

# COMMUNICATOR

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## ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Launched in 1965, Communicator is a peer reviewed journal of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) that publishes original research on communications. The flagship journal of the IIMC endeavours to publish the best literature available in the field of communications and its related branches for the greater benefit of scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. The main aim of Communicator Journal is to focus on communication theory, research, policy and practice. This UGC-CARE listed Journal is published on quarterly basis. Communicator is now being indexed in the Indian Citation Index.

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# From the Chief Editor's Desk



**Anupama Bhatnagar**  
Director General  
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Communication

Development communication is a specialized field dedicated to leveraging communication strategies for positive social change and progress, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It involves disseminating information, fostering dialogue, and encouraging community participation to address social issues, promote sustainable practices, and enhance overall well-being. Similarly, environmental communication conveys the importance of environmental stewardship, biodiversity conservation, and the impact of individual and collective actions on ecosystems, contributing to the broader goal of achieving ecological sustainability outlined in the SDGs. Together, development communication and environmental communication play pivotal roles in shaping a more sustainable and socially conscious global society in line with the broader SDG agenda.

This issue begins with a paper on the development agenda in communication, which refers to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat program, which he launched on October 3, 2014. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) have been adopted at the national and state levels in India. This paper investigates the development agenda in 'Mann Ki Baat' using a coding system of 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. The findings indicate that the program effectively covers all 17 SDGs, with SDGs 3, 6, and 16 being present in all episodes of the sample, indicating a focus on promoting healthy lives and well-being, sustainable water and sanitation management, and the development of inclusive and accountable institutions for sustainable development.

Another paper with the objective of analyzing the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) on health coverage in rural areas in Manipur investigates the implementation and coverage of the Ayushman Bharat scheme in rural Manipur, providing valuable insights into the healthcare communication landscape.

As we live in the digital age, social media has become increasingly important in raising awareness about a wide range of issues. A study aimed to understand the breast cancer-related awareness content of the most viewed videos on YouTube available in Hindi in order to understand health awareness through social media. This study's findings confirm that Hindi YouTube videos for breast cancer information have a large reach and accessibility among large audiences.



Shifting our focus to environmental concerns, a study investigates the role of media in raising awareness about critical issues. Environmental issues, particularly plastic pollution and air pollution, are harmful to humans. It is a good practice to protect the environment and preserve nature on an individual, organizational, and governmental level for the benefit of both the environment and humans. The study provides valuable insights into how media coverage can contribute to environmental conservation efforts in specific regions, using Kashmir as a case study.

With the pertinent questions in relation to audience behaviour as 'reader of the text' vis-a-vis 'consumer created through the cultural industry' in the widespread media environments, a study strived to find out the characteristics of the audience of rural India in the global media environment. The study revisits two villages in Rajasthan and one village in Kerala after 15 years to investigate the socio-cultural changes/resistance to the model of cultural industry.

To explain the various reasons for the growing popularity of digital streaming services, particularly among young people, a study investigated whether these preferences are a passing phase or a threat to the survival of cinema halls. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach to gather information from both the audience and filmmaking professionals, conducting surveys and focus groups.

There are other interesting topics taken up in this issue, like the psychology of social media, analysis of the folk dances of Naga tribes, social media strategies employed by national political parties, and the emergence of e-publishing and communication for development as a tool for empowerment and community engagement.

I would like to thank the editorial team, the editorial board, and the reviewers for their continuous support. It is always a pleasure to receive insightful suggestions from readers.

**Anupama Bhatnagar**



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# Development Agenda in Political Communication: A Case Study of Mann Ki Baat

BHARTESH SINGH THAKUR<sup>1</sup> & ARCHANA R SINGH<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

India has adopted the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at both national and state levels. The Centre's flagship programmes, in fact, align with the SDGs like "Ayushman Bharat", "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao", and "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan". Prime Minister Narendra Modi started 'Mann Ki Baat' on October 3, 2014, and the 100th episode was broadcast on April 30, 2023. This paper investigates the development agenda in 'Mann Ki Baat' through a coding system of 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. Every 10th episode of radio addresses is taken in the sample. The observation method is employed for identifying development communication. The findings suggest that the programme effectively covers all 17 SDGs and specifically, the SDGs 3, 6, and 16 were present in all episodes of the sample, indicating a focus on promoting healthy lives and well-being, sustainable management of water and sanitation, and building inclusive and accountable institutions for sustainable development. The results also demonstrate the alignment of the Indian people's thought process, the government's developmental agenda, and the global agenda through SDGs. The results have implications for policymakers too, who need to have an increased focus on health, water and sanitation management and citizens' participation in policy-making and decision-making process.

**Keywords:** Ayushman Bharat, Mann Ki Baat, PM Narendra Modi, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, United Nations

## Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. These goals encompass a broad range of issues, including poverty eradication, gender equality, climate action, and sustainable consumption and production patterns. The resolution reaffirms the UN's commitment to utilising the agenda to transform the world for the better (2030 Agenda: United Nations, 2015).

In India, the SDGs have been adopted at both the national and state levels, with the government's flagship programmes, such as "Ayushman Bharat" and "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan", aligned with the SDGs. The Niti Aayog agency is monitoring progress on the SDGs through the SDG India Index and Dashboard (SDG INDIA Index and Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

For implementation of the Agenda, the resolution asked member states to develop "practicable

ambitious national responses". It urged "to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (2030 Agenda: United Nations, 2015).

The SDGs followed the Millennium Development Goals, announced in 2000, and aim to complete what these didn't achieve (History: The 17 Goals, 2023).

Upon assuming office in 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced an additional media platform for his political communication in the form of 'Mann Ki Baat'. This radio programme allows the Prime Minister to discuss issues that are close to his heart, as well as those referred to him by the common man. The programme's name translates to "words from the heart" and is reflective of its personal nature. The first address by PM Modi on 'Mann Ki Baat' was delivered on the occasion of Dussehra, a Hindu festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil, on October 3, 2014. The programme has since continued to air, with the 100th episode being broadcast on April 30, 2023. The programme

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has a unique format, which allows the Prime Minister to connect with the people directly and discuss topics that resonate with them. It serves as a valuable tool for political communication and outreach, enabling the government to gauge public sentiment and gather feedback on its policies and initiatives. 'Mann Ki Baat' represents a notable addition to the Indian political landscape, providing a platform for interactive communication between the Prime Minister and the people of India. The aim of the study is to see whether 'Mann Ki Baat' aligns with the global development agenda.

### **Rationale**

PM Modi has a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube and has a dedicated website ([www.narendramodi.in](http://www.narendramodi.in)) where videos of his speeches, along with his text and audio recordings of radio addresses, are available.

In episode 50 of the radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister Narendra Modi recounted an incident that influenced his decision to use radio as a medium for his political communication. According to Modi, while travelling in Himachal Pradesh in May 1998, a wayside tea seller broke the news of India's nuclear bomb explosion and offered him a sweet. This incident, he claims, made him realise the power of radio as a medium for connecting with the masses. Modi was intrigued by the lone "tea seller in a remote, snow-clad hilly area who possibly kept listening to the radio the entire day". He observed how the news had a profound effect on the tea seller. Thus, this incident was a turning point that made Modi appreciate radio as a mighty means of communication.

The stress on radio as a means of communication is a recurring theme in the addresses. Right from the first episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', the PM describes radio as serving each and every corner of the nation and that he could reach the poorest homes through the medium. In the 100th episode, he describes 'Mann Ki Baat' as a monthly festival of "goodness and positivity" of the countrymen.

The radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat' was initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in October 2014. A year later, on September 25, 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the programme's focus was not intended to align with the SDGs, this research paper seeks to investigate the potential overlap in the programme's priority areas with the SDGs.

The paper aims to identify the development agenda within 'Mann Ki Baat' using the SDGs as a systematic coding system. Through an analysis of 'Mann Ki Baat' episodes, the paper seeks to uncover

the thematic areas of focus that emerge across the programme's episodes aligning with the SDGs in the development agenda being addressed. By utilising the SDGs as a framework for sustainable development, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the development themes within 'Mann Ki Baat'. The findings of this paper will provide insights into the potential alignment of the programme's priorities with the global development agenda set out by the SDGs.

Furthermore, the research aims to contribute to the existing literature on the potential impact of media communication on development discourse and outcomes. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study's findings for policymakers, development practitioners, and media professionals, providing recommendations for future research in this area.

For categorisation of the development agenda of PM Modi in 'Mann Ki Baat', 17 SDGs and their 169 targets are relied upon in this study.

### **Research questions**

- Q 1. What is the development communication content in the programme 'Mann Ki Baat'?
- Q 2. Whether development communication in 'Mann Ki Baat' aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals?

### **Research objectives**

To examine the content of radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat' for development agenda through the coding system of SDGs and their targets.

### **Research methodology**

This study employs the observation method to examine the content of 'Mann Ki Baat' episodes as a case in point, with the aim of identifying the presence of development communication. To achieve this objective, a systematic coding system of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets serves as the framework for the categorisation of development-related content in the programme.

