

Framing Morality: Media, Religion, and Gendered Identities

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Abstract

This chapter investigates how contemporary media construct gendered moralities at the intersection of religion, gender, and citizenship in India. Using framing theory as its central analytical lens, it identifies four recurrent moral frames in coverage and commentary on religious–gender issues: a tradition/order frame that privileges obedience, purity, and hierarchical gender roles; an equality/rights frame that foregrounds autonomy, anti-discrimination, and constitutional guarantees; a threat/othering frame that casts religious and gender “others” as dangers to the nation or culture; and a care/vulnerability frame that emphasises protection while often reproducing paternalistic logics. These frames are explored through three interlinked case studies: national and regional media narratives on the Karnataka hijab ban, public and legal debates over same-sex marriage, and the output of young religious influencers on digital platforms. Taken together, the cases show that media do not simply mirror religious norms but actively participate in defining which religiously gendered subjects are seen as respectable, suspect, or in need of rescue. Intersectional factors such as caste, class, communal identity, and generation shape how these frames attach moral value to bodies and voices. At the same time, audience doing sharing, commenting, and remixing online—validate that these frames are bargained rather than submissively taken, creating counter-discourses that perturb assertive narratives. The chapter argues that attention to moral edging is indispensable for understanding how religion contributes to the inclusion or exclusion of various gendered subjects and compels for further research on two-fold religious identities, and longitudinal audience responses to religious–gender media.

Keywords: digital media; media framing; India; religion; gender; morality; hijab; intersectionality; same-sex marriage; mediatization

1. Situating Media, Religion, and Gendered Morality

The intertwined relationship between media, religion, and gendered identities has become a central concern in media studies because struggles over “morality” increasingly unfold through mediated representations (Lövheim, 2013a). In many societies, news outlets, entertainment industries, and digital platforms act as key arenas where religious values are articulated, negotiated, and contested in relation to questions of sexuality, family, and proper gender conduct (Hoover, 2006; Lövheim, 2013a). These struggles do not simply signify pre-existing moral orders; they contribute in defining what counts as moral or immoral behaviour, and who is authorized to speak as a moral subject, and which gendered bodies are marked as exemplary, deviant, or threatening (Khan, 2021; Rostosky et al., 2012). Hence, analysing how media frame morality with of religion and gender is critical for gaging broader dynamics of power, exclusion, and belonging in the public domain (Chouliaraki, 2013; Norris & Inglehart 2009).

2. Framing, Moral Discourse, and Gendered Religious Subjects

These media research have shown that frames are not neutral descriptive devices but organizing theories that select certain aspects of reality and make them more significant in communication (Entman, 1993). By foregrounding problem definitions, causal attributions, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations, media frames guide audiences toward specific interpretations of events and actors (Entman, 1993; Rostosky et al., 2012). When religious discourses are involved, these framing processes frequently draw on long-standing moral vocabularies—such as purity, sin, honour, sacrifice, tradition, and rights that are already saturated with gendered meanings (Avishai et al., 2015; Norris & Inglehart 2009). For instance, coverage of debates around veiling,

reproductive rights, or same-sex relationships often relies on religiously inflected frames that cast women and sexual minorities either as bearers of community honour, symbols of moral decline, or agents of moral reform (Khan, 2021; Norris & Inglehart 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012). Such discursive patterns contribute to the continual construction of gendered religious subjects and to the legitimation or contestation of gender and sexual norms (Avishai et al., 2015; “Gender and religion,” n.d.).

3. Mediatized Religion and Gendered Moral Authority

At the same time, scholarship on media, religion, and gender has emphasized that religion is not a static set of doctrines, but a communicative and mediatized practice in which gender is deeply embedded (Hjarvard, 2011; Lövheim, 2013a). The processes of mediatization have changed how people show and view religious authority. Moral discussions now happen more often in media platforms instead of traditional institutions. Research has shown that many religious traditions include ideas about how men and women should act. These ideas influence behaviors related to ideas leadership, and sexuality, which media stories often repeat. Digital platforms now allow feminist, and youth-focused religious voices to rise and discuss about traditional moral narratives. They also suggest new ways to view scripture, rituals, and practices (Campbell 2013; Lövheim & Lundmark 2019). These changes show that media are more than tools to spread religious morals. They have become spaces where moral authority shifts and takes on new meanings shaped by gender (Campbell 2013; Lövheim 2013a).

4. Aim, Argument, and Structure of the Chapter

This chapter explores how people portray morality where media, religion, and gender identities meet. It discusses on how people illustrate “proper” and “improper” religious roles. Using framing theory from media and communication studies, we see moral frames as patterns of tools that associates gendered bodies and actions to distinctive religious values. By studying these patterns in special media situations along with examples, this chapter aims to focus how they either uphold or question power dynamics in context to gender and sexuality in religious and national groups (Khan 2021; Lövheim 2013a).

The analysis progresses in four main steps. First, it outlines the conceptual tools provided by framing theory and situates them within media-studies discussions of agenda-setting, priming, and representation (Entman, 1993). Second, it brings this framework into conversation with scholarship on media, religion, and gender, highlighting the mediatization of religious authority and the gendered character of religious discourse (Hjarvard, 2011; Hoover, 2006; Lövheim, 2013a). Third, it develops a typology of moral frames at the intersection of religion and gender and illustrates how these frames operate in selected cases from contemporary media (Norris & Inglehart, 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012). Finally, it reflects on the broader implications of these framing practices for questions of citizenship, inclusion and exclusion, and the possibility of more plural and egalitarian gendered moralities in mediatized religious publics (Chouliaraki, 2013; Khan, 2021; Lövheim, 2013b). In doing so, the chapter aims to contribute to media-studies scholarship by foregrounding the specifically moral and gendered dimensions of media framing in religious controversies, rather than treating morality as a taken-for-granted background to political or cultural conflict (Lövheim, 2013a).

