Life of Digital Nomads in India on Instagram

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Abstract

People can now combine travel and remote work thanks to the rise of digital nomadism, which has completely changed conventional work-life paradigms. This study explores the changing lifestyle of digital nomads in India by looking at the experiences of prominent Indian digital nomads: Aakansha Monga, a content creator who sheds light on digital freedom and mental health; Shramona Poddar, the voice behind Mishti and Meat, who combines solo travel with culturally rich narratives; Harsh and Prachi, who are renowned for their immersive travel content and storytelling; and The Wanderfully Lost Duo (Aashish and Muskaan), who highlight unusual Indian destinations while managing work on the go. Through a qualitative examination of their content, interviews, and digital footprints, the study explores issues such as location independence, financial sustainability, cultural immersion, challenges with consistency and connectivity, and the psychological effects of this unconventional lifestyle. The results show that social media is important for sustaining digital nomadism, that remote work is growing in popularity in India, and that the socioeconomic climate of the nation poses unique challenges.

Keywords used: Travel bloggers/content creators, nomadism, remote work, lifestyle, content analysis

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, there have been substantial changes in how people live, work, and travel. One of the most significant shifts in lifestyle that has taken place in this digital age is the rise of digital nomadism, a way of living and working that transcends geographical boundaries. Digital nomads are people who live a location-independent lifestyle and use technology to earn a living. They travel frequently and work remotely. Despite being a universal concept, its adaptation to particular sociocultural and economic contexts provides important insights into how digital workspaces are changing people's personal and professional lives.

India is a unique case study for examining the evolution of this lifestyle because of its diverse cultural landscapes, expanding gig economy, and increasingly digital infrastructure. In India, being a digital nomad entails more than just using technology and traveling; it also entails navigating societal expectations, gender roles, cultural norms, and economic realities. The Indian experience frequently combines desire, creativity, struggle, and reinvention, in contrast to Western narratives of digital nomadism, which are frequently linked to luxury and pleasure. This study attempts to comprehend the nuances of digital nomadism as experienced and expressed by Indian entrepreneurs, independent contractors, and business owners who are redefining what it means to live and work in the twenty-first century.

To give this investigation more depth and authenticity, the dissertation focuses on the digital footprints and life stories of four distinct voices in the Indian digital nomad community. Each of these individuals or duos offers a unique perspective shaped by their individual histories, artistic passions, and professional trajectories:

- Meat and Mishti, Shramona Poddar is a visual storyteller and content creator whose travels are infused with creative expression, moving tales, and a talent for capturing the spirit of the places she explores.Through writing, photography, and digital content, she offers spaces as well as moments of introspection, identity, and connection. Her story serves as an example of the emotional and

psychological facets of digital nomadism, especially for single people navigating a world that is changing.

- Aashish and Muskaan, who go by the online persona The Wanderfully Lost, have developed a mutual love for the digital nomad way of life. The concepts of narrative, mindful travel, and minimalism serve as the foundation for their work. They investigate themes of self-reliance, sustainability, and friendship as life and content-creation partners via their digital platforms. Their experiences highlight the difficulties of juggling work commitments, relationships, and the uncertainty of frequent travel as a couple.

- Akanksha Monga tells the tale of a young Indian woman who travels the world by herself while pursuing a career through remote work. Given that her work regularly examines the connection between gender, safety, and independence, she is an important voice in the context of Indian women leading alternative lives. Her observations shed light on the unique challenges and liberties faced by independent women digital nomads both inside and outside of India.

- Harsh and Prachi are a shining example of a modern Indian couple who have reimagined work-life balance by living life on the road. In their online presence, they blend lifestyle content, work productivity tips, and vacation experiences. Together, they challenge conventional Indian notions of married life and work obligations by demonstrating how technology enables new forms of partnerships, business, and family life outside of fixed locales.

These individuals serve as cultural producers as well as content providers, mediating and reflecting the changing dynamics of Indian culture in the digital age. Through content analysis, socio-digital ethnography, this study looks at their stories in order to address important questions:

- How do digital nomads in India create and maintain their lives?