The research question that guides this investigation is the extent to which the priority areas of 'Mann Ki Baat' episodes align with the SDGs. Since 'Mann Ki Baat' has emerged as an important platform for political communication in India, this research aims to provide a systematic approach to the identification and categorisation of development-related content in the programme through the use of SDGs as a framework for analysis.

The observation method is chosen as the most appropriate research design for this investigation, as it allows for a detailed analysis of the content of 'Mann Ki Baat'.

### Sample

Through the stratified sampling method and starting from the 10<sup>th</sup> episode of ‘Mann Ki Baat’, every 10th episode has been chosen until the 100th episode. English text of addresses is taken from [narendramodi.in](http://narendramodi.in), the official website of PM Narendra Modi.

### Review of literature

Brian McNair defines political communication as “all forms of communication by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives, communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspaper columnists and communication about these actors and their activities, as contained in news reports, editorials, and other forms of media discussion of politics” (McNair, 2003). Traditionally, it is considered a message from the political sphere to the public (Lilleker, 2006).

McQuail (1992) defines political communication as “to all processes of information (including facts, opinions, beliefs, etc.) transmission, exchange, and search engaged in by participants in the course of institutionalised political activities.” Feldman and Zmerli (2018) describe the major “goal of political communicators is to influence citizens’ political opinions, attitudes, and behaviour. By virtue of communicators’ use of rhetoric, that is, the art of persuasive speaking or writing, citizens’ beliefs, value orientations, or attitudes may be either reinforced or transformed and actions initiated. Political rhetoric is then the use of persuasion in the political process, i.e., the strategies used by decision-makers, members of various political groups, media reporters and editors, and other actors who are involved in public affairs.”

In modern democracies, politicians need to communicate with people to come back to power and win over political rivals. Earlier, it was through rallies. Newspapers and pamphlets were there, too. Then the radio came. It helped to reach a mass audience and “shaped a despatialized form of simultaneous experience” (Wijfjes, 2014).

US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (FDR) used radio to shape American history and his well-crafted ‘Day of Infamy’ speech helped in gaining people’s support for war (Yu, 2005). Using the phrases “my friends” and “we”, fireside talks of FDR created an intimate experience for listeners. In contrast, Adolf Hitler and his minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels “used radio to create heroic, mythic distance between the leader and the nation” (Wijfjes, 2014).

British PM Winston Churchill’s war time speeches on radio carried the themes of “determination, unity

and hope, at a time when the British population needed those qualities most”, in a sense resembled Hitler (Wijfjes, 2014).

The television shifted the discourse from ideas to personalities (Gurevitch & Coleman, 2009). There is little participation of audience in television broadcasts while digital media makes politicians to think about “interactive audiences and their capacity to question, challenge, redistribute, and modify the messages that they receive”, and hence political messages are more vulnerable to disruption (Gurevitch & Coleman, 2009).

With the advent of web and social media platforms, the reach of political communication has increased. Social media like Twitter and Facebook have increased the reach of political stories through ‘like’, ‘comment’, ‘share’ or ‘retweet’. All these platforms are available on smartphones and are free to use.

Now, even rally broadcasts are shared on social media platforms either through live telecasts or links to recordings.

However, PM Modi has chosen radio for his monthly address to the nation where he claims the address carries “nothing political, or any praise for the Government, nor Modi”. It is currently being broadcast in 23 Indian languages and 29 dialects (25 from north-eastern India and four from Chhattisgarh, a state in Central India), besides 11 foreign languages, including French, Chinese, Indonesian, Tibetan, Baluchi, Arabic, and Pashto (Divya, 2023).

“In an age of social media saturation, PM Modi has framed ‘Mann Ki Baat’ as a more intimate, longer duration, participative interaction with the people,” says the Indian Express’ article (A, Explained: The Indian Express, 2023).

Over 99 episodes in ‘Mann Ki Baat’, PM Modi mentioned his government schemes more often closer to their launch, and ‘Swachh’ or cleanliness has been mentioned 339 times, the most, while there is reference to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a flagship programme of previous UPA government, just six times (Vats & Rohmetra, 2023).

An analysis of PM Modi tweets was conducted by Pal in 2016 wherein he found that since 2009 there is a recognisable shift in the discourse. Hinduism theme represented significantly during the Phase-1 (2009-2012) and Phase-2 (2012-2013), and dropped off leading up to the Phase-3 (run up to 2014 Lok Sabha polls), while the theme of elections was strong in Phases 2 and 3 and in the run-up to the general election, rallies, addresses, and political confrontations were strong, which dropped off in Phase 4 (December 2014 to February 2015). Youth

and development were consistent themes in all phases (Pal, 2016).

Besides an address, 'Mann Ki Baat' is programmed as a PM's direct dialogue with people and celebrating their achievements, conveying a positive sentiment. In a foreword to a book, 'Igniting Collective Goodness: Mann Ki Baat @ 100' (Modi, 2023), PM Modi says, "Mann Ki Baat started as a small experiment, an endeavour to bring to light the inspiring life stories that often remain overshadowed in the daily hustle of politics and governance. Life stories of collective good and societal transformation are happening across India's length and breadth. It created a direct channel of communication with the people, a channel where we could listen to each other, learn from each other, and grow together as a nation. As I said during Episode 100, Mann Ki Baat is about 'Guno Ki Pooja' or worshipping the collective goodness of the people... Throughout these 100 episodes, we have traversed across our diverse nation. We have celebrated the unsung heroes, acknowledged the relentless efforts of our farmers, appreciated the creativity of our artists, and admired the spirit of young innovators."

It has been noticed that 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme gained traction in Google searches popularity after mention in 'Mann Ki Baat' in January 2015 (it was launched in January 2015) and continues to gain popularity after continuous mention for two years (9 Years of Mann Ki Baat: Transforming People, Policies & Governance, 2023). Similar is the case with yoga, which gained popularity in Google searches after its mention in 'Mann Ki Baat' in December 2014 and so does after a mention in May and June of 2015, and Mudra Loan application, which gained traction after mention in 'Mann Ki Baat' since November 2015 but gained highest popularity with the onset of COVID-19.

### Analysis

The sample has been analysed SDG-wise. Each episode of the sample is checked for content related to all 17 SDGs and its 169 targets.

#### ***SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.***

Number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide has risen from a pre-pandemic projection of 581 million to 657-676 million in current projections (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022). India has 21.92% population living below the national poverty line (2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The 'Mann Ki Baat' programme has made several references to poverty alleviation initiatives. For instance, there is a mention of the need to "run for

development of poor" and how Mahatma Gandhi's *swadeshi* campaign brought "prosperity in the lives of poorest of poor". Additionally, the programme talks about the 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna', which is the Indian government's flagship policy for providing access to various financial services, including banking, to weaker sections and low-income groups. Furthermore, the programme highlights how pilgrimages create opportunities for the poor.

The 'Mann Ki Baat' programme has also emphasised the importance of supporting small-scale shopkeepers who are often from low-income backgrounds. In this regard, the programme encourages a campaign for no bargaining with poor small-scale shopkeepers. The findings suggest that the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme has consistently addressed the issue of poverty alleviation in India, which is in line with SDG 1.

#### ***SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.***

About 1 in 10 people worldwide are suffering from hunger and nearly 1 in 3 lack regular access to adequate food (2020) (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022). The number of undernourished people in India has increased from 198.3 million in 2001 to 224.3 million in 2020 though population suffering from hunger reduced from 18.4% to 16.3% in the same period (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023).

In the 'Mann Ki Baat' episodes analysed for this study, there is a clear emphasis on the need for underprivileged populations to have access to pulses and cooking oil, with the production of pulses having increased to approximately 50% and oilseeds to 33%. The maxim "Per drop more crop" is mentioned as a measure for tackling drought, referring to micro-irrigation, drip irrigation, and the use of sprinklers for crop cultivation. These references indicate a focus on sustainable agriculture and promoting food security, in line with SDG 2.

#### ***SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.***

Covid-19 is threatening decades of progress in global health, infected more than 500 million people worldwide (mid-2022) and led to 15 million deaths (2020-21) (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

India has 113 maternal mortality rate per 1 lakh live births, under 5 mortality rate is 36 per 1,000 live births and full immunisation rate is 91% (age group of 9-11 months) (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard

2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

It is found that all episodes of 'Mann Ki Baat' in the sample refer to SDG 3. Road safety is highlighted, with the National Road Safety Policy and Road Safety Action Plan being discussed, as well as the Cashless Treatment policy, which ensures treatment within the first 50 hours' post-accident. The importance of universal health coverage, Yoga and International Yoga Day is emphasised, as well as the need for mental well-being and fighting depression. The Indian government's flagship programme, 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojna', for reducing health expenses through 'Jan Aushadhi Kendras' is also mentioned.

The achievements of Padma awardees are celebrated, including Lakshmi Kutti, a tribal teacher from Kerala (a state on the south-western coast of India) who created 500 herbal medicines, and Subhasini Mistri from West Bengal (a state in eastern India), who constructed a hospital and even cleaned utensils in the homes of others and sold vegetables to support her efforts. The assistance of countrymen in helping the poor access health treatment is also acknowledged.