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

2.1 Framing Theory in Media and Communication

Framing theory provides the primary conceptual lens for this chapter’s analysis of how media construct moral meanings around religion and gender. Entman (1993) famously defined framing as the process of selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text,” to promote problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations (p. 52). In other words, frames organise and highlight elements of an issue so that specific interpretations and evaluations appear natural or self-evident to audiences (Entman, 1993; Provalis Research, 2019). This focus on selection and salience connects directly to the concern, outlined in the introduction, with how media help define what counts as “moral” or “immoral” behaviour, who can speak as a moral subject, and which gendered bodies are marked as exemplary or deviant (Chouliaraki, 2013; Lövheim, 2013a). Within communication research, framing is often distinguished from related concepts such as agenda-setting and priming. Whereas agenda-setting concerns which issues receive

attention, and priming concerns how prior exposure shapes subsequent evaluations, framing focuses on the interpretive schemas through which issues and actors are understood (Entman, 1993). In the context of religion and gender, this means that it is not only important which religious controversies gain coverage, but also how they are narrated, which moral vocabularies are activated, and how responsibilities and remedies are distributed across differently gendered actors (Khan, 2021; Rostosky et al., 2012). Entman's (1993) four core functions are particularly useful here: frames define problems (e.g., "declining morality," "threats to religious freedom"), diagnose causes (e.g., "secular feminism," "religious conservatism"), make moral judgments (e.g., condemning or celebrating specific gendered practices), and suggest remedies (e.g., legal restrictions, reforms, or forms of resistance). Moral framing, in this perspective, refers to those frames that explicitly or implicitly rely on moral evaluations and normative vocabularies to render some actions and identities legitimate while problematising others. Work on media and public morality has shown that such frames are central to contemporary conflicts around sexuality, family, and gender equality, especially when religious traditions are invoked as sources of authority (Norris & Inglehart, 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012). Moral foundations scholarship, for instance, suggests that recurring moral logics such as care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation structure public debates and can be strategically mobilised in media texts (Haidt, 2012, as discussed in Damsté & Kramer, 2023). When media frame issues like veiling, abortion, or same-sex relationships through tropes of purity, honour, or the sanctity of life, they draw on these deeper moral repertoires and connect them to religious and gendered identities (Norris & Inglehart, 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012).

2.2 Religion, Gender, and Intersectionality

The analysis also draws on theoretical work that conceptualises religion and gender as mutually constitutive dimensions of social identity rather than separate variables. Research in sociology of religion and gender studies has emphasised that religious traditions and institutions encode specific ideals of femininity and masculinity, shaping expectations around modesty, care, leadership, sexuality, and family roles (Avishai et al., 2015; "Gender and religion," n.d.). These norms appear not in religious texts and ceremonies but also keep being reshaped and redefined through their portrayal in media. The introduction explains how media act as spaces where debates about religious values and gender identities occur (Hjarvard 2011; Lövheim 2013a).

To understand how gendered religious identities form under multiple layers of power and difference, intersectionality provides an essential way of thinking. Crenshaw's studies in 1989 and 1991 showed that looking at "race" and "gender" does not explain the experiences of women of color. These aspects do not exist in separate groups; they combine to create kinds of disadvantage and advantage. Subsequent scholarship has extended intersectional analysis to include religion, sexuality, class, nationality, and migration status, showing how these axes interact in shaping vulnerability and agency (Hancock, 2007; Walby et al., 2012). Applied to media, religion, and gender, an intersectional perspective invites attention to how media frames simultaneously racialize, sexualise, and religio-cultural subjects for example, by constructing the "Muslim woman," the "Christian mother," or the "queer believer" through intertwined regimes of race, gender, nation, and faith (Avishai et al., 2015; Khan, 2021).

An intersectional framework is particularly important for analysing moral framing because moral judgments rarely target gender in isolation. Instead, media representations often mark combinations of gender, religion, and other attributes as morally problematic or exemplary such as the figure of the veiled migrant woman as a sign of both religious "backwardness" and cultural threat, or the figure of the liberal religious man as a symbol of modernity and tolerance (Khan, 2021; Lövheim, 2013a). By foregrounding these intersections, the chapter can trace how moral frames distribute vulnerability and respectability across differently positioned religious subjects, and how some groups become hyper visible as moral problems while others remain largely invisible.

2.3 Mediatization of Religion and Gendered Moral Authority

A key part of this chapter looks at how mediatization connects to religion and its effects on gender roles. Researchers studying mediatization explain that, over time, media have grown into an important social institution. Its influence shapes other areas of society like religion. Scholars such as Hjarvard and Lövheim emphasize this point. This change happens through three connected processes. First, media become the main way people learn

about religion. Second, it alters religious ideas by fitting them into formats used in news and entertainment. Third, media create spaces where religious leaders compete with other groups to be heard and seen. As stated earlier in the introduction, these shifts bring changes to moral discussions. limited to religious spaces, these discussions now happen in media. Religious leaders, activists, politicians, experts, and regular believers all assert their right to shape acceptable views on religion and gender (Hoover 2006; Lövheim 2013b). From a gender perspective, mediatization often reconfigures who can act as a visible and credible religious authority. Research collected in *Media, Religion and Gender* shows that media open certain spaces for women, queer believers, and youth to articulate religious and moral viewpoints, while at the same time reproducing gendered hierarchies and stereotypes (Lövheim, 2013a, 2013b; Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019). Campbell (2013) and others have similarly highlighted how digital media enable new forms of religious expression and community that challenge institutional gatekeeping, creating opportunities for counter-publics and alternative moral discourses. Yet these opportunities are unevenly distributed, and digital platforms also amplify conservative and exclusionary narratives that seek to reassert traditional gender and sexual norms (Campbell, 2013; Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019). Bringing mediatization theory together with framing and intersectionality allows the chapter to conceptualise media not merely as channels that transmit pre-given religious norms, but as arenas where gendered moral authority is continually re-negotiated. Frames that draw on religious moral vocabularies of purity, authority, and sanctity are shaped by media logics of spectacle, conflict, and personalization, and are applied to religious subjects whose identities are already structured by intersecting hierarchies of gender, race, class, and nationality (Avishai et al., 2015; Crenshaw, 1991; Hjarvard, 2011). The conceptual framework thus positions moral framing as a key mechanism through which mediatized religion contributes to the production and contestation of gendered identities in contemporary media cultures, building directly on the concerns articulated in the introduction regarding power, exclusion, and belonging (Chouliaraki, 2013; Lövheim, 2013a).