- Which economic mechanisms and digital platforms facilitate their mobility?

- How is digital nomadism portrayed and experienced in India influenced by gender, class, culture, and tradition?

Objectives

1. Examine how digital nomads on Instagram organize their daily schedules to balance work and travel.

2. Examine the sociocultural, professional, and personal elements that affect their choice of lifestyle.

3. To investigate the difficulties Indian digital nomads encounter, specifically with regard to travel, connectivity, money, and mental health.

4. Examine their revenue streams (freelance work, brand partnerships, etc.) and financial tactics.

Review of literature

This is a thorough literature review for my research dissertation on the subject of "Life of Digital Nomads in India," with an emphasis on the public narratives and lived experiences of Indian digital nomads like Akanksha Monga, Shramona Poddar (Mishti and Meat), Harsh and Prachi, and The Wonderfully Lost Duo (Aashish and Muskaan).

1. Mancinelli (2020) defines digital nomadism as a lifestyle in which individuals use digital tools to work from home while leading a nomadic lifestyle, typically traveling from one location to another. Flexibility, location independence, and the blending of work and travel are characteristics of this way of life. In order to stay productive while traveling to new places, digital nomads frequently make use of technologies like laptops, Wi-Fi, cloud-based platforms, and remote collaboration tools. Globalization, improvements in digital infrastructure, and a growing desire for work-life balance and personal freedom have all contributed to a change in workplace culture.

2. India's nomadic trend has been greatly aided by the growth of digital platforms and high-speed mobile internet. Reliable connectivity is now available in both urban and rural areas thanks to 4G and the soon-to-be 5G networks, allowing remote work from practically anywhere. Researchers point out that dependable transportation, high-speed internet, and co-working spaces are important pieces of infrastructure that promote nomadism. For example, Goa is witnessing initiatives to lobby for a nomad visa and "beachside co-working spaces" for nomads. The Indian nomad lifestyle is generally attributed to enhanced physical infrastructure (shared workspaces) and digital infrastructure (fast broadband, mobile networks).

3. Indian nomads frequently resolve conflicts with established social mores. A nomadic lifestyle may clash with cultural norms regarding steady employment, family responsibilities, and marriage, even though 84% of young Indians say they "daydream" about future travels on a weekly basis. For instance, Forbes profiles reveal that Indian women still view traveling alone as taboo . In one instance, a young woman claims that her parents firmly refused to let her travel just because she was a woman. For many professionals, "the city is no longer aspirational; freedom is," according to an article on remote work. However, it also notes that "women… haven't been able to capitalise on the remote work boom in the same way" as men.

4. Workplace Transformation: Exploring the Impact of Digital Nomad-Inspired Travel Experiences", Author: Ekaterina Chevtaeva, Institution: Zayed University, Dubai, UAE, Published on: Approximately 1.1 years ago, Platform: ResearchGate

Particularly after COVID, India has witnessed a rise in "workations," which combine work and vacation. Scholars refer to this as the "workation trend," pointing out that it is becoming more prevalent among Indian urbanites who are looking for a work-life balance.

For instance, according to a Mumbai study, professionals are increasingly choosing work-from-home and nomadic travel as a way to gain flexibility and experience new things. Nowadays, coworking spaces, fast internet, and recreational facilities are available in major cities and their suburbs, blurring the boundaries between remote work and tourism.

5. The concept of place attachment theory, which holds that people develop emotional ties to specific locations, is typically predicated on permanent residence. Place attachment takes on new forms for nomads. According to some academics, digital nomads frequently choose areas that are regarded as having a strong cultural and natural heritage. One review notes, for instance, that "digital nomads are reshaping tourism in regions like Goa, Bangalore, and Rishikesh, where cultural richness, ecological diversity, and conducive work environments converge."
6. In conclusion, despite their extreme mobility, many Indian nomads still form strong emotional bonds with the places and people they interact with. Their attachment to specific "work-tourism" locations is more about social and experiential ties than it is about ownership or residency. Her narrative skillfully combines imagery and personal voice, serving as travel

journalism for her more than 200K followers. In a similar vein, Aakanksha Monga used social media to grow into one of India's top travel influencers.

