

ISSN 2348 - 5663



VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1  
JANUARY - JUNE 2016

**MEDIA & CULTURE**



DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
KERALA, INDIA

COMMUNICATION &  
JOURNALISM RESEARCH

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1  
JANUARY-JUNE 2016

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
KERALA, INDIA

Published in India by

Head, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Calicut.

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## Editor's Note

This issue of Journal of Communication and Journalism Research focuses on both theoretical and empirical aspects of various media, viz., newspapers, television and the internet-based. The issues discussed range from the uses and gratifications of the internet to gender disparities in their use, from cultural negotiation of television to its role in socio-cultural infrastructure development, and from new trends in the Indian press to news programming of national security news.

Lakshmi Pradeep assesses uses and gratifications from the internet among students in Kerala. Some of her findings are pointers to future trends with their implications thought-provoking, especially with regards to the increasing diffusion of the internet in Indian society. Simi Varghese argues that the emergence of the internet has enabled the public to interact with all the communication features – print, sound and videos. Divya P and Mohammed Haneefa K examine how the world-wide-web impacts and influences the reading habits of the youth. They postulate that browsing or scanning the Web is turning into an important reading pattern in today's digital environment. In another article, B.M. Rajesh Kumar probes the existence of gender disparities in accessing digital media among the Adiya tribes of Wayanad, highlighting their access to mobile phones and chances of m-governance for supporting development activities.

The cultural and developmental faces of television have been subjects to the enquiry of some researchers. The focus of the study of P.P.Shajuis the negotiation of cultural themes in Malayalam television serials, namely *Kalyani*. He concludes that the audience of *Kalyani* largely made a dominant reading, that is, they subscribed to the intended meaning of the producers in terms of the frames of reference/the central themes of the serial. Sanjeev S.R. and Kiron Bansal analyse how regional news television portrays regional development. The study specifically analyses the public perception about issues and factors associated with the Smart City Kochi (SCK), an IT infrastructure project in Kerala, and its television coverage.

A.S.Balasubramanya, an eminent communication scholar in South India, argues that in the new millennium, the Indian press continues to maintain its dynamic growth unlike its counterparts in most of the developed countries. Its dynamic growth is manifest both in the number of publications and circulation. In another study, Muhammadali Nellyullathil postulates that the sourcing pattern followed by Indian newspaper reporters in their stories on national security issues is premised on the concept that sourcing patterns of mass media reflect the power structure that determines the normative media practices in a society. The study concludes that the sourcing pattern followed by Indian media in the case of national security news serves as one of the five news filters identified by Herman and Chomsky in their Propaganda Model.

Jinoy Jose P, Deputy Editor, The Hindu Business Line, analyses the socioeconomic impact of fake news by looking into key global events and tries to chronicle efforts in checking fake news with special focus on how artificial intelligence tools can be a big boon in this mission. In *Many Souls and Many Worlds*, Abdul Muneer V reviews and analyses Shabnam Virmani's four documentary films produced as part of the Kabir Project, in a visual analysis method. The study emphasizes that through songs, images and conversations, Virmani builds an atmosphere where the many worlds of Kabir are explored and furthered, and how the documentaries explore the spiritual and socio-political meanings in Kabir's works.

**Dr. Muhammadali N.  
Chief Editor**



# Uses and Gratifications from the Internet

Communication & Journalism Research

5(1) pp 1-17

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ISSN 2348 – 5663

## Dr. Lakshmi Pradeep

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### Abstract

The study was an attempt at assessing uses and gratification from Internet among students in Kerala. The study objectives sought to provide answers to questions such as what gratifications do they seek from Internet? Is the student population using this medium ritualistically to pass time, or instrumentally for education? Which of their socio demographic variables have a bearing on the gratifications sought?

The analysis provided answers to these question and related aspects. Some of these findings are on expected lines, some are pointers to future trends, and their implications are thought provoking, especially in the light of increasing diffusion of Internet in Indian society.

The study seeks to explore the gratifications sought from the internet. Survey method was used in this study. The study was confined to student community as teens and young adults are the most avid users of Internet. Kerala was chosen as study locale as it happens to be the most literate State in India with an even spread of educational facilities.

To arrive at a representative student sample of Internet users in the state of Kerala, a total of 900 students were surveyed in the three districts; 300 each in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode districts respectively.

The central focus of this investigation was to identify the diverse gratifications sought by students from Internet. The analysis factored six gratifications: (i) Pass time & habit, (ii) Social interaction, (iii) Entertainment, and (iv) Education (v) IT application, and (vi) Financial benefit.

How would the six Internet gratifications sought compare across various demographic variables of students? Answer to this question formed the next objective of the study. Significant differences were noted based on demographic variables such as gender, location and level of education.

A large majority of students are using Internet more for the ritualistic use of passing time and entertainment.

### Key words

Internet, Uses and Gratifications, Students

## **Introduction**

Interest in the new medium of Internet is at an all time high. While the ICT industry is working overtime to expand its applications and increase its reach, the consumer products and service sector is harnessing its multimedia capabilities to deliver messages to their potential customers, the users of Internet. Its increasing popularity as a platform for interactive communication has opened new vistas for education, learning, entertainment, social interaction and also for merchandising products and services in multifarious ways. As Lievrouw & Livingstone (2007) describe, Internet indeed is shorthand for a bundle of different media and modalities that make it the most complex and plural of the electronic media as yet explored.

For communication researchers the dynamic and interactive nature of Internet makes it particularly suitable for evaluation from the uses and gratifications perspective. Indeed, studies modeled after the uses and gratifications tradition have come to dominate the field of new media research. Such studies besides clarifying the basic tenets of the uses and gratifications theory have also served in predicting its uses and thereby its growth and development in the years ahead.

Past studies have shown that the Internet is used differently and the gratifications sought also vary, though not much in the type of gratifications, but in the importance attached to gratifications sought. And the gratification seeking behavior varies in relation to users' socio demographic variables. Past studies have also uncovered significant differences in the structure of Internet's uses and gratification in different countries and populations. The medium being new, exploratory studies continue to be conducted in different countries and locales so as to detect broad patterns in differences and similarities among users and their uses.

In that direction, the present study was an attempt at assessing uses and gratification of Internet among students in Kerala. The study objectives sought to provide answers to questions such as what gratifications do they seek from Internet? Is the student population using this medium ritualistically to pass time, or instrumentally for education? Which of their socio demographic variables have a bearing on the gratifications sought?

The analysis provided answers to these question and related aspects. Some of these findings are on expected lines, some are pointers to future trends, and their implications are thought provoking, especially in the light of increasing diffusion of Internet in Indian society.

The study seeks to explore the gratifications sought from the internet. Survey method was used in this study. The study was confined to student community as teens and young adults are the most avid users of Internet. Kerala was chosen as study locale as it happens to be the most literate State in India with an even spread of educational facilities.

To arrive at a representative student sample of Internet users in the state of Kerala, a total of 900 students were surveyed in the three districts; 300 each in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode districts respectively. As the study concerned Internet use among students, the sample design had ensured adequate and equal representation to school, degree and post graduate students, 100 students from each category in each district. Two schools and two colleges were randomly selected from each district. one from an urban location and the other from a rural area. Thus, a total of six higher secondary schools, and six colleges represented the entire state. Following elimination of 183 questionnaires which were incomplete in one or the other part, the effective sample size was reduced to 717.

The central focus of this investigation was to identify the diverse gratifications sought by students from Internet. The analysis factored six gratifications: (i) Pass time & habit, (ii) Social interaction, (iii) Entertainment, and (iv) Education (v) IT application, and (vi) Financial benefit. Of these the four gratifications of (i) Pass time & habit, (ii) Social interaction, (iii) Entertainment, and (iv) Education were the most common gratifications identified by several of part researchers (Ferguson and Perse ,2000; Yang and Yowei Kang, 2006; Diddi and LaRose , 2006), though in varying order of importance. The last two gratifications of IT Application and Financial benefits had figured in the study of Choi, Watt, Dekkers and Park (2004). Some of these had also figured in other studies as well (example, Haridakis & Hanson, 2009), Hanson, Haridakis & Sharma, 2010, and Roy, 2009).

### Internet Gratifications

To realise the objective of determining the gratifications college students seek from using Internet, data was collected using 30 gratification statements as primary motives to use Internet. These reflected ten different dimensions – entertainment, pass time, information, education, IT applications, escape, habit, social interaction, interpersonal relations and financial transactions. Respondents' motives were assessed for each statement through a 5-point Likert- type scale where the response choices were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'. These were scored from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) respectively and their descriptive statistics ascertained. Subsequently, the data was subjected to factor analysis with the purpose of reducing the 30 gratification statements into a few and group interrelated ones into factors.

As has been used by several Uses &Gratifications researchers (for instance, Ferguson and Perse (2000), Diddi and LaRose (2006), the technique of principal component analysis (PCA) was utilised to extract factors. Here, Kaiser Criterion (Kaiser 1960), a popular factor extraction method, was used as it retains factors with an Eigen value of greater than 1.

### PCA Extracts Six Factors

The result of such an analysis is reported in Table 1. The first column of the table shows the Eigen value which indicates the overall strength of relationship between an extracted factor and its variables. The sum of the Eigen values equals the number of variables, 30 in this study. Kaiser's criterion extracted six factors whose Eigen value was greater than 1.

**Table 1: Principal Component Analysis - Total Variance Explained**

Components	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.567	25.224	25.224	7.567	25.224	25.224	5.032	16.772	16.772
2	3.715	12.382	37.605	3.715	12.382	37.605	3.992	13.308	30.081
3	2.517	8.390	45.995	2.517	8.390	45.995	2.269	7.562	37.643
4	1.431	4.770	50.765	1.431	4.770	50.765	2.259	7.529	45.172
5	1.394	4.648	55.412	1.394	4.648	55.412	2.113	7.042	52.214
6	1.112	3.707	59.119	1.112	3.707	59.119	2.072	6.906	59.119
7	.963	3.210	62.330						
8	.872	2.908	65.237						
9	.777	2.588	67.826						
10	.759	2.531	70.357						
11	.710	2.367	72.724						
12	.642	2.139	74.862						
13	.608	2.025	76.887						
14	.568	1.892	78.780						



15	.560	1.867	80.647						
16	.547	1.824	82.471						
17	.506	1.687	84.158						
18	.481	1.602	85.760						
19	.450	1.500	87.260						
20	.446	1.487	88.747						
21	.410	1.366	90.112						
22	.406	1.353	91.465						
23	.388	1.294	92.758						
24	.374	1.246	94.005						
25	.353	1.176	95.180						
26	.343	1.145	96.325						
27	.309	1.031	97.357						
28	.300	1.001	98.357						
29	.266	.887	99.245						
30	.227	.755	100.000						
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.00</b>								

A key aspect of PCA is factor loading. In simple terms, factor loading are the correlation coefficients between the variables. The squared factor loading, which is analogous to Pearson's r, is the per cent of variance in that indicator variable explained by the factor. The rule of thumb that higher the load of a factor, the more relevant it is in defining the factor's dimensionality point out that the first factor, the most dominant one, explained 25.224 per cent of the total variance. The second factor accounted for 12.382 per cent of the total variance.

The third, fourth and fifth factors explained a variance of 8.390 per cent and 4.648 per cent respectively. The sixth factor accounted for 1.112 3.707 per cent of variance. Together, the six extracted factors explained 59.119 per cent of the total variance.

### **Rotated Factor Structure of Six Gratifications**

The six factors were subjected to Varimax rotation with a cut off loading of above .45 as recommended by factor analysis experts (Hunter, 1980; Tabachnick & Fidell 1983). The Varimax rotation is the most commonly used rotation method which minimizes the complexity of the components by making the large loadings larger and the small loadings smaller within each component. As a result, the sets of similar components tend to group to gather. Therefore, it is often used in survey studies like the present one to see how groupings of questions items measure the same concept.

In the present study, the Varimax rotation grouped together the 30 Internet use motives under the six factors as reported in Table 2. The first column presents the motives that have loaded together under the six factors. The loading of the motives under each of the six factors have been highlighted in their respective columns. Based on their constituent motives, the six factors are named by the researcher as (i) pass time & habit, (ii) social interaction, (iii) entertainment, (iv) education, (v) IT application, and (vi) financial benefit.

#### **i) Pass Time & Habit Gratification**

The first factor which explained the highest variance had nine motives, three each belonging to the dimension of using Internet (i) to escape from day-to-day pressure and problems; (ii) as a part of daily routine, habit, and (iii) to pass time. These three indeed are interrelated concepts. For instance, using Internet may become a part of their daily habit for some of those who began using Internet to get away from daily problems and to pass time when they had nothing else to do. The mean scores of these nine items which were ranged

from 3.78 to 3.10 indicate to the high utility salience of passing time, escape and habit gratification.

**ii) Social Interaction Gratification**

The second important factor named social interaction gratification had six motives relating to the use of Internet to meet people online, belong to a group, maintain personal relations and to express care. These are interrelated in their utility dimensions which stem from the Internet’s immense potential to establish contact and communicate with others through emails, facebook and the like. The items mean scores ranged from 3.21 to 2.66.

**iii) Entertainment Gratification**

The 30-items motives inventory had three statements relating to the use of Internet for entertainment, fun and enjoyment. These three with moderate mean scores of 2.84, 2.39 and 2.94 formed the third factor which has been named as entertainment gratification. Internet is not just plain text but a multimedia system that offers sound, real to life graphics, games and of course a plethora of video products that are rich in entertainment value. But their moderate mean scores of 2.84, 2.39 and 2.94 respectively suggest that students’ Internet utility for entertainment is lower than habit and passing time utility.

**iv) Education Gratification**

Internet provides access to an endless variety of information on every conceivable subject with pedagogic value. Some such material is specifically designed for the curricular needs of the students’ community. In that context, the six motives relating to use of Internet for information and education were found grouped as the fourth important factor for which students use Internet. Hence, the fourth factor was named education gratification. The low mean scores of the six items (ranging from 2.45 to 1.60) indicate students’ lower utility of Internet for education and information purposes.

**Table 2: Rotated Factor Matrix of Internet Gratifications**

Factor Structure	Factor 1 Pass time & Habit	Factor 2 Social Interaction	Factor 3 Entertain- ment	Factor 4 Education	Factor 5 IT Application	Factor 6 Financial benefit
<b>Factor 1 Motives Items</b>	<b>.750</b>	.172	7.743E-03	-2.551E-02	-2.140E-02	3.533E-02
<b>To forget problems (16) (3.70; 1.14)</b>						
<b>Escape (6) (3.78: 1.11)</b>	<b>.724</b>	.191	8.487E-02	-5.443E-02	-7.694E-02	3.261E-02
<b>Forget problems (26) (3.37; 1.20)</b>	<b>.708</b>	.188	.167	-2.082E-02	2.530E-02	.127
<b>Habit (2)(3.47;1.18)</b>	<b>.684</b>	.322	.205	3.475E-02	-4.089E-02	7.939E-02
<b>Daily routine (12)(3.63;1.13)</b>	<b>.678</b>	.288	.136	.105	-8.960E-02	7.070E-02
<b>Occupy time (25)(3.23; 1.18)</b>	<b>.650</b>	.105	.301	-.166	9.471E-02	.157
<b>Same time activity (22)(3.63;1.13)</b>	<b>.632</b>	.332	-5.496E-02	.121	-.131	9.430E-02
<b>Nothing better to do (15)(3.30;1.21)</b>	<b>.625</b>	-7.597E-02	.330	-.141	7.153E-02	-1.539E-02
<b>Passing time (5) (3.10;1.22)</b>	<b>.606</b>	-3.014E-02	.437	-.235	6.444E-02	2.583E-03
<b>Factor 2 Motives Items</b>	.193	<b>.749</b>	.127	9.200E-02	5.311E-02	6.416E-03

Social Interaction(24)(3.14; 1.25)						
<b>Interpersonal relations</b> (3) (2.66;1.15)	6.519E-02	<b>.722</b>	.325	-8.155E-02	.104	6.741E-02
<b>Belong to a group</b> (13) (3.21;1.19)	.190	<b>.720</b>	-4.102E-02	2.207E-02	6.137E-02	-9.211E-02
<b>Expression of care</b> (23) (3.13;1.17)	.196	<b>.710</b>	.149	9.970E-02	-1.464E-02	-8.268E-02
<b>Interact with others</b> (4) (2.54;1.09)	.117	<b>.670</b>	.402	-6.009E-02	7.560E-02	.108
<b>Feel less lonely</b> (14) (3.06;1.19)	.270	<b>.660</b>	-2.782E-03	7.050E-02	-3.309E-03	-5.128E-03
<b>Factor 3 Motives Items</b>						
<b>For fun</b> (11) (2.84;1.16)	.279	.206	<b>.690</b>	3.479E-02	-.136	-.128
<b>To enjoy</b> (21) (2.39;1.08)	.285	.313	<b>.683</b>	5.748E-02	-4.633E-02	.116
<b>To get entertained</b> (1) (2.49;1.03)	.375	.258	<b>.595</b>	2.797E-02	-.160	3.748E-02
<b>Factor 4 Motives Items</b>						
<b>For information</b> (17) (1.60; 0.69)	-5.391E-02	-6.719E-02	.141	<b>.698</b>	.123	-.126
<b>Help in education</b> (8) (1.69; 0.83)	-.303	-.110	-1.905E-02	<b>.631</b>	.236	.237
<b>Learn about world</b> (7) (2.02; 0.95)	.210	.276	-.109	<b>.561</b>	.158	-.205
<b>Practice online tests</b> (28) (2.10;1.08)	-.134	.256	-.216	<b>.521</b>	.103	.415
<b>Know about</b> (27) (2.45; 1.17)	.169	.403	-7.770E-02	<b>.508</b>	9.452E-02	-.153
<b>Prepare for tests</b> (18) (1.62; 0.83)	-.377	-.118	.157	<b>.492</b>	.251	.297
<b>Factor 5 Motives Items</b>						
<b>Learn IT technology</b> (9) (2.29;1.02)	-4.746E-02	5.738E-04	-3.692E-02	.245	<b>.797</b>	6.775E-02
<b>Computer use</b> (19) (2.26;1.09)	-7.676E-02	5.897E-02	1.054E-03	.170	<b>.794</b>	.161
<b>Web applications</b> (29) (2.47; 1.10)	2.455E-02	.196	-.184	.113	<b>.678</b>	.212
<b>Factor 6 Motives Items</b>						
<b>For job search/e-banking</b> (30)(2.99; 1.33)	3.110E-02	-1.469E-02	-.108	4.707E-02	4.515E-02	<b>.792</b>
<b>To save money</b> (10) ( 3.60; 1.15)	.181	-4.235E-02	.105	-5.251E-02	.147	<b>.680</b>
<b>Search bargain prices</b> (20)( 3.53; 1.18)	.254	-3.739E-02	8.132E-02	-8.365E-02	.253	<b>.618</b>
<b>Eigen value</b>	<b>7.567</b>	<b>3.715</b>	<b>2.517</b>	<b>1.431</b>	<b>1.394</b>	<b>1.112</b>
<b>Common variance explained</b>	<b>25.224</b>	<b>12.382</b>	<b>8.390</b>	<b>4.770</b>	<b>4.648</b>	<b>3.707</b>

**Note:** The factor solution explained 59.119% of the total variance. In the first column, numbers in first parentheses refer to the serial number of motives as listed in the questionnaire (see Chapter III/Appendix ). Values in second parentheses represent Mean and Standard Deviations of items.

### v) IT Application Gratification

Included in the motives inventory were three statements concerning use of Internet to learn web applications, computer use and gain control of information technology. These three related motives formed the fifth factor named here as IT application gratification. The moderate mean scores of 2.47, 2.29 and 2.26 of these motives are indicative of a moderate use of Internet to learn computer use and web application.

### vi) Financial Benefit Gratification

The 30 motives for using Internet had three motives relating to students' use of Internet to look for products and services at bargain price, e-banking/commerce, and use of Internet as it saves on money. These formed the last factor named the financial benefit gratification. This gratification was of higher utility value among students as its three items had a relatively higher mean scores of 3.60 3.53 and 2.99.

In sum, the analysis showed that students were using Internet primarily for the two ritualistic gratifications of passing time and habit, and entertainment. The fairly high mean scores of passing time & habit clearly point out to the ritualised or passive use of Internet among students. The remaining four gratifications namely, social interaction, education, IT application and financial benefits are instrumental or goal directed gratifications. Among these, the two gratifications of social interaction and financial benefits were more salient as their items scores had a higher mean values. Use of Internet for education appears to have a relatively low priority, though www provides education content in large measures. Perhaps students are yet to realise the value of education content that can be accessed on the web.

## Internet Gratifications Across Demographic Variables

How would the six Internet gratifications sought compare across various demographic variables of students? Answer to this question formed the next objective of the study. To seek answers for the question, the scores of the items grouped under each gratification were summed and their statistics were subjected to appropriate statistical test such as the *t* test in the case of gender and location variables which had two groups. In the case of other variables which had more than two groups, the data was subjected to ANOVA followed by a Bonferroni test to identify the group(s) that differ(s) from the rest. The results of such analysis are reported hereunder.

### 1 Gender Groups and Gratifications

The t-test revealed that male and female students differed in four of the six gratifications (see Table 3). The tendency to use Internet to fill free time, escape and as a daily habit was higher among female students (Mean 32.2744) as compared to male students (Mean 29.9511).

Using Internet to interact with others in an effort to maintain social relations was also significantly higher among female than male students. Likewise, women had a relatively stronger tendency (Mean 8.1026) to use Internet for fun and entertainment than men (Mean 7.2752). Such a pattern had a reverse order in the case of education gratification. Here, the use of Internet for education and information was stronger among male (Mean 11.7859) than female (Mean 11.2179) students.

**Table 3: T-Test - Gender and Gratifications**

Gratifications	Gender	N	Mean	Mean difference	Std Deviation	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2-tailed)
<b>1. Pass Time &amp; Habit</b>	Male	327	29.9511	-2.3233	7.4979	-	715	<b>.000*</b>
	Female	390	32.2744					
<b>2. Social Interaction</b>	Male	327	17.2049	-.9772	5.2634	-	715	<b>.014*</b>
	Female	390	18.1821					
<b>3. Entertainment</b>	Male	327	7.2752	-.8273	2.6649	-	715	<b>.000*</b>
	Female	390	8.1026					
<b>4. Education</b>	Male	327	11.7859	.5680	3.6221	2.200	715	<b>.028*</b>
	Female	390	11.2179					
<b>5. IT Applications</b>	Male	327	7.0000	-2.0513E-02	2.6654	-.104	715	.917
	Female	390	7.0205					
<b>6. Financial Benefits</b>	Male	327	10.0979	-4.3166E-02	2.7984	-.203	715	.839
	Female	390	10.1410					

**Note: \* *t* values are significant beyond .05**

In respect of the remaining two gratifications – IT application and financial transactions – there were no statistically significant differences between the two gender groups. In other words, the pattern of using Internet to learn and enhance IT application skills, and for financial transactions was similar among students irrespective of the gender differences.

## **2. Urban-Rural Location and Gratifications**

The *t* test revealed certain similarities and differences in the Internet gratifications of rural and urban students as reported in Table 4. Both groups were similar in using Internet for three gratifications namely pass time and habit, social interaction and financial transaction. In respect of these three gratifications, the visible differences were not statistically significant.

On the remaining three gratifications, the urban students differed from their rural cousins. The differences between the groups were significant beyond .05 levels. The tendency of using Internet for entertainment was more salient among rural students (Mean 7.9060) than students living in urban centres (Mean 7.4448).

Likewise, urban students showed a higher tendency of using Internet for educational purposes (Mean 11.7972) than students living in rural areas (Mean 1.2706). Using Internet to learn about IT application and computers was also more salient among urban students (7.3310) than students from rural locales (6.8050).

**Table 4: T-test –Location and Gratifications**

Gratifications	Location	N	Mean	Mean difference	Std Deviation	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
<b>1.Pass Time &amp; Habit</b>	Rural	436	31.4037	.4820	7.5352	.824	715	.410
	Urban	281	30.9217					
<b>2.Social Interaction</b>	Rural	436	17.5986	-.3516	5.2703	-862	715	.389
	Urban	281	17.9502					
<b>3.Entertainment</b>	Rural	436	7.9060	.4611	2.7573	2.197	715	<b>.028*</b>
	Urban	281	7.4448					
<b>4.Education</b>	Rural	436	11.2706	-.5265	3.4721	-	715	<b>.046*</b>
	Urban	281	11.7972					
<b>5.IT Applications</b>	Rural	436	6.8050	-.5259	2.5742	-	715	<b>.009*</b>
	Urban	281	7.3310					
<b>6. Financial Benefits</b>	Rural	436	10.0459	-.1926	2.8812	-890	715	.374
	Urban	281	10.2384					

**Note: \* t values significant beyond .05**

### **3 Education Groups and Gratifications**

To compare the six Internet gratifications in respect of the three education groups the data was subjected to one-way ANOVA.

The ANOVA results presented in Table 5 showed that the students' use of Internet for the gratification of passing the time & habit was similar among all students irrespective of whether they are studying in schools or pursuing graduate or post graduate courses. Such a deduction stems from the fact that between groups *F* ratio of 2.750 was not significant at .05 level.

But in respect of the remaining five gratifications, there were statistically significant differences between the three groups of students. This indicates that students studying at the level of school graduate courses and post graduate courses differ in using Internet for five gratifications of social interaction, entertainment, education, IT application and financial benefits. In respect of the gratifications of social interaction and IT applications, the between groups differences were statistically significant at .029 and .002 probability level. The between group differences in respect of the remaining three gratifications namely, entertainment, education and financial benefits had a higher statistical significance above .000 probability level.

**Table 5: One way ANOVA: Education and Gratification**

Gratifications / Education	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
<b>Grat 1: Passing Time &amp; Habit</b>					
Between groups	319.586	2	159.793	2.750	.065
Within groups	41487.337	714	58.106		
Total	41806.923	716			
<b>Grat 2: Social Interaction</b>					
Between groups	201.229	2	100.615	<b>3.568</b>	<b>.029*</b>
Within groups	20135.951	714	28.202		
Total	20337.180	716			
<b>Grat 3: Entertainment</b>					
Between groups	119.625	2	59.812	<b>8.062</b>	<b>.000**</b>
Within groups	5297.249	714	7.419		
Total	5416.873	716			
<b>Grat 4: Education</b>					
Between groups	183.350	2	91.675	<b>7.836</b>	<b>.000**</b>
Within groups	8353.520	714	11.700		
Total	8536.870	716			
<b>Grat 5 :IT Application</b>					
Between groups	88.996	2	44.498	<b>6.544</b>	<b>.002**</b>
Within groups	4854.915	714	6.800		
Total	4943.911	716			
<b>Grat 6: Financial Benefits</b>					
Between groups	228.835	2	114.418	<b>14.849</b>	<b>.000**</b>
Within groups	5501.608	714	7.705		
Total	5730.444	716			

**Note: \*F values significant beyond .05 level; \*\*F values significant beyond.01 level.**

Such ANOVA results are good enough in drawing a conclusion that young men and women studying for school level courses, graduate courses and postgraduate programmes differ in using Internet for the five gratifications of social interaction, entertainment, education, IT application and financial benefits. But the *F* ratios do not pinpoint the group(s) that is/are different from the other group(s). To identify the group(s) that differed from the rest, a post-hoc analysis of ANOVA was carried out through a test of multiple comparisons of groups.

Here it must be pointed out that ANOVA tests which yield significant *F* values simply suggest that the means are not the same across the groups under comparison. The significant *F* values however do not tell as to which of the group means differ. Therefore, post-hoc testing of ANOVA results is essential to determine which group(s) differ(s) from the rest. One such multiple comparison procedure available is the Bonferroni test developed by Italian mathematician Carlo Emilio Bonferroni. The test allows for pair-wise comparisons of groups. In the present case, the comparison is among three pairs: (i) school students and graduate students, (ii) school students and post graduate students, and (iii) graduate students and post-graduate students.