A health campaign by alumni of KR High School in Bhairavganj (Bihar, a state in eastern India) under Sankalp-95 is discussed. Additionally, the importance of exercising patience and observing restraint and vaccination in regard to COVID-19 are also mentioned.

These findings suggest that the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme has consistently highlighted the importance of SDG 3 and its targets, emphasising the need for health and well-being, both mental and physical, for all citizens.

***SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.***

Due to COVID-19, 147 million children worldwide missed over half of in-person instruction in 2020-21 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

In India, overall Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education for 2020-21 for age group 18–23 years is estimated to be just 27.3, while for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which are disadvantaged sections, it is just 23.1 and 18.9 respectively (Department of Higher Education, 2023).

The analysis reveals that the Indian government's initiatives towards promoting education have found significant mention in the episodes of 'Mann Ki Baat'. The 'Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan', which involves mentoring and guiding students from various universities towards choosing the right

career, and the involvement of IAS officers in teaching nearby schools and colleges for two to four hours a week, are some of the noteworthy initiatives discussed in the episodes.

Further, the contribution of alumni towards improving infrastructure in their schools, such as computerisation, better library facilities, and sports complexes, is also highlighted. Padma awardee Arvind Gupta, an alumnus of IIT Kanpur (a top engineering institution of India), who is working to get children inspired to conduct scientific experiments using waste, finds mention.

The National Education Policy, which emphasises the option of studying in regional languages and the integration of technology in education, is discussed. The 'Gunotsav' and 'Shala Praveshotsav' programmes of Gujarat (a state in western India) that aim to improve public participation in providing better education and reducing dropout rates are also referred to.

The episodes also mention individuals who are teaching underprivileged children for extended periods. Examples are provided, such as a tea vendor from Odisha (a state in eastern India) who contributed to education of children from low-income strata of society and of those who are running digital libraries in villages of Jharkhand or providing resources for e-learning during the COVID crisis. Indian forms of education through story telling with story tellers from across the country are also discussed.

This is reference to learning about cultural diversity through 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' website while there is discussion about foreigners who are teaching and promoting Sanskrit. There is a reference to a Sanskrit School where Sanskrit is taught and also plays, and grammar camps are held in the classical language.

The programmes and individuals mentioned in the episodes serve as examples of public participation in the country's education system.

***SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.***

More than 1 in 4 women worldwide have been subjected to intimate partner violence at least once in their lifetime while women accounted for 39% of total employment in 2019 but 45% of employment losses in 2020 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

In India, ratio of crimes against women per 1,00,000 female population is 62.4 while 19.54 women per 1,00,000 have experienced cruelty/physical violence by husband or his relatives in a year (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The analysis finds that the sample refers to

government's campaign on gender equality and celebrates women achievers. One of the episodes in the sample mentions that inspiring stories of woman power are narrated in 'Mann Ki Baat' and that they have been praised a lot and the radio address has become a platform to bring their efforts to the fore.

There is a reference to Indian government's campaign of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' (Save our Daughters and Educate a Girl Child) while there is a discussion on government's decision of enhancing maternity leave for women from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. There is a discussion on 'Nari Shakti' (Women Power) and that they are taking "rapid strides of advancement in all fields, bringing glory to nation".

Women exponents who contributed to composing verses of Vedas (Holy texts of Hinduism)-Lopamudra, Gargi, Maitryee-and devotion of Akka Mahadevi and Meerabai, governance of Ahilyabai Holkar, and valour of Rani Lakshmbai find mention. A verse from 'Skand Puran' (Hindu religious text) is quoted, which means a daughter is the equivalent of 10 sons. There are references to the then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's flight in Sukhoi 30; INS Tarini, having all women crew; Air India flight to San Francisco, having all women crew; Matunga railway station, manned by all women staff; women fighter pilots; and tribal women driving e-rickshaws in maoist-affected Dantewada, Chhattisgarh (a state in central India). President of India's meeting with first female merchant navy captain, first female fire fighter, first female bus driver, first woman to set foot on Antarctica, and first woman to reach Mount Everest is talked about.

Social maladies like child marriage and dowry system are touched upon and while celebrating Padma awardees, Sitavva Jodatti from Karnataka (a state in southwest India), who works for the welfare of Devdasis and Dalit women, are referred.

'Selfie with Daughter', a non-government organisation (NGO)'s campaign, that started from Haryana (a north Indian state), for taking pride in being parents of a girl child, is discussed which has a positive impact on gender ratio in the state. It is mentioned that after discussing it in 'Mann Ki Baat', it later became a "global campaign".

The youth born in 21st century abhorring any shade of gender discrimination is mentioned.

A story of Phulpur (Uttar Pradesh, a state in northern India) women is narrated who are learning making slippers with the help of 'Gramin Ajivika Mission' (National Rural Livelihood Mission), a flagship programme of the Modi government for poverty alleviation by providing gainful self-employment and skilled employment opportunities.

These women set up a slipper manufacturing plant and improved financial condition of their families.

A self-help group (SHG) of women making Khadi masks for protection against Covid-19 and other SHGs of Jharkhand (a state in eastern India) women delivering fruits and vegetables directly from farms to households using an application are talked about. The Jharkhand women delivering orders worth Rs 50 lakh during lockdown finds mention.

The findings suggest that the sample has ingredients of SDG 5 and its targets as government initiatives on women empowerment and women achievers are consistently mentioned.

### ***SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.***

As many as 2.8 billion people will lack safely managed sanitation while 1.6 billion people will lack safely managed drinking water worldwide by 2030 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

In India, 70.2 percent population has improved sanitation facility (flush latrine) while 95.9 percent have improved drinking water source (National Family Health Survey-5 2019-21 India Fact Sheet, 2023).

The analysis finds references about government campaigns and public's efforts on cleanliness campaigns and saving water in all the episodes of the sample.

There is a reference of 'Clean Ganges' (Indian government has a flagship programme of cleaning river Ganges) and deliberation on different water conservation campaigns in Indian states including Telangana's 'Mission Bhagirathi'; Andhra Pradesh's 'Neeru Pragati Mission'; Maharashtra's 'Jal Yukt Shivir'; Chhattisgarh's 'Lok Suraj, Jal Suraj'; Madhya Pradesh's 'Balram Talaab Yojana' and 'Kapil Dhara Koop Yojana'; Uttar Pradesh's 'Mukhya Mantri Jal Bachao Abhiyan'; Karnataka's Kalyani Yojna, Rajasthan's 'Chief Minister's Jal Swawalamban Abhiyan' water sufficiency campaign; Jharkhand's building of check dams and revival of deep tanks or masonry wells with steps going down to the water in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

A concern of a class 11th student from Dehradun (Uttarakhand, a north Indian Himalayan state) who wants to highlight the trash strewn in the river, which flows under the Rispana Bridge, is shared. There is a discussion on 'Mission Clean Morna' campaign of Akola (Maharashtra, a western Indian peninsular state) citizens for cleaning the river Morna of trash and 'Save Chite Lui' action plan for cleaning Chite Lui river of Mizoram (a north-eastern Indian state) where plastic collected from the river is used in constructing first plastic road of the state.

In Tamil Nadu (a south Indian state), 20,000 women coming together to revive the Nag river in Vellore is talked about.

Listeners are also urged for promoting river festivals.

Furthermore, a story is narrated about some youths having cleaned up Sultan Ki Baoli (a step well) in Udaipur (Rajasthan, a north-western state) and now people from abroad are coming to see it. Mission 'Amrit Sarovar' is talked about which is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as part of celebration of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

Some countrymen digging step wells and ponds for water conservation for 30-odd years, and cleaning them, are talked about.

People are urged to resolve to not let a single drop of water waste during the months of June, July, August and September (rainy season in India).

Cleanliness is mentioned as one of the strongest protections from disease and keeping natural resources, rivers, mountains, ponds and pilgrimage sites clean is talked about.

Listeners are called upon to never let the resolve of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (a national cleanliness campaign) diminish.

Clean Siachen (a glacier located in eastern Karakoram range), single use plastic and e-waste are mentioned.

A story about 'Operation Malyuddh' campaign is narrated where in Harda district of Madhya Pradesh (a central Indian state) the government officials are influencing brothers to gift toilet to sisters on occasion of Raksha Bandhan (a Hindu festival which celebrates bond between brother and sister). Also, Keshla village in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh (a central Indian state), celebrating on becoming open defecation free is talked about.

Indore city (Madhya Pradesh, a central Indian state) is lauded for being number one in 'Swachh Bharat Rankings' (national cleanliness rankings) for many years. Another initiative of Indore for 'Water Plus City', where no sewage is dumped into any public water source, is talked about. It has led to reduction in polluted water draining into Saraswati and Kanh rivers.

Women through SHGs run campaigns to clean village squares, roads and temples is mentioned.

'Healing Himalayas' campaign is celebrated where five tons of garbage is collected from different locations in the Himalayas every day.

These findings suggest that 'Mann Ki Baat' has consistently highlighted SDG 6 and its targets with focus on clean water bodies, saving water, and sanitation.

***SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.***

There were 2.4 billion people in the world in 2020 who were still using inefficient and polluting cooking systems, 733 million were without electricity in 2020, and the share of renewable in total energy consumption was only 17.7% in 2019 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022). In India, only 58.6 percent households are using clean fuel for cooking while population living in households with electricity is 96.8% (National Family Health Survey-5 2019-21 India Fact Sheet, 2023).

The analysis finds references of providing access to electricity and clean fuels in the sample.

'Deendyal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Programme' is mentioned for ensuring 24-hour power to villages. Tribal women driving e-rickshaws in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh (a state in central India and is infested with left-wing insurgency), which strengthens efforts to protect environment is talked about.

From Madhubani (Bihar-a state in East India), 'Sukhet' model of Dr Rajendra Prasad Agricultural University and the local 'Krishi Vigyan Kendra' is quoted where dung and other household waste are collected from farmers and in return money is given for cooking gas cylinders.

The findings point out presence of SDG 7 and its targets in the sample in regard to access to modern energy.

***SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.***

One in 10 children are engaged in child labour worldwide as in 2020 while the global unemployment rate in 2021 was 6.2% and will remain above pre-pandemic level until at least 2023 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

As per Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the estimated unemployment rate for persons of age 15 years and above at all India level was 4.8%, 4.2% and 4.1% for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively but for urban India it was 6.9%, 6.7% and 6.3% in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively (Questions and Answers: Lok Sabha, 2023). As per "Crime in India" a publication of National Crime Records Bureau, 772, 476 and 613 number of cases were registered in 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively under Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 in India (Questions and Answers: Lok Sabha, 2023).

The analysis finds references of job creation, entrepreneurship, innovation and secure working environment especially for women in the sample.

For instance, enhancing maternity leave for women is discussed.

'Himayat Programme', a skill development programme of Jammu and Kashmir (a north Indian state), is mentioned and success stories are narrated. This programme trains those who are in 15-35 years age group and couldn't complete their studies for some reason. Oukhoo village in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, is talked about which is known as pencil village owing to several manufacturing units of pencil slats and providing employment to people including large number of women. Creation of In-Space by the government, an agency for facilitating private sector in space activities, is celebrated too.

Tribal women of Tamil Nadu (a south Indian state) who exported thousands of eco-friendly terracotta cups is mentioned while a woman from Manipur (a state in northeast of India) making clothes from lotus fibres, employing 30 women and exporting clothes to the USA, is celebrated.

A Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) who paints various scenes related to railways is mentioned while stressing on how to bring more life to jobs. There is a stress on making digital payments using 'Bhim' app, and 'Digidhanmela' programmes for increasing awareness about digital payments.

Also, Incredible India movement, an Indian government campaign to promote tourism, is talked about and people are urged about visiting at least 15 tourist destinations of the country but they must be from outside one's state.

The findings have elements of SDG 8 and its targets regarding inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work.

***SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.***

Only one in three small manufacturers are benefitting from a loan or line of credit as in 2020-21, and passenger airline industry is still struggling to recoup catastrophic losses due to pandemic (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

There are 55.41 internet subscribers per 100 people in India, manufacturing employment as a percentage of total employment is just 12.07, percentage share of Gross Value Added (GVA) in manufacturing to total GVA is 16.1 and Innovation score of the country as per the India Innovation Index is 35.59 (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The analysis finds references of government initiatives encouraging innovation and industrialisation in the sample.

A story of woodcutter from Pulwama, Jammu

and Kashmir (a north Indian state) is narrated who with his entrepreneurial spirit sets up a pencil slats manufacturing unit, earning in crores and is also providing employment to 200 people.

App-based delivery systems from Madhya Pradesh (a state in central India) and Jharkhand (a state in eastern India) are mentioned. Start-up culture is mentioned and those start-ups working in space industry, who are working on ideas, which were either not thought about earlier or were considered impossible, are celebrated. Some are working on developing launch vehicles that will take payloads, developing high technology solar panels for satellite deployer and satellites, mapping waste in space, and developing low-cost flat antennas.

'Make in India' campaign and re-establishing of country's toy industry are talked about.

The findings reflect the sample has elements of SDG 9 and its targets of promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation.

***SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.***

The number of refugees outside their country of origin increased by 44% between 2015 and 2021, and one in five people has experienced discrimination on at least one of the grounds prohibited under International human rights law (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

The rate of total crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs) per 1,00,000 of their population is 22.8 while in the case of Scheduled Tribes (STs) the rate of crime is 7.9 per 1,00,000 of their population (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021). Both SCs and STs are disadvantaged groups in India.

The analysis finds concern for economic and social inequality in the sample. For instance, the need for separate quota for the disabled citizens for booking tickets on railways' website which the Modi government looked into and provided is talked about and people serving deprived of the society is mentioned. While referring about the members of the Constituent Assembly, which drafted the Indian Constitution, it is mentioned that each one of them was committed towards enriching the poorest of the poor.

Lord Jagannath Yatra (a Hindu festival) is mentioned as a journey where God walks along with every section and person of the society and that in all such 'yatras' (religious journeys) there is no distinction between rich and poor, high and low.

It is remarked that those born in 21st century despise any shade of nepotism, casteism and favouritism.

The findings reflect that ‘Mann Ki Baat’ has elements of SDG 10 and its targets as there are references of providing equal opportunity to all and reducing inequality within the country.

***SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.***

In sub-Saharan Africa, less than one-third of city dwellers have convenient access to public transport while according to new WHO air quality guidelines 99% of world's urban population breathe polluted air (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

In urban areas of India, 12.20 deaths take place due to road accidents per 1,00,000 population while just 38.86% sewage treatment capacity is installed against total sewage generation and only 68.1% Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is processed to the total MSW generated (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The sample has references of accessible transport systems for all, road safety and protecting world's cultural heritage. For instance, the need for separate quota for disabled that Modi Government has provided in railways' ticket booking is mentioned. There is stress on obeying traffic rules and road safety is mentioned, while talking about issues raised in ‘Mann Ki Baat’ and later adopted by media.

Sanskrit is described as heritage and there is a call for its preservation and future generations having right to it. Indigenous sports, Gatka, Thang Ta, Yogasan, Kalaripayattu, Mallakhamb and chess, which are claimed to have born in India centuries ago, are referred. Lakshadweep's (a group of islands in the Arabian sea) Kummel Brothers Challengers Club and Karnataka's (a state in south west India) 'Kwemshree' ji's 'Kala Chetna' are mentioned in reference to cultural preservation. While talking about G-20 presidency, resolve to enrich diverse global cultures is referred.

The findings point out SDG 11 and its targets are present in the sample with focus on making human settlements safe, resilient and sustainable.

***SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.***

More than 13% of world's food is lost after harvesting and before reaching retail markets while reliance on natural resources has increased globally by 65% from 2000 to 2019 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

In India, the quantity of hazardous waste recycled to total hazardous waste generated is 44.89% while biomedical waste processing has reached 86.91% (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21

Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The analysis finds references to saving fossil fuels and stressing on reducing waste generation through recycling and reuse in the sample. For instance, saving petrol or diesel is talked about. It is mentioned that people have started believing that waste is also a wealth. ‘Sukhet’ model of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Agricultural University, Madhubani (Bihar, a state in eastern India), where kitchen waste is being converted to vermicompost and dung to bio-fertiliser is mentioned. ‘Save Chite Lui’ action plan is informed about where local agencies, voluntary organisations and local people clean Chite Lui river in Aizawl (Mizoram, a north-eastern state of India) of plastic and polythene and used that in constructing first plastic road of the state.

It is discussed how thousands of kilogram of garbage is collected from sea-coast in Karaikal, Puducherry (located in southeast coast of India), and organic matter is being converted to compost and rest of the matter is being recycled under ‘Recycling for Life’ campaign.

The findings point out that people's campaigns on recycling and reuse are discussed in ‘Mann Ki Baat,’ which is in consonance with SDG 12 and its targets.

***SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.***

Medium-to-large-scale disasters will increase 40% from 2015 to 2030, sea-level will rise by 30-60 cm by 2100 and drought estimated to displace 700 million people by 2030 across the world (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

In India, a total of 15.44 lives are lost per 10 million due to extreme weather (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

An episode in the sample has a mention of climate change. While talking about a European Union's calendar where contribution by Indians in Europe has been displayed, it is mentioned that besides other it includes someone researching on climate change.

There is only an indirect reference to climate change while expressing gratitude to European Union for recognising work of people of Indian origin which goes with SDG 13.

***SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.***

Plastic pollution is choking the ocean as more than 17 million metric tons has entered the ocean in 2021 and is projected to double or triple by 2040 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

The analysis finds mention of keeping seas clean

in an episode. A case of pollution caused by plastic on sea coast of Puducherry (located on the southeast coast of India) and 'Recycling for Life' campaign is discussed where organic waste is converted to compost and the rest is separated for recycling.

The findings resonate with the SDG 14 of conserving and sustainably use of oceans, seas and marine resources.

***SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.***

Ten million hectares of forest are destroyed every year and almost 90% of global deforestation is due to agricultural expansion and around 40,000 species are documented to be at risk of extinction over the coming decades (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

India has 21.67% of forest cover and 2.89% of tree cover, which comes to a total of 24.56%, while the percentage increase in area of desertification was 1.98% (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The analysis finds mention of eco-friendly initiatives, saving forests and plantation of trees. United Nations theme of World Environment Day, 'Zero Tolerance for Illegal Wildlife Trade' and saving forest cover are mentioned. Raging forest fires in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir (all north Indian states) are talked about while Khadi has been described as eco-friendly fabric.