She expanded her LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram following by using the content from her well-received 2020 trip to Udaipur. In 2022, she quit her corporate job to focus entirely on content creation, saying that making videos, writing screenplays, and editing had become her new "job." Shramona and Aakanksha use YouTube and Instagram to create a community and brand identity in addition to sharing beautiful photographs. In return, they receive sponsorships and complimentary hotel stays.

7. Communities are deeply fostered by influencers. Monga highlights that the gender distribution of her fan base is equal, indicating that she appeals to both male and female tourists. Through blog entries and Instagram stories about regional food, culture, and responsible travel, Poddar regularly interacts with audiences. All things considered, these nomad content producers show how social media can be an effective medium for sharing the nomad experience, creating online communities, and generating revenue from travel.

8. Muskaan Mittal and Aashish Gupta, the Wandering Lost Duo: This couple from Bengaluru created a digital brand based on their romance and travels. They co-create content that combines travel and relationship advice after meeting on a dating app. They explain in a profile how their first Instagram video, which was about their trip to Vietnam, received 200K views and went viral.
9. Nomads' mental health may be strained by their constant travel and remote work. Loneliness, isolation, and trouble establishing boundaries between work and life are common problems. Global studies observe that nomads frequently lack traditional social support networks and may suffer from burnout due to being "always on," despite the paucity of specific Indian data. Many enforce self-care practices and community building as coping mechanisms. Travel bloggers Prachi and Harsh, for instance, outline their structured daily routines: "Our mornings begin early, around 6 or 7 AM," they say, with one partner engaging in yoga and the other in outdoor exercise.
10. The experience of being an Indian nomad is significantly influenced by gender. Though female participation is increasing, historically, men have made up the majority of well-known Indian digital nomads and travel influencers. Work-family expectations, safety concerns, and cultural limitations present particular difficulties for women.

Social pressures: As previously mentioned, young Indian women are frequently dissuaded from traveling alone or leading nomadic lives. According to Forbes, Monga was initially inspired by her family's "no travel" rule, which was enforced just because she was a girl. Many Indian women receive remarks that cast doubt on their independence or suggest that marriage will prevent them from traveling.

Methodology

Using content analysis as the qualitative research method and concentrating on particular Indian travel content creators, the following methodology section is customized for the study's dissertation on "Life of Digital Nomads in India on Instagram":

Design of Research

With an emphasis on content analysis of Instagram posts created by Indian digital nomads, this study uses a qualitative research design. The objective is to investigate the driving forces, obstacles, and financial tactics that influence these people's lives as they are presented on social media. Instagram is a visual and narrative-driven platform that provides a wealth of information for comprehending the digital nomad lifestyle from both a personal and cultural standpoint.

Three primary research goals serve as the study's compass:

- To understand the sociocultural, professional, and personal factors that influence the decision of Indian content creators to lead a nomadic digital lifestyle.
- To look into the challenges faced by Indian digital nomads, specifically those related to digital connectivity, travel logistics, unstable finances, and mental health issues.
- To investigate how these digital nomads make money off of their content and maintain their way of life, paying particular attention to revenue streams like brand partnerships, freelancing, and other financial tactics.

Qualitative Content Analysis as a Research Method

The Instagram content of a subset of Indian digital nomads is systematically examined using a qualitative content analysis approach. With the use of this technique, patterns, themes, and meaning can be found in textual, visual, and interactive content (such as images, captions, hashtags, reels, and comments).

Because the analysis is inductive, themes pertaining to incentives, difficulties, and monetization can arise naturally from the content while still being directed by the predetermined goals of the study.

Participant Selection

Four Indian content producers and digital nomads who are active on Instagram and well-known for sharing their location-independent lifestyle are the subject of the study:

A couple named Harsh and Prachi are chronicling their travels both inside and outside of India.

