

Symbiosis Centre for Research in Media and Creative Industries

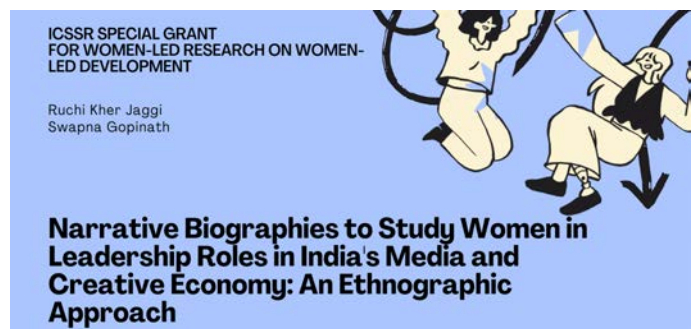
Annual Newsletter Year 2025-2026

The **Symbiosis Centre for Research in Media and Creative Industries (SCRMCI)**, under the Faculty of Media and Communication at the Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, is an interdisciplinary research centre committed to advancing scholarship at the intersection of media, culture, and creative industries.

The centre focuses on conducting high-quality, collaborative research while building meaningful partnerships across academia and industry. It seeks to foster a diverse and inclusive research ecosystem by engaging with pressing questions in media, culture, and creative industries. Through its initiatives, SCRMCI works towards creating networks of scholars and practitioners, while actively disseminating research through publications, presentations, and public engagement platforms.

Highlights

- Awarded the **ICSSR Punyashlok Devi Ahilyabai Grant of ₹14 lakhs** for conducting research on women leadership in India's media and creative industries.
- Organised **academic writing workshop and roundtable discussion** on AI in media and communication in collaboration with **ICA-India Chapter at ICMAC 2026**.
- Facilitated panel discussion on **OTT consumption and India's soft power** under the **SPARC project**.
- Started the **Research Talks Podcast series** featuring global scholars in the domain of media, communication, and platform studies.



A Message from the Dean

The Symbiosis Centre for Research in Media and Creative Industries (SCRMCI) marks three vibrant years of fostering dialogue, ideas, and impactful initiatives among media and communication scholars. Many ideas have evolved into projects, seminars, and our own podcast. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Swapna Gopinath and Ms. Dhara Shah for being the centre's backbone, and to Dr. Anuja Pradhan for her proactive contributions this year. With an ICSSR grant, and collaborations like ICA India, SCRMCI continues to grow. We thank our faculty colleagues, advisory board, and Symbiosis International University leadership, and look ahead with renewed purpose.

Professor Ruchi Kher Jaggi

Head, SCRMCI

Dean, Faculty of Media and Communication, SIU

Research Grant

SCRMCI was awarded the **ICSSR Punyashlok Devi Ahilyabai Grant for Women Researchers of ₹14 lakhs for project titled 'Narrative Biographies to Study Women in Leadership Roles in India's Media and Creative Economy: An Ethnographic Approach'**. Led by Prof. Ruchi Kher Jaggi and Prof. Swapna Gopinath the project focuses on documenting narrative biographies of women leaders in India's media and creative industries. The research contributes to addressing gaps in scholarship on gender, leadership, and creative economy.

The project has now moved into its next phase of fieldwork, focusing on interviews for the visual essay. As part of this, the team recently conducted an interview with Ms. Beena Paul, engaging with her reflections on her early-career journey and entry into the industry, as well as the role of women-led networks in shaping more inclusive media cultures, drawing on her work with the Women in Cinema Collective and her association with the IFFK.

The team conducted a visit to Sandbox Collective in Bengaluru, engaging with its co-founder, Ms. Nimi Ravindran. The visit provided insights into the collective's work in building sustainable support structures for independent artists and practitioners. It offered a closer understanding of how women-led cultural initiatives navigate production, collaboration, and circulation within the creative industries, while actively addressing structural gaps in the sector.