The Bonferroni test reported in Table 6 presents the group pairs in which statistically differences existed in respect of each of the five gratifications under scrutiny. In Table 6,

such pairs along with their mean differences and the *F* ratio's significance level have been highlighted.

In using Internet for social interaction gratification, statistically significant difference was restricted to students studying in school and graduate students. In this pair, the use of Internet for social interaction was more pronounced among school students than students of graduate courses.

In respect of entertainment gratification too, the difference was confined to one group-pair of post graduate students and school students. Between the two groups, the tendency of using Internet for entertainment was more pronounced among post graduates than students studying school level courses.

The tendency of using Internet for educational purposes was more common among school students than students pursuing post graduate courses. The remaining two gratification of IT application and monetary gratification were more salient among students of school level courses and graduate students than those pursuing post graduate courses.

**Table 6: Post Hoc Bonferroni Multiple Comparisons Test for Education and Gratifications 2 to 6**

Gratifications (dependent variables)	(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig
<b>Grat 2: Social Interaction</b>	<b>School students</b>	<b>Graduate students</b>	<b>1.2395</b>	.477	<b>.028*</b>
		PG students	.8634	.488	.232
	Graduate students	School students	-1.2395	.477	.028
		PG students	-.3761	.495	1.000
	PG students	School students	-.8634	.488	.232
		Graduate students	.3761	.495	1.000
<b>Grat 3: Entertainment</b>	School students	Graduate students	-.5213	.244	.100
		PG students	-1.0033	.250	.000
	Graduate students	School students	.5213	.244	.100
		PG students	-.4820	.254	.174
	<b>PG students</b>	<b>School students</b>	<b>1.0033</b>	.250	<b>.000**</b>
		Graduate students	.4820	.254	.174
<b>Grat 4: Education</b>	<b>School students</b>	Graduate students	.6061	.307	.146
		<b>P G students</b>	<b>1.2443</b>	.314	<b>.000**</b>
	Graduate students	School l students	-.6061	.307	.146
		P G students	.6382	.319	.137
	PG students	School students	-1.2443	.314	.000
		PG students	-.6382	.319	.137
<b>Grat 5: IT Application</b>	<b>School students</b>	Graduate students	-2.2886E-02	.234	1.000
		<b>P G students</b>	<b>.7526</b>	.240	<b>.005**</b>
	<b>Graduate students</b>	School students	2.289E-02	.234	1.000
		<b>P G students</b>	<b>.7754</b>	.243	<b>.004**</b>
	P G students	School students	-.7526	.240	.005
		Graduate	-.7754	.243	.004



		students			
<b>Grat 6: Financial Benefits</b>	<b>School students</b>	Graduate students	-.2833	.249	.768
		<b>P G courses</b>	<b>1.0607</b>	.255	<b>.000**</b>
			.2833	.249	.768
	<b>Graduate students</b>	School students	<b>1.3439</b>	.259	<b>.000**</b>
		<b>P G students</b>	-1.0607	.255	.000
			-1.3439	.259	.000
P G students	students				
	Graduate students				

**Note: \* Mean differences significant beyond .05 level; \*\* Mean differences significant beyond .01 level**

Thus, educational level of students is found to have a statistically significant bearing on five Internet gratifications. In that, the tendency of using Internet for the gratifications of social interaction and education was significantly higher among school students than post graduate students.

The use of Internet for the gratifications of IT application and financial benefits was also significantly among schools and graduate students than their seniors, the post graduate students. In respect of the entertainment gratification, significant differences were in evidence between the pair of post graduate students and school students. Between the two, the tendency of using Internet for entertainment was significantly higher among post graduates.

#### 4 Income Groups and Gratifications

To detect the bearing of the independent variable of students' economic status on their Internet gratifications, the data was subjected to one-way ANOVA. The ANOVA results presented in Table 7 showed that in respect of the three gratifications of social interaction, education and IT applications, all students were similar irrespective of the income group to which they belonged. However, students' economic status had a statistically significant bearing on the three other gratifications of passing time & habit, entertainment and financial benefits. In other words, the significant *F* ratios indicate to the differences between the three income-group pairs: (i) low income group and middle income group, (ii) low income group and upper income group, and (iii) middle income group and upper income group.

**Table 7: One way ANOVA: Income and Gratification**

Gratifications / Income Groups	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
<b>Grat1 : Passing time &amp; habit</b>					
Between groups	435.222	2	217.611	<b>3.756</b>	<b>.024*</b>
Within groups	41371.701	714	57.944		
Total	41806.923	716			
<b>Grat2: Social Interaction</b>					
Between groups	23.946	2	11.973	.421	.657
Within groups	20313.234	714	28.450		
Total	20337.180	716			
<b>Grat3: Entertainment</b>					
Between groups	111.516	2	55.758	<b>7.504</b>	<b>.001**</b>
Within groups	5305.357	714	7.430		
Total	5416.873	716			
<b>Grat4: Education</b>					

Between groups	46.856	2	23.428	1.970	.140
Within groups	8490.014	714	11.891		
Total	8536.870	716			
<b>Grat5 :IT Application</b>					
Between groups	4.324	2	2.162	.312	.732
Within groups	4939.587	714	6.918		
Total	4943.911	716			
<b>Grat6 : Financial Benefits</b>					
Between groups	89.285	2	44.643	<b>5.650</b>	<b>.004**</b>
Within groups	5641.158	714	7.901		
Total	5730.444	716			

Note: \* *F* values significant beyond .05 level; \*\* *F* values significant beyond .01 level.

To ascertain which income-group pair(s) differ(s) from the rest, Bonferroni multiple comparisons test for three gratifications of passing time & habit, entertainment and financial benefits was conducted. The results reported in Table 8. The statistics of the group pairs in which statistically differences existed in respect of each of the three gratifications under scrutiny have been highlighted in the Table.

**Table 8: Post Hoc Bonferroni multiple Comparisons Test for Income and Gratifications 1, 3 and 6**

Gratifications (dependent variables)	(I) Income	(J) Income	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig
<b>Grat 1. Passing time &amp; Habit</b>	<b>Low Income</b>	Middle Income	.1859	.669	1.000
		<b>Upper Income</b>	<b>2.1029</b>	.780	<b>.021*</b>
	Middle Income	Low Income	-.1859	.669	1.000
		Upper Income	1.9170	.876	.087
	Upper Income	Low Income	-2.1029	.780	.021
		Middle Income	-1.9170	.876	.087
<b>Grat 2. Entertainment</b>	<b>Low Income</b>	Middle Income	.2393	.240	.955
		<b>Upper Income</b>	<b>1.0816</b>	.279	<b>.000**</b>
	<b>Middle Income</b>	Low Income	-.2393	.240	.955
		<b>Upper Income</b>	<b>.8422</b>	.314	<b>.022*</b>
	Upper Income	Low Income	-1.0816	.279	.000
		Middle Income	-.8422	.314	.022
<b>Grat 3. Financial Benefits</b>	<b>Low Income</b>	<b>Middle Income</b>	<b>.7376</b>	.247	<b>.009**</b>
		Upper Income	.6659	.288	.063
	Middle Income	Low Income	-.7376	.247	.009
		Upper Income	-7.1665E-02	.323	1.000
	Upper Income	Low Income	-.6659	.288	.063
		Middle Income	7.166E-02	.323	1.000

Note: \* Mean differences significant beyond .05 level; \*\* Mean differences significant beyond .01 level

In respect of passing time & habit gratification, statistically significant differences existed between low income and upper income group students with the low income group students being more pronounced in using Internet for passing time and habit than students of upper income families. The tendency of using Internet for entertainment gratification was significantly salient among low income and middle groups of students than students hailing from upper income families.

In respect of using Internet for the gratification of deriving financial benefits statistically significant differences existed only between the pair of low income and middle income groups of students. Between them, the low income group students were more salient in using Internet for obtaining benefits than middle income group students.

From such results it follows that gratifications of passing time & habit, entertainment and financial transactions depended upon students' economic status. Low income group students were more pronounced in using Internet for the gratifications of passing time & habit as well as financial benefits than students of high income families. The tendency of using Internet for entertainment gratification was far more salient among low and middle income group students than students whose families had high income. The high income group students perhaps have other habits and avenues other than Internet to pass their spare time and also to carry out financial transactions of know about bargain product/services, job search. As a result, their use of Internet for the gratifications of passing time & habit, entertainment and financial transactions remains significantly lower than students from low and middle income families.

Of the six gratifications factored in this study, the most salient was the ritualistic gratification of passing time and habit followed by entertainment gratification. From such an ordering, it can be deduced that students are using Internet for passing time and as a habit, and for entertainment.

Though they are using it for social interaction and financial benefits, they are not seeking internet for deriving educational benefits in spite of the fact that the WWW is a treasure trove of information and education on every conceivable subject. Some of the major reasons for such a showing could be the lack of awareness about the education potential of the net, lack of efficacy in searching for educational content and limited high speed access. Language barriers in educational content could also be hindering the use of Internet for educational purposes. Exact reasons need to be ascertained through in-depth interviews with students.

The present study revalidates one of the central assumptions of the uses and gratification theory which states that different people use media to obtain different types of gratifications. The socio demographic attributes of gender, rural and urban belonging, education and income defined the gratifications sought in varying ways. While some findings support past studies, some are contradictory.

The male and female attributes of gender variable had no bearing only two gratifications on IT application and financial benefits. In respect of other four gratifications, male and female differed. While male students used Internet for education, female students were using it for passing time, entertainment and social interaction. These findings, in part, contradict the findings of Weiser's (2000) study where men were found to use the Internet primarily for entertainment and leisure where as women used it mainly for interpersonal communication and educational assistance. However, the findings support Hargittai & Hinnant's (2008) deduction that males with higher education and income tend to use the Internet more for activities to improve their lot in life, i.e., for instrumental purposes, as compared to females who tend to use it more for ritualistic purposes like pass time etc.

In respect of social interaction gratification, the findings of the present study were similar to the findings of Livingstone & Bober(2004) which had shown that more than males, females tend to utilize the potential of the net for communication, as a social medium that can augment their socializing potential. Women are generally perceived to be more interested in keeping in touch, and interpersonal communication. Perhaps therefore they tend to use features of Internet like email, social networking for social interaction.

Unlike other studies, the present study reckoned the rural and urban background of students as an independent variable to assess its bearing on the kinds of gratifications students seek from internet. In seeking the gratification of pass time & habit, social interaction and financial transaction, the two groups of students were similar. But in respect of remaining three gratifications the groups differed. In that, the rural students were using the net more, for seeking entertainment as well as education gratifications than their urban counterparts. Although education gratification was not a top priority for most categories of students, yet it is heartening to note that rural students are using the limited facilities at their disposal in a more constructive manner for education. One possible reason could be that unlike urban students, rural students have limited avenues to meet their varied entertainment and educational needs. So they tend to seek the entertainment and education gratifications from Internet. Urban students were found to use net for information technology application, perhaps to develop their computer skills, learn new software etc. It would be worthwhile to explore the underlying reasons for such differences between rural and urban students.

Students pursuing different levels of education displayed significant differences with respect to five gratifications sought except the gratification of pass time and habit which was popular cutting across all levels of education. The Bonferoni test revealed that between among the educational groups, school students and postgraduate students differed on several counts. Contrary to the suggestion of Metzger, Flanagin, and Zwarun (2003) that college students would rely very heavily on the Web for both academic and general information, including entertainment and news, the study revealed that school students were more avid users of the net for education gratification than the postgraduate students. This finding was unexpected because the postgraduate students are generally perceived to have better technical skills and curricular needs and therefore are likely to depend heavily on online educational resources more than students studying in lower level courses. In this context, it would be worthwhile to investigate the reasons for this paradox.

Yet another unexpected finding was that the tendency of using net for entertainment was more pronounced among postgraduate students than school students. Contrary to expectations, postgraduate students lagged behind school and graduate students in seeking instrumental gratifications like IT applications and financial benefits. The habit of seeking these two gratifications was more predominant among graduate students. This finding is contrary to the findings of earlier studies which had uncovered a strong positive association between level of education and visits to capital enhancing sites (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008). Here too, it needs to be ascertained as to why post graduate students stand out in seeking entertainment gratification and why do they lag behind lower education group of students in seeking the gratifications of IT applications and financial benefits.

Significant differences were noticed between school and graduate students only with respect to the gratification of social interaction, with school students displaying more interest in the socializing potential of this medium as compared to the graduate students.

The Bonferoni test showed that the economic status of students was not instrumental in defining the three gratifications of social interaction, education and IT applications. The other three gratifications of passing time & habit, entertainment and financial benefits were dependent on the students' economic background. Students hailing from low income families tended to use net for entertainment more followed by the middle class and least by upper class students. Also pass time and financial benefit gratifications were more salient for low income group than the high income group. Perhaps this stems from several reasons. Low income people may regard Internet as an economical and convenient way to pass time and for entertainment. But students from affluent families may have other exciting, expensive options to pass time and for entertainment.

In a nutshell, the findings clearly point out that students have come to use internet along with other media. The finding that most of the newest users of the net are school students suggests that as they grow in age and education their dependency on the net may get firmed up enabling it to become the most preferred medium on par with television, if not exceeding it.

But the findings relating to the gratification seeking tendencies, though on par with most of the findings elsewhere, demand the attention of the society, in particular the education subsystem. The tendency of using Internet for educational content is far away from becoming the dominant internet gratification. Concerns arise as a large majority of students are using Internet for the two ritualistic gratifications of passing time and entertainment.

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# The Gender Disparities in Digital Media Access among Adiya Tribes of Wayanad

Communication & Journalism Research  
5(1) pp 19-30  
©The Author(s) 2016  
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ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## Abstract

The present study is aimed at seeking the existence of gender disparities in accessing digital media among Adiya tribes of Wayanad. The researcher has given emphasis on the mobile phone access and chances of m-governance for supporting development activities since the Adiya community is one of the most vulnerable tribal sects in the District. Today mobile phone has become an everyday gadget that addresses different income groups with specific utilities. The device offers more opportunities with wider perspectives in the process of development. The study used survey method for data collection. The samples selected for the study is the Adiya tribe residing in the urban and rural areas of Mananthavady Taluk. The study gives focus on the gender specific media habits of Adiya community.

## Key words

Gender, Digital Media, Media Access, Tribe

## Introduction

The Adiya tribe is one of the marginalised tribal communities in Kerala. They are traditionally called Ravula and are related to Ravula language speaking Yerava tribes of Coorg, Karnataka. The word Adiya denotes slave and the community is survived through bonded labour. Even today the major source of their income is daily wage labours of the migrants and the mainstream society.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were some isolated efforts from non government funded agencies and political parties to uplift Adiya tribes in certain perspectives. Personalities like Sri. P. K. Kalan was raised up to the level of Block Panchayath President and Folklore Academy Chairman with the support of CPIM (Communist Party of India Marxist). C. K. Janu, was another Adiya leader who initiated combined struggles of many Adivasi groups on the land issue which ended up in a violent reactionary revolt at Muthanga in 2003. Apart from P. K. Kalan and C. K. Janu the Adiya community continues to be marginalised in the social, educational and economic scenario.

This study focuses on the attitudinal differences between male and female Adiya tribes in the use of mobile phones in informing, educating and responding to the development efforts implemented among them.



## Objectives of the Study

### General Objective

Keeping in view the major field of research, the study aims to evaluate the existence of gender disparities in accessing digital media among Adiya tribe residing urban and rural areas of Wayanad District.

### Specific Objective

To study the gender disparities in the media habits with a special reference to the use of mobile phones and allied services.

### Research Method

An exploratory study was first conducted on a pre-defined segment of tribes comprising different demographic groups in order to provide a better insight and purpose to this research. Certain corrections were made to the questionnaire after the pre-test. Since the majority of the tribes are illiterate it was not possible for them to read the questionnaire and answer accordingly. Therefore the questions were translated to Malayalam and the enumerators read out the questions for the tribes. Survey method is administered for the collection of precise and objective data. The data collection was done through personal interviews via questionnaire.

**Table 1: Which mass medium do you depend the most?**

		Radio	TV	Cinema	Internet	Newspaper	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	22	19	5	1	0	3	50
	Female	26	17	1	0	0	6	50
Urban	Male	23	25	1	0	1	0	50
	Female	22	23	1	0	1	3	50
Total		93	84	8	1	2	12	200

Mass media has proved to be the strongest catalyst of change. They have important roles to play as magic multipliers of information explosion. In the present era access to mass media and media literacy is considered to be key factors in the process of development.

Majority of the samples depend radio or television. When 44 per cent of the rural and 46 percent of the urban male use radio, it is 52 and 44 percent in rural and urban women respectively. The aggregate dependence of radio is 45 percent in the case of male and 48 percent in the case of female. So radio consumption of Adiya women is slightly over their counterparts.

As for television, a slight majority is evident among the male respondents. Here 38 per cent rural and 50 percent of the urban men opted television where as it is 34 and 46 per cent among rural and urban women. Ten per cent of the rural men voted for cinema where as it is 2 per cent women in all other strata. Of the 200 samples there is only one respondent who is a rural male marked the access to internet. The total percentage of tribes who access

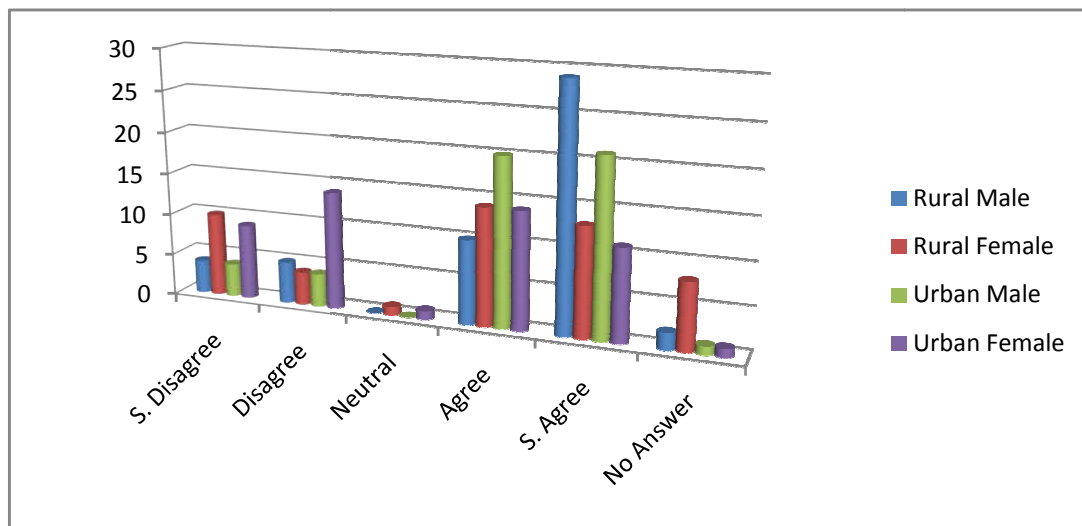
newspaper is 1 per cent which is equal among urban male and female. Six per cent of the samples say ‘no answer’. Except radio the Adiya males enjoy a slight majority in the access to all other mass media.

**Table 2: I use mobile phone**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	4	5	0	10	29	2	50
	Female	10	4	1	14	13	8	50
Urban	Male	4	4	0	20	21	1	50
	Female	9	14	1	14	11	1	50
Total		27	27	2	58	74	12	200
		Total -ves		54	Total +ves		132	

Mobile phones change our lives drastically. As the prices of the handsets as well as the service slashed, mobile phones became affordable for everyone. Like dress or other gadgets it is consumed all income groups. Tribes are not different here. Introduction of china made unbranded phones and the availability of pre-owned handsets made this medium more popular.

**Chart 1: The use of mobile phones**



There is a universal acceptance for mobile phones among Adiyian tribes as 78 per cent of the rural males, 54 per cent rural females, 82 per cent urban males and 50 per cent urban females say they use mobile phones. With 40 per cent agree and 42 per cent strongly agree Urban males are the largest users of mobiles among Adiyian tribes. When a total of 27 per cent tribes say they do not use mobile phones 61 per cent welcomes the technology. There are 1 per cent neutral and 6 per cent no answer. Hence there exists a significant percentage of difference in the use of mobile phones among Adiya males and females.

**Table 3: Mobile phones are helpful to keep touch with friends and relatives**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	1	4	0	18	23	4	50
	Female	1	1	0	16	17	15	50
Urban	Male	0	3	2	30	14	1	50
	Female	2	2	8	20	15	3	50
Total		4	10	10	84	69	23	200
		Total -ves 14		Total +ves 153				

Mobile phones add speed to interactive communication. They are convenient and handy. Adiyani tribes understand this fact and accept the device as helpful. From the above table it is evident that majority votes positive to the statement. 82 per cent of the rural men responded positive to the statement where as it is 66 per cent in rural women, 88 per cent among urban men and 70 per cent in urban women. So Adiyani males show more positive attitude towards the use of mobile communication for socialization process.

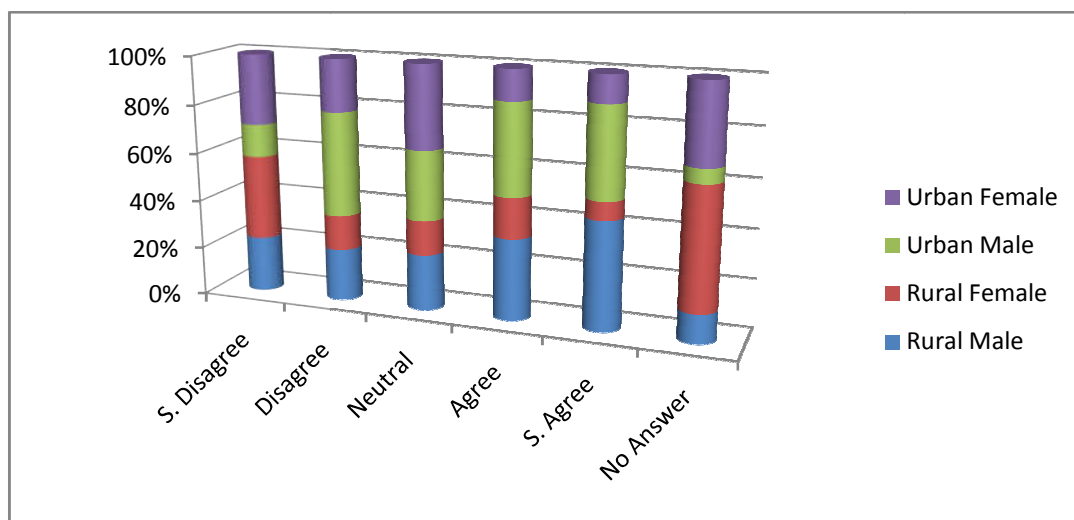
**Table 4: I utilise free SMS offers as a cheap means of communication**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	12	6	8	8	12	4	50
	Female	18	4	5	4	2	17	50
Urban	Male	7	12	10	9	10	2	50
	Female	15	6	12	3	3	11	50
Total		52	28	35	24	27	34	200
		Total -ves 80		Total +ves 51				

Short Message Service is meant to carry quick messages transfer at a cheap cost. The purpose varies in different categories of the society.

Of the samples 24 per cent of the rural men strongly disagree with the idea, 36 per cent of women join the squad. As for urban males 14 per cent say the same and 30 per cent females also say they strongly disagree. With 12 per cent rural males, 8 per cent rural females, 24 per cent urban males and 12 per cent females the total negative responses gross to 40 per cent of the samples. 17.5 per cent think neutral and 17 per cent have 'no answer'.

**Chart 2 : Use of free SMS**



When 40 per cent of the rural men support the idea, only 12 per cent of rural women agree with it. 38 per cent of the urban men think positive while it is only 12 per cent among urban women. There is a trait of male dominance visible here as the level of use of sms is comparatively high among both urban and rural men. In both urban and rural women it is less.

**Table 5: Which tariff do you prefer for your mobile recharge?**

		Rs. 100	Rs. 50	Rs. 20	Rs. 10	Others	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	1	10	24	7	2	6	50
	Female	0	3	16	8	0	23	50
Urban	Male	2	7	25	6	0	10	50
	Female	0	5	15	7	0	23	50
Total		3	25	80	28	2	62	200

The recharge tendency is similar among urban and rural Adiyen tribes. Men show more recharge options than women. There are three men (one from rural and two from urban area) who prefer Rs. 100 recharges where as no women use this. 20 per cent of the rural men recharge with Rs. 50 coupons while it is only 14 per cent among urban men, 6 per cent among rural women and 10 per cent in urban women.

The most favourite recharge option among Adiya tribes is Rs.20 which is preferred by 48 per cent rural men, 32 per cent rural women, 50 per cent urban men and 30 per cent urban women. Rs. 10 recharge stand next to it as 14 per cent of Adiya tribes use it. 31 per cent of the total respondents give 'no answer' this statement. Here the recharge has a direct relation to the earnings and the role of men in the Adiya society. The wage for labour is almost the double in the case of men which is reflected in their spending habits.

**Table 6: The frequency of my mobile recharge**

		Daily	weekly twice	Weekly	Monthly	Others	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	9	21	8	5	2	5	50
	Female	10	8	4	4	1	23	50
Urban	Male	8	16	11	7	0	8	50
	Female	6	11	4	4	1	24	50
Total		33	56	27	20	4	60	200

Recharge tariff and frequency reveals the way one utilizes the mobile phone. It also shows the affordability of the technology by the respondents. Here 18 per cent of the rural males recharge their phone daily where as it is 20 per cent among rural females, 16 per cent among urban males and 12 per cent among urban females.

The highest number of respondents voted for the option ‘weekly twice’ as 42 per cent of the rural males, 16 per cent of the rural females, 32 per cent of the urban males and 22 per cent of the urban females opted this. 16 per cent of the rural males say they recharge weekly while it is only 8 per cent among rural and urban women. 22 per cent of the urban males recharge once in a week. When 10 per cent rural men recharge once in a month, it is 8 per cent in rural and urban women and 14 per cent in urban men. In the case of daily recharge rural women showed a clean majority of their counterpart but in weekly twice it is the males in both urban and rural areas show the majority. Most number of no answers is marked by women. 46 per cent of the rural women and 48 per cent of the urban women say ‘no answer’ to the frequency of recharge while it is 10 and 16 per cent among rural and urban men respectively.

**Table 7: I use the special recharge offers for free services**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	10	12	5	11	7	5	50
	Female	16	6	3	4	0	21	50
Urban	Male	6	14	9	13	4	4	50
	Female	9	3	6	12	1	19	50
Total		41	35	23	40	12	49	200
		Total -ves 76		Total +ves 52				

Use of special recharges and offer tariffs are utilized when people are vigilant and informed of these ideas. Such information can reach the target chiefly through retailers, newspapers, business promotion sms or calls etc. The level of such use indicates one’s knowledge and utility rates of the medium.

With 22 per cent of agree and 14 per cent of strongly agree the total positive response among rural men is 36 per cent where as it is 8 per cent among rural women, 34 per cent in urban men and 26 per cent in urban women. Here also the option ‘no answer’ is higher among women as 42 per cent from the rural area and 38 per cent from the urban area vote

for this. There is a considerable difference in the use of special recharge offers between rural and urban females as well as the male and female in general.

**Table 8: I gave my mobile number to the Tribal promoter**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	13	10	5	3	14	5	50
	Female	18	2	3	5	3	19	50
Urban	Male	16	17	6	4	3	4	50
	Female	12	7	6	2	3	20	50
Total		59	36	20	14	23	48	200
		Total -ves 95		Total +ves 37				

‘M’ governance is the new age mantra which is chanted by every corporate office all over the world. The tribal promoter is employed to mediate the process of development in the tribal groups. Tribal promoters are directed to work as a link between the tribal development office and the tribes. If the promoters or tribal offices can reach the tribes through phones, effective M governance will be the result.