The Wanderfully Lost Duo, which consists of Aashish Gupta and Muskaan Mittal, is renowned for its immersive experiences and travel-based storytelling.

Aakansha Monga, a female traveler traveling alone, shares her honest experiences working from home and seeing new places.

Shramona Poddar (Mishti and Meat) is a creator who uses visual storytelling to combine travel, culture, and introspection.

These people were chosen using the following standards:

- Active Instagram account featuring content about travel.
- Either identifying as digital nomads themselves or in the community.
- Indian nationality and mostly visiting or departing from India.
- Profiles that are open to the public and have regular content for a minimum of a year.

Data Collection

Information was gathered from each creator's Instagram profile. Purposive sampling was used to select about 50 posts per creator, ensuring diversity in location, tone, and content type. These posts included reels, carousel images, and static posts. Visual aesthetics, hashtags, captions, and audience interaction (likes and comments) were all taken into account.

Only publicly accessible content was analyzed for ethical purposes, and when citing particular posts or images, due credit is provided.

Analysis of Data

The following steps were followed in the analysis:

reading and viewing the data repeatedly to become familiar with it.

To find recurring terms like "freedom," "remote work," "cultural immersion," "sustainability," "community," and "challenges," use open coding.

Sorting codes into more general categories such as:

Identity of a Digital Nomad

Balance between Work and Travel

Branding and Aesthetic Storytelling

Solitude and Mental Health

Interaction with Culture

Interpretation of the results in light of more general theories about digital labor, digital nomadism, and social media performative travel culture.

Ethical Aspects to Take into Account

- Despite the fact that the content under analysis is publicly available, ethical research procedures were observed:
- No personal data was utilized.
- No content was changed or manipulated.
- When cited, handles and identities were properly attributed.

Objective 1: Examine how digital nomads on Instagram organize their daily schedules to balance work and travel.

The main reasons Indian digital nomads choose to live nomadic lifestyles are a mix of personal goals (such as independence and self-discovery), professional discontent with traditional 9–5 work, and the sociocultural allure of traveling to different places and communities.

The desire for independence and experiential living is reflected in the language and imagery used by content creators, which often romanticize freedom and adventure.

In order to better understand how Indian digital nomads balance the demands of both travel and remote work, this study uses qualitative content analysis to examine how they use Instagram to record and recount their daily activities. In order to find recurrent themes, patterns, and representations of time management, workspaces, productivity tools, leisure activities, and travel logistics, content analysis enables the methodical examination of textual and visual elements, including posts, captions, hashtags, and reels.

Sampling Strategy: Based on follower count, consistency of travel content, and self-identification as digital nomads, a purposive sample of Instagram accounts belonging to Indian digital nomads (such as Aakanksha Monga, The Wanderfully Lost Duo, Harsh & Prachi, and Shramona Poddar) will be chosen.

Posts from 2020–2024 will be examined to see how they represent current nomadic patterns, especially the changes in remote work and lifestyle following the pandemic.

Objective 2: Examine the sociocultural, professional, and personal elements that affect their choice of lifestyle.

to investigate the personal, professional, and sociocultural elements that affect the lifestyle choices of Indian digital nomads as portrayed on Instagram.

Approach: Analysis of Qualitative Content

In order to understand how digital nomads depict and consider the forces, values, and motivations that influence their lifestyle choices, this objective employs qualitative content analysis. Both textual and visual Instagram posts are cultural texts that can be decoded to uncover hidden meanings about identity, freedom, social conventions, and career choices.

Sampling Strategy: A purposive sample of Indian digital nomads with an active Instagram following will be chosen, comprising content producers such as Harsh & Prachi, Aakanksha Monga, Shramona Poddar, and The Wanderfully Lost Duo.

To reflect recent sociocultural changes following COVID, particularly in the culture of remote work and mobility, content from 2020 to 2024 will be selected.