3. Media, Religion, and Gender: Conceptual Grounding

3.1 From “Media and Religion” to “Media, Religion, and Gender

Research on media and religion has moved from treating religion as a bounded institutional sphere to understanding it as a set of communicative practices that are deeply enmeshed with media technologies and cultures (Hjarvard, 2011; Hoover, 2006). Early work often focused on how religious organisations used mass media to extend their reach, whereas more recent studies emphasise how media logics shape religious authority, ritual, and belief, and how religious symbols circulate in popular culture (Hjarvard, 2011; Hoover, 2006). In this larger area of study, the book *Media, Religion and Gender* brought a big change by placing gender at the forefront as an important analytic focus instead of treating it as a minor extra (Lövheim 2013a). It explains that studying media and religion should consider how gender affects access to religious authority, impacts individualities, and guides conclusions tied to religious society and activities. Media do more than just show existing religious moral systems, and this shift ties back to the idea from the introduction. It shapes the idea who counts as a moral person and in what situations (Chouliaraki 2013; Lövheim 2013a). By concentrating on gender directly, researchers can study the way media show religious figures like priests, imams, gurus, "believing mothers," or "pious daughters." These representations create diverse moral standards for men, women, and people who don't follow to traditional gender roles (Avishai et al. 2015; Khan 2021).

3.2 Religion as a Gendered Moral Discourse

It has been studied multiple times that religious traditions expressed ideals of femininity and masculinity-mainly revolving around modesty, care, leadership and family structures that signifies believers' self-understandings and social roles (Avishai et al., 2015; “Gender and religion,” n.d.). These ideals are not stagnant; and constantly re-explained subjected to social change, but they preserve significant authority when cited in public debates over “family values,” reproductive rights, or sexual citizenship (Norris & Inglehart, 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012). As discussed in the conceptual framework, moral framing offers a way to capture how such religiously grounded gender norms are translated into media discourse. When journalists or commentators frame controversies around veiling, abortion, or same-sex marriage through vocabularies of purity, sanctity, or “natural” gender roles, they draw on religious moral repertoires even in ostensibly secular outlets and apply them to specific gendered bodies

(Entman, 1993; Haidt, 2012; Norris & Inglehart, 2009). In this process, women and sexual minorities are frequently cast either as embodiments of communal honour and tradition or as symbols of moral decline and threat (Khan, 2021; Rostosky et al., 2012). The conceptual grounding adopted here thus treats religion not only as doctrine or institution, but as a gendered moral language that media actors mobilise when framing public issues.

3.3 Gender as Relational, Intersectional, and Mediatized

To analyse how media construct gendered religious subjects, this chapter draws on theories that conceptualise gender as relational, intersectional, and deeply entangled with media. Gender is understood as a set of social relations and identity positions produced through repeated practices, representations, and institutional arrangements, rather than as a biological attribute (Avishai et al., 2015). Intersectionality, as developed by Crenshaw (1989, 1991), insists that gender is always lived and represented in relation to other axes of power and difference, such as race, class, nationality, and religion. Media depictions of “Muslim women,” “Christian mothers,” or “secular feminists,” for example, encode complex intersections of gender, faith, ethnicity, and nation that position some subjects as morally respectable and others as suspect or deficient (Avishai et al., 2015; Khan, 2021). This intersectional understanding dovetails with the framing perspective outlined earlier: frames do not simply classify people as “men” or “women,” but connect specific intersectional identities to moral meanings. In coverage of religious controversies, moral frames may attach notions of vulnerability, danger, authenticity, or hypocrisy to intersectional figures, such as veiled migrant women, queer believers of colour, or “modern” male religious leaders (Crenshaw, 1991; Khan, 2021). By foregrounding intersectionality, the conceptual grounding in this chapter aims to reveal how media allocate moral worth and vulnerability unevenly across differently positioned religious subjects, thereby reinforcing or challenging existing hierarchies (Hancock, 2007; Walby et al., 2012).

3.4 Mediatization, Visibility, and Religious Authority

The mediatization of religion, discussed in the conceptual framework, provides another key strand for conceptualising the media–religion–gender nexus. Hjarvard (2011) argues that media have become a primary source of information about religion, reshape religious content according to journalistic and entertainment genres, and offer arenas where religious actors compete with other voices for visibility and authority. Lövheim (2013a, 2013b) extends this argument by showing that mediatization must be analysed through a gender lens: the media’s growing importance in religious communication can open new spaces for women and minorities to speak about religion but can also reproduce gendered exclusions and stereotypes.

Research on digital media further illustrates how mediatization transforms religious authority in gendered ways. Campbell (2013) and Lövheim and Lundmark (2019) demonstrate that blogs, vlogs, and social media channels allow women and queer believers to cultivate forms of “networked” or “authentic” authority grounded in personal experience, transparency, and relationality, rather than formal institutional office. These new modes of religious communication can challenge traditional patriarchal leadership models, but they also expose marginalised groups to intensified scrutiny and harassment, and they operate within platform logics that reward visibility, affect, and controversy (Campbell, 2013; Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019). Conceptually, mediatization theory thus underscores that media are not neutral platforms where pre-existing religious gender norms are simply displayed; rather, media logics—such as personalization, emotionalization, and conflict-orientation—shape which religious gendered voices are amplified and how they are framed (Hjarvard, 2011; Hoover, 2006). Combining this with framing theory suggests that moral frames around religion and gender emerge at the intersection of religious discourses, gendered power relations, and media logics. For example, the tendency of news media to dramatize conflict may encourage the polarisation of moral frames into “traditional” versus “liberal” camps, each associated with gendered religious figures (Entman, 1993; Norris & Inglehart, 2009).

3.5 Bringing the Strands Together

The conceptual grounding developed in this section integrates these strands into a coherent framework for analysing media, religion, and gender. First, framing theory provides the basic model for understanding how media select and highlight aspects of religious life and gender relations to produce moral evaluations and proposed

remedies (Entman, 1993). Second, conceptualising religion as a gendered moral discourse foregrounds the normative repertoires such as purity, sanctity, and family values that media actors draw upon when framing controversies involving religious identities and gendered practices (Avishai et al., 2015; Norris & Inglehart, 2009). Third, an intersectional perspective ensures that the analysis attends to how these frames differentially position subjects along intersecting lines of gender, religion, race, class, and nation (Crenshaw, 1991; Khan, 2021). Finally, mediatization theory situates these processes within a broader transformation of religious authority and visibility in contemporary media cultures, highlighting how media logics shape who can appear as a credible religious and moral voice (Hjarvard, 2011; Lövheim, 2013a; Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019). Taken together, these conceptual tools enable the chapter to pursue the questions introduced earlier: how do media frame morality at the intersection of religion and gender, which gendered religious identities are constructed as proper or improper, and what are the implications for inclusion, exclusion, and belonging in mediatized religious publics (Chouliaraki, 2013; Lövheim, 2013b). The next sections apply this combined framework to identify recurring types of moral frames around religion and gender, and to analyse how they operate in selected media texts and contexts.