Some of countrymen planting trees on deserted hills and barren land for 40-odd years are mentioned.

Export of eco-friendly terracotta cups by tribal women of Tamil Nadu (a state in southern India) and a Manipur (a state in the northeast of India) woman making clothes from lotus fibres are talked about. 'Healing Himalayas' campaign in the context of protection of environment and conservation of Himalayas is being discussed.

The efforts of 'Mann Ki Baat' in solving environmental issues are mentioned.

The findings point out that reference in radio addresses match with SDG 15 and its targets with focus of people's campaign in contributing towards environment.

***SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.***

A record 100 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide (May 2022) and almost one

in six businesses have received bribe requests from public officials (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

There are 3.17 cases registered under Prevention of Corruption Act and related Indian Penal Code sections per million populations, and there are 4.95 victims of human trafficking per million populations in India (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The analysis finds the SDG 16 and its targets are consistently mentioned in all the episodes of the sample. The pledge of "citizen participation in democracy" and connecting "every citizen in development work" is talked about while giving figures of millions of people having visited mygov.in website (a citizen engagement platform) after a year of its launch, receiving over half a million comments and more than 50,000 suggestions on PMO (Prime Minister Office) applications. It is mentioned that people who listen to 'Mann Ki Baat', later communicate their feelings through letters and telephone calls, and on mygov.in and Narendra Modi app that help in functioning of the government and to know how active should the government be in matters of public service.

Receiving of thousands of letters and lakh of messages before the 100th episode and an attempt to read as many letters as possible are talked about. A letter received on Narendra Modi app is talked about where the author asks for touching upon the death anniversary of astronaut Kalpana Chawla.

There is discussion about 'Act East Policy' where officials of Ministry of Development of North-East Region (DONER) have been visiting north-east states and meeting local government officials, people's representatives and citizens for taking measures to solve their problems.

Cashless society resulting in transparency, reduction in influence of black money and under-hand dealing is talked about.

Jallianwala massacre (which took place in 1919 in Amritsar, Punjab), Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev are remembered. Also Mahatma Gandhi-led movements of 'Champaran Satyagraha', 'Kheda Satyagraha' and the Ahmedabad mill-workers' strike are discussed. Gandhian thought and practice in context of methodology for freedom struggle are talked about. His path of peace and non-violence is told to be applicable not only for India or the world but also for a person or a family or a society. While lauding Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, first home minister of India, his efforts for integrating public with freedom movement and connecting the farmers' issues with Independence are talked about. Besides, sacrifices made by millions to secure freedom are mentioned.

Combating forces trying to divide the country and country's befitting reply to them are talked about.

While calling for observing 75 years of Independence, listeners are asked to make new resolutions every day, think new and bolster spirit to do something new.

Padma awards are celebrated by claiming that a common man is cited for it without any recommendation and that transparency has been brought in the selection process.

Rights and duties enshrined in the Indian Constitution are discussed. Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar is remembered for giving right to live with dignity to millions of Indians and his appeal to safeguard democracy.

Younger generation is lauded as "they question" when system doesn't respond properly, detests anarchy of any sort, and despise any element of lack of governance and instability.

Data on the productivity of Indian Parliament, which broke a record of the last 60 years is mentioned and is reflected as strength of Indian democracy.

Emergency imposed in 1975 is discussed and it is mentioned how right to life was snatched away and democracy was crushed. It is talked about how constitutional institutions and press were put under control but despite that people's faith in democracy didn't shake.

The findings reflect the sample is in consonance with SDG 16 and its targets as 'Mann Ki Baat' is hailed as a two-way communication, with a discussion on participation of people in decision making and freedom struggle.

***SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.***

Debt to Gross National Income (GNI) has risen from 23.4% in 2011 to 43.7% in 2020 in sub-Saharan Africa countries (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2022).

India has extended more than 300 Lines of Credit (LoC) totalling USD 30.66 billion to 64 countries so far (SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21 Partnerships in the Decade of Action, 2021).

The analysis finds mention of SDG 17 and its targets in two episodes of the sample. On the occasion of Independence Day of Bangladesh, an assurance is given to Bangladesh citizens that India is a strong partner, and a good friend, and both countries will continue to work together for peace, security and development of the entire region. As India is presiding over G-20, a resolve to enrich diverse global cultures along with education is talked about.

The findings reflect 'Mann Ki Baat' has elements

of collaboration at bilateral level as well as at global level which goes with SDG 17.

**Conclusion**

The present study investigated the two-way communication process of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, which involves citizens and ensures responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making, as one of the targets of the SDG 16. Prime Minister mentions in one of the episodes that every month lakhs of letters are read, phone calls are listened to and comments are gone through on the website [www.mygov.in](http://www.mygov.in) and app, and then a common thread is weaved into an informal conversation. It is mentioned that after PM's radio address, people communicate their feelings through letters and phone calls. Listeners are also driving the content of the radio programme through their suggestions. It is not a monologue.

The findings suggest that the programme effectively covers all 17 SDGs, which may be due to their exhaustive nature. Specifically, the SDGs 3, 6, and 16 were present in all episodes of the sample, indicating the programme's focus on promoting healthy lives and well-being, sustainable management of water and sanitation, and building inclusive and accountable institutions for sustainable development. Individuals or NGOs whose work fulfils the objectives of the government programmes/policies be it 'Swachh Bharat' or 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' are particularly hailed.

Not a single mention of political rivals, their programmes or politics is found in the sample episodes studied.

These results demonstrate the alignment of the Indian people's thought process, government's developmental agenda, and global agenda through SDGs. Traction in Google searches about the historical personalities and events, and policies after mention in 'Mann Ki Baat' also points towards this (9 Years of Mann Ki Baat: Transforming People, Policies & Governance, 2023).

Thus, the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme serves as an important tool for promoting sustainable development and achieving the SDGs in India, thus fulfilling the purpose of political communication (Feldman, 2019). Also, it serves as a powerful tool for promoting inclusive political communication and advancing India's development agenda through citizen engagement.

**Implications and suggestions**

There are several policy implications that can be considered. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the role of participatory and inclusive decision-making

in promoting sustainable development. The success of 'Mann Ki Baat' in engaging citizens in the SDGs is a testament to this. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize citizen participation in policy-making and decision-making processes, especially in areas related to sustainable development.

Secondly, there is a need for increased focus on the SDGs related to health and well-being, water and sanitation, and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. Since these subjects find more mention in the programme, it can be safely assumed that the letters and other communication received from the citizens expresses these concerns.

Finally, academia could play a crucial role in promoting awareness and research on the SDGs. There is a need for interdisciplinary research that can contribute to achieving the SDGs. Universities and research institutions could collaborate with policymakers and civil society organisations to develop and implement effective strategies for achieving the SDGs. Mass communication research can identify adequate media platforms for effective dissemination of the developmental agenda.

As for further research, it would be interesting to investigate the effectiveness of 'Mann Ki Baat' in influencing behaviour change among citizens towards achieving the SDGs. This could include conducting surveys or analysing data from government programmes to assess the impact of the radio programme on behaviour change. This would point towards the effectiveness of the programme in opening up of the minds towards achieving the developmental goals. Also, it is important to study messages which Prime Minister receives for 'Mann Ki Baat' to correlate people's desire with policy making.

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# An Analysis of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana with Reference to Manipur, India

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is critically analysed from the perspectives of health coverage of rural Areas in India. According to the Census of India 2011, there are a total of 1210.2 million citizens in India in which 833.1 million or 68.8% of the total population comprises rural population and remaining 377.1 million or 31.2% of the total population is from urban area. As per the National Health Policy 2017's recommendation, Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of Indian Government, was launched to realise the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This initiative scheme has been designed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its sole underlining commitment, which is to "leave no one behind." For this study, researchers use both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected through informal interviews with the concerned authorities and beneficiaries.

**Keywords:** AB-PMJAY, Health Care, Manipur, State Health Agency, Universal Health Coverage

## Introduction

As per the National Health Policy 2017's recommendation, Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of Indian Government, was launched to realise the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This initiative has been designed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its sole underlining commitment, which is to "leave no one behind." This flagship scheme, Ayushman Bharat, is a move towards a comprehensive, need-based healthcare system from a sectorial and segmented approach to the delivery of health services. This health programme aims to conduct ground-breaking efforts to holistically and thoroughly address the primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare systems (including preventive, promotion, and ambulatory care) at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The continuum of care strategy used by Ayushman Bharat consists of two interconnected parts, which are (NHA, 2023)–

1. Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)
2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana or PMJAY is the second component of Ayushman Bharat. On September 23, 2018, Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, unveiled this programme in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

PMJAY is the largest health insurance programme in the world. It aims to provide a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to over 12 crore poor and vulnerable families (about 55 crore beneficiaries). The households that are entitled to this benefit are selected based on occupational and deprivation criteria of Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011) for rural and urban areas respectively. Prior to being rechristened, PMJAY was formerly known as the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS). Later on, it absorbed the then existing Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) that was launched in 2008. So, the families that are not included in SECC 2011 database will be covered under PMJAY, if they are already covered under RSBY. This health scheme is fully funded by the government and costs of implementation are shared between the central and state governments (NHA, 2023).