Data collection: collected posts and stories with personal anecdotes, social commentary, milestone declarations (such as leaving a job or taking a first solo trip), or reflective captions.

Hashtags like #lifegoals, #freedomlifestyle, #womenwhotravel, #remoteworkindia, and posts with tagged locations or references to career transitions will receive special attention.

Anticipated Result: The study will show how Indian digital nomads create and share their lifestyle in response to both structural elements (such as gender norms and work culture) and individual goals. It will also demonstrate how, in the context of mobility and digital labor, Instagram serves as a platform for negotiating social value, legitimacy, and identity.

Objective 3: To investigate the difficulties Indian digital nomads encounter, specifically with regard to travel, connectivity, money, and mental health.
To look into the difficulties that Indian digital nomads encounter, as shown by their Instagram posts, with an emphasis on problems pertaining to digital connectivity, travel planning, financial security, and mental health.

Approach: Analysis of Qualitative Content

In order to investigate how Indian digital nomads reveal and deal with the challenges of maintaining a mobile lifestyle, this objective uses qualitative content analysis. Such difficulties can be overtly expressed on Instagram or covertly woven into textual and visual narratives, which is a rich platform for personal expression.

Sampling Method: Four to six well-known Indian digital nomads who consistently post on Instagram (such as Aakanksha Monga, The Wanderfully Lost Duo, Shramona Poddar, Harsh & Prachi) will be included in a purposive sample.

Posts from 2020 to 2024 will be chosen in order to represent how post-pandemic mobility is evolving.

Data collection will involve gathering Instagram captions, reels, stories, and IGTV videos in which the creators allude to or discuss stressors, challenges, burnout, or struggles.

Hashtags like #travelstruggles, #nomadlife, #mentalhealthontheroad, #wifiissues, #budgettravel, and #freelancelife will receive special attention.

Anticipated Result: The study will expose the emotional toll and unseen labor that go into creating the carefully manicured aesthetics of digital nomadism. It will show how Indian nomads use Instagram to process and normalize risk, stress, and vulnerability in addition to showcasing their free lifestyle. Discussions about mobile wellness, digital labor precarity, and the structural constraints of the nomadic ideal in an Indian context may benefit from this.

Objective 4: Examine their revenue streams (freelance work, brand partnerships, etc.) and financial tactics.

to investigate Indian digital nomads' Instagram revenue sources and financial plans, with an emphasis on cost-cutting measures, brand collaborations, affiliate marketing, and freelancing.

Approach: Analysis of Qualitative Content

Through the use of qualitative content analysis, this goal aims to unravel the ways in which Indian digital nomads use their Instagram content to openly describe and oversee their financial planning and revenue generation.

Sampling Method: Indian Instagram-based digital nomads who frequently post about work-life balance and travel monetization, such as Aakanksha Monga, The Wanderfully Lost Duo, Shramona Poddar, Prachi & Harsh, will be included in a purposive sample.

Time frame: To document changing patterns in digital monetization before and after COVID, posts from 2020 to 2024 will be examined.

Data Collection: Instagram stories, sponsored posts, reels, highlight sections, and captions will all provide data.

Keywords or hashtags like #brandcollab, #sponsored, #remotework, #digitalnomadincome, #contentcreator, #freelancerlife, #budgettravel, and #affiliatemarketing will be used to choose posts.

Anticipated Result: This study will clarify how Indian digital nomads navigate the frequently unstable realities of remote work while crafting stories of financial independence and business success. Additionally, it will draw attention to the economic ingenuity required to maintain a nomadic way of life, assisting in distinguishing between superficial beauty and the more intricate systems of revenue generation.

So from here we can also get to know their ,causes for being a Digital Nomad

One theme that emerged was freedom and escape from the 9–5 culture.

Dissatisfaction with conventional work culture was a common theme among all four creators. Posts had captions like these:

“Left the cubicle for the Himalayas.” (Monga Aakansha)

"We haven't looked back since we switched from office chairs to hammocks." (Prachi and Harsh)

In order to represent adaptability and independence, visual content frequently showed creators working outside, in cafes, or while hiking.