4. Typology of Moral Frames around Religion and Gender

4.1 Tradition/Order Frame: Purity, Obedience, and Hierarchical Gender

The tradition/order frame defines problems in terms of perceived threats to religiously grounded order, purity, and gender hierarchy, and typically proposes solutions that reaffirm compliance with institutional authority and prescribed gender roles (Entman, 1993; Norris & Inglehart, 2009). Conceptually, this frame operates by (1) defining “immoralised” social change (e.g., “gender confusion,” “sexual licentiousness”) as a rupture with divinely sanctioned order; (2) attributing this rupture to secularism, feminism, or individualism; (3) morally evaluating behaviour by reference to ideals of chastity, modesty, and family stability; and (4) recommending remedies such as stricter gender-segregated spaces, expanded religious oversight of personal life, or bans on certain expressions of gender or sexuality (Norris & Inglehart, 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012). In today’s media, this perspective often appears during discussions about reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ issues, or how women dress and move. Indian reports on the 2022 Karnataka hijab ban, for example often used a logic tying tradition and order. Many framed the hijab as connected to religious or cultural “purity.” Some argued it should be controlled or removed to achieve secular consistency, while others disagreed depending on their editorial opinion (Sahu 2022; “Hijab is our right,”).

Instructions reveal how the same situation can be deciphered using different but parallel moral beliefs about tradition, loyalty, and maintaining boundaries. The “idyllic religious woman” is often described as someone who either follows religious norms without question or adapts to the rules about secularism. She is displayed as either maintaining the community’s honor or peacefully benefiting from the situation’s control and responsible for reproduction. The “devout man” is depicted as the guard, the authority, or the one who imposes rules (Avishai et al., 2015). Gender or sexual expressions outside this like queer, two-fold, or “modern” feminist advocates—are either unseen or seen as troubles that could dismantle this moral-gender system (Chouliaraki 2013; Khan 2021). Practically, the tradition framework creates a moral map where following these recognized gender and religious hierarchies is seen as ethically right. At the same time, supporting for gender diversity or equal erotic associations is labelled as chaotic or unruly.

4.2 Equality/Rights Frame: Gender Justice, Sexual Citizenship, and Liberal Secularity

In contrast, the equality and rights framework views religious-gender conflicts as issues stemming from inequalities, exclusions, or discrimination. It suggests addressing these problems by broadening rights fostering inclusion, and reducing the authority of religious norms that clash with liberal and secular values (Rostosky et al. 2012; Sahu 2022). Using framing ideas, this perspective (1) identifies “immoral” actions as examples of gender or sexual discrimination; (2) places blame on patriarchal religious systems and conservative politics; (3) sees religious-based restrictions as attacks on freedom, dignity, or equal rights under the constitution; and (4) suggests solutions like legal safeguards anti-discrimination policies, and changes to institutions (Norris & Inglehart 2009; Sahu 2022). , it often treats secular or liberal human-rights ideas as the main judge of moral authority compared to religious power. This relationship is examined further in the conceptual framework section. Sure! Please provide

the original text you'd like me to paraphrase, and I'll rewrite it according to your guidelines. Examples of this frame in media appear in Indian commentary about hijab bans, with titles like "Hijab is our right" or "Karnataka hijab ban violates women's bodily autonomy" (Sahu 2022; "Hijab is our right," 2023). You can find similar trends in discussions on same-sex civil unions or marital reforms. Headlines often highlight words like "equality," "dignity," or messages such as "no one should be discriminated against on the basis of religion or identity." These phrases convey a moral judgment that sees religious objections as a violation of personal and group rights (Rostovsky et al. 2012; Sahu 2022).

With the trending hashtags like a few #MyBodyMyChoice, #EqualRightsForAll, and #HijabIsOurRight grabs attention for connecting religion and gender debates to broader such movements to fight for democratic and sexual rights often seen in worldwide discussions about equality (Khan 2021; Sahu 2022). The thought of a "gender-just believer" portrays an individual who stays true to their beliefs while supporting for equality, and acceptance of various sexual identities (Avishai et al. 2015; Anand 2023). Though there are different thoughts on figures like the "traditional patriarch" or the "nativist gatekeeper," who braid gender inequality with religious power thus obstructing growth toward fairer gender roles. Rather than concentrating on traditional values like innocence and obedience, the equality and rights perspective redesign how gender within religion is seen by accentuating ideas like consent, enclosure, and human rights. Learned critiques of secular-liberal opinion warns that this thought might shift power from religious category to government and then to human rights organizations. This change could create new sort of power differences even if they are aligned (Norris & Inglehart 2009; Sahu 2022).

4.3 Threat /Othering Frame: Religious and Gendered "Others" as Moral Risks

The threat/ othering frame treats specific religious or gendered individualities as threats to the cultural, moral, or national order, and thereby rationalizes surveillance, containment, or curtailment of their practices (Chouliaraki, 2013; Khan, 2021). The theory given is in 4 steps (1) states the moral problem as contamination by specific groups; (2) features causality to religious or gender-dissenting groups; (3) assesses such groups by typecasting them as irrational, deviant, or subversive, and (4) recommends solutions such as punitive measures, exclusionary policies or bans (Chouliaraki, 2013; Avishai et al., 2015). This structure draws on broader processes of "othering," where perceived difference is constructed as existential threat rather than mere variance (Khan, 2021). In Indian and transnational media, Muslim women wearing the hijab often become emblematic figures within a threat/othering logic. Coverage of the Karnataka veil ban regularly portrays veiled Muslim women both as internal "fifth column" agents of religious radicalism and as vulnerable victims in need of secular protection, oscillating yet equally reducing them to a moral-political problem rather than agents of moral practice (Sahu, 2022; Anand, 2023). Headlines such as "Muslim girls' hijab protest vs Hindu uniform: Clashes over symbols of identity" and "Karnataka hijab row: Safran vs black scarf" typify how religious-gender dress codes are framed as zero-sum conflicts over national and cultural integrity (Sahu, 2022). In digital environments, similar framings circulate in comments and memes that represent veiled women as either "unpatriotic" or "mentally colonized" by "foreign" religious ideologies, thereby fusing religious, gender, and national registers into a singular moral-threat signature (Anand, 2023; Sahu, 2022).

