

To What Extent Does the Commercialization of Digital Mindfulness Platforms Contribute to Inequalities in Access to Mental Health Resources?

Gia Narang

Co-Founder of Healing Hearts Foundation, Aditya Birla World Academy (Grade 12) & Healing Hearts Foundation

Mihikaa Jhaveri

Co-Founder of Healing Hearts Foundation, Aditya Birla World Academy (Grade 12) & Healing Hearts Foundation

Abstract

Digital mindfulness is now a multi-billion-dollar industry, marketing digital tools that fuel distractions as pathways to mental wellbeing. But of course, only available to those who can afford it. Despite this opportunity, the commercialization of these platforms risks turning mental health into a privilege rather than a basic right due to exclusion of individuals through cost and cultural barriers. This paper analyzes how profit driven digital mindfulness platforms affect equal access to mental health resources and create inequality. Furthermore, we look at strategies to minimise the impact of these disparities on mental health accessibility, including school-based mindfulness sessions, employee and business wellness initiatives, non-profit partnerships and pricing models that cater to different income stratas. Additionally, the digital mental health apps market has been predicted to be worth \$17.5 bn by 2030 (Grand View Research 1) highlighting the monetization of well-being tools. Overall, while digital mindfulness platforms are growing quickly their commercialisation contributes to inequalities in accessibility to mental health resources.

Keywords

Commercialisation refers to the process of developing an idea, invention, or product and introducing it to the market for sale.

Digital Mindfulness Platforms are digital tools and applications designed to help users cultivate a conscious, intentional, and balanced relationship with technology.

Inequality is the difference between groups in society because one has more money, advantages, etc. than the other.

Mental Health Resources are the tools, services, support systems, and professionals that help individuals promote well-being, cope with stress, manage mental illnesses, and build resilience.