Research Talks - A Podcast Series

Research Talks by SCRMCI is a podcast initiative that brings together scholars and practitioners to discuss emerging themes in the domains of media and communication studies, platform studies, and cultural and creative industries. The podcast continues to expand SCRMCI's engagement with global academic conversations and interdisciplinary research.

Season 1:

- **Episode 1 (August 2025) - In conversation with Prof. Ruchi Kher Jaggi and Prof. Swapna Gopinath**

This introductory episode outlines the vision and objectives of SCRMCI, reflecting on its research focus, emerging priorities, and its role in shaping interdisciplinary conversations in media and creative industries.

- **Episode 2 (September 2025) - In conversation with Dr Ameya Sawadkar, Georgia Tech University**

This episode explores narrative as a methodological tool in media research and pedagogy, highlighting how storytelling can bridge academic inquiry and creative practice.

- **Episode 3 (November 2025) - In conversation with Prof. Anabel Quan-Haase, Western University**

This episode focuses on digital media research, examining theoretical approaches, platform-based methodologies, and strategies for identifying meaningful and relevant research problems.

- **Episode 4 (March 2026) - In conversation with Prof. Aswin Punathambekar, University of Pennsylvania**

This episode situates media industries as a dynamic field of study, engaging with themes of platformisation, globalisation, and the growing importance of interdisciplinary frameworks.

- **Episode 5 (March 2026) - In conversation with Prof. Thomas Poell, University of Amsterdam**

This episode examines platform capitalism from a global perspective, addressing issues such as labour precarity, algorithmic governance, and evolving economic models in digital media ecosystems.



SCRMCI-ICA (India Chapter) Collaboration

Academic Writing Workshop for PhD Scholars and Early Career Researchers

On 17th February, 2026, Symbiosis Centre for Research in Media and Creative Industries (SCRMCI) in collaboration with the International Communication Association (ICA) India Chapter as part of ICMAC 2026, organised this workshop to support scholars at different stages of their academic journeys.

Through interactive sessions, the workshop focused on three core areas of academic writing: synthesising literature and articulating theoretical frameworks, crafting effective abstracts aligned with journal and conference expectations, and developing pathways from doctoral research to book proposals. The sessions were conducted by Prof. Usha Raman (Academic and Writer; Former Professor, University of Hyderabad) and Prof. Aswin Punathambekar (Professor of Communication, University of Pennsylvania), who provided both conceptual and practical insights into scholarly writing in media and communication studies.

Artificial Intelligence, Communication, and the Future Directions of ICA India Chapter (Roundtable Discussion)

Also organised by SCRMCI in collaboration with the ICA India Chapter, this roundtable engaged with the growing intersections of artificial intelligence and communication research. The discussion addressed critical issues including algorithmic bias, privacy, and the ethical responsibilities of scholars in an AI-driven media landscape.

The session created a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue on how research networks and institutions can shape future research agendas, establish ethical frameworks, and foster collaboration across communication studies, technology, and policy. The roundtable was chaired by Prof. B. P. Sanjay (Head, ICA India Chapter; Senior Professor of Communication, Manipal Institute of Communication, MAHE) and Prof. Ruchi Kher Jaggi (Head, SCRMCI; Director and Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication; Dean, Faculty of Media and Communication, SIU).



Expert Roundtable: Rearticulating India's Soft Power through OTT Consumption Cultures
An initiative under the SPARC project of SIMC

Dr. Smith Mehta - Assistant Professor, Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen
Prof. Shivali Lawale - Director, Symbiosis School of International Studies, SIU
Dr. Sunitha Chitrapu - Independent Researcher and Consultant, School of Media and Cultural Studies, TISS, Mumbai
Mr. Sampad Patnaik - Independent Journalist and Researcher
Mr. Dominic D'Souza - Independent Director, Phonographic Performance Ltd India (PPL)
Dr. Vasanti Rao - Director General of the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), India

Date - 31st May 2025 Time - 3 p.m.
Location - Online via Zoom
SYMBIOSIS CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Panel Discussion

May 2025 - Rearticulating India's Soft Power through OTT Consumption Cultures
Organised as part of the SPARC Project, this panel explored how OTT platforms are reshaping India's soft power through evolving audience practices and transnational media flows.