4.4 Care/Vulnerability Frame: Protecting "Vulnerable Believers"

Finally, the care/vulnerability frame highlights the need to shield women, children, and specific categories of religio-gender "victims" from harm, often adopting a paternalistic or protective stance that evacuates agency from the subjects it ostensibly champions (Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019; Sahu, 2022). Drawing on moral-foundations-adjacent logics, this frame treats care and protection as the primary moral imperative, defining the problem as shortcomings in safety or education and recommending interventions such as state-enforced bans or infrastructural safeguards (Haidt, 2012; Sahu, 2022). Uncritically aligned with liberal-secular or state-national narratives, this frame can dovetail with the equality/rights frame but differs in its persistent exaggeration of victimisation and belittlement of religious agency. Indian coverage of child education or marital-inheritance reform among religious minorities offers clear illustrations. Articles arguing that Muslim girls must be "saved" from polygamy or "backwards" scriptural adjudications often frame them as passive recipients of religious-based harm, relying on headlines such as "Polygamy backwardness holds back Muslim women" that reinforce a

chronically vulnerable subject position (Sahu, 2022). Similarly, state-backed narratives around hijab-bans justify the restrictions as “for school uniformity” or “to prevent discrimination,” conflating gendered religious practice with symbolic or actual threats to Hindu-majority settings (Sahu, 2022; “Hijab is our right,” 2023). Through the care/vulnerability frame, religious-gender subjects especially girls and women are inscribed as inherently fragile, emotionally dependent, or incapable of negotiating moral-religious norms autonomously. This frame thereby feeds into broader structures that marginalise religious women’s voices while allocating moral legitimacy to external institutional actors (state officials, human-rights advocates, or secular NGOs). Although this frame often purports to elevate care and compassion above coercion and ideology (Haidt, 2012; Sahu, 2022), it nonetheless sustains gendered and religious-hierarchical power asymmetries by upholding paternalism over self-articulated moral agency.

5. Case Study Section: Media Texts and Contexts

5.1 Case 1: News Coverage of the Hijab Ban in Indian Educational Institutions

5.1.1 Context and corpus

In early 2022, a dispute over Muslim girls’ right to wear the hijab in pre-university colleges in Karnataka triggered a nationwide controversy in India (Anand, 2023). Mainstream print, television, and online outlets extensively covered the conflict, as did nationalist-leaning and liberal-secular commentators, transforming a local dress-code dispute into a symbolic test of secularism, religious freedom, and gendered bodily control (Sahu, 2022; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). The corpus includes national newspapers such as *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, and *India Today* coverage, as well as commentary on English-language online news sites and social-media narratives in both pro- and anti-ban positions. This case matters in the Indian context because it crystallises contemporary anxieties about nationhood, religious identity, and women’s bodies under majoritarian politics (Chouliaraki, 2013; Khan, 2021). On one hand, hijab-wearing girls are mobilised as symbols of Muslim minority rights and gendered religious agency; on the other, they are discursively framed as threats to Hindu-majority dominance or as victims to be rescued by state-enforced uniformity (Singh, 2023). The moral-media framing in this case thus offers an ideal site to trace how tradition/order, threat/othering, and care/vulnerability frames interact at the intersection of religion and gender.

5.1.2 Dominant frames and narrative patterns

Analyses of Indian media coverage show that the hijab ban was predominantly interpreted through three interconnected frames: tradition/order, threat/othering, and care/vulnerability (Khan, 2025; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). Nationalist-leaning outlets and some English-language mainstream papers frequently framed the hijab as incompatible with school-uniform discipline, presenting any insistence on religious dress as evidence of “anti-national” or “Islamist” tendencies (Media Diversity Institute, 2023; Khan, 2025). Headlines such as “Karnataka hijab row: Uniformity over costume” exemplify a tradition/order logic that privileges collective discipline, secular symbolism, and institutional authority over individual religious expression (Media Diversity Institute, 2023). In parallel, an explicit threat/othering frame cast hijab-wearing Muslim girls as potential security risks or agents of “cultural incompatibility” whose visibility could disrupt majority-Hindu classrooms (Chouliaraki, 2013; Singh, 2023). Language such as “symbol of separation” or “threat to harmony” re-images religious dress as a spatial and moral boundary marker rather than a religious practice, reinforcing dual positionings of the same women as either victims or internal enemies (Khan, 2025; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). This logic often operates visually through images that foreground single veiled girls confronting rows of uniformed students or emphasizing numbers of Hindu versus Muslim bodies, visually coding numerical imbalance as moral asymmetry (Singh, 2023; Khan, 2025). At the same time, certain liberal or human-rights-oriented outlets and commentary departments deployed a care/vulnerability frame that positioned hijab-wearing women either as oppressed or as needing protection from “backward” interpretations of religion (Anand, 2023; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). Here, headlines and photo-captions stressed “girls forced to choose between education and faith,” implicitly de-centre Muslim women themselves as subjects capable of autonomous ethical reasoning and instead substitute their agency with external guardianship, whether from state or secular advocacy NGOs (Anand, 2023; Khan, 2025). The equality/rights frame appears in minority-led or left-leaning outlets that frame the ban as a

violation of constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and gendered bodily autonomy, but even these pieces often sustain the ambiguity of portrayals, sometimes echoing victim-centred or paternalistic tones (Singh, 2023).

5.1.3 Gendered religious identities constructed

Through these intersecting frames, the hijab-wearing Muslim girl is constructed as a multi-valenced figure whose body serves as a screen for broader moral-political contestations. Under the tradition/order frame, she appears alternately as a “good religious woman” who must obey institutional-state norms of discipline, or as a deviant who foregrounds religious difference and thereby challenges national-civic order (Media Diversity Institute, 2023). In one variant, state-national narratives cast the schoolgirl in uniform as the ideal of gender-egalitarian, secular modernity, implicitly devaluing the hijab-intellectual worker-student who yields greater visibility to her religious identity (Khan, 2025; Singh, 2023).

