

New Media in Contemporary Society

DR. Sukanya

Head, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

St. Philomena's College, Mysore -570015

Email: sukanyamalloli@yahoo.co.in

Abstract:

These technological advances of the Internet and mobile phones have created a new global culture and seem to impact on people's perspectives. The Internet culture has dared to take on to unbeaten paths to initiate educational, cultural and psychological revolutions. Internet technology has raised the level of awareness to hitherto unknown levels. A cursory glance at the studies conducted across the globe compels one to take notice of the 'digital divide' that has come about in the society.

Cultural impact of Internet & mobile phone is considered for study because:

- 1. They are the ultimate in social alienation, and indicative of a trend that threatens to erode our sense of social cohesion.*
- 2. Impact of new media on Indian culture is seemingly evident.*

This study was confined to four districts in Karnataka (IT bowl of India). The sample consisted of 801 respondents. The Survey method was found to be appropriate to conduct a study of this nature. The findings make interesting revelations. There is a significant relation between education and surfing Internet i.e. a vast majority of the respondents (89.9%) belonged to graduate and post-graduate categories. Chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 42.20$; $df: 4$ $p < 0.001$) revealed that there is a significant relation among the respondents with reference to age and gender. There is no significant relation between gender and surfing Internet ($\chi^2 = 0.35$; $df: 1$, NS; $p > 0.01$).

The majority of the people do not surf Internet just to spend time, download music, seek information about movies, film stars and celebrities, watch pornographic films, play games, gamble nor just to chat. The 't' value is negative ($t = -12.2607$, $t = -3.4273$, $t = -2.0139$, $t = -24.9099$, $t = -14.5926$, $t = -14.7339$) in all the above cases.

New media have failed to penetrate deep enough to alter the social or cultural life of a person.

Key terms: *Society, Internet, Surfing, Browser, To chat, Social Networking,*

Introduction

Mass media which have proved to be the most successful channels of communication excelled in creating a common culture. The advent of TV, in particular promoted the isolation of human beings. Now, finally, there is a counter-trend. Howard Rheingold framed it beautifully, when he wrote *The Virtual Community*, nearly 15 years ago: "Perhaps cyberspace is one of those informal public places, where people can rebuild the aspects of community that were lost when the malt shop became a mall. Theorists such as Louis Wirth and Talcott Parsons have emphasized the importance of mass media as instruments of social control. In the 21st century, with the rise of the internet, the two-way relationship between mass media and public opinion is beginning to change."¹

The mass media constitute a powerful and pervading force in our lives. We are exposed daily to a bombardment of media messages. Most of the information we receive about our community, our state, the nation and the world comes to us through newspapers, magazines, television and radio.

The information and views communicated through these media have great impact on our attitudes toward people, events and problems. Mass media expose people to a flood of information almost narcotic sing reader, listener or viewer. Due to mass media the range and amount of information available to the people has vastly increased."²

Significance of the Study

The new generation is now being raised with widespread availability of Internet connectivity, with consequences on privacy, identity, and copyright concerns. These "Digital natives" or netizens face a whole set of concerns that was not present for earlier generations.

Karnataka is one of the more advanced states with Bangalore being the IT capital of the country. It is the right time to study whether people still are exposed to traditional mass media when they have access to new media for more than a decade now.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the mid 1990s one of the hot topics that dominated the sphere of discourse was regarding sociability and the Internet. On the one hand people argued that there was something innovative about the virtual communities whereas others were of the opinion that online social networking would adversely affect the real life relationships of people.³

Mass media are capable of creating various kinds of impact on mankind. They play a crucial role in the function and change of any society. A study of social change cannot be done without studying mass media. Therefore, in the present times when technology has brought about changes in the society, mass media studies have become important.⁴

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study makes an effort to measure the exposure of the respondents to various media. The statistical techniques employed for data analysis are described.

Primary data was collected from students and people by the use of structured questionnaire method.

Sample Profile

The sample (800) was selected on the basis simple random sampling technique. Since the study also pertains to Internet, it requires respondents who are the users of Internet as well. Therefore the sample consists of users of media like newspapers, Radio, magazines, TV and new media and excludes non users.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze the frequency of utilization of New media
2. To analyze the exposure to various media

Table-1: Showing frequency of media exposure by respondents:

Media	YES		NO		t-value
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Newspaper	706	88.1	95	11.9	21'.58
Magazine	447	55.8	354	44.2	3.29
Radio	508	63.4	293	36.6	7.59
TV	708	88.4	93	11.6	21.73
Computer	472	58.9	329	41.1	5.05
Internet at Home	312	39.0	489	61.0	-6.05
Internet at Office	239	29.8	562	70.2	-11.41
Personal Mobile Phone	600	74.9	201	25.1	14.09

t=21.58, p<0.01

df: 799

From the table it can be deciphered the print media is still a more popular medium than the new media. The reasons could be newspapers are cheap, easily available, portable, anywhere and everywhere could be read, personal touch towards newspaper and people have been used to read newspaper since their childhood as against new media . It is interesting to note that TV as well as newspapers has the highest viewership and readership. A good percentage of people (75%) own mobile phone whereas only 39% of them have Internet connection at home.