With 26 per cent strong disagree, 20 per cent disagree and 10 per cent ‘no answer’ the rural men mark 56 per cent of negative responses where as it is 32, 34, 8 and 74 per cent respectively among urban men. When 36 per cent of rural women mark strong disagree with 4 per cent disagree and 38 per cent no answer, it is 24, 14 and 40 per cent among urban women to a total of 78 per cent of negative in each strata. The sum total of all the negative response is 71.5 per cent.

Comparatively rural men are more positive to the idea of ‘M’ governance as 34 per cent of them gave their mobile numbers to tribal promoters while it is followed by only 16 per cent of the rural women, 14 per cent of urban men and 10 per cent of the urban women. The total positive response among Adiya men is 48 per cent whereas it is only 26 per cent among Adiya women. There exists a gender disparity in the perception of mobile based governance among Adiya tribes.

**Table 9: Employers contact me through mobile phone**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	7	1	3	12	23	4	50
	Female	13	1	4	7	8	17	50
Urban	Male	5	0	4	21	18	2	50
	Female	13	7	4	3	6	17	50
Total		38	9	15	43	55	40	200
		Total -ves 47		Total +ves 98				

M governance has proved to be successful among software industry in India as the employers can make use of the services of the engineer even if he is on leave or in sick bed! Job seekers and students are happy to give their mobile phone numbers to potential employers.

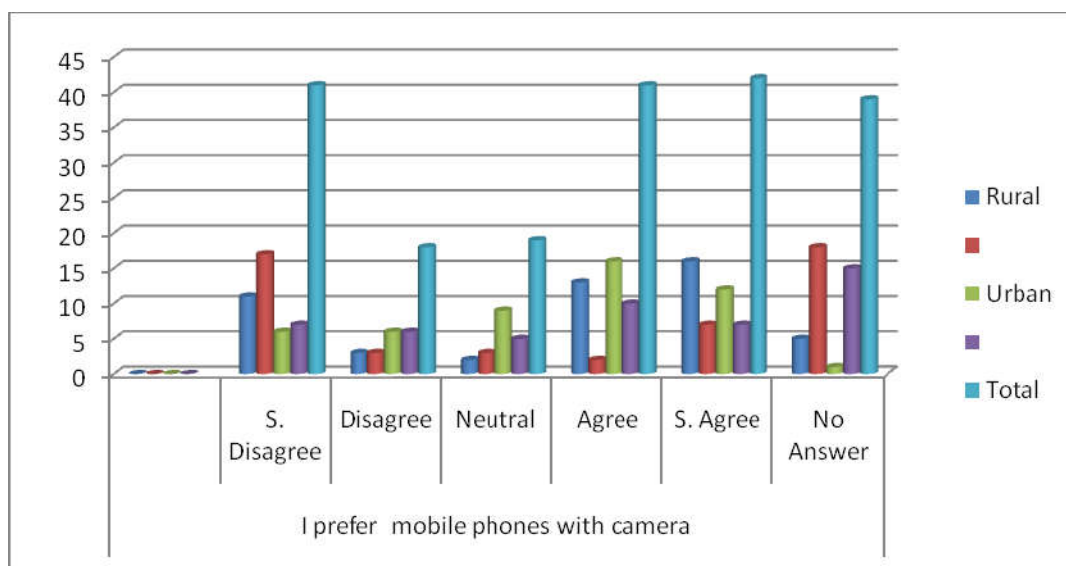
To the statement ‘employers contact me through mobile phone’ 70 per cent of the rural men and 78 per cent of the urban men responded positively where as it is only 30 among rural women and 46 per cent among urban women. Here also the gender disparity is evident.

**Table 10: I prefer mobile phones with camera**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	11	3	2	13	16	5	50
	Female	17	3	3	2	7	18	50
Urban	Male	6	6	9	16	12	1	50
	Female	7	6	5	10	7	15	50
Total		41	18	19	41	42	39	200
		Total -ves 59		Total +ves 83				

Camera phones are priced just above basic phones. As technology improves the taste of mobile aspirants also increase. This question is included to check whether the mobile using Adiyar tribes use options other than calls and sms.

**Chart 3: I prefer mobile phones with camera**



The positive response from rural men is 58 per cent while only 18 per cent rural women think so. 56 per cent of urban men prefer mobiles with camera while it is 34 per cent among urban women. Of the total women only 26 per cent think in favour of the idea of a camera phone where as 57 per cent of men prefer camera phones. The utilization of a value added technology of mobile phone is spread faster among men than women in the case of Adiyar tribes.

**Table 11: Which is your mobile service network?**

		BSNL	Idea	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea & Vodafone	Videocon	NoAnswer	Total
Rural	Male	0	25	3	15	1	0	6	50
	Female	0	23	1	3	1	0	22	50
Urban	Male	0	38	0	3	0	1	8	50
	Female	0	24	1	1	0	1	23	50
Total		0	110	5	22	2	2	59	200

This question was included to explore the understanding level of Adiya tribes about the choices they can avail of in the case of mobile networks. Here 50 per cent of rural men against 46 per cent of the rural women and 76 per cent of the urban men against 48 per cent of the urban women prefer Idea network. One per cent of the total samples use two networks – idea and Vodafone. The main reason for choosing Idea is the wide coverage enjoyed by it. Many of the tribes did not hear any other network than Idea.

Vodafone is the next popular network among Adiya tribe as it covers 11 per cent of the total samples. Vodafone is subscribed chiefly by rural males as the statistics show 30 per cent of them use the network.

BSNL network has no subscriber from the sample where as lately introduced Videocon has managed to create at least one per cent subscribers. Women from both rural and urban strata show more no answer as it is 44 per cent in the former and 46 per cent in the latter. There are 12 per cent rural men and 16 per cent urban men to mark no answer or no mobile phones. Thus it is obvious that 29.5 per cent of the samples do not use mobile phones.

**Table 12: I change my sim/mobile service provider according to offers and tariff plans**

		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree	No Answer	Total
Rural	Male	15	16	5	7	2	5	50
	Female	20	3	2	2	2	21	50
Urban	Male	19	12	9	5	1	4	50
	Female	13	7	6	2	1	21	50
Total		67	38	22	16	6	51	200
		Total -ves		Total +ves				
		105		22				

Changing the service provider according to offers and special plans is a new trend among mobile users. This question aims at finding if such habits are active among tribes. Here rural men showed their disapproval with the statement with 30 per cent strongly disagree and 32 per cent disagree where as it is 38 per cent and 24 per cent among urban men. When it comes to rural women 46 per cent disliked the concept and 40 per cent of urban women join the negative response.

A total of 11 per cent stand neutral to the statement where as 25.5 per cent say they have no answer. Only 18 per cent of the rural men support the concept of changing the service provider while it has acceptance among 8 per cent rural women, 12 per cent urban men and 6 per cent urban women.

The total score of negative response is 52.5 per cent while the total positive marks only 11 per cent. From the above statistics it is assumed that there is no significant difference in the attitude to change the service provider among Adiya male and female.



## Conclusion

**Table 14**

<b>M-governance aspects</b>	<b>Rural male</b>	<b>Rural female</b>	<b>Urban male</b>	<b>Urban female</b>
Use mobiles	78%	54%	82%	50%
Mobiles helpful to keep in touch	82%	66%	88%	70%
use of sms offers	40%	12%	38%	12%
I gave my no. to Tribal Promoter	34%	16%	14%	10%
Employers contact me through mobile	70%	30%	78%	18%

The communication aspects among Adiya are tested with 13 questions. Of these questions four are direct questions and others are attitude scales. The major focus in this aspect is on mobile phone communication habits among Adiya. From selected five positive statements 1000 responses were marked on the use of mobile phones. The total positive attitude responses are 47.1 per cent against 29 per cent negatives. The neutrals and no answers are 8.2 per cent and 15.7 per cent respectively.

From the above table it is evident that in each aspect the positive response and awareness is much higher among males than females. In the case of mobile use the disparity among rural male and female is 24 per cent where as it is 32 per cent in the urban area. In the case of mobile communication this disparity level is 16 per cent in the rural area and 18 per cent in urban. The disparity rate is wider in using sms offers. It is 28 per cent in rural and 26 per cent in urban areas. A clear difference of 18 per cent is marked with rural are when it comes to m-governance and only 4 per cent in urban tribes. As for the employer contact the rate of difference is the highest. The disparity is 40 per cent in rural areas and 60 per cent in urban centres.

Though the result is promising for m-governance among Adiya tribes there exists a wide gender disparity in the access and use of mobile phones in the community.

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# Negotiation of Cultural Themes in Malayalam Serials: A Study of Kalyani

Communication & Journalism Research

5 (1) pp 31-38

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ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## **Abstract**

Culture has a decisive say in people's lives, attitudes, lifestyles and beliefs. The cultural components are transmitted through interactions between individuals. Mass media also play an important role in preserving and passing along cultural characteristics from one generation to the other. The focus of the study was the negotiation of cultural themes in Malayalam television serials, namely Kalyani. Negotiation is a complex cognitive process wherein the audience tends to understand and interpret the meaning of the text based on their frames of reference. The data generated from the sample was analysed to assess the manner of reading of Kalyani text based on the triadic (dominant, negotiated and oppositional) reading of a media text proposed by Stuart Hall. The audience of Kalyani largely made a dominant reading, that is, they subscribed to the intended meaning of the producers in terms of the frames of reference/the central themes of the serial.

## **Key words**

Culture, Negotiation, Dominant Reading

All social units both at the micro and macro levels have a culture. Micro-level relationship develops a culture over a period of time. For example, in friendships, patterns develop based on shared experiences, language codes, behavioural pattern, likes, dislikes, habits and rituals that provide a special character to the relationship. The special dates, songs, persons, events etc. will have unique social and emotional value for the members of the group. These, however, will be irrelevant and meaningless for the members of another distinct group. At the macro-level too, groups develop a culture which differentiates them from others. Over a period of time, the way a particular group at the macro-level goes about socialising and conducting its affairs will eventually become the specific elements of its culture.

For Ruben (2001), the most complex and rich cultures are those that are associated with a society or nation and the term culture is most commonly used to refer to these characteristics including language, language usage, patterns, rituals, customs, norms and so on. A national culture includes elements such as significant historical events and characters, social customs, religious practices, beliefs and value systems, and systems of law.

All social units, be it a group, organization, political party, society or nation, develop a culture over a period of time. The culture so developed performs certain essential functions. The first is to link individuals to one another, the second is to provide the basis for a common identity and finally to create a context for interaction and negotiation among members. These functions get actualised through inter-personal and inter-community discourses.

Culture and communication are therefore described as the two sides of the same coin. The relationship between them is complex as well as intimate and integral. Cultural components like customs, roles, rules, rituals, laws and other patterns are created and shared through communication. Culture emerges and is transmitted through the interaction between individuals at various levels. Without communication, and of course mass media, it would be impossible to preserve and pass along cultural characteristics from one generation to another or from one place to another. As Ruben (2001) rightly points out, culture is created, shaped, transmitted and learned through communication. The reverse is also true; that is, communication practices are largely created, shaped and transmitted by culture.

Culture is a learned behavior of societies through formal and informal social discourse modes of production of sense, meaning and consciousness. Individuals who are at the centre of dynamic social discourses imbibe culture from a variety of informal and formal channels of interaction. The latter has come to assume great significance with television establishing its presence in the drawing rooms and the bedrooms. Its 24x7 presence has provided a surrogate space for cultural interaction for television audiences everywhere who lap up its varied fare on a regular basis. The soap operas in particular are known to have a great influence on their audiences to the extent of making them develop para-social interactions with the characters (Horton and Wohl, 1956; Nordlund, 1978). Para-social interaction means the seemingly face-to-face interpersonal relationship which can develop between a television viewer and a television performer. Perhaps, that is the reason for their large viewership all across the world (Whetmore and Kielwasser, 1993; Allen, 2004). This is also the case in India (Singhal and Rogers, 1989). The state of Kerala is no exception (Aravindan, 2006). Unlike many other genres of television programmes which have a limited life, soap operas go on and on for years. Over a period of time, soap opera characters, sets, lifestyles, the ups and downs of the stories etc. become a part of an imaginary neighbourhood. That being the case, how do viewers engage with and negotiate soap opera texts? This is the question that the present study tries to investigate.

## **Negotiation**

Communication research in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century focussed on what media do to its audience, that is, media content can have an immediate and direct effect on thoughts and actions of individuals. Later, attention was shifted to limited effects perspective mass communication. The research in this line concluded that media rarely had powerful and direct influence on individuals.

Mass communication research further shifted to active audience perspective where the focus was on what people did with media rather than the earlier concept of what media did with people. Thus, a perceptible shift was visible here from source-dominated approach to audience-centred approach. Although the latter approach was round the corner from 1940s, it gained momentum and academic attention in the 1970s and 1980s at the hands of the exponents of cultural media researchers. By this time, the reach and use of television in Europe, the US and other countries expanded exponentially and research concentrated on what the viewers did with television programmes.

As stated earlier, the audience-centric approach was round the corner from 1940s. The uses and gratifications theory (Herzog, 1944; Schramm, 1954; Blumer, 1979) was one of the

early audience-centric approach which conceived that individuals seek certain uses from media and derive satisfactions in terms of the motives and self perceived needs. McQuail (2005) lists some of the major gratifications sought from media such as information and education, guidance and advice, diversion and realization, emotional release, identity formation, security, sexual arousal and filling time.

Stuart Hall, one of the prominent figures at the Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, contributed greatly to the audience-centric approach popularly known as reception analysis. Hall (1980) argued that researchers should direct their attention to the twin aspects of social and political context in which the content is produced (encoding) and the consumption of the media content (decoding). A key feature of Hall's reception analysis is the manner in which various types of audience make sense of media content. A centrally packaged programme beamed on a television will be understood, interpreted or negotiated by the viewers depending upon several factors. He stated that a programme/text can be read/decoded in three different ways.

### **1. Dominant/Preferred Reading**

All messages/texts will have an intended meaning as perceived by the producer of the text. When a reader's interpretation coincides with that of the producer(s), there takes place a dominant reading.

### **2. Negotiated Reading**

Media messages are also open and they can be interpreted according to context and cultural backgrounds of a viewer. Thus a reader may interpret the meaning of a message differently from what is intended by the producers. This process of understanding or interpreting a message differently from the preferred understanding is referred to as negotiated reading.

### **3. Oppositional Reading**

In some cases, individuals can make interpretations that are in direct opposition to preferred meaning. Thus depending upon a host of experiences and outlook, an individual may resist the intended meanings of the messages altogether and read them differently.

## **Methodology**

The primary focus of the present study being the negotiation of culture in Malayalam television serials, the study design demanded the conduct of a viewership survey to gauge the negotiation of portrayed cultural themes by the audience. Negotiation, as explained earlier, is a complex cognitive process and audiences do not negotiate media content in a uniform manner. Instead, they tend to understand and interpret the meaning of the text based on their frames of reference. The frames of reference are a set of viewpoints or presuppositions through which individuals assimilate the cultural facets of the messages.

*Kalyani* serial was broadcast on Surya TV from August 16, 2006 to May 30, 2008. It made its debut on the prime time slot of 8.30 pm, Monday to Friday. Later, when its popularity began to wane, it was shifted to 7.00 pm slot on July 9, 2007, then to 6.30 pm on September 3, 2007 and finally the 5.30 pm slot on May 19, 2008. *Kalyani* enjoyed top Television Rating Points (TRP) and was one among the ten top rated serial for a substantial period of its broadcast (Malayala Manorama Weekly 2007-2008).

*Kalyani* reflects the two faces of Indian women as ingrained in the cultural ethos: (i) housebound and self sacrificing as well as (ii) an individual who has the abilities to fight the odds and excel as entrepreneur. This serial is also a cultural product which presents certain facets of middle class life with focus on marital compatibility, extra martial relations, follies of men in deserting the lower middle class wife to take a wife from the upper-class, determination of the deserted wife to prove that she can be both charming and successful entrepreneur like an upper class woman, and the return of the husband to the first spouse. Thus, *Kalyani* is a story of a middle class family juxtaposed and enmeshed with an upper class family in the context of marital relations wherein the middle class woman's determination to excel is singularly portrayed.

### **Viewership Survey**

In order to gather information on the extent of negotiation, a viewership survey was devised and conducted among the viewers of *Kalyani* while the serial was being aired and at the end of the serial. To collect data while *Kalyani* serial was being aired, the 450 sampled viewers spread across six locations were administered. The post telecast questionnaire was to be administered to 450 sample members from whom mid-telecast data had been collected. But, 70 respondents could not be contacted despite several visits. As a result, these 70 respondents had to be removed from the sample. Thus, the effective study sample got reduced to 380.

### **Reading of *Kalyani* Text by the Audience**

One of the important objectives of the study was to determine the way *Kalyani* serial's text was read/decoded by the audience. The triadic classification by Hall (1980) has been used by several researchers notably among them are Morley (1980), Hobson ((1982), and Mankekar (1991). These and other researchers have investigated and categorized the reading/decoding of televised text based on qualitative analysis. In this effort, the five frames of references which reflected five ideas central to the storyline of *Kalyani* serial were taken to assess the nature of reading *Kalyani* text by audience. The five central ideas/frames of references were:

1. Prior to marriage, individuals must meet their fiancé/fiancée and understand them well.
2. Men who shun their wives for not being fair-skinned would one day realize their folly.
3. Simple and ordinary housewives can transform themselves into attractive and successful entrepreneurs.
4. Parents should not support their sons in establishing and maintaining extra-conjugal relationships.
5. In our society, married women are expected to silently suffer and endure their husbands' extra-conjugal relationships.

A frame of reference is a viewpoint or a set of pre-supposition within which a person's perceptions seem to occur. All incoming messages have a viewpoint which may or may not match the message recipients' pre-suppositions. But, they will bring about one or the other kind of change in the audience's frames of reference. Thus, a frame of reference is a product that reflects (i) the way the recipients read/decode message(s), as also (ii) the effect of such reading on their pre-suppositions, that is, their attitudinal positions.

To meet the objective of assessing the way in which *Kalyani* text is read by the audience and the effect of serial on audience's attitudinal positions towards the five frames of references/central ideas, the data was collected twice. In both laps of the study, the respondents were presented with five statements. For each of the five statements they could either agree or disagree. Each 'agreement' was given a score of 2 and 'disagreement' a score of 1. Thus, the scores could range from 1-2 for each of the statements with the midpoint being 1.5.

A mean score higher than 1.5 and closer to 2 is indicative of an agreement with the core idea conveyed in the text. A mean score of 1.5, or closer to it, reflects a position of both agreement and disagreement with the portrayed message. Likewise, a mean score of 1, or closer to it, is suggestive of the audience's dissonance with the statement(s). Following this schema of scoring, the mean, standard deviation and standard error of mean were determined for the mid and post telecast periods of the serial based on audience's responses to the five frames of references.

To assess the way in which the audience read/decoded five central ideas, the data pertaining to the post telecast period was most appropriate. Though redundant, it must be pointed out that the way in which the audience read the texts can be best ascertained only when the entire text gets presented to the audience. In the case of tele-serials and soaps, that happens when the serial culminates. Therefore, the choice of post-telecast data to assess the way the audience read/decode five central ideas as reflected in the five frames of reference was appropriate.

**Table 1: Frames of Reference: Sample Statistics**

Frames of Reference	Telecast Period	Sample Statistics			
		Mean	Freq	Std. Dev.	Std. Error of Mean
1. Prior to marriage, individuals must meet their fiancé/fiancée and understand them well	Mid-telecast	1.8579	380	.3496	1.794E-02
	Post-telecast	1.8421	380	.3651	1.873E-02
2. Men who shun their wives for not being fair-skinned would one day realize their folly	Mid-telecast	1.9474	380	.2236	1.147E-02
	Post-telecast	1.9079	380	.2896	1.485E-02
3. Simple and ordinary housewives can transform themselves into attractive an successful entrepreneurs	Mid-telecast	1.9421	380	.2339	1.200E-02
	Post-telecast	1.9237	380	.2659	1.364E-02
4. Parents should not support their sons in establishing and maintaining extra-conjugal relationships	Mid-telecast	1.9079	380	.2896	1.485E-02
	Post-telecast	1.9632	380	.1886	9.676E-03
5. In our society, married women are expected to silently suffer and endure their husbands' extra-conjugal relationships	Mid-telecast	1.2079	380	.4063	2.084E-02
	Post-telecast	1.9342	380	.2482	1.273E-02

Going by the evaluative schema detailed in the earlier paragraph, one could very easily classify the reading/decoding of each of the five central ideas as reflected in the frames of references into Hall's triadic classification: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional reading. In the case of all five central ideas of *Kalyani* text, the mean score during the post telecast period ranged from 1.9421 to 1.9632 (see Table 1). These high mean scores which are very closer to 2, the highest score possible, is suggestive of viewers' strong agreement



with the intended meaning of the text which is described by Hall as dominant reading. Had they not agreed, the mean scores would have been lesser hovering around 1.5 or closer to 1. In the event of obtaining such mean score, the inference would have been that the reading of the text by the audience is either negotiated or oppositional. Thus, it could be deduced that the reading of *Kalyani* text is entirely dominant. In other words, *Kalyani* audience's interpretation of the messages appears to coincide almost fully with that of the producers of *Kalyani*.

From the above analysis of the effects of *Kalyani* serial on the five attitudinal ideas posited vis-à-vis the audience's socio-demographic variables, it could be summarized that the serial had not brought about uniform changes in the audience. Of the five attitudinal ideas or frames of reference chosen for investigation, there was no change in only one of the frame of reference. That being 'parents should not support their sons in establishing and maintaining extra-conjugal relationships.' In the remaining four frames of references, however, there were significant changes during the two phases of the study – mid telecast and post telecast periods. And the changes could only be attributed to the portrayal of the messages and their assimilation and negotiation by the audience. The four of the five attitudinal positions that underwent change suggest that television serials like *Kalyani* have the potential to bring about changes in the attitudes of their audience. And, the changes cut across all socio demographic variables in varying ways. In relation to one attitudinal idea, a few variables assumed importance. In respect of the other ideas posited, other socio demographic variables appeared to be critical in bringing about attitudinal changes. Which of these socio demographic variables are more salient than the other is the question that needs to be investigated in future studies. Similarly, another question that needs to be probed is the endurance of changes in the viewers brought about by teleserials like *Kalyani*. Such an investigation would throw ample light in understanding whether the changes resulting out of assimilation and negotiation of culture portrayed in teleserials are ephemeral or long lasting.

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# Impact of Fake News on Socioeconomic Sphere and How to Fight It

Communication & Journalism Research

5 (1) pp 39-45

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ISSN 2348 – 5663

**The alarming emergence of fake news and how artificial intelligence could help fight it. A contemporary analysis.**

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## Abstract

Fake news is penetrating even legitimate and genuine sources of news today, imperilling the credibility and value of news organisations, public personalities and even corporates. Even though myriad forms of fake news existed across centuries, the advent of social media has given misinformation a new lease of life and push. This paper analyses the socioeconomic impact of fake news by analysing key global events and tries to chronicle efforts in checking fake news with special focus on how artificial intelligence tools can be a big boon in this mission.

## Key words

Fake News, Socio-economic Sphere, Artificial Intelligence.

Fake news now claims a disturbingly significant chunk of good news. But most likely, most readers would not have noticed it. But their impact on brands, personalities, markets, issues and causes has become so deep to ignored. That's because efforts to expose fake news are only beginning to take shape. There has been a series of popular writing about fake news worldwide, but scholarly papers on the subject has been much less. Several academics did publish a few peer-reviewed research on the topic, but not enough. Entities such as the Poynter Institute, the First Draft Partner Network, a collective of newsrooms across the globe, and some social media companies and fact-checking bodies are in the forefront of understanding and containing fake news.

It would not be an exaggeration if one states that fake news is becoming all-pervasive. Examples of fake news are so pervasive in our media now. More and more cases are coming up, of established new organisations falling for false news. To pick an example, let's look at the Paris attacks of November 2015. Several media outlets carried a selfie photo of Canadian Sikh Veerender Jubbal, terming him a possible leader of the attacks. Europe's popular newspaper La Razón (The Reason), news agency ANSA and Sky TG24 carried Jubbal's photo. Later, it turned out that the photo was manipulated. Sky TG24's Twitter profile, which 20 lakh people followed at that time, continued to carry the photo even nine days after the incident. It is obvious that the news would have been consumed by several hundreds of people.

This incident, and many similar others, brought to light the immediate need to trace and trash fake news in the real time. Delays can cause serious personal, social and economic damage. As Claire Wardle, research director at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, wrote on First Draft News, news organisations risk losing audience to such lies if they don't fight it as and when such misinformation is leaked. Of course, the easy way to check fake news is by asking all readers to check online (Google search, mainly) all the images they share on social media. But that is not going to be a workable solution.

It can be easily said that the challenge in front of concerned citizenry, media houses and regulators is gargantuan when it comes to fighting fake news. Here a question arises: How exactly to fight fake news? There is a consensus on a few steps. First, news outlets should build dedicated services to debunk misinformation. Now many news organisations have begun such services to check fake news. Le Monde's Décodeurs, Libération's Désintox, Buzzfeed France's Vérifié, France 24's Observateurs or Hoaxbuster.com are some examples. Next, news organisations must support readers and reporters who try to analyse and expose fake news. Volunteers are the key. In the age of social media, the amount of misinformation being circulated across the globe is too wide and deep. So it requires concerted efforts to check that.

### **Direct Impacts**

Media studies experts say fake news have influenced two recent, epochal events: Brexit and the US Presidential elections. To pick a specific instance, a study from NYU and Stanford, have found that people shared fake stories supporting Trump at least 30 million times on social media during the presidential election campaigns. In comparison, fake pro-Hillary Clinton stories were shared at least 7.6 million times. It was reported that fake news has become an industry with huge business potential during the recent American President elections. Writing in *The Wired*, Samanth Subramanian has exposed a boutique industry in Macedonia where fake news outlets flourish as a business. Media reports had revealed that a Macedonian small town of Veles where only 55,000 people resided had at least 100 pro-Trump websites registered there. Most of these websites were filled with sensationalist and fake news. Macedonia is just an example of fake news hubs. Such fake news factories are spread across the globe, influencing the thinking processes of millions. Why this trend is alarming is because studies have shown that people with moderate views would be more satisfied by the fake news shows coverage than were liberals. And this doesn't augur well for democracies across the globe.

As the US has proved, elections are a direct example of the impact of fake news. Media experts have pointed out that the average US adult person read one or perhaps several fake news articles during the recent Presidential election period, with higher exposure to pro-Trump articles than pro-Clinton articles. How much this affected the election results depends on the effectiveness of fake news exposure in changing the way people vote. As one benchmark, studies show that exposing voters to one additional television campaign advertising changes vote shares by about 0.02 percentage. That means if one fake news article were about as persuasive as one TV campaign ad, the fake news in would have changed vote shares by an amount on the order of hundredths of a percentage point. This is much smaller than Trump's margin of victory. Of course, there are many reasons why a single fake news story could have been more effective than a television commercial. But in general, fake news, convincingly placed, can sway poll results, as the US presidential elections have showed.

Fake news works in quirky ways. If it were true that the Catholic Pope endorsed Trump (as many fake news pieces had claimed during American election campaign), this

fact would be significantly and probably move a rational voter's beliefs more than the information contained in a typical campaign advertisement. Most media outlets and agencies don't have a fake news database, if they have one, that would be incomplete, and the effect of the stories it omits could also be significant. There are many ways in which this speculative estimate becomes conservative; this could overstate the relevance and impact of fake news. A mistake most analysts make when they consider the number of stories voters read regardless of whether they believed them is that they do not account for collateral damages in the sense that such news gradually and steadily influenced people's behaviour towards several other allied factors.

Social media platforms and advertising networks have faced some pressure from consumers to reduce fake news on their systems. For example, both Facebook and Google are removing fake news sites from their advertising platforms on the grounds that they violate policies against misleading content. Further, Facebook has taken steps to identify fake news articles, flag false articles as disputed by third party fact-checkers, show fewer potentially false articles in users' news feeds and help users avoid accidentally sharing false articles by notifying them that a story is disputed by third parties before they share it. Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg had initially disputed allegations that fake news spread on the social media had tilted the election for Trump. According to him, more than 99 per cent of what people see on Facebook authentic. But later Zuckerberg joined Google in taking the most serious steps to crack down on purveyors of phony stories by cutting off a critical source of funding — the ads that online platforms have long funneled to creators of popular content.