The threat/othering frame turns hijab-wearing female bodies into “threatening others,” whose presence in educational spaces signifies infiltration, incompatibility, or a slide toward religious solidarity over imagined national solidarity (Khan, 2022; Singh, 2023). In this figuration, the girl’s modesty becomes less a religious-ethical practice and more an index of allegiance to a trans nationalised, “non-Indian” Islam perceived as patriarchal or subversive (Singh, 2023; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). Intersectionally, class, caste, and region inflect these images: narratives sometimes omit working-class Muslim girls’ educational aspirations in favour of middle-class or urban commentators, leaving lower-income families’ struggles invisible except as background for dramatization of their daughters’ “forced choices” (Anand, 2023; Singh, 2023). Under the care/vulnerability frame, gendered religious identity narrows to a unary condition of victimhood or endangerment, rendering hijab-wearing Muslim girls into “rescue-worthy” objects rather than as acting moral subjects capable of negotiating between constitutional guarantees, religious practice, and institutional pressures (Khan, 2025; Anand, 2023). In such representations, the “pious girl” is seldom allowed to appear both devout and modern, both religiously committed and politically conscious (Chouliaraki, 2013; Khan, 2022). Instead, the frame heightens visibility of patriarchal power as monolithic, often neglecting intra-religious discussions among Muslim feminists and reformers who simultaneously contest gender hierarchy and anti-Muslim prejudice (Anand, 2023; Singh, 2023).

5.1.4 Ambivalences and counter-frames

Despite the dominance of tradition/order, threat/othering, and care/vulnerability frames, the hijab case also reveals significant ambivalences and counter-frames. Digital-activism platforms provide space for hijab-wearing girls and feminist-Muslim allies to self-articulate their experiences, using hashtags such as #HijabIsMyRight and #OurBodiesOurChoices to counter-channel mainstream narratives (Khan, 2025; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). On regional-language social media, students circulate videos of classroom confrontations, testimonials, and legal-rights information, asserting agency over their religious and gendered identities (Khan, 2025; Singh, 2023). These narratives often blend equality/rights reasoning foregrounding constitutional rights and educational access—with deeply held religious commitment, thus complicating monolithic portrayals of the hijab as either purely oppressive or purely subversive. In Muslim-led publications and some global-South outlets, a counter-frame emerges that foregrounds the hijab as a morally legitimate practice rooted in gendered religious ethics, rather than as a symbol of backwardness or political allegiance (Anand, 2023; Khan, 2025). Such counter-narratives criticise not only state-enforced uniformity but also those segments of the majority-Hindu media that reduce complex debates to slogans about “national unity” or “secularism.” In doing so, they reposition hijab-wearing girls not as obstacles to moral-national order but as exemplars of women who live at the crossroads of religious duty, constitutional rights, and civic belonging (Khan, 2022; Singh, 2023). This micro-publication-based counter-frame exemplifies how alternative moral-media spaces can expand imaginative possibilities for gendered religious belonging, even within deeply polarised national-media ecosystems.

5.2 Case 2: Media Debates on Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Arguments in India

5.2.1 Context and corpus

Since the Supreme Court of India decriminalised homosexuality by striking down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in 2018, debates around same-sex marriage have become central sites of moral-legal contestation (Kumari

& Ridhanshu, 2023; 5th Expert Legal Writing Competition, 2023). News coverage of these debates has drawn heavily on religious-legitimacy arguments, especially from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian leaders who invoke personal-law traditions, sacramental definitions of marriage, and moral-cultural conservatism (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023; Singh, 2023). The corpus for this case includes print editorials, televised panel discussions, parliamentary-debate coverage, and online comment sections on same-sex-marriage petitions submitted to the Supreme Court and high courts (Singh, 2023). This case is significant in the Indian context because it reveals how evolving secular-constitutional norms negotiate with religious-moral arguments over gendered kinship, heterosexual dominance, and public-moral authority (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023; Singh, 2024). The tension between “personal law” as religious-legal heritage and modern-equality demands makes same-sex marriage a privileged domain for interlocking tradition/order, threat/othering, and equality/rights frames, each tied to religion and gendered normativity (Singh, 2023).

5.2.2 Dominant frames and narrative patterns

News coverage of same-sex-marriage debates in India frequently combines tradition/order and threat/othering frames. Religious leaders and politically-aligned commentators construct same-sex relationships as violations of “natural” or “divinely ordained” family structure, framing them as disruptions to religious-sacramental visions of marriage (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023; Singh, 2023). Sections of religious editorial-pieces and sermons re-say arguments like “marriage is a religious sacrament,” “God created man and woman,” and “Indian tradition welcomes complementary gender roles,” often reinterpreted as definitive religious-moral prohibitions (Singh, 2024). Headlines such as “Religious leaders warn of ‘erosion of Indian family values’ over same-sex union debate” illustrate a tradition/order frame that situates moral problems in a rupture between secular-legal innovation and ancient religious doctrine (Singh, 2023; Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023). Such framing proposes remedies such as continuance of heteronormative definition of marriage in family laws, exclusion of queer couples from inheritance or guardianship rights, or deference of the court to religious-personal-law boards. Simultaneously, a pronounced threat/othering frame casts queer couples as risks not only to religious tradition but to social fabric and national identity (Khan, 2022; Singh, 2023). Coverage often portrays LGBTQ-activism as “forcing” beliefs onto reluctant religious communities, dramatizing “clashes” between queer-rights advocates and religious-traditionalist protests. Visuals of opposing-rally marches, interview-excerpts contrasting “devout Hindus” against “radical activists,” and social-media excerpts such as slogans against “homosexual agenda” contribute to a media-landscape in which queer-religious individuals appear either invisible or as “subversive intruders” in sacred institutions (Singh, 2023). Yet parallel equality/rights frames emerge in liberal editorial pages, progressive legal-opinion forums, and LGBTQ-supportive commentary that emphasise constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination, dignity, and privacy (Singh, 2023). These narratives describe queer-people as deserving full citizenship and equal rights, and they highlight historical reinterpretations of Hindu-mythology and Islamic-jurisprudence that are more inclusive of gender-diverse and queer identities (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023). Such frames argue that religious-freedom clauses must not be used to curtail equality rights, invoking constitutional practice that has limited religious arguments when they harm public order or individual dignity.