The World Bank's compilation of development indicators from officially recognized sources estimates India's rural population (as a percentage of the country's total population) at 64.13 percent in 2022. According to the Census of India 2011, out of the total of 1210.2 million population in India, the size of rural population is 833.1 million (or 68.8% of the total population) and Urban population 377.1

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million (or 31.2%) (Trading Economics, 2023).

### Review of literature

GV and Maiya (2021) highlighted that households with health insurance had a lower financial burden of medical expenditure than those without it. PMJAY which is the largest health insurance fully funded by government is very helpful for the poor and vulnerable sections. However, due to lack of knowledge, many people have not been able to properly use or take advantage of the benefits of this health scheme.

Angell *et al.* (2019) implores that AB-PMJAY serves a unique and exclusive service and opportunity to enhance hundreds of millions of Indians' health and also help to eradicate one of the root causes of poverty in the country. This requires close monitoring of programme implementation to track progress on key budget, service and financial protection measures and to avoid unintended consequences.

Chellaiyan *et al.* (2020) highlight that to enhance the health of the world's population and end the scourge of medically associated poverty, universal health coverage has emerged as a fundamental global health care policy aim under the Sustainable Development Goals. If funds are managed properly and the participants of the plan are given quality treatment, PMJAY can be a success. To move this health initiative ahead, the public and private sectors should cooperate and collaborate with one another. These kinds of health insurance programmes are crucial and significant in developing countries because new illnesses are constantly emerging.

Akshay *et al.* (2021) point out that Ayushman Bharat has several endearing qualities and the ability to significantly improve the lives of the underprivileged and vulnerable sections of the society. In order to achieve UHC in India, the government has taken a proactive approach by providing basic, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services for the underprivileged. Additionally, for such programmes to succeed, state governments must take greater responsibility for the programme's execution. All age groups are affected by oral illnesses, which constitute a serious public health issue. Even yet, very few people seek dental treatment. And also dental services covered under Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme are underutilised due to lack of awareness among the beneficiaries.

Panda (2019) also concludes that PMJAY programme is India's most significant step to date towards the promotion, prevention, treatment, mitigation and rehabilitation aspects of universal coverage. PMJAY is a programme of large size, scale and complexity; that's why it is important to have strong anti-fraud mechanisms in place to regulate the

financial and also to curb unethical and fraudulent practices on people's health. The National Health Agency is aware of this problem and has taken many steps from the beginning to protect the programme.

### Research objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) on Health Coverage in Rural Areas in Manipur.
2. To find out the feedback from the beneficiaries on AB-PMJAY.
3. To find out the challenges faced by the authorities concerned to enrol or verify the beneficiaries.

### Research methodology

For this research study, both exploratory and descriptive research methods are used. Both primary and secondary data are used. For primary data, related information is collected through informal interviews with in-charges of District Co-Coordinator and Beneficiaries of PMJAY Scheme. Researchers also used the secondary data from government official websites and other relevant non-government official websites. Besides, researcher also used the secondary data collected from different research articles, papers, journals, books, etc.

### State Health Agency (SHA), Manipur

The state of Manipur shares 352 km long international border with Burma (Myanmar) to the southeast and 502 km long border with the neighbouring states of Nagaland on the north, Cachar District of Assam on the west and Chin Hills (Myanmar) and Mizoram on the south and the south-west and Surma Tract and upper Chindwin of Myanmar (Burma) on the East. Manipur has a geographical area of approximately 22,327 square kilometres, representing 0.7% of the total land area of India. 90% of the state's total area, or 20,089 square kilometres, is covered by hills, the rest is a small valley measuring only 2,238 square kilometres and making up only one-tenth of the state's total area. Manipur State Health Agency, Manipur (SHA) was established by the Government of Manipur with the aims of sole task of effective implementation of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMAY). On 25th July 2018, it was registered as a society under Manipur Societies Registration Act, 1989 and has been working with complete operational autonomy since its national launch on 23rd September, 2018 (SHA, 2023).

A Governing Board led by the Minister of Health and Family Welfare and including the Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Government

of Manipur, as vice-chairpersons oversees SHA (Manipur), a child agency of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Manipur. A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the office (SHA, 2023).

To implement PMJAY, the State Health Agency of Manipur has assembled a core team with the assistance of a development partner GIZ and a TPA has been recruited as an implementation support organisation. District Implementation Units have also been established in all of the State's districts to boost the service delivery of the programme. These units are presided over by the district's Deputy Commissioner. The Directorate of Health Services, Lamphel, Imphal West, Manipur, is where the State Health Agency of Manipur's office is now situated.

### **Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang (CMHT)**

In addition to PMJAY, the State Government's innovative health assurance programme popularly known as Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang (CMHT) was launched on January 21st, 2018 by Manipur's chief minister, N. Biren Singh to provide health coverage valued upto Rs. 5 lakhs per eligible family per year to the poor and vulnerable families and underprivileged professionals or workers that are left out from PMJAY Scheme. In Manipur and Guwahati, the empanelled network of hospitals offer cashless treatment to the poor as part of the Scheme (CMHT, 2023).

Cashless health protection upto Rs. 5 lakh per household per year is provided through the CMHT plan. A beneficiary may receive cashless treatment (without making any payments to the empanelled hospitals) for secondary and tertiary healthcare costs upto Rs. 5 Lakh per year per enrolled household by presenting the CMHT-Manipur Health card at the hospitals. The benefit is only going to be used for hospitalization procedures (CMHT, 2023).

**Eligible beneficiaries under the Scheme:** Widows, Disabled and AAY cards holder; local media

person and newspaper hawkers; newly added to State SECC (identified through DC verification process); ASHA workers; anganwadi workers; anganwadi helpers; Ima market woman vendors.

### **Finding of the study on data of PMJAY and its benefits in Manipur**

According to 2011 population census of Indian Government, the state of Manipur has the population of 28.56 lakhs with a population density of 128 per sq.km. (Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011). The rural population constitutes about 70.79% of the total population according to the final figure of the Population Census, 2011 (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, 2023).

As per record shown in the official website of State Health Agency, there are 485,016 eligible families under PMJAY in Manipur. Out of the 485,016 eligible families, 84% of the eligible families are from rural and remote areas in Manipur. There are 59 hospitals empanelled in the state. 68% of the hospitals are public and 92% of hospitals are of multi-speciality (SHA, 2023).

In Manipur, many valuable lives have been lost because individuals could not access to proper health care facilities mostly due to financial problems. PMJAY which is the largest health insurance scheme fully funded by the government and is just like a pathway to access proper health care facilities for those who particularly living in rural and remote areas.

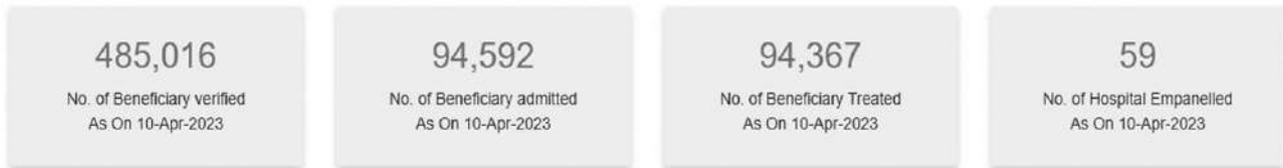
Naorem Bishwamitra, a PMJAY Beneficiary, who utilised his PMJAY card in Shija Hospital for Chronic Hemodialysis expressed his thanks by stating that "He spent around Rs. 2800 per dialysis under PMJAY. He is very thankful to the government for saving his life. He submitted the card for dialysis before 2 or 3 days."

Mayanglambam Umarani Devi, PMJAY beneficiary who also utilized the PMJAY card in RIMS, Imphal for general surgery, expressed her

#### **AN OVERVIEW OF PMJAY IN MANIPUR**



Source: State Health Agency (SHA), Government of Manipur.



Source: State Health Agency (SHA), Government of Manipur.

gratitude by saying that “Not a single penny was spent on her treatment in hospital and she is very thankful to the government for such a helpful scheme.”

Although the government is trying to provide the benefits of this health scheme to all eligible beneficiaries, may still remain unreached. There could be several reasons such as lack of awareness/knowledge of this scheme.

When interviewed with Soibam Rajesh Singh, In Charge of District Coordination AB-PMJAY, expressed some concerns that they are facing during enrolment: (1) When they go to village for a Camp for enrolment, they face AB-PMJAY portal's server being frequently down (2) In 2011 Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) data, 60% of beneficiaries names are found wrongly entered (3) For Hilly areas, 80% of the villagers are not found in their own village; they migrate from one village to another village for their livelihood.