The move has raised new questions about long-standing claims by Facebook, Google and other online platforms that they have little responsibility to exert editorial control over the news they deliver to billions of people, even when it includes outright lies, falsehoods or propaganda that could tilt elections. Such claims became increasingly unsustainable amid reports that News Feed and Trending Topics, two core Facebook products, had promoted a number of false, misleading political stories, such as the above cited article saying Pope Francis had endorsed Trump, which was shared by over 100,000 users. The number one Google hit for the search "final election count" during the US presidential elections last year was an article from a relatively unknown website claiming that Trump had won the popular vote by 700,000 votes.

### **Studies on Fake News**

To understand the gravity of the fake news phenomenon in recent global scenario, it would be important to understand the trends in academic investigation into fake news. In "Displacing Misinformation about Events: An Experimental Test of Causal Corrections", Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler argue that misinformation can be very difficult to correct and may have lasting effects even after it is discredited. One reason for this persistence is the manner in which people make causal inferences based on available information about a given event or outcome. As a result, false information may continue to influence beliefs and attitudes even after being debunked if it is not replaced by an alternate causal explanation.

In "Rumors and Health Care Reform: Experiments in Political Misinformation", Adam J. Berinsky explores belief in political rumors surrounding the health care reforms enacted by Congress in 2010. Refuting rumors with statements from unlikely sources can, under certain circumstances, increase the willingness of citizens to reject rumors regardless of their own political predilections. Drawing upon research from psychology on 'fluency' — the ease of information recall — this article argued that rumors acquire power through

familiarity. Attempting to quash rumors through direct refutation may facilitate their diffusion by increasing fluency.

“Rumors and Factitious Informational Blends: The Role of the Web in Speculative Politics” by Andrew Rojecki and Sharon Meraz show that the World Wide Web has changed the dynamics of information transmission and agenda-setting. Facts mingle with half-truths and untruths to create factitious informational blends (FIBs) that drive speculative politics. They find that the web is not sufficient alone for spreading misinformation, but it leads the agenda for traditional media. They find no evidence for equality of influence in network actors.

“Analyzing How People Orient to and Spread Rumors in Social Media by Looking at Conversational Threads” by Arkaitz Zubiaga, et al shows, as breaking news unfolds people increasingly rely on social media to stay abreast of the latest updates. The use of social media in such situations comes with the caveat that new information being released piecemeal may encourage rumors, many of which remain unverified long after their point of release. Little is known, however, about the dynamics of the life cycle of a social media rumor. They show that the prevalent tendency for users is to support every unverified rumour.

“Deception Detection for News: Three Types of Fakes” by Victoria L. Rubin, Yimin Chen and Niall J Conroy discusses a fake news detection system aims to assist users in detecting and filtering out varieties of potentially deceptive news. The prediction of the chances that a particular news item is intentionally deceptive is based on the analysis of previously seen truthful and deceptive news. They discuss three types of fake news, each in contrast to genuine serious reporting, and weighs their pros and cons as a corpus for text analytics and predictive modeling. Filtering, vetting, and verifying online information continues to be essential in library and information science (LIS), as the lines between traditional news and online information are blurring.

In “When Fake News Becomes Real: Combined Exposure to Multiple News Sources and Political Attitudes of Inefficacy, Alienation, and Cynicism”, Meital Balmas assesses possible associations between viewing fake news (i.e., political satire) and attitudes of inefficacy, alienation, and cynicism toward political candidates. It was also demonstrated that perceived realism of fake news is stronger among individuals with high exposure to fake news and low exposure to hard news than among those with high exposure to both fake and hard news. Overall, this study contributes to the scientific knowledge regarding the influence of the interaction between various types of media use on political effects.

“With Facebook, Blogs, and Fake News, Teens Reject Journalistic ‘Objectivity’” by Regina Marchi examines the news behaviors and attitudes of teenagers, an understudied demographic in the research on youth and news media. Based on interviews with 61 racially diverse high school students, it discusses how adolescents become informed about current events and why they prefer certain news formats to others. The results reveal changing ways news information is being accessed, new attitudes about what it means to be informed, and a youth preference for opinionated rather than objective news. This does not indicate that young people disregard the basic ideals of professional journalism but, rather, that they desire more authentic renderings of them.

### **Indian Examples**

Back home in India, which seems to have become the new hub of fake news, misinformation spreads like wildfire, damaging companies and individuals alike. Right-wing groups and religious fundamentalists in the country pump in gigabytes of fake news

online which get penetrated offline channels as well. In this geography, WhatsApp is a big resource for fake information.

Just a few months ago, there was news doing rounds that the new rupee notes being printed after the demonetisation drive will feature a technology to help the fight black economy. A “nano-GPS chip” will allow authorities to track these notes anywhere in the world. Many media units took the story seriously. It was broadcast on Zee News TV, prompting the Reserve Bank of India to interfere and clarify that the news was fake. Another fake news was that of a Government move where people would be able to open bank lockers only under supervision by a government official.

### **Cost to Companies**

Fake news impacts corporates as well. A good example is how fake news affected global drinks giant Pepsi. During Q4 2016, Pepsi’s average sentiment score (which reflects its popular appeal) was slightly above neutral (5.5\*), indicating that the company was generally perceived positively in this market. However, there is a clear dip on 13th November, which is directly linked to the publication of the fake quotes in a widely-shared piece on The Last Refuge. This represents a 35 per cent fall below the average US sentiment score during Q4 and shows it was significantly ahead as the single most damaging incident for Pepsi.

This shows there was a clear impact on Pepsi’s domestic reputation, but how did the issue filter through to the company’s international reputation? In the weeks leading up to the fake news incident, Pepsi’s stock price averaged around \$106.58. Pepsi’s stock price took a significant hit on 10th November, the day the fake quotes initially started circulating. In the weekend that followed, the quotes were widely shared on social media, resulting in a further decline in share price when the markets re-opened on the 14th November. In the weeks following the circulation of the fake quotes, there is a clear difference between Pepsi’s sentiment trend and its stock price.

The sentiment towards Pepsi recovered well within five days, and its subsequent average reputation score has been higher than the months leading up to the fake news story. However, Pepsi’s stock price continued to decline for almost three weeks, before it began its recovery at the start of December. Even a month after the quotes were recognised as false, Pepsi’s stock price still trails its previous average. This indicates that if it is quickly refuted fake news may not cause lasting reputational damage, but the subsequent impact on stock price can take longer to restore.

And that's why digital marketing companies, corporates and news organisations are now brainstorming frantically to filter and fume fake news. Granted, it's not an easy task given the challenges fake news poses to human intelligence, in terms of identifying and classifying sources of news, fact-checking claims and verifying quotes and numbers. But it seems humans have found a suitable ally in artificial intelligence, which can help us trace and trash fake news.

### **The Numbers Game**

Armed with Big Data analytics, AI works in many layers here. At the outset, it does what it does best: find patterns. Most fake news follow similar patterns. They sensationalise even trivial information, skip citing sources for numbers and are first beamed from websites that lack credibility. AI tools can sift through millions of webpages in real time and set off alarm bells if they detect what could be cooked up news. That said, how 'exactly' AI works against fake news? For starters, there are a few tangible steps. It starts with rating webpages.



The AI programme will run a check in the news sources' URL and try to analyse its reputation. Of course an original news item from, say, a Financial Times is far more acceptable than a news report from an unknown portal that is produced from one of the content cottage industries in Macedonia. As the algorithm gets perfect, news organisations can have a repository of trustable sources of news and the rating process will get fine-tuned and will become faster.

The next step is crunching numbers. This is especially important in business news. Umpteen numbers of new items appear on the web detailing, falsely, financial performances of companies. These news pump half-baked data. AI helps analyse these numbers and put them in perspective and find correlations that help us ascertain their reliability. Language mapping is the next crucial stage in filtering fake news out. AI tools help detect unwanted sensationalism and wordplay in news and alert readers. Analysts have observed that fake news makers are mostly amateur content creators working for money or pushing a cause. They rarely manifest restraint when it comes to use of language. AI tools, especially those with NLP (natural language processing) capabilities can help here.

AI also helps in areas such as stance detection. That means to scan the copy and find out whether the author the story or the agency that has reported the news is in favour of or against the target of the news. This inference will help trace ulterior motives, say experts. Facebook, which is one of the most popular social media platforms where fake news spreads, is already using AI to fight fake news. The other two big players, Google and Twitter, are also developing and integrating AI plus Big Data tools into their information dissemination infrastructure.

### **AI at Play**

Other than the internal programmes of the big-ticket social media companies, several other small players have developed AI solutions that help check fake news. NewsWhip, a social media monitoring firm from Dublin, is helping several media companies sieve out fake news. Crowdtangle, a content discovery firm, also offers similar service. GoogleTrends, Hoaxy, PHEME, Snopes are some of the companies that offer AI-Big Data solutions to fight fake news.

Even the academic world has sat up and taken note of the fake news woes. In the US, the WVU Reed College of Media has tied up with the computer science department at the WVU Benjamin M Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, to host an AI Vs fake news course at its Media Innovation Center. Several other universities are following suit.

Experts expect AI in checking fake news will see more R&D activity given the way governments are pushing for clean news. Germany, for one, has approved plans to penalise social media companies more than 50 million dollars if they post fake news.

But one of the biggest challenges these companies are facing is, of course, of time. Analysing fake news real time is a big challenge. It requires highly potent machine learning skills and rapid-fire analytics for data veracity. Here, the companies hope crowdsourcing will help them significantly. Communities and developers spread across the globe are now developing tools, small and big, to track fake news and alert readers and news media. Big players like Google want to help compile and coordinate these efforts.

Another worry is algorithm going wrong. AI experts say there are possibilities, statistically speaking, for AI tools to produce two kinds of bad results -- false negative and false positive. Simply put, this means an AI tool could stamp a fake news item as not fake

and term real news as fake. But that's just an initial hiccup. As we move on, and with more and more data and news getting cleansed, we will soon be able to kick in a world free of fake news. And, hey, that's not fake news!

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### Web Resources:

<https://www.ft.com/content/64fdb23e-badc-11e6-8b45-b8b81dd5d080>

<https://www.wired.com/2017/02/veles-macedonia-fake-news/>



# Revisiting New Media and the Cyber Public Sphere of Kerala

Communication & Journalism Research  
5(1) pp 47-53  
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masscomhod@uoc.ac.in  
ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## Abstract

Today, we live amidst a digital, new media revolution. The new media have triggered revolution of a different genre in the country. Every technology with its own capabilities in terms of sound, image and live interaction has played a key role in transforming the media while replacing or subliming with the invention of newer or other media. The emergence of the internet has offered a digital platform that enables to interact with all the communication features – print, sound and videos. Social networking platforms such as Facebook and Google, blogs and microblogs like Twitter, content communities such as YouTube, collaborative content creation projects such as Wikipedia enhance the communication possibilities of people. Globally, the Arab Spring and Anna Hazare movement emerged victorious by dint of new social media like Twitter and Facebook. New media serve as the greatest manifestation of democratized media culture. The street campaigns of civil societies, anti-war campaigns etc. create a rhetorical public sphere according to Gerald Hauser. Truly, new media far surpasses any traditional media in terms of accountability and social vigilance.

## Key words

New Media, Public Sphere, Social Media, Cyber Public Sphere.

Today the global mediascape is abuzz with a digital, new/social media revolution. Social Media is the most influential and unparalleled tool to share information, connect people across cultures and formulate opinions. The great debate kickstarted by Marshal McLuhan and Reymond Williams in the 60s and 70s focused on the role of technology and sociology in defining the cultural dynamics of media. Theodore Adorno and Walter Benjamin too have debated in 1940s about the democratization of culture industry. McLuhan vociferously opined that technology rather than sociology determined the cultural politics of media. This technological determinism faced the music of media critics. But Williams firmly believed in social constructionism rather than technology. But traversing through print, audio, visual media and reaching new media in the 1980s, the discourses on technology and social dynamics have become more relevant. But it seems paradoxical that a section of the new media which is an offshoot of technological revolution itself is termed as social media. Modern media can be categorized into traditional, industrial and mass media where as new media comprise computer-assisted media and the digital versions of modern media. The cultural politics of new media can be analysed only in the backdrop of

globalization, post-communist world order, extension of internet and other social, economical and technological factors.

A study conducted in Britain in 2002 revealed that as an edutainment medium, internet has acquired the third position behind television and radio. Meanwhile, newspaper and news magazine have been subjugated to fourth and fifth positions. Internet singlehandedly executes the functions performed by newspaper, television and radio. Truly, each traditional medium absorbs the user-friendly facets of internet and survives by virtue of it. With the advent of Facebook in 2004, the dimensions of social media have entered a new phase in its existence. In a span of 10 years, the number of Facebook members reached 155 crores. Consequently, popularity of online media has outwitted print media. The online media coupled with social media have jointly created a new political public sphere which defined the cultural contours of the first decades of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Truly, the new media have carved the cultural history of that quarter century punctuated by post-modernism, globalization and post-cold war world order. Generally, the 'new' concept in new media has been defined by two factors. On the one hand, it restructures the mass media character of modern media. New media communication is not at all a linear communication process involving one sender and so many receivers. Secondly, unlike modern media, new media have got its own social telecasting methods. Multimediality, hypertextuality, interactivity, convergence, immediacy, digitization and virtuality are its characteristic features.

The technological leaps in the field of communication, turning points in medical science, nuclear science etc., blog literature which proclaimed the death of a literary editor, online media which silenced the print media, electronic book-newspaper publishing, fully automated digitization, the unexplored realms of knowledge - experiences unraveled by research, the cyber underworld which defeats the world through religious fundamentalism to pornography etc comprise the prospects and dimensions of new media. Social networking sites form another parallel media sphere. Social media are computer-mediated tools which allow people to create, share or exchange information, career interests, ideas, pictures and videos in networks and virtual communities. Close on the heels of the technological revolution, the true democratization of media culture takes place in new media. Though modern media have been basically capitalistic and market-oriented, new media are cost-effective and extensive unlike legacy media like newspapers, magazines, books, radio, music and television. Several media studies have analysed the democratized media culture opened up by internet. Internet has revamped the traditional media, outwitted the space-time-geo-political limitations, overwhelmed the establishment sanctions and curtain-raised the media possibilities of participation and intervention. New Media brought forth a shift from modernity to post-modernity. New media effected a thorough replacement in the West of an industrial age of manufacturing by a 'post-industrial' age of information. It's a term which encapsulates broad cultural resonance rather than a narrow technical or specialist application. New media enhances the dissolving of national boundaries in terms of trade, corporate organization, customs and cultures, identities and beliefs.

According to media researchers, the greatest social impact of new media is the creation of a global political ambience for a liberal democracy. Stalwarts like Russel Newman defines new media in this backdrop. 'New media enables the democratization of the creation, publishing, distribution and consumption of media content through computer technology' (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003, 322). This is nothing but the new media politics which is synonymous with cyber democracy, digital democracy, electronic democracy, participatory democracy etc. Douglas Kelner opines that new media have manufactured a post-modern democratic public sphere. Several new media researchers expostulate the varied and new dimensions of citizenship and formulate the possibilities of democratic consciousness unfurled by new media. Howard Rheingold argues that new media

challenges the governments which put the traditional media in fetters and executes citizen-oriented democracy (James Curran, 2006 : 278). Manuel Castells terms the post-modern new media world as 'network society' and argues for the social vigilance of new media rather than the dereliction of modern mass media which thrive on entertainment. This society has been 'structured in its dominant functions and processes around networks' (Castells 2000: 133). Castells believes that "it is open source, free posting, decentralized broadcasting, serendipitous interaction, purpose-oriented communication and shared creation that find their expression on the internet." The initial euphoria in the 1990s of those who saw the internet as a qualitatively different and egalitarian type of journalism , media, culture and politics faded. Frank Beacham who praised internet as a public sphere outside corporate or government control in early 1995 started lamenting the next year witnessing the plight of internet. Internet shifted 'from being a participatory medium that serves the interests of the public to being a broadcast medium where corporates deliver market-oriented information. Interactivity has been reduced to little more than sales transactions and email'. Even 'Fortune' magazine regrets about the objectives of internet. 'It's a far, far cry from the cherished vision of the internet as a public network involving the free exchange of ideas.' But we can never undermine the positive underpinnings of internet.

Edward S Herman and Robert McChesney have waged criticism against the monopolization of multinational media conglomerates like Google, Yahoo etc. Much criticism has been leveled against the various repercussions of internet. Ziauddin Sardar argues that in the West, the newest region to be colonized is cyberspace. Another major criticism in 2015 has been the issue of Facebook colonizing digital spaces. This happened after the controversy over net neutrality. Peter Golding enumerates three factors as enhancing the popularity of internet media. Enhanced democracy, empowerment of citizenry through information and through the availability of educational gadgets and improved communication among world populace. Golding blatantly blurts out that internet has changed the global village into digital market. He also believes that the economic discretions will gradually give way to cultural and political upheavals (Paul Morris, 2003, 809). Nonetheless, he brings forth a relevant proposition regarding new media. The question reveals that whether new media constructs electronic democracy or cyber individualism. It's a known fact that television had skyrocketed the hopes of tele-democracy. Golding also reminisces the changes accrued by the election process and politics through television campaigning which had evolved as an electronic referendum. In the domestic realm too, internet has been relevant for civil society. In India, a small tech-savvy intelligentsia used internet to record and debate the social issues of the time. Internet activism has been revealed in the online news portal, Tehelka, which conducted a series of sting operations in 2001 that exposed corruption in defence deals. As a consequence, the government launched extensive raids into the affairs of Tehelka, followed by legal procedures. Meanwhile, the mushrooming of cybercafés happened in the nooks and corners of India which helped the accessing of global pornography industry spurred by the internet. An internet law was passed in 2000 which instituted penalties for spreading or viewing pornography in India.

Peter Golding is also wary about the challenges faced by cyber democracy. Representational democratic institutions like trade unions, social groups, political parties, pressure groups etc face threats in the era of digital democracy. In such situations, representational democratic institutions will disappear resulting in a kind of mob/crowd democracy. The citizen-rebellions kickstarted globally by social media also face the same kind of criticism. New media institutions assert only the kind of democracy formed after digital literacy. Consequently, an individualistic political culture gets formulated. Digital divide is a concept which evolved out of the social experiences of new media. It has been in the mid-90s that Bill Gates prophesied the advent of an information super highway which

had been instigated by the dramatic overhaul created by Gutenberg through his printing machine. Gates envisioned this knowledge gateway as the regal highway of a new world order. But cyber society has been categorized into the private – public sectors who pay ransom to the information super highway owners, information hardware manufacturers, information software owners and information customers. But the civil society comprises people who are given entry into the information super highway and those who are denied permission into the information super highway.

Print and the early electronic media have disseminated communication as a linear progression from the sender to the receiver while television made it two dimensional. But new media have transformed the communication into the interactive mode. The primary structure of new media itself is interactive and the same message could be channelized to any number of receivers. Internet has even undermined television and emerged as a powerful mass medium with fantastic dimensions. In 1998 Matt Drudge had posted a message in his website. It has been regarding the unholy affair between Bill Clinton and an employee in White House and how 'Newsweek' had denied the publishing of the report. But the magazine retorted that it has been in search of more factual data. But the post sent by Drudge had shaken the global news world for two years. Truly, internet still intimidates the global news world. Internet has dramatically reduced the popularity of newspapers and emerges as the prominent medium for entertainment, knowledge and information. With the advent of broadband connectivity, internet enhances the news value of issues and events by sound and videos instead of still pictures. But the lion's share of the news in the internet does'nt consider news sources, authenticity of news, factuality of news, believability, privacy etc. But globally, it reigns supreme as a prominent news medium.

### **Genesis of Public Sphere**

The most popular theory in the backdrop of social analytics is the theoretical construct 'public sphere' propounded by the German philosopher and social scientist Jurgan Habermas. Public sphere discussions got animated in the post-renaissance European capitalist societies. As a political analysis, it also triggered the social experiences created by print-oriented modernism. Habermas had explained the genesis of public sphere by explaining 'reason' as the foundation of wisdom and 'critical debate' as the base of democracy. In 1956, Habermas joined Frankfurt University as a researcher. But after having difference of opinion with the renowned Marxist thinker Max Hokheimer left the place. Meanwhile Habermas had submitted his doctoral thesis in the same university titled 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society'. But as Hokheimer has been staunchly against the opinions and standpoints of Habermas, he could'nt get his doctorate. Later he submitted the thesis in Marburg University where he applied for the post of Professor. The thesis created ripples in the academic circles of Germany in 1962 when it was published in book form. Nevertheless, Theodore Adorno invited Habermas to Frankfurt University in 1964 to take up the vacancy of Hokheimer and he adorned the academic chair till 1993. In 1989, Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence had translated the book into English and it became the cynosure of academic intelligentsia. Today the history, literature, media, sociology, political studies following the Marxist, post-Marxist, feminist, post-structuralist, post-colonial stylistics cannot but depend on Habermasian public sphere. Habermas had meticulously initiated the discussions regarding the creation of public sphere in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Germany, France and Britain. They had built up their public sphere based on several social echelons pertaining to sociology, history, politics, government laws, religion, philosophy, media, literacy movement, literature, economic structure etc.

Certain media critics argue that the new democratic culture mistaken as the creation of new media is actually the product of new journalism (David Hesmondhalgh, 2008). By weakening governments and by upholding civil rights, New Journalism had initiated consistent efforts to ensure people's participation in the democratic process. Television had ably supported this venture. Jeff Peary had named this tendency as 'critical professionalism'. If Watergate - Vietnam controversies and the media upsurges in Europe and Latin America can be viewed as a continuum of new media, political analysis as done by social networking sites would become easier today. The television news by questioning and challenging the power of governments has formulated a 'political-receiver society' which could be more creatively addressed by new media. Today, the new media have been eked out as the most vibrant genre of media activism. The Euro-American neo-liberal economic policies coupled with the Afro-Asian supremacy have made this a reality.

Miklos N Szilagy had observed that 'the information revolution will change the political system automatically. The commercialization of computer networks will create a situation when everyone will be connected to everyone else with the ease of using a telephone today. In this environment, ideas will be exchanged free of charge and with the speed of light.' He opines that representative democracy will be collapsed and will be replaced by democracy of the information age. This new democratic politics created by cyber media has been termed as 'cyberspace democracy' by Ziauddin Sardar. Sardar observes that this situation is a byproduct of individualism and dissipation. Social Media web 2.0 has formed after the first wave of websites which exclusively provided information alone. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Henlin have defined Social media as 'a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Social media comprise the rare communication spheres formulated by individuals to communicate their ideas and messages based on their interactive possibilities. Through technological, social and cultural revolutions, social media define the contemporary world order. It re-explores the world consciousness irrespective of national and regional boundaries.

### **Public Sphere of Kerala**

The active participation of new/social media in the public sphere of Kerala deserves special mention. It's difficult to comprehend the public sphere without studying the politics and prospects of new media. The invention of printing and the monopolization of visual media have influenced the public sphere. It's high time we re-snatched the Kerala public sphere from the octopus-grip of media imperialism. Individual blogs, interactive media fraternity groups like Facebook, online journals which exerts influence on the political and cultural realms, news portals run by newspapers, news channels or independent agencies serve as the four broad spheres which recapitulates the politics of new media interventions of malayalees. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new media complements the social, political thoughts and critical interventions purported through the print and visual media. Individual blogs which regularly problematizes the malayalee life, individual and collective posts, comments, sharing etc in Facebook which creates political repercussions, those who unravel their varied life experiences, contemporary and academic interventions in the socio - political spheres, socially relevant civic campaigns etc serve as a cross - section of post-modern Kerala's cultural and political milieu. The increased presence of youth and women, the empowerment of dalit and subaltern societies, the anti-communal and secular attitudes, participatory democratic consciousness, the ever-vigilant social defence etc enhance the possibilities of the formation of a civil society in Kerala. The public sphere here on the one hand repletes with the multivocality of new media politics and on the other hand teems with religious and ideological fundamentalism and anti-dalit tendencies.



The online portals of mainstream newspapers like Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhumi, Madhyamam and other dailies, news channels of Asianet, Reporter etc, independent news portals, cultural journals, Facebook pages of Free Thinkers, Right Thinkers, Krishibhoomi etc enrich the online, social media sphere of Kerala. The presence and influence of independent new media are more relevant than the new media interventions of print and electronic media. The reach of the new media editorials, features, articles, interviews, discussions, debates, columns, literary compositions etc is unimaginable. But the influence and power of the new media far surpasses the clout of print media. The continuous social media interventions of Sri Thomas Issac and Sri V T Balram (whatever be the topic) create repercussions in Legislative Assembly, in the top echelons of political parties, in the civic society and also in electoral politics. They along with other social media writers get thousands of likes, comments, shares and followers. New media have also ably popularized strikes like 'nilppu samaram', 'chumbana samaram' and other regional and national revolts. The Facebook page 'Munnar' had intervened culturally and ecologically in the social consciousness of Kerala. These interventions have been discussed even in the National Green Tribunal. The basic change effected by this technological media revolution is that Malayalee had become an indispensable part of the networked global society. The geographical boundaries and distances have become irrelevant as most of the popular new media writers are not residing in Kerala. Writers like Anand, Arundhati, Murali Thummarukudy, T T Sreekumar, Murali Vettathu, Dayal Karunakaran etc are examples. But they actively intervene in the public sphere of Kerala. New Media has a crucial role in the creation of a democratic, secular and cultural public sphere in the world.

The Habermasian concept of political public sphere exhibits the underpinnings visible from early missionary journalism to later political journalism. Based on the journalistic responsibilities of Swadeshabhmani Ramakrishna Pillai, Dr K N Panikker had initiated discussions on the formulation of a Malayalee public sphere. The most relevant social impact of political journalism gets manifested in public opinion according to Habermas. Swadeshabhmani tops the list of journalists who had been successful in creating this social impact. Even in the 19th century, Kerala had newspaper owners and journalists who sincerely proclaimed the responsibilities of newspapers in the formation and execution of public opinion. The interests of Devji Bhimji, the newspaper owner and Kandathil Varughese Mappilai, the newspaper editor in starting Kerala Mithram, in 1881 have been to wipe out the anomalies taking place in the Justice Depts of Kochi. The criticism leveled by G P Pillai through newspapers against the government has elevated him as the Father of Political Rebellions. The splendid trail of journalists from Chengalath Kunhirama Menon to Kesari Balakrishna Pillai and a host of other editors who led the National Movement have created a political public sphere which resurrected the ideals of modernism, democratic consciousness and nationalism in Kerala. The public sphere of Kerala comprises the communicative sphere punctuated by secularism, democracy, science, nationalism etc. Women and Dalits always constitute the subaltern public sphere. Here, the world of ideas and the societal representations have resulted in the formation of a peculiar public sphere. Nancy Frazer had employed the term 'subaltern counter public' to denote these downtrodden groups.

Habermas himself has enumerated the places of public discussions in Europe as saloons, coffee houses, clubs etc. Likewise in Kerala, barber shops, tea shops, reading rooms, factories etc served as places to form public opinion based on newspaper reading. Also, during the 1970s, drama halls, fine arts halls, cinema theatres etc have created a popular, democratic, cultural and modern public sphere. Today, the world and the public sphere have become wider with television talk shows, news discussions, blog debates, Facebook - Twitter campaigns etc. The possibilities of this post-modern public sphere demand serious analyses and debates.