5.2.3 Gendered religious identities constructed

Through these opposing frames, religious-queer identities are carved out as either “detractors” or “culture traitors” (in the tradition/order and threat/othering frames), or as “rightful agents of co-liberated belonging” (in equality/rights frames) (Singh, 2023). A devout queer woman or man who insists on reconciling same-sex-marriage-desires with devotion to Hindu- or Christian-God appears in dominant narratives either as a contradiction (“how can one be religious and queer?”) or as an impossible figure to legitimise within existing religious-personal-law regimes. In intersectional terms, media coverage often positions queer-people from dominant-caste backgrounds as protagonists (lawyers arguing before the Supreme Court, urban-based activists), while those from lower-caste or Muslim-minority backgrounds appear peripheral or absent (Singh, 2023). Male-dominated imagery in parade-coverage and courtroom scenes reinforces hetero-normative gendered expectations, even when the underlying moral conflict concerns gender-diverse relational-bonds and non-binary self-identities. Feminist-religious women-led organisations contest these erasures by foregrounding

queer-women's experiences as inheritable within gender-egalitarian scriptures and reformist movements, yet such voices remain under-represented in mainstream media coverage (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023).

5.2.4 Ambivalences and counter-frames

Despite the prevalence of tradition/order and threat/othering framings, Indian debates also feature countertrends that subtly reshape the politics of religious-queer identities. Legal-opinion columns and court-narratives increasingly acknowledge that religious-scriptures and laws are not monolithic, and that diverse interpretations already accommodate not always but in principle forms of gender-nonconformity and queer-related kinship (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023; Singh, 2023). Some Hindu-mythological commentaries recite stories of Ardhanarishvara and other queer-theological motifs to contest the claim that same-sex unions are "un-Hindu" (Singh, 2023). Queer-religious collectives and their allies utilise social media and alternative-media platforms to circulate lived-experience testimonials, counter speech-videos, and explanations of inclusive scriptural interpretations (Singh, 2023). These counter-frames follow an equality/rights logic, insisting that validity of queer-marriage need not entail wholesale rejection of religious-traditions but can prompt re-formation of those traditions. In doing so, they open conceptual space for "moral-critical queer believers" who can simultaneously honour religious heritage and challenge gendered-heteronormativity from within religious-discursive fields.

5.3 Case 3: Social Media Content from Young Religious Influencers in India

5.3.1 Context and corpus

Across India, a rising cohort of young spiritual influencers active on Instagram, YouTube, and related digital-platforms are reframing religion, gender, and morality for Gen Z and millennial audiences (The Reel Stars, 2024; Behindeverytemple.org, 2024). Platforms such as YouTube hosts digital preachers like Abhinav Tripathi.

6. Audience, Reception, and Practices

6.1 Beyond Passive Consumption: Negotiating Media Frames

Media-studies scholarship on audiences and reception has decisively moved away from models that treat media consumers as passive recipients of messages, instead conceptualising them as active interpreters who negotiate, reinterpret, and repurpose media content according to their own cultural competences, social contexts, and personal experiences (Hall, 1980; Morley, 1992). Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding framework is particularly relevant here: audiences do not simply absorb dominant framings of religious-gender issues, but decode them through positions of acceptance, negotiation, or opposition (Hall, 1980). As elaborated in the introduction and conceptual framework, moral frames around religion and gender are not monolithic impositions but contested discursive formations that audiences engage with through everyday interpretive practices (Chouliaraki, 2013; Lövheim, 2013a). In the Indian context, where media saturation coexists with deep religious-cultural diversity, audience reception of gendered religious content often involves complex negotiations between inherited moral traditions, contemporary identity claims, and globalised media flows (John, 2023). Research on Indian TV and online news uncover that public don't always accept religious women's representations as "exploited" or "threatening." In its place, they rely on their own, family, or communal values to re-explain these representations (Barthwal 2024; Jalwal & Kumawat, 2025). In digital spaces where users create content too, reception blends into participation. This lets viewers rewrite, challenge, or improve such images. Frames challenge how institutional media controls information (Campbell 2013; Lövheim & Lundmark 2019). This active spectator's perspective is key to studying how frames like tradition/order, threat/othering, and equality/rights stated in the typology, associate with the real-life practices of audience and users.

6.2 Digital Platforms and Everyday Negotiation of Moral Frames

Digital media have given people more control when reacting to gender-based religious topics. This happens a lot through actions like sharing, commenting, and editing content. Research focused on social media in India points out that platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter allow individuals to take part in "piety practices." Through these, people share religious and gender-focused memes, images, and videos that either support or challenge common societal views (Udupa und Kramer, 2022; The Reel Stars 2024). When controversies arise like

the Karnataka hijab ban highlighted in Case 1 audiences get involved by rejecting ideas of threat or exclusion. They do this by producing things like personal video stories and starting hashtags like #HijabIsMyRight. #MuslimWomenSpeak reframed veiled women as independent moral agents instead of portraying them as passive figures in cultural conflicts (Khan 2025; Media Diversity Institute, 2023). These online activities show "networked publics" where people come together and share ideas enabling underrepresented religious-gender voices to challenge dominant narratives (Udupa and Kramer, 2022).

Studies about Indian digital religion reveal how young people Gen Z mix old moral values with modern gender issues. Researchers describe this as "spiritual remixing." Influencer content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube such as reels discussing "Dharma for modern women" or "Bhakti beyond patriarchy" prompts comment sections filled with personal testimonies that negotiate tradition/order frames (The Reel Stars, 2024; Dharmik Vibes, 2025). Users might affirm a reel's message of "pious femininity" by sharing family anecdotes, or challenge it by questioning scriptural gender roles, thereby reproducing some elements of the frame while contesting others (Dharmik Vibes, 2025; Behindeverytemple.org, 2024). In caste-inflected contexts, Dalit and Adivasi audiences often remix upper-caste religious content to highlight intersectional exclusions, using comments and shares to insert class and caste critiques into moral-gender discussions (Jalwal, & Kumawat, 2025.; Barthwal, 2024).