Their, personal Growth and Self-Discovery

The reflective tone of Shramona Poddar's writing made it stand out. Identity exploration was frequently reflected in her captions:

"I discovered parts of myself that I didn't realize were missing in the middle of nowhere."

In order to emphasize authenticity, these posts were usually accompanied by photos of lone travelers or unprocessed, unrefined moments.

How do they maintain their connection and cultural curiosity

Content about interacting with local communities and customs was frequently shared by creators such as The Wanderfully Lost Duo:

Taking part in Keralan customs surrounding local cuisine

Acquiring knowledge of indigenous crafts or sustainable tourism models

Content producers wanted cultural immersion rather than travel, which is consistent with sociocultural reasons for nomadism.

Their professional adaptability and individuality

Posts demonstrating how digital platforms linked freedom and professional identity with the ability to generate income:

"Being a full-time content creator wasn't the plan, but it became the dream." (Muskaan Mittal)

The use of imaginative visuals (color grading, narrative reels) demonstrated both artistic mastery and contentment with independently managed work.

The Difficulties Digital Nomads Face:

Themes Found:

1. Problems with infrastructure and connectivity

Poor internet was a constant problem for all creators. It was frequently stated clearly by Aakansha Monga:

"Send prayers—we're operating at 13,000 feet with a 2% battery and 1-bar WiFi!"

Shramona Poddar demonstrated adaptive behavior by sharing workarounds such as downloading files beforehand.

2. Loneliness and Emotional Burnout

Several posts addressed fatigue, either directly or indirectly, in contrast to the carefully constructed narrative of freedom:

"Switch to digital detox mode—burnout is real." (Prachi and Harsh)

Shramona talked candidly about loneliness and the "emotional cost" of constantly traveling.

Mental health issues were indicated by captions that mentioned reflection, taking breaks, and removing oneself from social media.

3. Uncertainty in finances

A lot of artists mentioned how unpredictable their income was:

"After three months without any brand work, five months all at once." (Gupta Aashish)

The insecurity of gig work and creative burnout from content deadlines were depicted in behind-the-scenes captions, despite their aspirational lifestyle.

4. Logistics of Visas and Travel

The Wanderfully Lost Duo alluded to travel restrictions in their captions, albeit less frequently:

"I wish passports were upgraded for digital nomads as well—visa paperwork still keeps us confined."

This points to structural barriers for Indian nomads hoping to find employment abroad.

Goal 3: Financial and Monetization Techniques

Themes Found:

1. Brand Collaborations and Sponsored Content Every creator is actively involved in brand partnerships. Typical characteristics were:

Hashtags and tags: #Collab, #BrandPartner, #Ad

meticulously created images (such as lifestyle reels and drone footage)

For instance:

Aakansha's collaboration with outdoor clothing companies

Harsh and Prachi are advertising homestays and travel websites.

These partnerships were central to income, though some creators (like Shramona) showed a preference for only value-aligned brands.

Conclusion

This study explored the lives of Indian digital nomads on Instagram, focusing on four creators who balance work, travel, and storytelling. It found that while digital nomadism offers freedom and creative fulfillment, it also involves emotional and financial challenges. Aakanksha Monga and The Wanderfully Lost Duo enjoy broader appeal due to their aspirational content, while Harsh & Prachi and Shramona Poddar connect deeply with niche audiences. Overall, digital nomadism in India reflects a shift toward flexible, self-driven lifestyles shaped by technology and evolving cultural values.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by its small sample size of four Instagram-based digital nomads, which may not represent the broader, diverse population in India. Focusing only on Instagram introduces platform bias and overlooks content shared on other media. The highly curated nature of social media limits insight into creators' real experiences, and the absence of interviews restricts depth. Additionally, there is no intersectional analysis, quantitative data, or detailed market insights, which limits generalizability. Ethical and data access constraints, along with changing algorithms and post-pandemic shifts, further affect the study's scope and accuracy.

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