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# Many Souls and Many Worlds: The Kabir Documentaries of Shabnam Virmani

Communication & Journalism Research  
5 (1) pp 55-63  
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ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## Abstract

Shabnam Virmani's Kabir Project is a detailed expedition into the world of the 15th-century mystic poet and philosopher. Through songs, images, and conversations, Virmani builds an atmosphere where the many words of Kabir are explored. The documentaries explore the spiritual and socio-political meanings in Kabir's works. Virmani, an artist-in-residency project at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design, and Technology in Bangalore, travels to pluralist and, hence, diverse musical landscapes, meeting connoisseurs of Kabir's art. This article uses a visual analysis method to review and analyse Virmani's four documentaries created for the Kabir Project.

## Key words

Documentary Films, Kabir Project, Kabir's Poetry

The documentary film the realities on reels realistically depicts the realities. They are the objective journeys towards the subjective truth. With perseverance and patience, several documentary makers have chased the hues and tones of life in diverse manners. Shabnam Virmani is one among them. She chases the soul and songs of Kabir, the 15th-century mystic poet, and philosopher. She has succeeded in her enterprise through the four documentary films that are an integral part of the Kabir Project. Contrary to the inherent dryness of the documentary genre, these journeys are musical, poetic, and touching.

In 1987, Alexander Frater experimented with such a chasing in pursuit of the Indian monsoon and filmed the same for BBC. Following the several 'bhavas' of the Indian monsoon, Frater's expedition and its captivating narrative reveal the exotic and frequently astonishing findings of an ambitious and seductively romantic adventure (IMDB). He started it from Thiruvananthapuram's beaches, traversing Delhi, Calcutta, and all of Bangladesh. The outcome is an illumination of nature's enormous influence on the lives and culture of India's people. Similarly, Anand Patwardhan, India's most internationally acclaimed documentary filmmaker, chased the disasters of nuclear tests and filmed them under the title *War and Peace (Jung aur Aman, 2002)*. That was a four-year trip made due to the most famous/in-famous nuclear experiments conducted in May 1998 in Pokaran, Rajasthan. Patwardhan has been a traveller for the whole of his career, and he visits hotspots well before news of a catastrophe reaches the media (Halberstadt, 2004).

In *War and Peace*, Patwardhan conducted an expedition through India, Pakistan, and Japan in search of the victims of nuclear nationalism. Similarly, Shabnam Virmani journeys through India, Pakistan, and the USA to find out about real friends of Kabir and their musical souls. Both documentary makers extensively use rural/folk music to proclaim their statements and locate and encourage alternative political/cultural folks remaining in India as a safety valve against communalism and fascism. Similarities could be seen in the style and techniques of filmmaking as well. Even in interview scenes, they remain unseen as interviewers, and their sounds and narrations become their signatures. Both emphasized participatory and observational documentary techniques.

Documentaries can be categorized into six modes: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative (Nichols, 2010). Shabnam Virmani's documentaries on Kabir fall and fit in all modes; they are poetic and expository, observational and participatory, and reflexive and performative. From some angles, they are objective and neutral views of the Indian cultural setting. Nevertheless, often, they take an activist approach and make explicit political statements. Documentary films depicting culture, religion, arts, and literature are not new to the Indian audience. The documentary film on Indian Gypsies of Rajasthan depicts the Gypsy culture and its identity politics. Several films with Buddhist themes are also present as precursors to this cultural/religious genre.

### **Why Kabir Project?**

The Kabir Project, which began in 2003, offers via songs, images, and discussions the experiences of trips and inquiries into the spiritual and socio-political resonances of Kabir's poetry: "We journey through a stunning diversity of social, religious and musical traditions which Kabir inhabits, exploring how his poetry intersects with ideas of cultural identity, secularism, nationalism, religion, death, impermanence, folk, and oral knowledge systems" (<http://www.kabirproject.org/>). The project is an artist-in-residence initiative conceptualized and started by Shabnam Virmani at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design, and Technology in Bangalore.

*The Kabir Project* was born in the context of the Gujarat massacre in 2002, which intensified the polarisation induced by religion and identity. When the Godhra event occurred, the filmmaker was residing in Ahmedabad and started to explore Kabir. "Immediately, Kabir seemed to call out, 'Sadho, dekho jag baurana! (Oh seekers, see the world's gone mad!)'. I instinctively felt, yes, this man is saying what I feel" (Virmani 2010). She found a healing voice in Kabir, and in a journey spanned six years; she chronicled the saint's poems and ideas by traveling across various locations in India and Pakistan. Apart from the four documentary films, several audio CDs of Kabir's songs sung by folk musicians were compiled, and some books also were published as part of the project. These documentaries were officially screened at a large festival, Kabir held in Bangalore in 2009 (Virmani, 2010; Abhinav, 2009, cited in Ancin, 2013).

It is believed that Kabir was born in Varanasi in a weaving family that had lately become Muslims. After mastering the family trade, he pursued religious activities under the tutelage of a Hindu guru and emerged as a teacher and bard. As he was illiterate, his poems and songs were circulated orally and collated by his pupils and fans (Hess, 2002). Kabir was against the caste/creed divide and fought against meaningless religious practices. His thesis was that one's ideas and actions are useless without significant personal experience and self-awareness. Virmani contemplates the poet: "Kabir himself is the perfect icon to reflect this, because he inhabits many cultures and opposing social paradigms, and yet refuses to be contained or defined by any one of them" (Virmani, 2010).

Kabir has developed his school of thought: Kabir's Nirguna School. He believes in an impersonal God. His devotion does not depend on the concept of God's "otherness" but instead on a clear sense of God and man's intrinsic oneness. His Nirguna-bhakti stems from the monistic stream of Hindu thought, which was as old as the Hindu concept of the Nirguna Brahman. According to Krishna Sharma, Kabir "is full of ridicule for those who have no knowledge of the true nature of bhakti but are called bhaktas and pride themselves in it" (Sharma, 1987).

### **Documentary Films.**

As mentioned earlier, Shabnam Virmani started her journey in 2003 in pursuit of the soul and songs of Kabir, and six years later, she came out with four documentary films. Her journeys ventured into pluralist and diverse musical settings, where she encountered ardent individuals who imbibed the poetry and meanings of Kabir into their lives. Each of the four documentaries travels through borders and imprints our mental landscapes (Virmani, 2010).

#### **1. *Chalo Hamara Des (Come to My Country)***

##### **Journeys with Kabir and His Friends.**

96.85 Minutes duration.

The film depicts the relationship of a rural Dalit folk singer, Prahlad Tipanya (The Kabir of rural Malwa), and an American scholar and translator, Linda Hess (The Kabir of urban America). The relationship mediated by Kabir emphasizes cross-cultural friendship. It "traverses hearts and minds, crossing bridges of understanding, despite difference" (Virmani, 2010).

The documentary begins with extreme close-up shots of the strings of the musical instrument, the Thambura. It was the beginning of an odyssey of a rural rock star Prahlad Tipanya, a famous folk singer and school teacher. He sings popular verses of Kabir *Hare, Kahaan Se Aaya, Kahaan Jaoge*, meaning "Where did you come from? Where are you going?" With that musical piece as the title song, the documentary maker begins her narration, not through her voice but with sub-titles: "*I was searching for Kabir- the 15th-century mystic poet whose songs are still sung all over north India. His songs beckoned to his "des"- a mysterious country where a million suns blaze. In some folk songs, I could hear the call of that elusive land.*"

With this, Shabnam follows Kabir through Tipanya, accompanying his Kabir bhajans and concerts held in near and far places, and talks to him extensively about his turn of Kabir during the intervals. She even stays at his home, chats with his wife Shanti, and explores her insights and perspectives on Kabir, which all become an enlightening experience for the viewers. Prahlad Tipanya introduces us to a shrine, a memorial to Kabir he built opposite his house. Citing the verses on the shrine's walls, he explains: "Kabir's vehicle is made of words."

The documentary camera takes us to the other side of the world, stating that one can enter Kabir's country through different doorways. We meet Prof. Linda Hess, a renowned and learned Kabir scholar, at the Department of Religious Studies/Buddhist Studies, Stanford University, California. She refers to Kabir's poem: "In India, it is literature, but more than that, it is oral, performative, musical, living utterances."

Then we meet Ram Prasad Aradiya & Group at Ghunsi Village. They enthusiastically testify to the role and influence of Prahlad Tipanya in democratizing Kabir.

They say that when Prahlad sang, the audience was enthralled, and even youths were attracted to Kabir. Some saw Kabir as a Dalit icon and compared him with Ambedkar. The documentary travels to Banaras, UP, with Linda Hess and Tipanya. The blend of music with beautiful visuals of rituals gives the audience a meditating experience. Prahlad Tipanya sings throughout the boat journey, and Linda shares her nostalgic memories of Banaras while she was chasing Kabir in her prosperous research days. Meeting with Ganga Sharan Shastri, the mahant (Cleric) of the Kabir Panth sect whom Linda knew in her early days in Banaras, is a different encounter. He has been compiling Kabir's poetry into a book titled *The Maha-Bijak of Kabir*. They vigorously argue about the spiritual as well as poetic aspects of Kabir. The documentary cuts to a foreign trip of Tipanya with Linda to various parts of the USA, organized by their friends of Kabir. Tipanya leads long sessions of Kabir concerts, and the American audience is enthralled.

The documentary ends with informal singing sessions of Tipanya. The filmmaker also joins with her inherent singing skills. We rarely see Shabnam Virmani's face in films—only on one or two occasions. Sometimes we see her shadows holding the camera on her shoulder, and often we listen to her humble voice. They sing the meaningful verses of Kabir zealously: “*A boat was made of paper*

*Then filled with a ton of iron  
The true Guru will get it to the shore  
A saint's words are calling out to you  
In your own body see the light.....”*

## **2. Had-Anhad (Bounded-Boundless)**

### **(Journeys with Ram and Kabir)**

102.18 Minutes duration

Focussing on the communal harmony envisaged by Kabir, the documentary probes into the depth of the Hindu-Muslim and India-Pakistan divide created by religion and nationalism. It informs audiences of their common history with the neighbouring Muslim countries from the perspective of intercultural dialogue and of “bonds that are deeper than blood” (Virmani, 2010). This journey is in pursuit of the real Ram, the Kabir's Ram.

The opening scene is at Ayodhya. Even after a decade of demolition incidents, the divide created by it is still profound. The filmmaker wants to know about it and talks to people who stand in front of a shop selling video CDs of the Babri Masjid demolition. The people who talk to her argue vigorously in favour of the incident. They see Muslims as cruel invaders and opine they deserve humiliation and atrocities. The salesman also substantiates that the CDs are sold like hotcakes. The documentary maker clears her stance by cutting to the song of Prahlad Tipanya on Kabir's Ram: “*There is no place without Ram.*”

We meet Mukhtiar Ali, a Mirasi Folk singer from Pugal village in Western Rajasthan. He shares the experience of singing Kabir and other Sufi pundits. He says Muslim pundits and clerics attack Sufi songs and poems, citing that they are anti-religious. He asks that if God does not like it, why did he create singers and poets on earth? He sings Kabir's lines:

*“Reading book after book,  
This world went to dogs!  
No one became a learned one,  
The one who studied the four letters of “love” was the real wise one.”*

He further criticizes the attitude of people who search for Kabir without understanding the real meaning of Kabir. He asks them to introspect into themselves to find the real Kabir in them:

*“Why cry, Kabir, Kabir?  
Be aware of yourself!  
Get the five senses in control,  
And you’re Kabir himself!”*

Mukhtiar Ali’s father, Vasaye Khan, and his sons join the Kabir singing. That shows the generation link of his family with Kabir.

The documentary also traces the evolution of the stories of Kabir’s birth and death and the myths attached to them. People give different versions of it, as do the clerics of both Hindu and Muslim sects. Then it follows a theatre group in Indore doing a play on Kabir who wishes only to focus on his humanist aspects than religious myths. The writer-turned activist Krishna Nath quotes Kabir:

*“In the market stands Kabir  
Flaming torch in hand!  
Burn down your home  
Then come, walk with me!”*

He challenges the contradiction of religious sects to put him in their rigid frames. He states that Kabir is the man who has set out to burn down people’s houses, but they are trying to put him in a house.

The camera then exposes the ridiculous changing-of-guards ceremony on the Wagah border between India and Pakistan and warns about the intensity of division that causes among the people of both nations. After the third attempt, the film crew enters Pakistan through the Wagah border and meets Fariduddin Ayaz, the famous Pakistani Qawwali singer living in Karachi. He says he has read Kabir in great depth; not only read him but also has met Kabir. He has seen Kabir, not in the literal sense. He says that “Kabir is my subject; he is my topic. I am not willing to bargain with anyone on Kabir. I won’t compromise on Kabir....In order to understand Kabir, you must clear your mental level...wipe it clean...First, consider Kabir a human being. Then you might reach him. If you treat Kabir as a supernatural thing...You will never attain him.”

The filmmaker also meets another friend of Kabir in Pakistan named Shafi Faqir, a Manghaniar Folk singer who lives in the same city, Karachi. He also gives his account of Kabir and questions the negative attitude of religious clerics towards Sufis and their verses. The documentary ends with the long sessions of Qawwali recitals by both the stalwarts.

### **3. Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein (In the Market Stands Kabir)**

#### **(Journeys with Sacred and Secular Kabir)**

93.11 Minutes duration

This documentary's underlying quest was the filmmaker's tension regarding the conflicts between religious and secular Kabir. It reveals the contradiction of secular Kabir hijacked by the sacred Kabir. Further, It searches for the impulses and paradoxes that manifest in Prahlad Tipanya's life. He is a member of Eklavya, an alternative cultural



activist organization. At the same time, he chooses to join the Kabir Panth (religious group) as a mahant (cleric). The film chases "the opposing pulls of the individual and the collective, the spiritual and the social, the contrasting calls of autonomy and social authority, as he tries to conscientiously translate the ideas of Kabir into his own life practice" (Virmani, 2010).

The documentary begins with the rituals of a temple in Banaras. The Kabir Panthis organize Artis (Poojas) in the name of Kabir there. The filmmaker expresses her uneasiness and states, "I leave Kabir in his temple in Banaras - confused. Can this 'God' be my revolutionary?" Without giving up optimism, she meets Kiran Shani, director of a theatre group in Indore that works on a play on the "rebel street poet" Kabir. He recollects from the oral history that in Banaras, Kabir declared that they would gather only to sing. Then they would gather in public to eat together! Shani highlighted that like a lion, Kabir roared, people of all castes—upper, lower, even untouchables— would sit and eat together. Shani emphasized that one and only Kabir could take such a revolutionary stand in those times.

In 2003, Prahlad Tipanya decided to become a mahant for the Kabir Panth, embarrassing many of his friends and activists. The filmmaker decided to interview him on a trip to Damakheda village in Chhattisgarh for the annual festival of Kabir Panthis. Rituals and activities held there are similar to a festival of organized religion. When the spiritual head of the Dharamdasi branch of the Kabir Panth, Prakash Muni Naam Saheb, arrives, people receive him as a Godman and pay artis. During the interval, the filmmaker chats with the accompanists of Tipanya; Manoj, and Teju. They boldly say that Kabir had not asked anybody to build temples.

Besides Tipanya's family and accompanists, others were critical of his decision to become a Mahant, particularly activists of Eklavya group, a forum of Kabir singers in Malwa. He was also part of that group as a lead singer, and it lasted for eight years with the simple agenda of connecting Kabir's poetry with the everyday life of rural masses. The documentary provides a forum to express their views on 'sacred Kabir,' and they frankly express their disagreement with Tipanya's shift. We also meet Hiralal Sisodiya, an intellectual leader of Eklavya, and Narayan Delmia, the folk singer-turned activist.

The camera focuses on an annual event by Prahlad Tipanya in his home village, Lunyakhedi. As a Mahant, he leads the rituals and announces that they will start Chauka Arti after midnight. People queue in line to get his blessings. However, a year later, he was informed by the head of the Dharamdasi Panth that they revoked his authority to practice as a mahant. The documentary ends with the last encounter with him a year later, at the same annual event put up in his village. We meet Vivek Das, head of the Banaras sect of the Kabir Panth, an ex-Naxalite from Bihar. He says that most of Kabir Panthis support Hindutwa politics, and so does he. Another mahant underlines it and goes a step further, saying that Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, Sangh Parivar, and VHP are needed to protect our nation; likewise, a Kabir's army is required to teach traitors a lesson. Prahlad Tipanya strongly opposes this opinion arguing that armies can only kill people, invade a nation's borders or secure domination over others. He affirms that Kabir was not interested in domination, and he won people over through his experience, simplicity, and purity. The documentary ends with these words projecting optimism for those who believe in secularism, pluralism, and the very humanism.

#### **4. *Koi Sunta Hai (Someone is Listening)***

**(Journeys with Kumar and Kabir)**

96.13 Minutes duration

This documentary, the most musical and mind-blowing of the four, examines our limits on information, literature, art, and music. It shows how the musical maestro Kumar

Gandharva burns down the so-called citadel of classical learning. He dared to break the rule and walk over to the other side—the marginalized folk genre. The documentary maker appreciates this kind of radical move by Kumar Gandharva, which is crucial in social strife and politics: “And that is why his Kabir defies musical boundaries, is impossible to label like Kabir himself and is experienced by many listeners as so movingly authentic” (Virmani, 2010).

The documentary begins with the magical rendering of “*Sunta Hai Guru Gyani*” and acknowledges that Kumar Gandharva was the first to bring the 15th-century mystic poet Kabir to the classical stage in the 1970s. It attempts to explore his connection with Kabir through his disciples and friends. First, we meet PC Rele, the classical singer from Mumbai, and he was very excited to say that his guru Kumar was a conference artist at the age of 11, and he dominated the conference.

Vinay Hardikar, writer-turned-activist, delineates how Kumar embraced Nirgun (abstract). In 1947, when he was 23, Kumar was diagnosed with tuberculosis and told he could never sing again. On the doctor’s advice, he moved to Dewas town in Malwa, Madhya Pradesh, for its cleaner, unpolluted air. For about five years, he was thinking about music, not singing. Vinay Hardikar says that this experience of Nirgun churned in Kumarji’s consciousness. In the early 70s, it arrived on stage in a musical form neither Kabir nor classical had seen before. In another scene, we hear the words of Kashi Ba, a street fruit seller who recites Kabir through Kumar in her vital voice and reveals how both Kabir and Kumar moved poor people like her.

Again we listen to the magical voice of Kumar singing, “*Ud Jayega..Hans Akela.*” Ashok Vajpeyi, poet and friend of Kumar Gandharva, expounds on what Kabir meant and how it is perceived. He interprets the famous and most quoted verses of Kabir:

*In the market stands Kabir  
Flaming torch in hand!  
Burn down your house  
Then come, walk with me.*

He says that Kabir calls them to the market, not to the jungle, to meet him. Kabir asks them to free themselves of their attachments and cravings, get free of them, extinguish them, burn down their houses, and then join him in the street so that they can walk with him.

The documentary follows several urban musicians, artists, and authors whom Kumar’s Kabir inspired. One among them is Shubha Mudgal, Kumarji’s disciple. She sings for us: “*Hamare ram, rahim kareema keso...Alaha ram sath soyi* (meaning for me, Ram, Rahim, Karim, and Keshav are all perceptions of the same truth). Like Prahlad Tipanya, Shubha also reveals that there is a paradox in her personal life. Leaving Kabir, she got initiated into the Gaudiya sect and found pleasure in listening to the music of the Krishna temple. We meet Vidya Rao, a Tumri singer who enthusiastically and emotionally touches Kabir through Kumar. She sings, “*Yeh Tan Thaat Thambure Ka...*” and in her attitude of singing, we feel Kabir through her guru, Kumar Gandharva. Pratheeksha Sharma, a young classical singer, shares her experience in singing Kabir. She says that, in the initial years, she used to get very annoyed with Kabir, and she even assumed Kabir was a male chauvinist. Slowly, she understood more, and her inner journey became fierce. Later she realized that Kabir was not singling her out as a woman! Nevertheless, he addressed the soul in that way.

The film leaves urban friends of Kabir and meets rural folk. Rai Chand, an older man from Lunyakhedi, a village in Madhya Pradesh, recites a poem written by him about Kabir. Then it cuts to the Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad in Bhopal, where the folk-invented Kabir is meticulously documented. One thousand seven hundred fifty poems of Kabir in 10 dialects have been collected for publication. Dr Kapil Tiwari, the director of Parishad, romanticizes Kabir. He says that to sing Kabir's truth, one need not be a musical expert. Many maestros lack Kabir's life force, faith in Kabir, and a yearning to search for his truth. However, a folk singer, to some extent, lives Kabir.

We witness a very rare, emotional, and inspirational encounter between a guru and shishya when Prahlad Tipanya meets his folk guru Chenaji Maru. They sing together and recollect the good old days of long singing sessions. Leaving this reunion, a memorable singing session, Chenaji Maru passed away after one month of this shoot. Munda Das Chhattisgarh and Madhup Mudgal sing the songs of both Kabir and Kumar. Madhup Mudgal emotionally recollects the last moments with his guru Kumar Gandharva. When Kumarji passed away, several folk groups had come to his cremation. They sang the song "*Hum Pardesi*." Mudgal says that he was at the cremation ground and had never heard singing with such emotion: "The ambiance...it was dusk time...the light and that song I cannot explain. It was too much ... my hair stood on end".

The documentary cuts to another old rural folk singer, Dhulichand, from Kathbaroda village. He was asked since when he started to sing Kabir. His spontaneous reply was that he had been singing Kabir all his life. The documentary ends with the words and songs of Vijay Sardeshmukh, Kumar Gandharva's other disciple.

### **Craft and Camera**

Compared to the process of feature filmmaking, a documentary maker cannot go with a pre-planned blueprint. That is the main limitation of this genre and the advantage as well. The camera will lead a filmmaker to the subjects, and the imperfection of the camera sometimes adds to the meaning of those realistic films. Here in the above-mentioned four documentary films, a viewer could feel the beauty of the shaking of the camera. Natural lights and shades were well utilized in these films. As they are the journeys chasing a beautiful mind, the films extensively make use of point-of-view shots. In many scenes, we only see the shadows of the filmmaker, which emphasizes the objectivity and neutrality of her approach. Usual train shots with the background of popular Kabir songs illuminate the scenes and make the film musical.

Documentary films often give emphasis to aesthetic elements and capture the beauty and quality of rituals as well as the colours of our country. Beautiful visuals of objects from nature are occasionally used. The potentials of animations and graphics were also well-utilized. The dedication of the filmmaker is seen in her modes of traveling for filming. Sometimes she travels by car and sometimes as a fellow rider on a bike holding camera on her shoulder.

All four documentaries are well-edited. A blend of songs with words is made to avoid the monotony of long conversation segments, usually seen in many documentaries. Like in Patwardhan's documentaries, the creative use of folk music is another highlight. In the documentary *Koi Sunta Hai*, Kumar Gandharva lives again through his songs and memories of his friends and disciples. Even still photographs are intelligently used to make it lively. Another specialty is that documentary maker rarely interferes with the flow. The documentary moves only with subtitles, not with commentary.

## Conclusion

Shabnam Virmani's documentaries are the journeys in search of truth, songs, and souls of a legend who lived in the fifteenth century. Through the routes paved by the forerunners like Frater and Patwardhan, she chases Kabir. These films explore the astounding range of Kabir's social, religious, and musical traditions.

*Chalo Hamara Des* depicts the relationship between a rural Dalit folk singer, Prahlad Tipanya (The Kabir of rural Malwa), and an American scholar and translator, Linda Hess (The Kabir of urban America). *Had Anhad* probed into the depth of divides between Hindu and Muslim and India and Pakistan, created by religion and nationalism. *Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein* reveals the contradiction of secular Kabir hijacked by the sacred Kabir. It investigates the drives and paradoxes that manifest in Prahlad Tipanya's life. *Koi Sunta Hai* examines the limits we impose on knowledge, literature, art, and music. It shows how the musical maestro Kumar Gandharva burns down the so-called citadel of classical learning and blends his music by embracing Kabir. When Shabnam Virmani was asked the reason for choosing Kabir, she famously replied that she did not choose Kabir, but Kabir chose her. There lies the beauty and quality of her documentary films.

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## Acknowledgement:

Jamshy Kohinoor

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Chats with Jamshy on Sufi songs adopted in popular films have introduced me to the world of Kabir. The Kabir documentaries he shared helped me a lot while writing this article.



# ICT Infrastructure Development and Regional News Television: A Study of the Smart City Kochi (SCK) Project

Communication & Journalism Research

5(1) pp 65-75

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ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## **Abstract**

Infrastructure development constitutes one of the key requisites of development. Developing economies which embrace the globalisation process have to build physical infrastructure to catalyse manufacturing, production and exports. Information and Communication Technology products and solutions also require infrastructure to grow and flourish. Many Indian states including Kerala have identified the potential of ICTs and efforts have been made to develop adequate infrastructure. The success of these efforts lies in factors such as good governance, appropriate legal framework, flow of private capital and a favourable public opinion. This study analysed the public perception about the issues and factors associated with the Smart City Kochi (SCK), an IT infrastructure project in Kerala and its television coverage. Triangulation method was employed in this study which included a survey revealing the gaps in TV coverage of SCK and found insignificant influence of it in building public perception.

## **Keywords**

Infrastructure Development, ICT, Smart City Kochi, Malayalam TV News, Development Reporting

## **Introduction**

ICTs have emerged as an indispensable instrument in economic growth and development of a country and its people. It has elevated its stance from an enabler to a key player in modern development strategies. A quarter century long economic reforms in India have generated considerable wealth from ICTs and allied sectors with the help of young, educated population and appropriate policy framework. Although governments view ICT networks as prerequisite for investment, growth and economic development, Rice (2009) cautioned that political freedom, transparency and protection of property rights are central to technological transfer, diffusion and innovation in a country. Since 90's India had leapfrogged to global IT map by setting up software parks in many cities such as Hyderabad

and Bangalore and reaped the benefits of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) of companies in developed countries. The first software park in India, Technopark, was started in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala in 1991. However, even with an advantage of early start in electronics<sup>8</sup> and IT development the state could not make much headway in this emerging sector. In 2014, the Kerala's share of the total software exports<sup>9</sup> of the country stood at a meagre 2.02% whereas the neighbouring Karnataka state could garner 39.58%.

Factors such as administrative inefficiency, lack of atmosphere for investments and ease of doing business, high cost of labour, unfriendly policies etc. were attributed to the lacuna in ICT development in Kerala. Sustained efforts have been made by successive governments to change the perception on investor friendliness of the state since 2001. The Global Investors Meet (GIM) at Kochi (January 18&19, 2003) organised by the Government of Kerala led by Chief Minister A.K. Antony was the first major initiative in this direction. Many projects of ICT, tourism and other service sector industries were showcased by private investors in the GIM. This event was a platform to identify the issues of development for the state as well as brainstorm ideas for moving forward.

The mass media discourses at that time critically scrutinised many projects and programmes mooted by the government as well as private agencies. A broad consensus among major political fronts seemed to emerge after these exchanges in Kerala. One aspect of the consensus was the impracticability of heavy industrialisation of the state due to environmental issues and high population density. ICT, Tourism and other service sector industries were identified as the best options for Kerala's growth in future. Some other aspects which contributed to the emergence of consensus were the availability of skilled human resources, dearth of public finances for development programmes, lesser displacement and minimum requirement of land for development. It was also pointed out that IT is bereft of pollution and it can offer a credible alternative for depleting opportunities abroad for migrants from the state.

The second IT Park of the state was established at Kakkanadu, Kochi in 2004 in this context. A Dubai based infrastructure development company; Tecom (Technology, Electronic, Commerce and Media Free Zone Ltd.) which had built Dubai Internet City (DIC) approached the Government of Kerala with a proposal to build an Internet City at Kochi in the same year. The project proposal was to set up an IT park in 336 acres of land (100 acres of Infopark+136 acres of additional land in Kakkanad village + 100 acres of lease land in Puthancruz village) in Kochi with 9% equity participation for the state government, which invites IT, ITeS and BPO companies to Kerala. As per the provisions of IT policy 2001 of the state government, the Smart City was expected to create 33,000 new jobs in 10 years as they were provided with 100 acres of land free of cost<sup>10</sup>. The IT infrastructure project was widely welcomed by all the stakeholders for various reasons. It was expected that the presence of an IT infrastructure major in the state would help in bringing investments and in an image makeover of the state as an investment destination. However, the project could commence only on February 24, 2011 and the delay of seven years cost Kerala losing the ground in IT development to other neighbouring states.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation (KELTRON) which was set up in 1973 at Thiruvananthapuram started producing electronic hardware and equipments including TV sets in 1978 through village level women's co-operative societies.

