Self-Image in the Digital Veil: Social Media, Modesty, and Identity Among Muslim Women in Kashmir

Dr. Babita Chaudhary[1] and Irfan Ahmad[2]
Assistant Professor, Maitreyi College, New Delhi[1]
Research Scholar , University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir[2]
bchaudhary@maitreyi.du.ac.in and raj.irfan321@gmail.com

Abstract: *This qualitative study explores how young Muslim women in Kashmir navigate self-image development in the context of social media engagement. Situated at the intersection of digital modernity, Islamic values, and Kashmiri cultural traditions, participants (aged 18–25) offer nuanced insights into the challenges and strategies they employ while constructing online identities. Drawing from 25 in-depth interviews, the study reveals three core thematic areas: the negotiation of modesty and identity, the impact of global beauty standards on self-perception, and the role of community surveillance and support networks. Findings indicate that while platforms like Instagram and Facebook can reinforce body dissatisfaction and religious scrutiny, they also foster digital sisterhoods and empower diverse self-expression. Social media acts as both a site of conflict and connection—where personal authenticity, cultural heritage, and religious expectations are continuously contested and redefined. This study extends objectification and social comparison theories through an intersectional feminist lens, foregrounding the culturally specific experiences of Kashmiri Muslim women in digital spaces.*

Keywords: Social media, Self-image, digital identity, Body image, Muslim women and Kashmir.