## Conclusion

Improvement in healthcare services is a challenging concern for hilly states like Manipur, because of its tough hilly topography and geographical constraints. To achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) remains a matter of challenging concern to the policymakers. In Manipur, almost half of the families are eligible for PMJAY, of which 84% are from rural and remote areas. As we know that the beneficiaries of this health scheme are vulnerable and the economically weaker sections identified in the Social Economic Caste Census. Through this world

largest health insurance (PMJAY), many vulnerable and the poorest of the poor living in rural and remote areas can get quality health care facilities. But, it is also found that still many eligible beneficiaries are not enrolled or not able to get the benefits of this scheme mostly due to a lack of awareness. Therefore, more concrete steps are needed to extend the benefits of this scheme to all the beneficiaries thereby “Universal Health Coverage”.

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# Understanding Health Awareness through Social Media: A Study of Hindi YouTube Videos on Breast Cancer

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## ABSTRACT

Social media channels play a significant role in spreading health awareness. On YouTube website, a large number of breast cancer-related videos are available in Hindi language. The aim of this study is to understand the breast cancer-related awareness content of the most-viewed videos on YouTube available in Hindi. Using the search term “Breast Cancer-Hindi”, the most-liked videos were extracted from YouTube. Thematic analysis was conducted subsequently. Six themes were apparent from the transcripts analysis; namely 1) what is breast cancer?, 2) the risk factors of breast cancer, 3) the symptoms of breast cancer, 4) preventive measures, 5) the status of India, and Indian men and women, and 6) investigation and treatment. Posts on YouTube generate a wide range of information about breast cancer for a large Hindi-speaking population but their authenticity is a big concern. This study outcome may help policymakers and health professionals to understand the types of information on breast cancer available on YouTube and to take further action.

**Keywords:** Awareness, Breast cancer, Risk factors, Social media, Symptoms, YouTube

## Introduction

In recent years, the development of the internet has made new arrangements available to the users in the form of social media. The universal accessibility of the internet has given users scope to access social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to connect with others without the urgency of face-to-face gathering. This facility has been provided by Web 2.0 applications, which has created a new interactive environment, where one can generate content and network with others. A vast majority of adults, including men and women equally, are accessing and participating in online health information. In fact, online searching for health information is the most popular activity among adults (Fox, 2011). The user involvement concept through social media has given a new rise to health awareness, education and empowerment among users (Sarasohn-Kahn, 2007). Many study findings have shown that social media is effective in enhancing health knowledge (Bennett & Glasgow, 2009; Sinha & Sharma, 2021).

Whether it is Facebook, YouTube, Instagram or any other social media platforms, health-related information is being shared for various purposes

ranging from commercial purposes to raising the awareness level of the audience (Basch & MacLean, 2019; Abramson *et al.*, 2015; Yurdaisik, 2020). These platforms are being used by health organisations, non-profit organisations and even by individuals for health promotion (Foley *et al.*, 2015; Abramson *et al.*, 2015). Breast cancer is a major threat to women in India and worldwide. It is anticipated that with the rising percentage in developing countries, the global burden of breast cancer will cross two million cases by the year 2030 (Jemal *et al.*, 1999). There is a need for awareness among women, so that they can prevent the disease using various appropriate practices (Gupta *et al.*, 2015). Social media offers various types of information related to breast cancer (Brachtenbach *et al.*, 2020; Abramson *et al.*, 2015). YouTube is a popular social media platform where breast cancer information is available and users are accessing it (Brachtenbach *et al.*, 2020; Yurdaisik, 2020). Experiences from breast cancer survivors are also being shared on YouTube (Foley *et al.*, 2015). But on this easily accessible platform, unscientific knowledge is also being promoted that has not been approved by appropriate agencies (Madathil *et al.*, 2015). This information is being accessed by

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the users and they are making informed decisions. These videos have the capacity to change users' beliefs about controversial issues (Madathil *et al.*, 2015). It is critical for all health organisations and health professionals working for breast cancer to be aware of what information is being shared online on YouTube. Many studies have been conducted to evaluate the messages of YouTube videos on various health issues but mostly in the English language using a quantitative approach. To the authors' knowledge, no study has attempted to evaluate Hindi language YouTube videos on breast cancer using a qualitative approach. Hindi is the widely spoken language in India (Census of Government of India, 2020) and YouTube is a popular platform for Indians (Business of Apps, 2020). Henceforth, it becomes inevitable to understand the content of this platform available in Hindi language on breast cancer that is reaching to a large Hindi-speaking population. This study aims to evaluate the content of Hindi YouTube videos on breast cancer using a qualitative approach. The objective of this study was to analyse the most viewed Hindi YouTube videos related to breast cancer using thematic analysis.

### Materials and methods

Data for the qualitative descriptive analysis was extracted from the YouTube website. The search term "Breast cancer-Hindi" was inserted into the search bar of YouTube, and then the view count option was chosen in the relevance section to filter the most viewed videos. Regardless of the date of posting, the first 30 most-viewed videos were collected on 26th June, 2020 as the viewership number is an indication of the popularity of the videos. Both objective and subjective data were collected. The Objective data included video length, source of the video, upload date, total views, total likes, total dislikes, total comments, views per day and type of videos (real and animated). Sources of the videos were classified into two categories, i.e., consumers, who do not have any professional connection, and individuals, who have a medical affiliation (Basch *et al.*, 2017). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)-21 version

of IBM was used for all calculations. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean, standard deviation and minimum-maximum values) were used to give objective details of the videos. For subjective data, all the selected videos were reviewed and transcribed in a Word file. These transcribed files were used for coding with the help of NVivo software. Emerged themes were named based on the codes present in most of the files. Subjective analysis was done together by both the authors. If there was any confusion between them about the codes and emerging themes, a third expert was consulted to clarify it. All the codes and themes were analysed further to understand the manifest content of the videos.

### Ethical approval

The content of the study is considered publicly available material and doesn't fall in the category of private material so institutional permission was not required. Consent is not necessary for publicly available material. (Foley *et al.*, 2015; Meldrum *et al.*, 2017).

### Results

Out of all 30 videos, 18 (60%) were of professionals and 12 (40%) were of consumers. The videos' upload date ranged from June 2010 to June 2021. Twenty-one (70%) videos were real and 9 (30%) were animated videos. Total views, likes, dislikes, comments and views per day of the videos have been given in Table 1. Six themes have emerged in our analysis out of all 30 Hindi YouTube videos. Each theme is illustrated subsequently.

#### *Theme 1: What is breast cancer?*

A very limited number of professional videos have mentioned how this disease develops in one's body. They have tried to make the audience aware that organs are made up of cells and when cells start growing abnormally and accumulate and tissues become dense, then one gets the problem of breast cancer. In breast cancer, a cyst develops in the milk duct and the tumor spreads to lymph nodes. They have mentioned that breast cancer is directly

Table 1: Descriptive details of the most watched YouTube videos on breast cancer

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Videos length (In minutes)	7.37	3.50	1.05	13.07
Views per day	422.67	443.42	18.27	1817.17
Total views	324610.03	354,861.98	55795	1,724,498
Total likes	3104.30	5065.16	1	26000
Total dislikes	235.50	317.09	1	30
Total comments	283.70	401.96	1	1800

related to irregular periods that activate the *BRCA I* and *II* gene. Four stages of breast cancer have been mentioned in some of these videos. It has been mentioned that in the Stage 1, the size of the lump/cyst is less than 2 cm; in Stage 2, the cyst is less than 5 cm; in Stage 3, cancer spreads in the armpit; and in Stage 4, the cancer spreads in other body parts. They have also explained that if cancer is in Stages 1, 2 or 3, then cure is possible. It has also been intimated that 80% tumors are not breast cancer. It can be cured if diagnosed in the initial stage. Only a few videos by the professionals have mentioned that more than 90% cure is possible when it is reported in 1<sup>st</sup> stage, 80% cure is possible when it is diagnosed in 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, 60% cure is possible in 3<sup>rd</sup> stage and only 20% cure is possible when it is diagnosed in the 4<sup>th</sup> stage.

***Theme 2: What are the risk factors of breast cancer?***

Mostly, videos have focused on information about risk factors like hormonal replacement therapy, radiation therapy and breast enhancement therapy. Using contraceptive pills has also been mentioned as a risk factor. Exposure to X-rays, radiation therapy after menopause, obesity especially after menopause and a sedentary lifestyle have been mentioned as risk factors in many videos. If the BMI rate is more than 2, then there is a chance of the disease. Any history of lump or tumour in the breast, or hereditary and family history of breast cancer have been notified as risk factors for breast cancer. Few videos mentioned early periods (before 12) or late menopause (after 50 years of age) and irregular periods as the risk factors. Aging (50-plus women), 55-plus women are more prone to breast cancer. Nineteen plus women can get it, 35-plus women are prone to it, 40-plus women are at high risk. Some videos indicated that 80% women are diagnosed with breast cancer after 50 years of age. No pregnancy in a lifetime, late pregnancy (after 30 years), and no breastfeeding in lifetime have also been registered as risk factors in limited videos. Usage of phones has also been reported as a risk factor in two videos by individuals.