Table- 2: shows reading of newspapers by respondents of different age groups

Age	Newspaper		Total
	Yes	No	
18-24	485	74	559
25-34	128	18	146
35-44	38	2	40
45-54	41	1	42
55 and Above	14	0	14
Total	706	95	801

$\chi^2 = 8.34$; NS; $p > 0.05$, df: 4

There is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and the newspaper reading ($\chi^2 = 8.34$; NS; $p > 0.05$ df: 4). It may be inferred that irrespective of age, people of all age groups read newspapers. Age is independent of newspaper reading.

Table-3: shows the reading of magazines by respondents of different age groups

Age	Magazine		Total
	Yes	No	
18-24	296	263	559
25-34	81	65	146
35-44	27	13	40
45-54	31	11	42
55 and Above	12	2	14
Total	447	354	801

$\chi^2 = 15$; NS; $p > 0.05$, df: 4

Magazines are read by everybody irrespective of age. But the type of magazines read may vary from one age group to another so also time spent on reading. The table also reveals that the number of youth who read newspaper and those who don't is almost equal. But age is not the factor for reading or not reading magazine.

Table-4: shows listening radio by respondents of different age groups

Age	Radio		Total
	Yes	No	
18-24	367	192	559
25-34	74	72	146
35-44	28	12	40
45-54	27	15	42
55 and Above	12	2	14
Total	508	292	801

$\chi^2 = 15.76$; $p < 0.05$ df: 4

It may be inferred that listening to radio varies from one age group to another. Younger the age higher is the listening pattern. Radio appears to be more popular among the younger people than older ones. There is high listening in the age group of 18-35 years.

Table-5: shows watching TV by respondents of different age groups

Age	TV		Total
	Yes	No	
18-24	490	69	559
25-34	129	17	146
35-44	35	5	40
45-54	41	1	42
55 and Above	13	1	14
Total	708	93	801

$\chi^2 = 4.09$; NS; $p > 0.05$ df: 4,

Television is watched by everybody irrespective of age as it is an attractive audio visual medium unlike radio where youngsters listen more compared to adults.

Table-6 shows using of Computers by respondents of different age groups

Age	Computer		Total
	Yes	No	
18-24	307	252	559
25-34	95	51	146
35-44	26	14	40
45-54	32	10	42
55 and Above	12	2	14
Total	472	329	801

$\chi^2 = 15.92$; $p < 0.05$, df: 4

The reasons for the popularity of computers among the youngsters could be attributed to the fact that they are exposed to computers since their childhood days whereas adults were not, as the computers set strong foot in India only after 1990s and the present adults most of them are computer illiterates and or not computer savvy.

Table-7: shows owning personal mobile phone by respondents age wise

Age	Personal Mobile Phone		Total
	Yes	No	
18-24	412	147	559
25-34	109	37	146
35-44	34	6	40
45-54	34	8	42
55 and Above	11	3	14
Total	600	201	801

$\chi^2 = 3.52$; NS; $p > 0.05$, df: 4

The data shows that mobile phones are owned by everybody irrespective of age. Though it is an assumed notion that youth are the maximum users of mobile phones the data indicates there is no relation between age and owning personal mobile phone.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The analysis of data was done by using percentage analysis and graphical representation. The interpretation of data was done using chi-square and t- tests.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part deals with the summary of the findings of the research study.

Major Findings

The results of the study are summarized as following:

1. The print media is still a more popular medium than the new media. There is no significant relation between age and newspaper and magazine reading which means irrespective of age everybody reads newspapers and magazines with few exceptions.
2. Television is watched by everyone irrespective of age unlike radio which is being listened to more by youngsters than adults.

3. There is a correlation between age and listening to the radio, age and using computer, and age and surfing Internet both at home and office.
4. There is no relation between age and owning personal mobile phone.

Inferences and Implications of the Study

Media have many facets in our daily life. It affects our thoughts, feelings and emotions sometimes it affects our total behavior. The study in general reveals that though internet has grown exponentially in India, surprisingly access to Internet among the respondents is very limited. While newspapers and television rule the roost, radio and magazine follow suit. But computers are still a far cry.

There is no significant relation between age and newspaper, magazine reading and television viewing. But there is a significant relation between age and exposure to computers.

New media (Internet and mobile phone) are considered to be the marvels of the twentieth century. It is an assumption that exposure to Internet is high among the younger generation. The data revealed that people have embraced computers as one among mass media in their day-to-day life.

Bibliography:

¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Wirth

² Payal Kamat, Essay on the Impact of Mass Media on people,
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³ "Sociability and the Internet," <http://www.netinfluencer.com/mediapedia/sociability-and-the-internet>, accessed September 18, 2011.

⁴<http://www.preservearticles.com/2012011721059/essay-on-the-impact-of-mass-media-on-people.html>