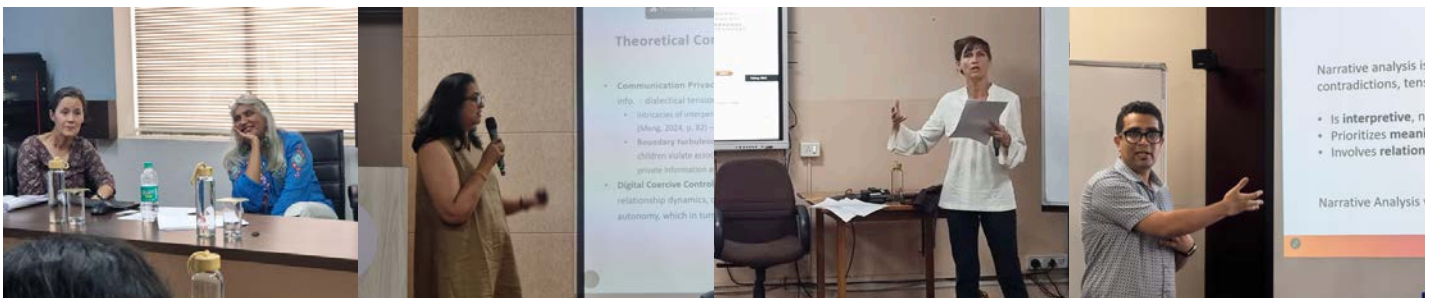
Viewpoints

May 2025- Narrative as Method: Exploring Stories in Creative and Media Research
Speaker- Dr. Ameya Sawadkar (Georgia Tech University, USA)

September 2025- Media Production and Time: Time as an Economic Resource in Factual Television Production in the UK
Speaker- Dr. Anna Zoellner (University of Leeds, UK)

November 2025- In/Visibility: Asian New Zealanders on Screen
Speaker - Dr. Shuchi Kothari and Dr. Serina Pearson (University of Auckland, New Zealand)

April 2026 - Digital Precarity among Marginalised Women
Speaker- Dr. Aparna Hebbani, Senior Lecturer, School of Communication & Arts, University of Queensland, Australia.



Bibliophile

August 2025 - The Art of Creative Writing
Mr Ramesh Menon, Adjunct Professor, SIMC

The book talk focused on writing practices across journalism and creative industries, bridging professional insights with academic inquiry.



Research Presentations

December 2025

Prof. Ruchi Kher Jaggi and Dhara Shah virtually presented a paper titled 'From Tools to Actors: Rethinking Gen AI's Role in India's Media and Creative Industries' at the GenAI & Creative Practices Conference, University of Amsterdam (Netherlands). The paper critically examined the role of generative AI in reshaping media production, labour, and creative processes from a dual theory framework.

February 2026

As part of the ongoing ICSSR-funded research project, Prof. Ruchi Kher Jaggi, Prof. Swapna Gopinath, and Dhara Shah presented their work-in-progress paper titled 'Class, Caste and Capital: The Political Economy of Social Networks for Women in India's Creative Industries' at the International Conference on Media and Communication (ICMAC) 2026. The presentation highlighted key insights on gendered access to networks, opportunities, and leadership within media industries.

February 2026

Prof. Swapna Gopinath served as the moderator, while Prof. Ruchi Kher Jaggi participated as a panelist, at an international roundtable hosted by the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) titled Repositioning of Stars in the Age of Celebrity Culture: A Local-Global Perspective. The session brought together scholars to critically examine and discuss the role of celebrity within Indian media and cultural frameworks

April 2026

Prof. Swapna Gopinath delivered a keynote address at the International Media Conference hosted by Kristu Jayanti University in April 2026. Her talk, titled "Tradwives & Tradwomen: Hyperfeminine Identities and Social Media in India," examined emerging gendered identities within digital cultures, contributing to ongoing discussions on media, identity, and representation in contemporary India.



Let's Connect
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