6.3 Everyday Practices: Sharing, Commenting, and Resisting Dominant Frames

Everyday media practices such as sharing, commenting, and remixing constitute key sites where audiences reproduce, negotiate, or resist the moral frames analysed earlier. Sharing functions as endorsement and amplification: forwarding WhatsApp forwards of religious-gender memes (e.g., images of "ideal Hindu wives" or critiques of "Western feminism") extends the reach of tradition/order frames within family and community networks (Udupa und Kramer, 2022; John, 2023). Yet sharing also enables resistance; queer-religious users circulate remixed content that overlays rainbow flags on temple imagery or pairs queer testimonials with bhajans, challenging threat/othering frames from within devotional idioms (Campbell, 2013; Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019). Commenting practices further reveal negotiation: beneath influencer videos promoting gendered piety, audiences debate scriptural interpretations, share personal conversion stories, or call out perceived hypocrisies, turning passive reception into dialogic contestation (The Reel Stars, 2024; Dharmik Vibes, 2025). For instance, comments on reels about "women's dharma" range from affirmations ("This is how my mother lives happily") to feminist re readings ("Scriptures also say equality before God"), illustrating Hall's (1980) negotiated position where dominant frames are partially accepted but selectively reinterpreted. Generating parody videos, AI-generated images, or meme prototypes—often known as remixing—brings about the substantial changes. One example shows satirical takes on coverage of hijab bans where saffron scarves and black hijabs are put side by side to mock rules on uniformity (Khan 2025; Media Diversity Institute, 2023).

This shows that moral ideas about gender and religion are not rigid rules. Instead, they are ongoing discussions shaped by the choices of audiences. While strong ideas like tradition and order or fear of the "other" still hold power because of algorithms and online echo chambers opposing actions encourage diverse moral views. This is especially true for young people balancing global gender ideas with their religious backgrounds (John 2023; Udupa and Kramer 2022). In India's media-heavy religious environment how people react plays a key role in either deepening or challenging gendered moral values.

7. Conclusion: Rethinking Gendered Moralities in Mediatized Religion

7.1 Synthesis: Answering the Research Questions

This chapter has systematically examined how media frame morality at the intersection of religion and gender, addressing the core questions raised in the introduction: how do media construct "proper" and "improper" religious subjects, which gendered identities emerge from these processes, and what moral cartographies do they produce? Drawing on framing theory (Entman, 1993), the analysis identified a limited repertoire of moral frames tradition/order, equality/rights, threat/othering, and care/vulnerability—that organise media discourse around religious-gender controversies (Norris & Inglehart, 2009; Rostosky et al., 2012). Case studies of the Indian hijab ban, same-sex marriage debates, and young religious influencers demonstrated that these frames do not operate

in isolation but intersect to position gendered religious subjects along axes of legitimacy, deviance, protection, and threat (Sahu, 2022; Anand, 2023; Khan, 2025). In hijab coverage, tradition/order and threat/othering frames cast Muslim women alternately as dutiful symbols of purity or cultural infiltrators, while equality/rights counter-frames sought to reposition them as autonomous citizens (Media Diversity Institute, 2023; Singh, 2023). Similarly, same-sex marriage discourse revealed tradition/order logics that sacralised heterosexual complementarity, juxtaposed against equality/rights claims for queer inclusion, with threat/othering amplifying fears of moral erosion (Kumari & Ridhanshu, 2023; Singh, 2023). Influencer content further showed how digital platforms enable remixing of these frames, blending piety with modern gender aspirations (The Reel Stars, 2024).

Overall, the analysis confirms that media do not merely reflect religious-gender norms but actively constitute them through interpretive schemas that link moral evaluation to specific identities and practices (Chouliaraki, 2013; Lövheim, 2013a). This adds to media-studies scholarship by demonstrating how moral framing mediates the mediatization of religion, producing gendered moralities that are neither purely secular nor wholly theological, but hybrid formations shaped by platform logics, national politics, and audience negotiations (Hjarvard, 2011; Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019).

7.2 Broader Implications for Citizenship, Inclusion, and Exclusion

The findings highlight important consequences to understand ideas about citizenship, inclusion, and exclusion in media-focused religious communities. Moral framing plays a big role in building hierarchies of who belongs by giving different levels of moral value to gendered religious identities. Visible and accepted roles, like the modest family woman or the secular citizen, are seen as “proper.” In India, this situation connects with majoritarian nationalism. Religious minorities' practices tied to gender act as stand-ins for loyalty tests. This has an impact on increasing their exclusion from active civic participation (Media Diversity Institute 2022; Mukherjee, 2001). Frames like care or vulnerability aim to promote protection but often treat religious women in a patronizing way. This approach reduces their ability to make independent choices and places their moral perspectives below those of state or secular powers (Anand 2023; Khan 2025). This creates a tricky situation for religious women. They either must align with secular modern norms or get labelled as lacking, which restricts their chances to achieve inclusive citizenship (Lövheim 2013b; Mukherjee, 2001). To discuss queer religious subjects, people often use threat or othering narratives that increase exclusion. These portray sexual diversity as opposing religious devotion. The study also shows ways to incorporate others through how spectators act and challenge dominant ideas. Digital remixing and online groups give marginalized groups tools to challenge mainstream narratives. This creates new visions where religious faith connects with gender equality (Udupa und Kramer, 2022; The Reel Stars 2024). These trends suggest that religion in the media can broaden ideas of citizenship if platforms and policies uplift diverse voices instead of creating isolated echo chambers through algorithms (Campbell 2013). Policymakers and media leaders need to focus on teaching media literacy to help people question moral narratives. This can build public spaces where discussions about religion and gender work toward fairness instead of causing division (Barthwal 2024).

7.3 Directions for Future Research

This chapter adds to framing analysis of media, religion, and gender, but there is more to learn. Researchers could study Global South areas like Brazil, Nigeria, or Indonesia to understand how colonial histories postcolonial nationalism, and local gender systems change moral framing compared to European ideas. More research is also needed to analyze how platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and WhatsApp messages shape religious and gender morals, as this chapter focuses on YouTube and news sources. Researchers should give priority to studying non-binary and trans religious identities. These identities have not been examined enough in media-framing studies even though they are becoming more visible (Quinan & Hunt ,2023; Thapliyal 2023). In regions like the Global South where third-gender groups such as hijra have long histories, analyses of framing could explore how traditional roles are balanced with current trans activism efforts (Thapliyal, 2023). To track changes over time, researchers could study how framing affects every day moral actions like family discussions or community traditions. This research would build on the focus of text-based studies (Barthwal 2024; Morley 1992). Experimental approaches that examine how framing shapes public views of religious-gender policies can connect

detailed observations with measurable impacts. This could help to design strategies to create more inclusive media environments (Rostosky et al. 2012). Exploring these ideas allows media studies to reveal how gender and morality shift in religious settings influenced by media. Such efforts can help create societies where different religious identities strengthen rather than weaken democratic values (Lövheim 2013a; Hjarvard, 2011).

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