<sup>9</sup> As per the data published by Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council in 2014-15, India's software exports were worth 5,93,669 Rs. Cr. Karnataka state which topped in exports had a share of 2,35,000 Rs. Cr. Kerala's contribution was just 12,000 Rs. Cr.

<sup>10</sup> IT policy 2001. IT Department, Government of Kerala. The Govt. has introduced 'Kerala IT Industry Incentive Scheme' which stipulates the creation of 1000 IT jobs in 1 acre of allotted land.

The reasons for this delay and subsequent adverse impact, as earlier mentioned, were far too many. These included disagreement between the agency and the government on the terms and conditions such as the extent of land parcels of the project, the cost of land, assured number of jobs from the project, claim for Infopark, Kochi, equity participation of the government, SEZ status and free hold rights among others. In most cases, such issues surface at the formative stages of the project. However, in the case of Smart City, Kochi (SCK) the conditions and bargains put forth by the private agency were scrutinised through the prism of the 'interests of the state'. Questions such as to what extent a government can incentivise for private investments and what should be the ideal role of government in Private Public Partnership (PPP) projects also emerged. The central issue of 'installation of an IT infrastructure project' transformed itself into the issue of 'protecting the interest of the state in a capitalist environment'. It needs to be mentioned that these exchanges and shifts of goalposts did not happen due to the compulsions emanating from within the government structure but emerged from the public perceptions formed by mass media discourses on above mentioned issues.

The media diffusion in the state is much wider and deeper in comparison with other Indian states owing to high literacy and other historical reasons such as migration, public action and matriarchy (Jeffrey, 1992, 2000 and 2010). The ABC figures (2015) showed 64,88,094 (10.2% of the total circulation in India) as the circulation of all Malayalam publications which stood at third position in the country and 76.8% of the households in the state owned a television set. As per the statistics released by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, on June 31, 2016, the number of private satellite TV channels which had valid license in India was 890. Of these, 401 were news and current affairs channels and 489 were non-news channels revealing that, although the viewership share was less, 45.1% of the Indian satellite channels were engaged in news broadcasting. The FICCI-KPMG report (2015) showed that in 2014, the viewership share of the regional news and regional entertainment channels was 3.7% and 17.9%, respectively among all Indian channels. Mass Media in Kerala assumed a pivotal space in the exchange and analysis of information and synthesis of public perception and public opinion on issues related to SCK.

This study explored the coverage of Malayalam TV News Channels (Asianet News, Manorama News, Mathrubhumi News, Indiavision, Kairali People TV, Reporter TV and channels such as Media One TV, Jaihind TV, Kairali TV and Jeevan TV which telecast news and current affairs programmes) of SCK. Attempts were made to identify the features of coverage of SCK and related issues and analyse how the coverage was instrumental in creating public perception.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

Why is it relevant to study the public perception or opinion on a developmental issue in relation to policies of governments? And what is the role of mass media in creating public perception? These questions were investigated many a time and gave useful suggestions in policy formulations. For example, a study which spanned 12 long years have reaffirmed that policy making in American states had significant correlation with public opinion (Erikson, Wright and McIver, 1993). The symbiotic relation between media and policy was clearly enunciated by agenda setting theoreticians and they established that there was an indirect relationship between media agenda and policy agenda (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). With the proliferation of economic reforms and the subsequent media diffusion these findings have a bearing in the Indian context as well. The issue of positioning media in the development initiatives has become imperative due to a number of factors. Peripheral news gathering processes and over dependence on 'talking heads' are some of the criticisms



leveled against media in the recent past. Noisy debates which have not been yielding concrete guidelines for solutions and the profit maximisation tendencies which retard the objective journalism practices are also being criticised vehemently by many media experts.

Thus it was pertinent to probe the media agenda, public perception and policies and the interrelationship between these three facets through the prism of development communication and development journalism. The people centric-participatory communication ideas (Servaes 1986, Mody 1991, Melkote 2015) put forth by Devcom scholars have paved the way for the 'Communication for Development' (C4D) strategy by the UN which encompasses a comprehensive signpost for best practices in development journalism and communication. C4D rejects the top-down vertical models and prompts free expression of ideas of development by each individual. It also encourages critical scrutiny of development programmes which includes the estimation of side-effects of development such as environmental issues, displacement and adverse policies which threaten sustainable development.

The issues of infrastructure development have ramifications in the sustenance of gains achieved in the social sector development as well. In the light of this argument it was worthwhile to examine the SCK project. The media coverage of this project was hinged on several aspects such as policy issues, state's role, employment, rehabilitation and economic growth. It was therefore important to ascertain the public perception about the coverage of these issues to identify the gaps in coverage in Malayalam News Channels.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The broad objective of the study was to identify and analyse the issues covered in the television coverage of SCK project and the role of coverage in creating public perception towards these issues.

The specific objectives were to:

- Identify the salient issues related to the SCK based on public perception;
  - Analyse the public perception about the coverage of SCK by Malayalam TV News Channels
- and
- Explore if there is any relationship between the television coverage of various issues related to SCK and the public perception.

Based on the objectives of the study, following hypotheses were formulated. These were:-

**H1.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the importance of the project for future IT development of the state;

**H2.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the terms and conditions of the project;

**H3.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the rehabilitation issues of the project;

and

**H4.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the elements of conflict in the project.

### Research Design

The research design of this paper comprised of detailed study and review of available TV programmes of Smart City Kochi, Indepth interviews with two experts<sup>12</sup> and a field survey of Ernakulam District. The quantitative analysis helped in triangulating the observations drawn from the qualitative study and indepth interviews. Two urban and two rural clusters were selected for identifying 320 respondents for the study who were exposed to the television coverage of SCK. Sample selection was done by using systematic random sampling method with due representation to various demographic indicators.

### Findings and Analysis

The research instrument prepared for the study enquired the rank order of SCK issues as perceived by the respondents and the agreement level towards separate statements framed on the basis of TV coverage of these issues. Personal details and media habits were also elicited from the respondents.

The profile of the respondents has been summarised in Table 1.0.

Category	Classifications	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	203	63.4
	Female	117	36.6
Age group	Young (18-35)	129	40.3
	Middle aged (36-55)	122	38.1
	Old (56 and above)	69	21.6
Area of Residence	Rural	154	48.1
	Urban	166	51.9
Extent of Media Use	Passive (Less than half an hour)	118	36.9
	Moderate (Between half an hour and one hour)	125	39.1
	Active (more than one hour)	77	24

The qualitative study and review of available TV programmes on SCK and indepth interviews with experts revealed the following issues/factors.

<sup>12</sup> Mr. Joseph C. Mathew, Commentator, writer and expert in IT sector and Mr. K.G.Krishnakumar, Principal Correspondent, *Manorama News*.

**1. Relevance of SCK:**

The presence of the promoters of SCK was believed to be an important factor in attracting IT majors to the state. The volume of the project and strategic advantage of Kochi were other aspects which were crucial in the IT development of the state. Thus the project was portrayed as an extremely important as well as relevant component of various development initiatives of Kerala in TV coverage.

**2. Land Issues:**

The transfer of land for the project was expected to be in lieu with the jobs that may be created from the project. This was a contentious issue among the promoter and the government and it was covered prominently in television coverage.

**3. Terms and Conditions:**

The agreement between the promoter and the government has stipulated certain terms and conditions such as job creation, transfer of land, monopoly rights for IT infrastructure development, equity participation etc. The negotiations based on these stipulations had significant impact on the policy formulation of the state. Naturally these conditions were widely reported in TV channels. The coverage was constructed within the framework of the 'interest of the state' and biased towards the versions of experts who were critical to both the government and the promoter.

**4. Rehabilitation:**

The rehabilitation package implemented among the 59 families of Edachira was praised in the media coverage as it included alternate land, newly constructed houses and subsistence allowance for a fixed period. Since rehabilitation issues are the major hurdle in the realisation of infrastructure projects in the state, this initiative was specifically highlighted and portrayed as a model which could be emulated elsewhere in the country.

**5. Disagreements and Controversies:**

The project was lagged for more than seven years due to disagreements between the promoter and the government. These disagreements were triggered after the eruption of controversies with regard to the terms and conditions which may be detrimental to the interest of the state according to a section of IT experts. TV news content reflected these aspects and the coverage fuelled the prevailing chaos.

**6. Employment:**

Since there is an abundant skilled and educated work force in Kerala, any development initiative which could generate employment was viewed enthusiastically by the general public. One of the reasons for high media attention to SCK was the expectation of jobs from the project.

**Salience of SCK Issues in Television Coverage:**

The respondents were asked to rank the issues/factors related to SCK according to their perception. The issue of land transfer received maximum attention among the viewers followed by rehabilitation issues and the terms and conditions for the project. Although the case study revealed a wider consensus on the relevance and potential of the project to create jobs and other opportunities, the factor was ranked as fifth by the respondents. The disputes

and disagreements among the stake holders surfaced through news conferences, interviews, special reports and debates in television coverage were viewed with least priority.

**Table 1.1 Rank order of issues/factors related to SCK N=320**

Issues/Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Land issues	2.72	1.416	1
Rehabilitation	3.10	1.704	2
Terms and Conditions	3.36	1.527	3
Employment	3.55	1.586	4
Relevance of the project	3.64	1.753	5
Disagreements and controversies	4.22	1.806	6

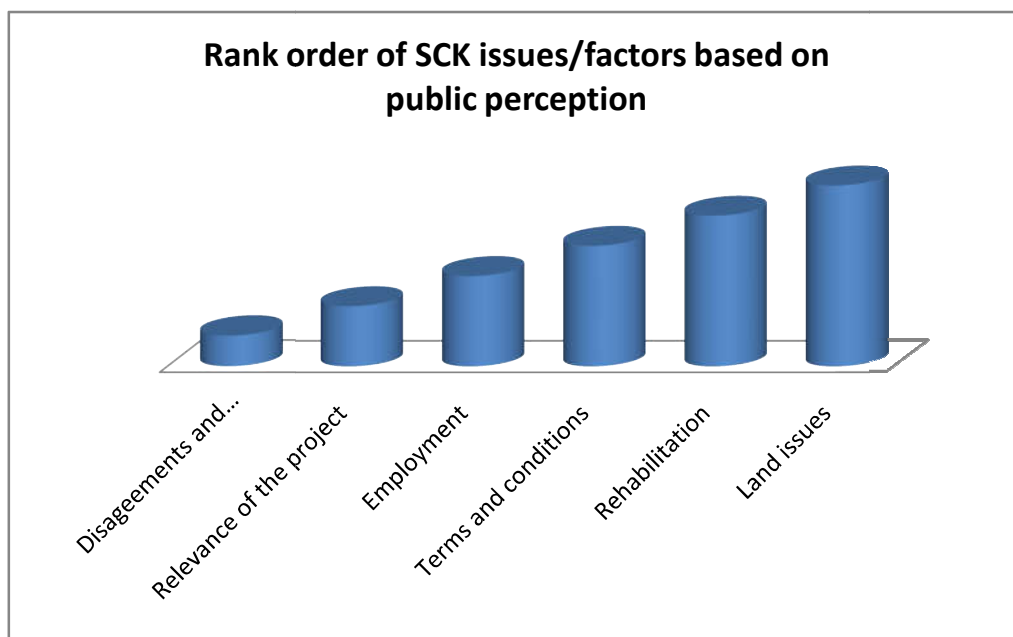


Fig 1: Rank order of SCK issues/factors

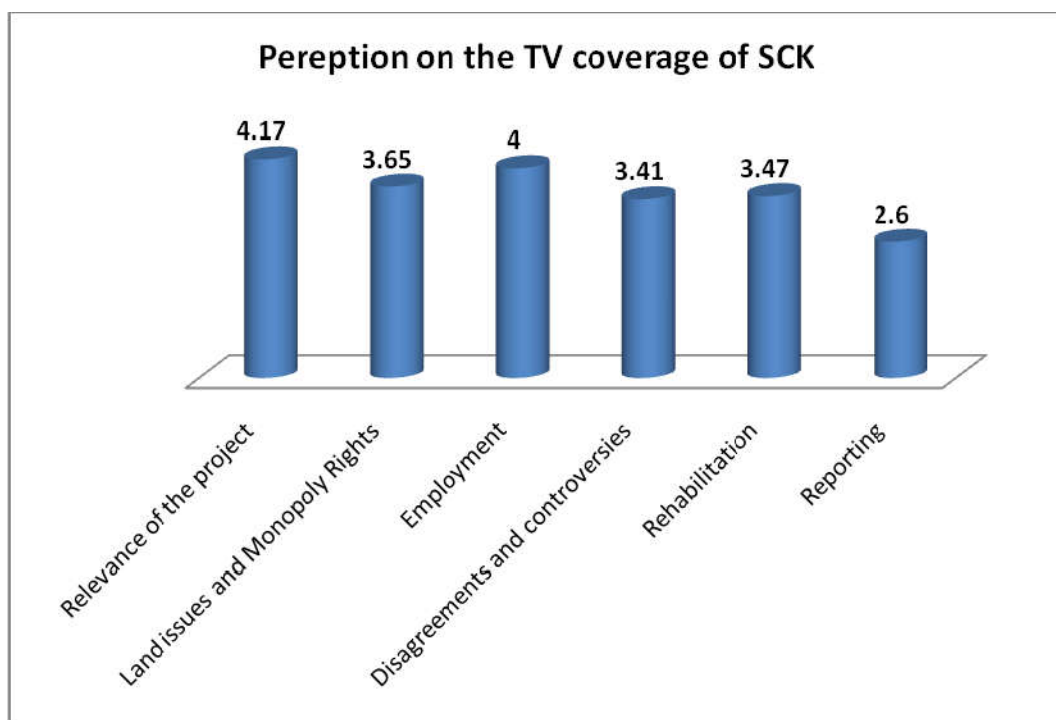
**Hierarchy of Issues/Factors Presented in the Television Coverage:**

The respondents were given six statements which sought the opinion about the Malayalam Television News Channel (MTNC) coverage of issues/factors related to SCK in a 5 point Likert scale. Table 1.2 showed the results.

**Table 1.2 Distribution of Respondents by the coverage of SCK; N=320**

Issues/Factors	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relevance of the project	MTNCs presented the Smart City Project as an imperative for the overall development, particularly for the growth of IT sector in the state	4.17	.671

Land issues and Monopoly Rights	MTNCs opposed the terms and conditions in the agreement which gave away huge benefits such as monopoly in future IT development projects and large stretch of land to the agency.	3.65	.836
Employment	MTNCs have persuaded the agency and the Government to create maximum number of jobs in the project	4.00	.855
Disagreements and controversies	MTNCs were more interested in the disagreements between the agency and the Government	3.41	1.001
Rehabilitation	MTNCs reported the issues of rehabilitation of the residents in the project site with prominence	3.47	.880



The analysis showed the following.

- All the respondents agreed that the TV news channels covered the project as one of the most important initiative for the overall development of the state (Mean = 4.17).
- The respondents agreed that the Malayalam News TV Content had opposed the terms and conditions in the agreement between the agency and the Government which gave away monopoly and vast area of land to the agency (Mean= 3.65).
- The respondents agreed that (Mean=4) Malayalam TV News Channels persuaded both the government and the agency to create maximum employment opportunities in SCK through a well defined agreement.
- The respondents were neutral (Mean= 3.41) on the statement that TV News channels were more interested in the disputes between the agency and the Government.

- The rehabilitation issues related to SCK were not prominently reported by the TV channels according to the respondents. However, they observed that the channels represented the issue. The mean value of this variable was more than neutral (Mean = 3.47).

### Testing of Hypotheses

- H1.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of SmartCity Kochi and the viewers' perception about the importance of the project for future IT development of the state.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between the variables 'Relevance of the project' and 'TV coverage on the relevance of the project'. The correlation was negative and statistically significant. Spearman's Rho  $\rho = -0.271$ ,  $p = 0$  (N=296). Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the importance of the project for future IT development of the state. Thus hypothesis 1 (H1) was accepted.

- H2.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the terms and conditions of the project;

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between the variables 'Land Issues' and 'TV coverage of land issues and monopoly rights'. The correlation was negative and statistically insignificant. Spearman's Rho  $\rho = -0.026$ ,  $p = 0.655$  (N=304). Similarly another test between the variables 'Land Issues' and 'Terms and Conditions' was run and the result obtained was statistically insignificant positive correlation. Spearman's Rho  $\rho = 0.034$ ,  $p = 0.556$  (N= 302). Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the terms and conditions of the project. Thus hypothesis 2 (H2) was rejected.

- H3.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the rehabilitation issues of the project.

The results of the Spearman's rank-order correlation between the variables, 'Rehabilitation' and 'TV coverage of rehabilitation' was Spearman's Rho  $\rho = -0.105$ ,  $p = 0.066$  (N=305). The correlation was negative, but statistically insignificant. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the rehabilitation issues of the project. Thus hypothesis 3 (H3) was rejected.

- H4.** There is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the elements of conflict in the project.

The Spearman's rank-order correlation run to test H4 was between the variables 'Disagreements and Controversies' and the TV coverage of this aspect. Results were Spearman's Rho  $\rho = 0.205$ ,  $p = 0$  (N=288). There is a statistically significant positive correlation between the variables. Thus it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between the coverage of Smart City Kochi and the viewers' perception about the elements of conflict in the project. Thus hypothesis 4 (H4) was accepted.

### Conclusions

Kerala state has the highest population density in the country and it is an environmental 'hot spot'. Land constitutes the most priced commodity in the business

capital and the paucity of land is a common feature in setting up of any infrastructure development project across the state. All these aspects invite critical scrutiny of land use for any developmental or non- developmental schemes. The general public of the state expects optimal utilisation and maximum bargain of the government land allotted to private investors. In this backdrop, allegations of undue benefits to the SCK promoter in the form of land received more credibility and TV coverage on SCK was often revolved around this issue.

The study revealed that despite the significance of SCK project in the state; public at large viewed land issues as the most prominent aspect while approaching the project proposal. The 'terms and conditions' of the project such as creation of jobs in lieu with the allotted land, equity participation of the government, monopoly development rights of IT infrastructure in Kochi etc. were also evaluated in the public domain and people were not ready to yield to the demands raised by the promoter even when the project was considered as an imperative by IT experts. Here the 'interest of the state' was kept upfront than the interests of the developer by the people.

The TV coverage of land issues and other terms and conditions of the project were featured with more prominence than the installation of the project, according to this study. However, the viewers were not significantly influenced by the TV coverage on the issues to formulate their opinions. They might have shaped up their opinion from previous experiences, interpersonal communication channels or from other media outlets.

The rehabilitation issue of SCK was ranked second by the respondents. Although the number of affected people was less as compared to other infrastructure projects in the state, public at large considered this as an important issue. Since rehabilitation occupies higher order in the hierarchy of issues/aspect, it is to be noted that public at large are vigilant and responsive to such issues and they expect accountability from governments and agencies of development. The minimalistic approach on rehabilitation as exhibited in many Indian development projects earlier would not suffice to realise large scale projects. The neutral response to the TV coverage of rehabilitation issue and the results of negative correlation showed the insignificant role of Malayalam TV Channels in building perception among public in this regard.

There was high agreement among respondents with the TV coverage which highlighted the significance of SCK for future IT development of the state. However they found this aspect with lesser importance (Rank=5). The influence of TV coverage in building a favourable perception towards the project was not worth mentioning. The study revealed that a monolithic prescription of developmental ideas by agencies would not satisfy the public and there should be an efficient mechanism to spell out doubts and apprehensions of the people.

The disagreements between the stake holders of SCK and subsequent controversies occupied longer TV time than other issues. 'Conflict' is being viewed as an important element of news as it is expected to draw more audience. The least priority given to this issue as well as the neutral response to TV coverage which highlighted the conflicts in the project by the viewers disclosed the lack of judgment of news by Malayalam TV news channels. However, the respondents were influenced by the coverage of the elements of conflict in the project.

According to this study the role of TV news channels in infrastructure development is to be reinvented by critically studying the audience feedback. The pointers obtained from this study lead to the necessity of capacity building of TV journalists to make sense of the complex business models, global economic turbulence, local aspirations and developmental

options through the prism of ground realities. In the globalisation paradigm, reporting of development issues is not mere dissemination of versions of stake holders of development but providing critical analysis and interpretation of the available data for an informed citizenry.

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# Indian Press: New Trends in New Millennium

Communication & Journalism Research

5(1) pp 77-90

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ISSN 2348 – 5663

## Dr. A. S. Balasubramanya

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### Abstract

In the new millennium, the Indian press continues to maintain its dynamic growth unlike its counterparts in most of the developed countries. Its dynamic growth is manifest both in the number of publications and circulation. In relation to the English press, the growth is more vibrant across regional language newspapers. Leading the growth chart are the Hindi newspapers which are concentrated in the northern regions of India followed by newspapers in south Indian languages, namely, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam. The growth of press in other major languages such as Marathi, Punjabi and Bengali has been of a low order. The first prerequisite of increase in literacy along with other essential factors such as improvement in purchasing power, political awareness and advancements in print media technologies excited to be harnessed by the print media. Capitalising on these factors, several language newspaper publishers adopted innovative-research based marketing models and entered smaller cities and towns to emerge as the lead players of the Indian press industry. Multi editions rich in hyper local and national news along with content on topics such as sports, entertainment, and lifestyle presented in attractive and colourful pages have attracted millions of readers. Now, the Indian press has a challenge to retain the existing readers and attract the young generation so as to stay resurgent in the coming decades of the millennium.

Key words: Growth Rate of Indian Press, New Technologies; Innovative Research Approach, Niche Magazines.

### Introduction

Diversity, a distinctive feature of the Indian press, has multiplied several folds since India's independence in 1947. From 330 dailies, 1,189 weeklies, and 1,733 publications of other periodicity at the end of 1952, the Indian press has grown steadily in response to the changing times. That as on March 31, 2016, there were 1, 10,851 registered publications comprising of 16,136 dailies and 94,715 periodicals (Registrar of Newspapers for India, 2016, p.15) stands testimony to its diversity and steady growth. Yet another facet of its diversity is that registered publications are being brought out not only in 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, but also in scores of minor languages and dialects.

In the post-independence decades, Indian press embarked itself on the path of growth by consolidating and expanding the readership base during 1947 –1975; launching a variety of magazine by making full use of colour printing technologies between 1975 – 1990; bringing

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about changes in the presentation of content following the growing popularity of TV from 1990 onwards; adapting digital technologies to cater to the changing media needs of the readers from 2000 onwards.

The first landmark in the first phase (1947-1975) was the appointment of the First Press Commission (FPC) in 1952 by the Government of India. The FPC submitted its report in 1954 and the Government accepted and implemented some of its recommendations which set-off a series of welcome changes. Some of those being: the setting up the office of the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) to maintain the records relating to newspapers; the appointment of a Wage Board for journalists to ensure minimum wages and good working conditions; and the appointment of Press Council of India (PCI) as the watchdog of the press.

Further, this period witnessed the consolidation and expansion of the Indian press. The leading newspapers expanded their reach by moving into new regions and launched new magazines. For instance, the leading English daily *The Times of India* launched its Delhi edition in 1950 and soon brought out magazines such as *Film fare* in 1952, *Femina* in 1959, *The Economic Times* in 1961, and a Marathi daily *The Maharashtra Times* in 1962. Likewise, *The Indian Express* expanded by moving into Madurai in 1957, Bangalore in 1965 and Ahmedabad in 1968. Similarly, the Chennai-based *The Hindu* moved into several parts of south India. The growth of language press, though slow, was steady during this phase and a few dailies such as the *Dainik Jagran* expanded by launching editions at Rewa in 1953, Bhopal in 1956, and Gorakhpur in 1975. Quite a few Hindi dailies made their debut during this phase. For instance, Hindi daily *Rajasthan Patrika*, which made its debut in 1956 in Jaipur began to publish from eight states. Hindi daily *Dainik Bhasker* which made its debut in Bhopal in 1958 is being published from 14 states. The growth of the language publications continued with much vigour in the subsequent time periods.

The Indian press industry was marked by magazine boom in the second phase, 1975-1990. The year 1975 in itself saw the emergence of several new magazine, namely, English magazine *India Today* of the Living Media group; *Sunday*, a political weekly, and *Anandamela*, a children's periodical of the Anand Bazar Patrika group; Malayalam magazine *Kalakaumudi* of Kalakaumudi publications; and women's magazine *Vanitha* of Malayala Manorama group. Other prominent magazine that made their debut during the magazine boom period were: *Anandalok*, a Bengali film magazine, in 1976; Malayalam magazine *Grehalakshmi* of Mathrubhumi group in 1979; Hindi magazine *Grihshobha* of the Delhi Press group in 1979; *Cricket Samrat* of Dewan Publications in 1980, Malayala Manorama group's English weekly *The Week* in 1982; and *Meri Saheli* of Pioneer Book Company Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, in 1987.

From the 1990s onwards, Indian newspapers had a facelift in order to move parallel with the magazine boom and the growing popularity of television, a major contestant for advertising revenues. Political coverage was scaled down and colourful features on lifestyles, business, and entertainment were added. Technological developments gradually began to metamorphose the print industry. The offset printing technology entered print rooms. The age-old hand composing as well as the monotype and linotype composing methods were gradually replaced by computer-based word processing systems both in English and Indian languages. The page-design and layout software and photo offset printing gave a totally new look to print publications. This helped advertisers to showcase their products extremely well.

The entry of 24x7 news channels in 1990s had a significant bearing on newspapers. News was no more the monopoly of newspapers. The visual presentation of events on TV had a

considerable impact on dailies. They became more colourful with attractive info-graphics and other stylish visual aids. By 2000, web based technologies triggered another revolution in the Indian newspaper industry. Adopting these new technologies, newspapers and magazines extended their reach through the Internet. User-friendly electronic versions of the newspapers and magazines made their appearances on their websites. The entry of smart phones opened a new avenue for the media industry which developed various types of Apps to reach out to the users of mobiles, iPods, tablets, notebooks, and desktop computers. As remarked by Dwivedi (2015, para 2), newspaper had not underwent so many changes in the past 400 years as they did in the last 20 years. The present study aims to examine the developments in the Indian press in general and the language press in particular during the period 2000 to 2015.

### Review of literature

Studies on the various facets of the Indian press are not sparse. Comprehensive accounts of the Indian press by eminent scholars such as Natarajan (1954), Krishnamurthy (1966), Parthasarathy (1989), and Jeffrey (2000) pertain to the period prior to 2000. The developments in the new millennium have been analysed and commented upon by scores of media analysts. Most of the narratives are about the language newspapers which in the late 1970s had over taken the circulation of English dailies (Ram, 2000; p.255).

What were the factors that spurred the growth of Indian language newspapers? The key factors identified by noted political scientist Robin Jeffrey in his book *India's Newspapers Revolution; Capitalism, politics and Indian Language Press* (2000) are improved technology. Steady expanding literacy, better purchasing power, aggressive publishing, and political excitement.

Similar factors have been identified by t (2007) in respect of the growth of Hindi dailies: "increase in literacy and communications, rising rural incomes, as well as the aggressive marketing strategies adopted by Hindi publishers helped them expand their penetration in the Hindi belt" (p.15). However, "The advent of market penetration and localisation of news and advertising as a strategy by the big boys of the Hindi belt was sounding the death knell of those who had been local to begin with, and the winners would soon become the big boys of the national scene too, ready to challenge the English-language giants of the Indian newspaper world" (Ninan 2007, p.109).

