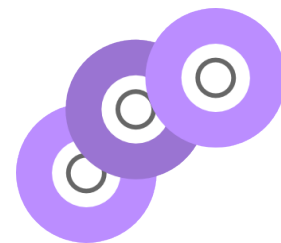
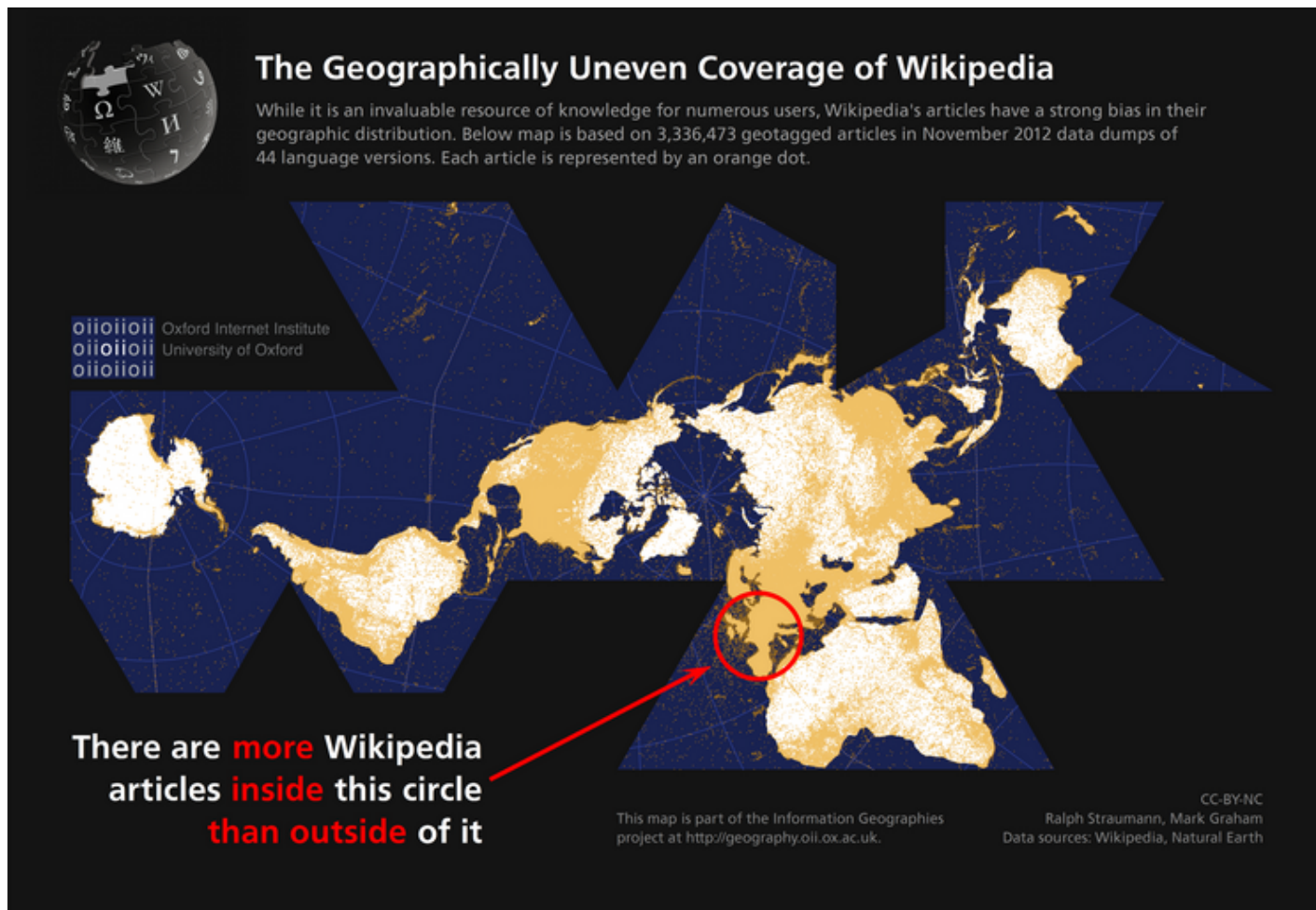
“Cognitive justice recognises the right of different forms of knowledge to co-exist...It demands recognition of knowledges, not only as methods but as ways of life” - Shiv Vishwanathan

Does the Internet encourage feminist cultures of knowledge production, curation and dissemination?



Representational inequalities

- “only 20% of the world (primarily white male editors from North America and Europe) edits 80% of Wikipedia currently. Only 1 in 10 of the editors is estimated to identify as female.”
- “84% of Wikipedia articles focus on Europe and North America. Most articles written about the global South are still written by those in the global North, so that even where content is present, skewed representations remain. In other words, a minority of the world is writing about the majority of the world. And this is still true for most knowledge production on the broader Internet today.” (Whose Knowledge, 2016)



What needs to be done now?

- Digital literacy that emphasizes women's knowledge production and creative expression online, and not just consumption.
- Deliberate and considered choice of copyright frameworks for publicly funded efforts to strengthen the digital knowledge commons.
- Effective measures to tackle technology-mediated Violence Against Women