From 1990s onwards, Hindi press underwent transformation. As Ninan (2007, p.287) has observed "Hindi readership numbers grew exponentially, and as Hindi emerged as the foremost medium of political discourse. The relationship between press and politicians in this region was calibrated by the needs of both. Some strong regional newspapers had identifiable political affiliations which they did not bother to deny. Nationally, this period was one of striking change and growth."

In that growth process, some publications faced a setback. As Bhanawat (2007) has pointed out that the launch of *Dainik Bhaskar* in Jaipur followed by aggressive expansion *Rajasthan Patrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar* proved detrimental to dailies being published from divisional and district headquarters. While several small newspapers ceased publication, a few of them struggled to survive with the support of state government advertisements.

Neyazi (2009), who conducted a study of the developments in Hindi newspapers from 1977-2007 observed that "the penetration of Hindi newspapers into the hinterland has definitely empowered the marginalized groups who were ignored by both English newspapers as well as television. By getting access to information, people in rural areas and small towns, are

increasingly getting mobilized and have articulated their demands in the public arena” (p.340).

Globalization does not necessarily mean the subordination of local aspirations over western values and culture. In this context, Neyazi (2009) has noted that “despite the ongoing process of globalization which started in 1991 in India, Hindi newspapers have maintained their relative autonomy by not succumbing to the pressure of global forces and providing content in tune with the cultural specificities of the local society”(p.342).

Localization of news brought more readers to Hindi newspapers and this indirectly attracted advertisers. The economic aspect of newspapers considerably got improved. Thus, the Hindi publications had a makeover of their image as stable publishing houses. In this direction, Neyazi (2009) has noted that Hindi newspapers are now professionally organized with modern outlook. Working in Hindi newspapers is no longer an unattractive proposition. A number of journalists have shifted from English to Hindi newspapers which was unimaginable until the late 1990s. “Similarly, politicians are now willing to give exclusive interviews to Hindi newspapers. This clearly shows that Hindi newspapers are no longer subordinate to English newspapers and have become an important channel to raise grievances and shape public opinion. Such a change in the image of Hindi newspapers has also helped them to attain, if not a superior, but an equivalent space in the public arena, along with English newspapers” (Neyazi, p.343).

Innovations in design, printing and content are no longer restricted to established newspapers. For instance, *Sakshi*, a Telugu daily owned by a politician, was launched in 2008 with several ‘firsts’ to its credit: first regional newspaper to be designed by the world-renowned newspaper designer, Mario Garcia; first daily to be launched with 23 editions – 19 editions in Andhra Pradesh and one edition each in metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore; and first daily to have colour pages in all editions. Documenting such an unthinkable publishing venture in a regional scenario in India Rathore (2009) quoted the Marketing Director of the daily, K. R. P Reddy that "after the launch of *Sakshi*, other Telugu dailies made prominent changes in their content. Prior to *Sakshi*, sports coverage was restricted to half page reports in Telugu dailies but with *Sakshi* dedicating two pages to beat, others also started following suit. The broad sheet has also recently experimented with a four page business news pull-out. The newspaper also started the trend of having navigational tools on the front page... The success of *Sakshi* can be attributed to the group entering the market with aggressive plans and from day one, (para 6).

Jeffrey (2010) who has researched into various aspects of the Indian press asserts that “India in the 21st century is lucky: newspapers have a future, they reach into the countryside in remarkable ways, and they are still family-owned. All this is probably good for journalism and the public interest, and it is certainly good for entertainment.... In India, it will be media owners who decide how the grand ideal of free press is translated into black and white” (para 4-5).

However many media analysts are apprehensive of their future. Ninan (2011) has noted that “there is too much media around, including new media. No economy can sustain so many newspapers, magazines, television channels and websites. Much of today’s media, therefore, has no realistic hope of financial viability. The resultant pressure on publications has forced many among them to breach the Chinese wall between editorial and advertising in a desperate effort to raise more revenue” (p.5).

Concerned with the growing monopolistic trends in Indian media, Vasanti and Rao (2011) noted that “thirty years ago, about 30 media enterprises dominated most (75 per cent) of the

media in the country. Today, less than 15 media houses have that share. This is not coming under active legal and regulatory provisions that apply to other corporate bodies” (p.7).

Many marketing experts argue that Indian media market is yet to be tapped to its full potential. Kiran (2012) in his study noted the factors affecting the circulation of six newspapers (*Dainik Bhaskar*, *Dainik Jagran*, *Punjab Kesari*, *Dainik Tribune*, *Hari Bhoomi* and *Amar Ujala*) in Haryana during 2004-08, and remarked that a large market was opened up by outside newspapers with effective marketing strategies. The outside newspapers were successful in creating new readers without affecting the circulation of existing newspapers. The researcher identified six key factors which contributed for the success of new entrants. The six factors were: i) systematic marketing survey; ii) promotional schemes; iii) pull-outs; iv) competitive pricing; v) local printing facilities; vi) magazines and feature pages (p.245-248).

According to Ninan and Chattarji (2013), several factors “influenced the publishers to expand their operations across the country. Technology, support from financial institutions, a healthy growth of economy, substantial growth of middle class, coalition governments which created more curiosity in political developments and increase in literacy have fuelled the growth of newspaper markets beyond traditional major publication centres. The Hindi region witnessed, a healthy growth of newspaper penetration” (p.182).

Shekawat (2014) in a research study has noted that “with the entry of *Dainik Bhaskar* in 1996, as a key competitor to *Rajasthan Patrika*, the print media of Rajasthan took a new direction. *Rashtrdoot* and *Dainik Navjyoti* were also present, but the market was dominated by *Rajasthan Patrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar*. The increased competition, price-war and fight for survival between the two dailies proved a boon for the people of Rajasthan as the only option left for them was to gain public support and participation which could be gained by the acts of social responsibility and developmental works” (p.150).

Panneerselvan (2015) made a candid remark when he stated that “Indian media is an ironic entity. While it defies the global downward trend of traditional media and continues to grow in terms of new publications, television channels, websites and radio stations, it has failed to come up with a viable revenue stream and some unscrupulous elements — both among the owners and the editors — have embarked on a path that can only be termed blatantly unethical” (para 1).

The steady growth in circulation of print media has also been found by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC). In July-Dec 2015 the CAGR of print media circulation of ABC member publications across various languages grew by 5.04 per cent over a period of last eight years as a result of the launch of new publications and new editions at different locations. While Hindi newspapers continued to top the circulation list, English newspapers too showed a growing trend, though not as much as the Hindi publications. The highest circulated Hindi newspaper was *Dainik Bhaskar* followed by *Dainik Jagran* and *Amar Ujala*. The top three positions among the English newspapers belonged to *The Times of India* followed by *The Hindu* and *Hindustan Times* (Exchange4media News Service, 2016).

### **Study Method and Objectives**

The Indian press is undergoing critical changes. With aggressive marketing tactics, newspapers are attempting to reach remote areas with latest news and analysis. Split editions along with supplements sprinkled with popular English words are trying to lure young readers and to retain the existing ones. Almost all major publications are according equal importance to both print and digital versions. Paywall is being introduced by several publications on an experimental basis. All major publications have well-designed websites.

Several publications have separate staff who exclusively contribute for their websites. When most of the western newspapers are struggling to survive, the Indian press is comfortably placed.

Against this backdrop, this study was undertaken with the following specific objectives to: I) Examine the current status of the Indian newspaper industry, and II) Identify the distinctive features of language newspapers.

Data for the study was collected from two main sources. Information on print media growth, circulation and advertising revenue was collected from the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), a government department, and the industry agencies such as the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), FICCI-KPMG, and WAN-IFRA. The second source of information essential for realising the study objectives was gathered from in-depth interviews with the publishers, editors, media critics and journalists representing the Indian press.

In assessing the growth and trends in Indian language press in recent years, there was a need to focus on the major languages. A thorough examination of the 22 scheduled languages revealed that in eight languages- Dogri, Konkani, Manipuri, Maithili, Nepali, Sanskrit, Santali and Sindhi - there weren't many publications. Excluding these eight languages, the researcher examined the growth of publications in 14 major languages namely, Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Odiya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

Here, it must be noted that the data pertaining to the number of publications and their circulation reported by RNI annually doesn't match with ABC data. Not all registered publications submit their annual statements to the RNI. Further, the circulation provided by them is 'claimed' circulation, not audited circulation. The ABC annually authenticates the circulation of publications who have are it members. But, the ABC membership remains restricted to a few of the registered publications. These limitations inherent in the circulation data of the two organisation cannot be overcome. Hence, the researcher analysed the RNI data as the 'claimed' circulation gives a broad overview of the growth trend of the Indian Press. Further, to obtain a comprehensive account of the in the Indian press during 2000-2015, the researcher interviewed senior editors of several major publications along with media critics.

Some of the salient findings along with the observations of senior editors are presented in the succeeding unit.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **1. Growth rate of Hindi publications is much higher than that of English publications**

According to the 60<sup>th</sup> annual Report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India 2015-16 (2016) a total number of 15,723 dailies were being published in 23 major languages along with several bilingual and multilingual variants. The largest number of dailies were in Hindi (6755), followed by Urdu (1775), Telugu (1368) English (1304) and Marathi (1116). This data points out to the dominance of Hindi dailies. Of the top ten dailies listed by the ABC, five were in Hindi, four in the south Indian languages and one in English. The periodicals indicated to a negative growth.

In an interview with the researcher, K. Subramanya, Executive Editor of *Deccan Herald* shared some of the challenges the English press is faced with. He noted that "there is a pressure on profit. Paid content, promotion, publicity has entered in a sophisticated way. Election news is also paid. There is a lot of bargain even in placing the ads. Innovation in

ads is another feature. Every newspaper is under pressure to enhance revenue. In some cases, incentives are offered to agents and *raddi* value is more than the cover price... Print media (English) in India is not in good health. Circulation is falling, unhealthy practices and abnormality exists at all levels. Eventually news is compromised. More soft news and paid contents are pitched in. The growth is not organic, but it is artificial... English paper's circulation has gone down”.

## **2. Regional players are expanding their market to the national level and beyond**

For a long time, only a few publishers who had their base in four major metropolitan cities of the country were reckoned as leading publishers. English publications were considered as trend setters. Post-emergency, the Indian press scenario underwent an overhaul and new leaders emerged. For instance, the marketing approach of *Eenadu* became a national trend setter for daily publications in the country. By the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, two Hindi publishers, Bhopal-based *Dainik Bhaskar* and Kanpur-based *Dainik Jagaran* overtook most of the established national players. With ten publications in five major languages brought out from 13 states, the Dainik Jagran group dailies have 400 plus editions and sub-editions. The group has printing units at 37 locations across north India.

The Dainik Bhaskar group publishes *Dainik Bhaskar* (Hindi), *Divya Bhaskar* (Gujarati), *Divya Marathi* (Marathi), *Business Bhaskar* (a financial newspaper in Hindi) and *DNA* (English). With 64 editions and more than 55 lakh copies, the group everyday reaches to 1.84 crore readers across 13 states. It also publishes three magazines: *Aha! Zindagi* (a monthly family magazine), *Young Bhaskar* and *Bal Bhaskar* (*Kids magazines*), and *Lakshya*, a career oriented magazine (*Bhaskar Foundation*, n.d).

Another publishing group that has made its presence at the national level through its diverse periodicals is the Malayala Manorama group. Beginning in 1982 with the launch of English news magazine *The Week*, now it has several magazines in Hindi and English, besides Malayalam. It has a total of 43 publications including niche magazines. The *Manorama Year Book* is published in five major languages-Malayalam, English, Hindi, Tamil and Bengali. The English publications of the group include *Watch Time India*, *Tell Me Why*, *Read and Colour*, *National Geographic Kids*, *Magic Pot*, *The Week*, *The Man*, *Smart life* and *Living*.etc.

*Gulf Madhyamam*, India's first international newspaper published from seven Gulf countries - Dubai, Bahrain, Kuwait, Doha, Dammam, Riyadh and Jeddah – is the largest circulated newspaper in the Middle East. Several Malayalam, Tamil, Urdu and Gujarati dailies have their editions from Gulf nations and USA.

In the era of global business practices, it is but natural that a few publishers from small towns and cities are making waves at the national level.

## **3. Innovative market research by Indian language press has been a success formula**

Indian language newspapers charted a new course to launch new publications and attract readers in towns and hinterlands in 1990s. In that direction, the innovative research approach of the *Dainik Bhaskar* group while entering new markets deserves to be mentioned. In a document entitled ‘Making Breakthrough Innovations’ (1996), the group explains the survey it conducted so as to feel the pulse of their readers and make solicit their subscription for the daily.

The innovative research approach was put into practice first in 1996 when it planned to enter Jaipur market. A team of 700 surveyors surveyed 200,000 households and assessed



their expectations from newspapers. Based on the survey feedback, the research team developed a prototype of the daily, presented it to potential readers and sought their subscription at a discounted price. That approach worked. It launched the Jaipur edition in Dec 1996 and became number one daily with a circulation of 172,347.

Subsequently, *Dainik Bhaskar* followed the innovative research approach while entering the markets of Chandigarh and Haryana in 2000, Ahmadabad in 2003 and in Punjab in 2006. In Chandigarh, 220,000 households were surveyed and the inputs obtained were incorporated in the design and language of the daily. The result was that *Dainik Bhaskar* emerged as the leader on day one in Chandigarh by overtaking the erstwhile leader, the English daily *The Tribune*. At Ahmadabad, the survey team comprising of 1050 surveyors, 64 supervisors, 16 zonal managers, and 4 divisional managers surveyed 12,00,000 households!. It is possibly the single biggest direct consumer contact programme in the history of Indian press industry. The survey revealed the preference for non-sensationalist, better quality paper with fewer ads and lower price (Making-Breakthrough-Innovation, 1996, pp.1-11).

The prelaunch survey of *Dainik Bhaskar* was followed by other publications. *Sakshi*, a Telugu daily, also undertook an extensive market survey prior to its launch to identify the expectations from a new daily. In 2008, as many 5,000 agents met an average of 1,200 readers every day to understand the need gap. Later, for three months (January-March), the group promoted the newspaper to prospective readers. After getting consent from 11 lakh people, the newspaper was launched with 19 editions spread across Andhra Pradesh and an edition each from the four metros (Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai) and crossed the one million mark in its first audit done by the ABC (Rathore, 2009).

Such successful attempts by the Indian language dailies while pointing out to the potential of pre-launch market survey in increasing the readership base, also indicate that Indian language publications have the wherewithal to follow new approaches to contribute to their growth.

#### **4. The entry of businessmen and politicians in to the newspaper industry has threatened professionalism among journalists as they are more interested in protecting their business interests rather than serving the public interest.**

In recent years, businessmen and politicians have come to own news publications. Their unethical practices have eroded journalism of its objective of serving public interest while fulfilling their business and political interests. Such instances are not rare. Malik (2014) has noted how several Odia publications cheated the investors and readers, by showcasing a few firms as stable and reliable ventures so to attract investments. Several newspaper promoters in Odisha were questioned by the CBI for their alleged involvement in promoting certain investment companies. In August 2014, CBI had arrested *Kamyab TV* channel owner Manoj Das, *Odisha Bhaskar* owner and secretary of Press Club of Orissa Madhu Mohanty, and Bikash Swain, publisher of Odia daily *Suryaprava* for their links with the Artha Tatwa chit fund group. All of them were charge sheeted.

The Saradha chit fund scam is another instance of the involvement of media owners in unethical business ventures. As Bidwai (2013) has noted, Saradha's Promoter-Chairman Sudipta Sen "ran a range of papers and television channels in Bangla, English, Hindi and Urdu, whose main function and purpose was to promote the Trinmool Congress. Several party MLAs openly canvassed supporting in small towns and villages for Saradha's chits -- Ponzi schemes which, like 'chain letters' promise impossibly high returns to investment on the assumption that investors would indefinitely multiply at geometric rates. But the chain breaks down and the scheme collapses" (para 7). Such instances wherein media institutions

in connivance with politicians and bureaucrats were tagged into major financial scams make a mockery of fourth estate.

Some newspaper owners unabashedly flaunt their political leanings. For instance, as Shaw has (2016, para 4-5) pointed, “It was Eenadu which pioneered open political affiliation when, in the early 1980s, it professed its support for the TDP and its then leader N.T. Rama Rao, known as NTR. Eenadu is believed to have powered the TDP campaign as a non-Congress alternative and within a short time it helped NTR become chief minister of Andhra Pradesh.

This modus operandi has remained the template and aspiration, more or less, for most political entities in the Telugu states: to have a media megaphone under one’s control and to drive politics and business rigorously with its help. As for the media houses, they are enthusiastic participants in the political slugfest between the two main parties”.

Quite a few publications in Tamil Nadu, Odhisa, Maharashtra and Kerala either have political affiliations or being brought out by politicians. Many Odhisa publishers and editors are ministers or MP’s or MLA’s. In Maharashtra, the publisher of *Lokmath* was a minister representing Congress party. Malayalam daily *Chandrika* is the organ of the Muslim League. CPI (M) has publications in Bengali, Tamil and Malayalam. The publisher of *Amar Ujala*, a leading Hindi daily is a MP.

In Tamil Nadu, newspapers affiliation with political parties is a common feature. Dr. Krishna Murthy, Editor of *Dinamalar*, Chennai, in an interview with the researcher noted that in Tamil Nadu several newspapers run by political parties have destroyed the value of news. Minute things are exaggerated. Only two or three publications present honest news.

Echoing similar views, Chatterjee (2013) had stated that “newspapers across the country and languages have had political leanings, some overtly and some covertly. But an interesting feature of Tamil journalism is that it has distinct in-your-face political leanings. Several newspapers were open and vocal about their leanings.” (p. 53).

According to Jayakumar (2007, p 5-6), most Tamil newspapers thrive on sensationalism. They devote prime space for trivial issues and cinema so as to boost circulation. In Tamil Nadu, politics and newspapers go hand-in-hand as nearly all political parties have their own organs. The political parties and their publications are as follows: DMK (*Murasoli*), AIADMK (*Dr.Namaddhu MGR*), DK (*Vidhuthalai*), CPM (*Theekathir*), CPI (*Janasakti*), PMK (*Thamil Osai*) and MDMK (*Sangoli*, a weekly).

The close linkage between politicians and newspapers in Odhisha makes a very interesting study. Tracing the grip of political families on Odiya press, Mishra (2009) has observed that “the Odiya media took a U-turn in the post-independence era. Journalists associated with popular media outlets emerged as the anchor persons of Odisha politics. Radhanath Rath, the editor of *The Samaj*; Harekrishna Mahtab, the founder-editor of *The Prajatantra*; Rajendra Narayan Singhdeo, the founder of *The Swarajya*; Debendra Satpathy; Nandini Satpathy and Tathagat Satpathi of *Dharitri*; Biju Patnaik, the owner of *Kalinga*, and its editor, Surendra Mohanty, utilised their newspapers to establish themselves in electoral politics. But curiously, nobody wants to discuss how these editors have used their papers to further their political interests. Popular perception of the media, however, bears this out. The owners or the editors of all the leading newspapers in Odisha have been in politics and have occupied seats of power. The editors of *The Prajatantra* and *Dharitri* are Members of Parliament from the ruling Biju’s Janata Dal (BJD) and seeking re-election to the fifteenth Lok Sabha. While the editor of *The Sambad* continues to be a prominent office-bearer of the Congress party and contesting election with a congress ticket to get his entry into assembly.

The owner of another powerful media house running the biggest cable network and Orissa Television Ltd (OTV), Baijayant Panda, is also one of the contestants for Lok Sabha from ruling Biju Janata Dal. Lately, Pyari Mohan Mahapatra, second-in-command of BJD, has entered the media business. The owners and editors of other small and medium newspapers present the news in keeping with their political interests. The news that is published and aired by these groups is always “politically motivated” and “pro-capitalist” (para 9).

Chatterjee (2007) made a cryptic comment on the state of affairs of the Odiya press, when he stated “two interesting features of Oriya newspapers are ‘proliferation of owner-publisher-editor entity’ and politicians owning/controlling newspapers. Both have stood as stumbling blocks on the development of professionalism in Orissa... There is nothing wrong in a politician owning and /or editing a newspaper or controlling a new channel... But what is unique in Orissa is the magnitude of it” (p.6).

Venkateshwarlu (2016) who analyzed the conditions of Urdu newspapers in Telangana has noted that the Urdu newspapers are divided on their political stance. *Etemaad*, was launched by the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul Muslimeen (AIMIM) a few years ago. While *Siasat*, *Rehnuma-e-Deccan* and *Munsif* are anti-AIMIM, *Rashtriya Sahara*, a national newspaper, neither supports nor opposes AI MIM (p.69).

It is obvious that such publications that have leanings to political ideologies would present colored news to the readers and deprive them of knowing the realities.

### **5. Liberal mixing of words from other languages is becoming a reality in the language press**

India is a multilingual country. Each language has its own identity and charm. Newspapers follow literary prose style for presentation of news. In order to attract readers and present news more effectively, they use colloquial words. Because of the popularity of English in educational institutions, language newspapers have started using English words in news, headlines and reports.

For instance, several Telugu publications like *Eenadu* and *Sakshi* liberally blend Urdu and English words with Telugu. The liberal sprinkling of English words with Hindi and Kannada has created new language variants popularly known as ‘Hinglish’ and ‘Kanglish’ respectively. Similarly, several dailies in Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi liberally mix English words to attract and retain young readers who are tech savvy. *The Nava Gujarath Samay*, Editor admits that they use ‘Gujlish’ deliberately to attract young readers. Bilingual publications are also being experimented. For instance, *Inext* is a bilingual morning daily targeted at the young adults residing in mini-metros of North India. Launched in December 2006 by Jagran Prakashan Ltd, from Kanpur, *Inext* is published from 13 cities spread across five states.

There is another dimension of this trend. Several language publications attempt to enrich their languages by coining words for new English terms and phrases. For instance in Tamil, any English words would get translated and newspapers start using them. In Odiya and Malayalam, few newspapers have made serious efforts to retain their literary purity.

### **6. Niche magazines are in demand**

After Indian Government allowed 100 per cent foreign ownership in the non-news and special interest categories in print media, there has been a spurt in the number of magazine brands in India. Some of the top most brand magazines are now available in the country. As Sharma (2014) has observed, “Indian print industry is the second largest in the world after

China, pegged around \$ 4.2 billion, growing at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7 per cent. Despite being a fragmented market, this industry offers ample opportunities. The growing literacy rate has increased the demand for specialized content which has further encouraged the demand of magazines, especially niche publications” (para 1).

He further states that “News stand are full of niche magazines targeting men, women, kids, students, sports lovers, travel lovers, foodies and so on. Another factor which has contributed towards the growth of magazine brands is digital, which has created an entirely new ecosystem of e-magazines. E-magazines have crossed the geographical boundaries and cater to the needs of the consumers globally.... India is a multicultural and multilingual country, and considering the effect of the strong cultures, lot of regional language magazines have evolved. For instance, *Femina*, a popular publication targeting women recently launched its Bengali edition. Besides English and Bengali, the magazine is also available in Hindi and Tamil(para2-4). In an interview with the researcher, Thirumala Velan, Public Theme Editor of *Anand Vikatan group* explained how they capitalized on the changing interests of readers and set a new path by launching niche magazines for kids, auto, personal finance, organic agriculture, kitchen, and women. The group brings out 13 such publications, which very few have attempted in the country. Even from business perspective, it was a prudent move. The group has pay wall for their online publications.

Aroon Purie, the publisher of India Today group shared his thoughts about the future of niche and digital magazines with Watkins (2015). On the challenges the industry faces in India, Purie told Watkins that “the benefits of being on digital platforms are multiple and hard to ignore, including faster publishing and distribution, better knowledge of your readers and audience, measurability of advertising goals, flexibility of content, elimination of revenue loss from unsold inventory and wider reach..

“With millions of smart phone and tablet users worldwide, through digital formats magazines are able to reach a much larger audience, both domestic and international. Rich multimedia content, with features such as video embedded in stories, hyperlinks to other content, pinch-zoom and 360-degree panorama views etc., all add to the value digital magazines can provide and make the reading material much more interesting. It also helps publishers put together all the perspectives of a story. A shift of spend-to-digital is taking place from across media platforms” (para 6-7).

Purie further noted that “digital also offers easy discoverability. Frequent promotions and marketing by digital newsstands make digital magazines more discoverable through the Appstore/Playstore, thereby increasing probability of downloads....Google has launched its own digital newsstand in India now. Idea has launched its digital magazine store - e-read – which was made available exclusively for Idea subscribers from June 2015; and Reliance Jio is planning to launch a digital library towards the end of this year ( para 9).

Purie informed Watkins that most of their publications available on digital with 22 editions. “We need to create a single, unified platform that integrates content delivery across all digital channels and devices, culminating in a monetisation strategy for content and premium assets. The future is multi-platform publishing, and key drivers for revenue will be video advertising and native advertising where non-intrusive ad formats will have prominence. Mobile-first will stay, and we will need to focus on providing content tailored for these devices” (para 10).

In sum, the infusion of new technologies, corporate management style, new marketing strategies have helped Indian language newspapers to redefine their goals and transform themselves in tune with cotemporary publishing trends. However, what is required is to

maintain the trust that people have reposed in them by presenting a holistic and unbiased picture of events and issues free of sensationalism.

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The author is a senior media teacher and researcher. Served in the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Karnatak University for over three decades. Earlier, he worked in few Kannada publications and at the department of Communication, Bangalore University before moving into Karnatak University. He played a key role in setting up of the Department as a leading teaching and research institution in north Karnataka. He also played a major role in establishing a state of the art multimedia educational studio. He completed two major and three minor research projects funded by UGC and ICSSR. He superannuated in 2014.

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# Sourcing Pattern of National Security News in Indian Newspapers

Communication & Journalism Research  
5(1) pp 91-99  
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masscomhod@uoc.ac.in  
ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## Abstract

The present study that seeks to explore the sourcing pattern followed by Indian newspaper reporters in their stories on national security issues is premised on the concept that sourcing patterns of mass media reflect the power structure that determines the normative media practices in a society. This reciprocity between media and the power structure is proved by research and indicated how it led to the lack of diversity of news sources, credibility of content and associated problems of organizational and official bias in news stories. Set as quantitative content analysis the study finds out the varying patterns in citing governmental, non-governmental and unspecified sources and in the distribution of factual, opinionated and framed contents in sourced news stories published in the major English and Malayalam newspapers in India. The study concludes that sourcing pattern followed by Indian media in the case of national security news serves as one of the five news filters identified by Herman and Chomsky in their Propaganda Model.

Keywords: News Sourcing, Credibility, Propaganda Model, Security News, Indian Newspapers

## Introduction

News reporting is impossible without journalists' interaction with information sources in their socio cultural environment. It is through these constant and intense relationships with various sources that social realities are mediated to media users. Tiffen (1982) observes that news mediates the wider socio-political environment to its audience, but in turn its content has been mediated by its reliance on how other institutions make information available. He further considers news as a parasitic institution with its product is the deeds and words of others, and its quality depends at least partly on the quality of the information environment in which it is operating. News content, therefore, always needs to be understood not only in the context of what information is considered newsworthy, but of what information becomes available to the news media. (Tiffen, 2013). The simple reason behind it is that journalists cite those whom they value and in return, citation offers the cited sources with chances of gaining more power by getting their opinions published. Therefore, news sources and related citations if used objectively serve as credibility boosters, especially in the reports on security issues that attract much public attention and are potential to create social panic. For this very reason professional journalists are keen to refer to the governmental or expert



sources in their national security related stories. National security issues in the contemporary political contexts of war on terror and cross border terrorism are considered as very sensitive by journalists across the world. Citing governmental or official sources in such issues reduces the professional burden of reporters and the media's chances for litigation. In addition, it is an easy method to authenticate stories as the audiences traditionally attach enhanced credibility to government sources. At the same time, in doing so, these journalists bestow a level of legitimacy and credibility to sources associated with political administrations.

Reporters use varied methods for sourcing and reporting stories of security concerns considering the values of news and their salience in diverse geographical, cultural and political contexts. Sometimes, they stay away from citing sources of the stories putting the audience in dark and compromising on the credibility of news. Total absence of credible sources of the story lead to confusion and chaos in the society and it places the media under the shadow of doubt. ISRO spy case is the best example of this uncited reportage where newspapers sourced news from 'anonymous' sources were forced to report without citations. At the end, the case was proved to be false by the courts of justice and media was put under the fire of criticism for their absence of accountability and ethics.

In short, presence and absence of sources in news stories is a critical factor in defining the credibility of the story. Who is quoted is as important as who is not quoted or why nobody is quoted in the stories, especially those related to governmental affairs including national security since the fundamental duty of governments is to ensure sense of security in the public mind through transparent approach. In that sense, sourcing and citation pattern in the news stories takes a political turn as famously observed by Herman and Chomsky (1998) in their critical analysis of the mass media in the United States of America. According to them, in the countries led by state bureaucracy, media fulfills the aims of dominant elite by official censorship, plantation of stories and selective sourcing and citations and pose threats to responsible journalism.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have established the fact that government officials and elite voices dominated news sources over decades (Althaus et al. 1996; Brown et al. 1987; Entman and Page 1994; Hallin, Manoff, and Weddle 1993; Lacy and Coulson 2001). Hallin et.al (1993) revealed that 76 percent of sources of news stories related to national security in major newspapers in the US. These newspapers include The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Los Angeles Times. Entman and Page (1994) observed that the Gulf War reporters cited heavily government officials and military sources for their reports to enhance credibility. Even a study of the sourcing patterns of environmental beat reporters found that government sources dominated, and these journalists tended to marginalize consumers and environmentalists (Lacy and Coulson 2001). Most of the studies on sourcing pattern observe a lack of civil or nongovernmental sources in traditional news media. In turn, sourcing national security and terror related news stories in the mass media most often end up as public relations content for governmental version rather than being best available version of truth. Hallin and colleagues reported only 5.8 percent civil sources in coverage by national security reporters (Hallin, Manoff, and Weddle 1993). Interestingly, even a study of an alternative newspaper in the U.K. found very few non-elite sources (Atton and Wickenden 2005). Soloski (1980) found that majority of sources cited in local news media were government officials followed by non-governmental sources like political leaders, businesspersons, activists and social workers. By following these sourcing patterns news media reinforce the dominant knowledge structure, assigning authority, credibility, and legitimacy to government officials while simultaneously pushing civilians and their views

and concerns to the margins. Taking cues from the body of research literature in the domain source studies, the present study tries to explore the nature of sourcing pattern in Indian newspapers.

### **Study Objectives**

How reporters in Indian newspapers source their news stories related to national security issues is the central theme of this study. To materialize this investigation the researcher set two specific objectives:

- 1) To find out the frequency of citation of various types of sources (governmental, non-governmental and unspecified) in the news reports on national security issues published in Malayalam and English newspapers
- 2) To examine the distribution of the types of content (factual, opinioned and framed) offered by sources cited in the news reports on national security issued published in Malayalam and English newspapers

### **Hypotheses**

The researcher has formulated the following hypotheses to guide the study in its in-depth analysis.

- H1 Types of sources of news on national security are likely to differ among newspapers in India
- H2 The distribution of the types of knowledge offered by sources cited in the news reports on national security issues are likely to vary among newspapers in India

### **Theoretical Framework**

The researcher imbibed the framework of this study from the theoretical perspective of source studies presented by Herman and Chomsky in their Propaganda Model. The Propaganda Model (PM), which sought to explain the behavior of the mass media in the United States, was developed by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky and published in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* in 1988 was firmly rooted in the critical-Marxist, more specifically the political economy, tradition of media and communication studies. They observe that the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear and think about, and to 'manage' public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns, the standard [liberal-pluralist] view of how the media system works is at serious odds with reality (Herman and Chomsky (1998). Tuchman's (1978) study observed that journalists tend to cite official and non-official sources in a central point or geographically near to them. 'By identifying centralized sources of information as legitimated social institutions, news organizations and news workers wed themselves to specific beats and bureaus. Those sites are then objectified as the appropriate sites at which information should be gathered. Additionally, those sites of newsgathering are objectified as the legitimate and legitimating sources of both information and governance'. (Tuchman 1978). This tendency points at the filter concept in the Propaganda Model proposed by Herman and Chomsky.

In Propaganda Model, Herman and Chomsky identified five ingredients of news "filters" such as the size, ownership, owner affluence, and profit of the dominant mass media firms; advertising as the main revenue source of the mass media; the dependence of the media on information provided by government, business, and experts supplied and accepted by these primary sources and agents of power; informal criticism or flak as a means of disciplining

the media; anti-communism as a general belief and management machinery. The graphic representation of the model is given below.

Figure 1.: Flow chart of Propaganda Model introduced by Herman and Chomsky



The content of news must pass through successive filters, remaining only the filtered residue fit to print. These filters process naturally, so that the system can convince the journalists operating with complete integrity and they choose the news objectively on the basis of professional news values. It requires a macro along with a micro i.e. story-by-story view of media operations to see the pattern of handling and systematic bias.

### Data Collection

Qualitative content analysis was the method used for data collection and the data was collected from four widely circulated newspapers in Kerala, a southern state of India taking news stories on national security issues as unit of analysis. As the study was set in a comparative perspective based on the language of newspapers, two English newspapers (Times of India and The Hindu) and two Malayalam newspapers (Malayala Manorama and Mathrubhumi) were selected for data collection as they are largest circulated dailies in the state. News stories were retrieved from the issues of newspapers published in January 2016. For analytical purpose sources were classified as Governmental, Non-Governmental and Unspecified while the types of sourced contents were categorized into Factual (content based on facts and figures and supported with official records) Opinionated (content that reflects views and opinions of the source either explicitly or implicitly) and Framed (content that contains cognitive bias).

### Data Analysis

The total number of news stories taken for analysis is 241 sourced out of 30 issues of newspapers from The Hindu, The Times of India, Mathrubhumi and Malayala Manorama in January 2016. The data regarding distribution of sample stories is given in Table 1.

**Table1: Distribution of Sampled News Stories on National Security**

Newspapers	News Stories	
	Frequency	Percentage
The Hindu	68	28.22
The Times of India	72	29.88
Mathrubhumi	48	19.92
Malayala Manorama	53	21.99
Total	241	100.00

The Times of India published most number of stories (72) followed by The Hindu (68), Malayala Manorama (53) and Mathrubhumi (48) respectively. It is to be noted that The Times of India is the largest circulated newspaper and its circulation is widespread all over the nation unlike the Hindu, circulation of which is concentrated in south Indian states. More so, The Times of India has larger news hole compared to other newspapers. In that sense, its number of stories is not proportionate to its news hole size. There is a glaring difference among English and Malayalam newspapers in publishing the number of news stories on national security issues. The reason for this difference can be attributed to English newspapers' wider audience reach and larger spectrum of news collection.

As mentioned, the unit of analysis in the study is news sources in stories on national security issues published in the sampled issues of four newspapers selected. In 241 stories appeared 404 sourced content and their details are given in the Table 2. Most number of sources are seen in the Hindu (114) followed by The Times of India (110), Mathrubhumi (94) and Malayala Manorama (86). While the Hindu carries on average 1.67 source in each story, Times of India carried 1.52 story.

**Table 2: Distribution of News Sources in Sampled Newspapers..**

Newspapers	News Sources	
	Frequency	Percentage
The Hindu	114	28.22
The Times of India	110	27.23
Mathrubhumi	94	23.27
Malayala Manorama	86	21.29
Total	404	100.00

But, the average sourced stories are higher in Mathrubhumi (1.95) and Malayala Manorama (1.62). In this case higher level of sourcing is visible in Malayalam newspapers compared to their English counterparts.

The way these sources are distributed among their three categories is detailed in Table 3. In a democracy, governmental sources are considered to be more credible than any other sources, particularly in the case of stories related to national security issues, as they are most often to be sourced from classified documents. More so the level of the challenges to

national security can be assessed accurately only by government with authentic data at its disposal which is not accessible to non-governmental sources.

**Table 3 : Distribution of Types of Sources in Newspapers**

Newspapers	Types of Sources			Total
	Governmental	Non-governmental	Unspecified	
The Hindu	29 (7.18)	30 (7.43)	50 (12.38)	114(28.22)
The Times of India	21(5.20)	40(9.90)	49(12.13)	110(27.33)
Mathrubhumi	24 (5.94)	34(8.42)	36(8.91)	94(23.27)
Malayala Manorama	20 (4.95)	32(7.92)	34(8.42)	86(21.29)
Total	94 (23.27)	136(33.66)	169(41.83)	404(100)

*Figures in parentheses denote percentage*

$X^2 = 5.9855$ .  $df=3$ ,  $p$  value .42.

The data show that The Hindu carried highest percentage of governmental sources (7.18) compared to other newspapers while The Times of India carried highest percentage (9.90) of non-governmental sources and the both of these newspapers had higher and somewhat equal percentages (12.38, 12.13 respectively.) of unspecified sources compared to their Malayalam counterparts. Of all the sampled sources, highest percentage (41.83) goes to unspecified category followed by non-governmental (33.66) and governmental sources (23.27). The common trend in all newspapers is that unspecified sources are higher compared to other types of sources. Unspecified sources are those whose identities are disclosed and most often reported with wordings like ‘according to official sources’ or ‘sources said’, or ‘according to information from confidential sources’ etc.

However, the differences in the distribution of various types of news sources among newspapers are not statistically significant as the probability value was found to be .42. In short, sourcing trend is same in all newspapers irrespective of their language, reach and spectrum of reportage. This finding invalidates the first hypothesis (H1): Types of sources of news on national security are likely to differ among newspapers in India.

Yet another dimension sought be explored in the study was the nature of the distribution of various types sourced content among different newspapers. While the Hindu stood up with highest percentage (13.37) of factual content The Times of India was credited with highest percentage of (12.88) framed content. Opinionated content was found to be higher in Malayalam newspapers – Mathrubhumi (10.40%), Malayala Manorama (19.40%). The percentage of factual content is lower in Times of India (6.44) and Malayala Manorama (6.94).

**Table 4: Types of Sourced Information in Newspapers**

Newspapers	Type of Sourced Content			
	Factual	Opinionated	Framed	Total
The Hindu	54 (13.37)	35(8.66)	25 (6.20)	114(28.22)
The Times of India	26 (6.44)	32 (7.93)	52 (12.88)	110(27.33)
Mathrubhumi	30 (7.43)	42(10.40)	22 (5.45)	94(23.27)
Malayala Manorama	28 (6.94)	38 (9.40)	20 (4.96)	86(21.29)
Total	138 (34.15)	147 (36.39)	119(29.46)	404 (100)

*Figures in parentheses denote percentage*

$\chi^2: 31.7667. df=3, P=.00.$

The differences in the distribution of various types of sourced content in the sampled news stories were found to be statistically significant at a p level of .05. It means pattern of developing content from sourced information varies according to the newspaper policy on various national security issues. The finding supported the second hypothesis (H2): The distribution of the types of knowledge offered by sources cited in the news reports on national security issues are likely to vary among newspapers in India.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

From the data, it is clear that citing specified sources is not rooted as a professional practice in both English and Malayalam newspapers in India. Official sources are considered to be essential elements of news production and main sources of information on issues related to national importance since official sources have authority to comment on the issue and have access to authentic official sources. More so they are the formally assigned gateways through which governmental information has to pass to the public. (McNair 1998; Ericson et al 1989; Gans 1979; Altheide and Snow 1979; Tuchman 1978; Sigal 1973). However, Indian newspapers do not consider this parameters of credibility attached to official/governmental sources when reporting national security issues. There are two possible reasons for this trend: either governmental sources are not ready to disclose their identity due to official constraints, or media persons are not bothered about the verification of information on national security issues with the government sources as both audiences and governments are not concerned about the credibility of news. Whatever be the reason, this less professional approach leads to erosion of media credibility and spread of misinformation about sensitive issues related to the security of nation.

The level of citation of non-governmental sources in the sampled newspapers is at an average level. Such sources are most often cited for their comments based on their political or communal perspectives and their dominance over the government sources clearly indicates the Indian media's temptation to politicize national security issues. Politicization of national security issues consequently sensationalizes news of serious concern and end up as a market product that woo more audience. This is how immature sourcing practice functions as 'filters' mentioned by Herman and Chomsky in their Propaganda Model.

The notable finding was of the higher frequency of unspecified sources that inevitably lacks credibility. In both national and regional newspapers, citing unspecified sources is a common practice. While resorting unspecified sources, reporters and at large the media

itself are not ready to shoulder the responsibility of news and creates doubt and some times panic among the audience.

When looked at the types of sourced content in a comparative perspective, framed or opinionated contents are more prevalent than factual content in all newspapers except for The Hindu, which is known for serious journalism in India. However, The Hindu's sourcing pattern in terms of the types of sources is in line with other newspapers. And, it indicates that The Hindu filters content received from news sources according to their editorial policy to ensure credibility and demarcate facts from comments and views. This type of rigorous filtering mechanism is not found in the pattern of content selection followed by other three newspapers. Framing is an established practice in The Times of India given their higher frequency of framed stories.

The results indicate that sourcing functions as one of the five filters of propaganda as suggested by Herman and Chomsky in their famous model. Lack of professional editorial policy, vested interests of media corporates, lack of matured political vision and dearth of credibility concerns on the part of the audience collectively contribute to this situation where news ends up as a media product for content industry. Indian journalism has to go far to reach professionalism in basic journalistic practices like sourcing, citation and content editing. The way Indian reporters source national security related information unquestionably points at the existence of the elements of irresponsible editorial practices in India media sector and warrants serious attention for healthy future of democracy, media freedom and informed citizenry.

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# Reading Behaviour of Youth in Digital Environment

Communication & Journalism Research  
5(1) pp 101-107  
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masscomhod@uoc.ac.in  
ISSN 2348 – 5663

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## **Abstract**

Reading is crucial in the changing world of the information age. With the rapid development of digital technologies and constantly growing volumes of information, reading is no more restricted to paper. Far reaching utilization of digital resources and hazardous development of the Web has acquired critical changes in reading habits of new generation, as they spend more time reading online. Browsing or scanning is turning into an important reading pattern in today's digital environment. They do not have the capacity to read profoundly and to sustain a prolonged engagement in reading. This paper examines the reading behaviour of youth in the digital environment.

## **Keywords**

Online Reading, Digital Environment, Youth, Browsing, Scanning, Internet, World Wide Web

## **Introduction**

Digital Reading includes a dynamic procedure of developing meaning and gaining knowledge which varies from individual to individual. It is a scholarly activity which serves to acquire more information and knowledge. The propensity of reading adds to advancement of aptitudes such as reading comprehension, problem solving and critical thinking. For a good reader, it is an intuitive discussion between him and the creator. The reader shares the knowledge and experience of the creator, which helps him to give intending to the content and to preferable comprehend the content other over what the creator himself may have inferred. Subsequent to understanding what he reads, he comes out with his own interpretations. It is said that good readers are critical readers with capacity to land at a more profound comprehension of the world exhibited in the content as well as of this present reality around them.

Growing collection of digital resources has had a significant effect on reading of youth. The extent of reading resources has changed radically in the digital environment to incorporate e-books, e-journals, e-papers, e-mail, discussion boards, chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs, wikis, and other multimedia documents. Because of the accessibility of a substantial choice, effectiveness, low cost, openness, and progressive and up to date nature, youth can read a scope of online materials. With an expanding measure of time spent on reading online a screen based reading behaviour is rising. Today the reading has social,

scholastic, economical and survival importance, in the light of the fact that democracy of a nation can survive when individuals everywhere have reading ability. Subsequently, reading gives both power, and joy with understanding, by reading the material as a bound together entire, by which one can extend the wildernesses of knowledge and scholarship. Boundless utilization of digital resources has realized noteworthy changes in reading practice and conduct as youthful era spend more time on reading online.

### **Electronic Reading**

Uses with the quickly developing ICT (Information and Communication Technology), the content are exchanged to the computer pages and they are distributed through computers. The readers ought to read on the screen to get to the new information. Online reading exercises in which the more youthful era regularly engaged are reading messages, e-journals, e-books, e-zines, e-daily papers, blogs, wikis, online chatting, social networking sites, utilizing an online dictionary or encyclopedia, searching for online information to learn about a particular topic and taking part in online group discussions or forums. This reading behaviour is described by more time on searching and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and reading all the more specifically; while less time is spent on in-depth and concentrated reading, and sustained attention is diminishing.

Dillon (1994) has proposed a structure for depicting electronic reading. This system contains various issues: (1) TM (Task Model) manages reader's necessities and uses for the reading content; (2) IM (Information Model) gives mental model to the reading context (3) MSF (an arrangement of manipulation skills and facilities that support physical utilization of the reading materials); (4) SRP (a Serial Reading Processor) represents the cognitive and perceptual preparing includes in reading words and sentences. Online reading includes reading with extraordinary subjective exertion in handling electronic printed information. The capacity of an individual's attention span, working memory, and long-term memory ought to be considered.

### **Electronic Reading Literacy**

Current technological development has prompted significant changes in reading proficiency. For reading electronic resources, youth need essential ICT aptitudes, such as moving a mouse, scrolling down page, clicking on links, and progressed cognitive skills such as scanning and skimming among hyperlinks to hunt down significant and important material or judging of content (Leu et al., 2008). In this manner, the cognitive process and procedures included in reading printed and digital resources are similar; however, the procedures are much more complex for electronic texts. For both online and traditional text readers develop their own particular mental models to make importance. The central distinction between conventional printed content and new reading proficiency is that new reading proficiency is fixated on an issue and requires the readers to pick among distinctive links to effectively develop their own particular interest and to assess the quality and reasonability of the content they read (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Contrasted with the traditional printed content, the inter-textual connection in online reading is frequently made more unequivocal so it gives increasing access to complex texts for readers to investigate in their mind and on the screen. When readers had better attitude, confidence and access to ICT (at home), they read more online/electronic texts, despite the fact that their original intention may not have been to read. The aggregation of online reading experiences, which includes complex cognitive processing of online information and the utilization of reading strategies, at last transferred to and improved the reading of printed writings.

Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, and Cammack (2004) compressed five online reading processing practices which includes recognizing critical inquiries, finding data, critically assessing information, synthesizing information and communication of data. A large portion of these practices are imparted to traditional reading, yet have a tendency to weigh all the more in the online reading context. For instance, critical thinking to assess the information is more vital for online readers because of the refinement of unbounded instructive in the Internet. In addition, new abilities and strategies are obliged to convey adequately and effectively in online using tools such as email, blogs, wikis, discussion boards, chats, and messaging. Among these reading practices, finding information is unique to online reading. At the point, when searching for information on the web, one needs to utilize a search engine, to read the outcomes give via search engine, to locate data on webpage, and to make an induction and figure out which link will prompt the wanted data starting with one webpage then onto the next (Henry, 2006). The online information search skills are so important to the point that they choose whether the readers succeed or neglect to understand the online content as prove by the nonisomorphic example of a struggle offline reader who performed well in the online reading environment in light of the fact that he gained the skills, strategies, and disposition central to online reading comprehension.

### **Hypertext**

Online reading can be mulled over from a few alternate points of view; the fields of cognitive psychology, education, information studies, and scholarly studies have all added to diverse aspects of current knowledge of online reading. The most prominent theory of online reading today is hypertext theory (Miall & Dobson, 2001). The term hypertext was initially instituted by Theoder H. Nelson in the 1960s, which is a text composed of blocks of words linked electronically by multiple paths, chains or trails (Landow, 1997). Hypertext is text demonstrated on a computer display or other electronic devices with hyperlinks to other text which the reader can get too rapidly, or where text can be revealed continuously at diverse levels of detail. Hyperlinks which are utilized for interconnecting hypertext pages are enacted by a mouse click, by touching the screen or by a key press progression. Hypertext is occasionally used to depict tables, pictures and other presentational substance outlines with hyperlinks. Hypertext is the concealed thought portraying the structure of the web with pages frequently written in the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). It engages an easy to use and adaptable connection and sharing of information over the Internet. Hypertext can take a wide range of structures giving diverse degrees of context and decisions to readers. The two segments of hypertext are links and lexias. A lexia, a reading unit or area of text, can be of fluctuating length and composition which are joined by links. Through these links that lexias gain meaning and structure the text as a whole. Contingent upon the reader's decisions this entire is variably and can be shaped again with every reading.

Hypertext is described by several features. In the first place, hypertext is depicted as non-linear, in which the readers can make the content as they read, contingent upon the decisions depending made when reading. Hypertext is said to bring freedom to readers, making new terms such as wreader and secondary author. Since hypertext is joined by links, each reader has the capacity to make a one of a kind way through the content, subsequently having a part in the text's authorship. Every reader can then make an interesting or unique text according to the links followed (Carusi, 2006).

As readers acclimate to the digital medium, certain new components are acquainted with the reading process. First, the digital text is less material than content on a page, yet can act in diverse ways than print text. Words on the screen can have hyperlinks and can be changed through computer function. It is not yet clear whether hyperlinked words are read

in the same path as print-based words. The non-linearity of hypertext may additionally influence the reading process. Readers no more have the altogether of texts before them and must figure out how to navigate undetectable segments of text (Gervais, 2007). At the time of reading digital text, essentially advancing through the text regularly obliges more thought and practices than it does when reading print texts. Gervais (2007) clarifies that each demonstration of reading comprises of three sections: manipulation, comprehension, and interpretation. The manipulation of conventional print texts is regularly ignored in the act of reading, yet this part of the reading process is developing in significance with digital reading. If a text cannot be manipulated, readers will experience issues in understanding and interpreting the text. Readers must keep on learning to manipulate texts on screen as they adjust to the digital reading environment. As indicated by Carusi (2006), the focal case of hypertext theory is that it constitutes a challenge to existing reading practices, and that even our experience of reading will eventually be changed by it. Hypertext may be able to change the roles of readers, the consideration given to texts, and the form of texts themselves. Because of the nature of hypertext, some scholar stress that youth may get to be readers who lack depth of thought and analysis, while others propose that hypertext can realize new types of scholarship that have yet to be found.

Practically speaking readers may favour print on paper for longer, depth and augmented times of reading and limit our reading onscreen to passages and references. Previously, poor screen resolution had made sustained reading tedious and troublesome. However, now with current innovative advancement, enhanced screen technology and reader software improvements, reading onscreen presents a less aggravating and more adaptable and flexible reading experience to an expanding number of individuals.

### **Influence of Online Reading on Youth**

Reading is considered as a corner stone of success throughout the life of a person. Reading is significant and considered as a window to knowledge. In the digital age, youthful grown-ups are found spending more time on reading digital resources than those are printed. A lot of their reading time is spent on browsing and skimming for information on the Internet. Their motivation of reading appears to stray from the conventional reading methods, which are linear, brief and less structured.

The Internet is a wonderful resource for many things, and it has allowed people all over the world to become more connected to each other. However, with its rapid speed, mentality of instant gratification, and its unique format, the Internet has had a detrimental effect on the reading habits of entire generation. The generation that grew up with the Internet has an attention span that is conditioned to eschew any work of writing that requires a close, analytical read, or a long investment of time. The effect of the Internet on reading habits cannot be ignored as the Internet itself becomes more accessible to more people each day. Growing amount of digital information accessible and the expanding measure of time that youth spend on reading electronic media, the digital environment has started to influence their reading behaviour. The most essential element of today's information environment is links and this has made information seeking a horizontal rather than vertical type of conduct. It is in this manner difficult to isolate reading from navigating, readers are reading as part of searching, not searching for reading. Various researchers contend that the entry of advanced media, together with the fragmentary way of hypertext, is threatening sustained reading. In the event that a webpage does not stack inside of three seconds, readers click their approach to another webpage or site. Clicking is quick turning into substitute for thinking. Clicking requires less exertion than thinking and is in some instances less difficult than thinking. Birkerts (1994) notes that the younger generation growing up in the digital environment does not have the capacity to read profoundly and to sustain a

prolonged engagement in reading. The digital transition has bought about readers moving from a vertical to a horizontal information seeking model, which prompts them getting to be viewers instead of readers. Their conduct is best portrayed as bouncing, flicking or skittering: they move quickly along the digital surface, generally with frequent light contacts or alters of direction. Multitasking while reading online is another issue. While readers are at their laptop or desktop, they will keep various program windows open then, blinking images on the web, scrolling and turning of pages, check their email and may likewise be on their mobile phone checking their twitter feed, also listening to the radio or television also (Nicholas, 2011). This will prompts to decrease in in-depth and concentrated reading.

Eveland and Dunwoody (2001) observe that it is exceptionally troublesome for readers to devote full attention to reading in light of the fact that they need to choose which text to read, which hyperlink to follow, and whether to scroll down a page. These issues should be solved for reading with full concentration. The conceivable arrangements are to take print out of the documents for reading or save them on computer and read offline. Opening of undesirable websites giving access to pornographic material and data unsafe to national integrity, etc., ought to be blocked using the innovative arrangements. The youth ought to likewise abstain from tapping on undesirable websites, blinking pictures, appealing screen savers, irrelevant headings, and so forth to be more engaged while surfing. Other conceivable component responsible for decreasing in in-depth reading is that the readers are possible surfing of the free portion of the web where the subjects are not talked about profoundly but rather widely. In addition, they may not be aware about of deep web and open access web resources. The solution is to make the users mindful of profound web collection, qualitative web resources through consortia and other means, and its search tools (Loan, 2011). The other concern is decline in reading of literature. The possible reasons are lack of familiarity of literary collection, lack of adequate literary collection and lack of access to it. The need is to aware youth about literary collection on the web like Gutenberg book venture which gives free access to literary collection of well known scholars like William Shakespeare.

There is no doubt that the Internet plays an important role in today's information age and has become extremely powerful in communications, work life and people's daily activities. As the new media bring exceptional flexibility for readers, they likewise prompt another type of limitation. In the print environment, the text is fixed and the author decides the order in which ideas are displayed. In hypertext, however the author provides alternatives, yet readers choose the order through activating links. The expansion of hyperlinks has a significant impact on reading behaviour such as non linear reading (e.g., bouncing from page to page and from site to site). Notwithstanding for readers who begin reading from the same page, what they read may be diverse relying upon which link is activated. Hypertext reading may also reduce the sustained attention to any printed source and lead to more fragmented reading, subsequent to every page on the web need to compete with many pages for the user's consideration. Links imposed may not be logically associated with the original topic, which may send readers to a site for no reason and result in disorientation. So online reading has an awesome effect on younger generation in the digital environment. Subsequently reading practices of new era are experiencing significant change gradually moving from sequential reading to non-sequential reading, passive reading to interactive reading, concentrated reading to superficial reading and in-depth reading to extensive reading, restricted access to unrestricted access, local sources to worldwide sources, print sources to online sources, local languages to English language and individual reading to participative reading. The landing of computerized media brings both positive and negative changes. Despite the fact that youth are likely to read more from a screen than from a printed page later on, it must be remember that readers purposes and inclinations are extremely various because of contrasts in gender and age, and there is not a solitary

arrangement that is perfect to all. It is that impossible that digital media will render conventional books and traditional libraries outdated soon (Liu, 2008).

### Conclusion

In an inexorably digital environment, readers are likely to gradually develop the screen-based reading behaviour, and progressively utilize a variety of methodologies to adapt to the information abundant environment. It appears that the youth have been quick sent from a world where the attention was on knowing one major thing truly well to a world where they know numerous things, however not extremely well. In a world influenced by powerful online culture, it is exceptionally well to propel the readers particularly youth to take the time needed for in-depth reading.

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# Communication and Journalism Research

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1 JANUARY - JUNE 2016

*Communication and Journalism Research (CJR)* is a refereed journal published twice a year by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Calicut, Kerala, India. The journal presents a broad ranging account of the fast changing world of communication, bringing together a variety of studies in qualitative and quantitative approaches.



COMMUNICATION & JOURNALISM RESEARCH

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1 JANUARY - JUNE 2016

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