***Theme 3: What are the symptoms of breast cancer?***

Most videos have mentioned the early symptoms of breast cancer, namely lump in the breast as a symptom of breast cancer. This lump is not of a fixed shape. Tumor, beside the breast being of the one symptoms of breast cancer has been mentioned in many videos. They have also mentioned that changes in size and shape of the breast and swelling in the breast or any other parts of the breast surface are the symptoms of breast cancer. Maximum videos have revealed that redness in the breast appears, and pain can also occur in the breast or surrounding areas.

Breast itching is also one symptom mentioned in some of the videos. They explain that a change in skin colour and texture occurs in some women and heaviness in breast can be felt. Atypical fullness and/or puckering occur; a painless tumour in breast can also be present. A few videos also tell that a lump sticks to the breast if cancer is in the advanced stage. They have also mentioned that if breasts become heavy during periods that may be because of the breast cancer. Pain is also felt in the breast during periods. Dimpling of the nipple, blood, puss or any other discharge from the nipple are also symptoms of breast cancer in many videos. These videos have explained that one must be aware that retraction or indentation of the nipple might be present. Pours increase in the breast when a cancerous lump exists in the body. Inward nipple, change in nipple size and abnormalities in the nipple were also considered symptoms of the breast cancer in some videos. The underarms region may change. Lumps or swelling in the underarms can also occur. Swelling in hand and colour change in chest skin also happen. Pain can persist in shoulders or neck. Some of the videos have emphasised that if one is aware about these symptoms, early reporting is possible that leads to timely diagnosis, treatment and cure.

***Theme 4: What are the preventive measures for breast cancer?***

The central concern of almost all the videos was to make users aware of the preventive measures. Awareness and the right information along with timely recognition of the symptoms and treatment are must to prevent the disease. If any symptom is present, one must visit the doctor for timely diagnosis. It has also been suggested that in routine, one should visit the doctor for a checkup every 3 months. Weekly breast self-examination has been recommended in most videos. Many videos have given importance to breast self-examination. Some videos have advised that after 20 years of age, breast self-examination is a must. Women should learn from clinicians how to do it. Few videos have suggested that 30–35 years of age, one should be observant of her breast abnormality while doing breast self-examination. At this age, a clinical examination should be done. If possible, it should be done in 3 months, 6 months or in 1 year. Most professionals' videos have suggested that 40-plus women must go for mammogram. Mammograms can diagnose even small cyst at a very early stage.

In some individuals' and professionals' videos, some suggestions for lifestyle changes have been given to prevent breast cancer, namely one should quit the consumption of alcohol and smoking, which

are causes of the problem. Women have also been advised to take a balanced and healthy diet. They have also suggested for regular exercise. Few of the videos have recommended that if women are obese, they should work to reduce their obesity. Women should also opt for breastfeeding. Sufficient water intake is a must to prevent a disease. Consumers' videos have suggested to consuming green tea and anti-oxidant foods. Salmon fish, tuna, tomato, garlic, flax seeds, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, blueberry, turmeric, bel fruit, fenugreek, grapes and pomegranate juice, etc should be eaten. Only limited videos of consumers have suggested that one should not carry a phone always as it is a risk factor.

#### ***Theme 5: Status of India, Indian women and men***

Some of the videos have given information about the status of India and Indian women regarding breast cancer. They have mentioned that breast cancer is the second-most common cancer in India. Women living in metro cities and urban areas are prone to develop this disease. They have also explained that in India, the average age for breast cancer in women is 47 years, which is 10 years less than that in Western countries. Few professional' videos have notified that in India, 60% of women are not aware of breast cancer. So, they report it in the Stage 3 or stage 4 (advanced stage) while in America, it is reported in Stage 1 or 2. Only a limited professional videos have revealed that men can also get this disease but women are more prone to breast cancer.

#### ***Theme 6: Investigation and treatment***

Few of the videos of professionals have discussed how the investigation and treatment are done for breast cancer. Firstly, mammography is done. If the doctor finds any problem, then other tests like biopsy are done. To diagnose the various stages of breast cancer, MRI/ CT scan/FNAC/biopsy is done to know the stage of the cancer.

Four types of treatments have been mentioned in professional' videos that are done to treat the disease as per the stages of the disease. These treatments are surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and hormonal therapy. It has been mentioned that localised therapy is surgery. Two types of surgeries are conducted, i.e., breast removal or without breast removal. Breast reconstruction can also be done while breast removal surgery. Mastectomy is only needed in an advanced stage. They have also opined in these videos that advancements in surgical techniques and medicine have reduced the side effects and increased the cure rate.

Some limited homoeopathic doctors have suggested homoeopathic medicines for the treatment.

Again, very limited videos of individuals have mentioned some natural remedies like ointment made up of natural things to be applied to the breast and hot fomentation should be given on the breast.

#### **Discussion**

As awareness of breast cancer is very low among the women of India, an urgent need for education has been suggested by earlier studies (Gupta *et al.*, 2015; Singh *et al.*, 2018). It has been established in earlier studies that YouTube is a significant tool for health education (Esen *et al.*, 2019; Yurdaisik, 2020) which can raise the awareness level of women about the disease. In more than 88 countries, people are searching and browsing YouTube to the 76 distinct languages (Esen *et al.*, 2019) but to the authors' knowledge, no study was conducted using Hindi language YouTube videos. This study's findings confirm that on YouTube, more professional videos are available to consumers among most-viewed videos. Results also authenticated that videos are being accessed by a large number of users. The result of the study also confirms that these videos are liked by many of users and they are also posting their comments on this platform. They have also disliked the videos but their numbers are less than their likes. This finding confirms that users are actively involved in with YouTube videos on breast cancer. Earlier study has also confirmed that breast cancer-related YouTube videos are extremely popular among the users (Esen *et al.*, 2019).

In this study, the results also indicated that 30 videos are informational regarding what breast cancer is, its risk factors, symptoms, preventive measures, status of India and Indian men and women, how the investigation is being done by the doctors and what procedures doctors are following for the treatment. Information about breast cancer has been elaborated in these videos with a duration that ranged from 1.05 to 13.07 minutes. Earlier studies have analysed the quality and accuracy of the videos available on breast cancer in the English language using some scales like Global Quality Score (GQS), DISCERN scale and JAMA (Esen *et al.*, 2019; Yurdaisik 2020, Sinha & Sharma 2022). Previous studies have discussed about the video quality which is poor because very less videos were uploaded by professionals and more were uploaded by consumers (Yurdaisik, 2020). In this study, more videos are of professionals and they have discussed in detail that what is breast cancer, what is the diagnosis process, and how they treat it. They have also suggested users to be aware of the symptoms that can help them in timely diagnosis to prevent the disease. Most of the symptoms have also been discussed in the previous studies (Singh *et al.*,

2018). Many videos have discussed the risk factors of the breast cancer which are necessary to make people aware of the disease, so that this disease can be prevented (Gupta *et al.*, 2015). A few of the videos have discussed that the use of phone is one risk factor for breast cancer but to the authors' knowledge it was not found in the literature of the World Health Organization (WHO) and peer-reviewed journals as a risk factor for breast cancer.

In present studies, many videos have given importance to routine breast self-examination. But no uniform information has been given regarding it. In some of the videos, it has been suggested that after 20 years of age, it should be conducted, while some say in the age of 30-35 years, one should be vigilant of any abnormality in the breast using the breast self-screening. Previous studies have also found unreliable videos on breast self-examination (Esen *et al.*, 2019). In the selected videos, mainly professional videos have discussed that poor awareness is a major concern in India that is leading to the advanced stage of breast cancer reporting (Gupta *et al.*, 2015) when it becomes difficult to cure the disease.

Very limited videos have revealed the fact that men can also be the victims of the disease and no separate instructions have been given on how they can prevent it, maybe because a very small percentage of men are affected by the disease (Chikaraddi *et al.*, 2012). They have given all the information and suggestions focusing mainly on women. No video has mentioned that where one should visit for the diagnosis and treatment.

In all the videos, no information is available for the users to know the reliability of the videos. In a few videos, it has been mentioned that natural therapy and homoeopathy are the treatments for breast cancer but the source is not mentioned in the videos. Only information regarding the reliability of all the videos can be considered that the videos are narrated by professionals. Although it is considered that the professionals as narrators build trust among the users but it was found that the source of the uploads was generating more reliability than professionals as a narrator (Esen *et al.*, 2019). However, in this study, the source of the content is not revealed in any of the videos whether of professionals or consumers. So, it is very difficult for the users to find out which information they should rely on. Earlier studies have also confirmed that viewers could not differentiate between useful and misleading information and so their likes, dislikes and comments were not different for both kinds of videos (Esen *et al.*, 2019).

The limitation of this study is that the nature of in-depth qualitative research has permitted only a limited number of videos to consider for the analysis.

Videos couldn't be captured using a cross-sectional research design because of ever-changing content of the YouTube. Further studies could expand on the search term, sample size and analysis of the comments given by the users to understand the larger picture and impact on users and their requirements. Researchers can also work on how to make this important platform more authentic.

## Conclusion

The result of the study has filled the gap about the detailed information about breast cancer on YouTube website. The results also confirm that Hindi YouTube videos have a huge reach and accessibility among large audiences for breast cancer information. But, there is no information available for the users to check the authenticity of the content. There must be some guidelines to post valid, reliable and quality videos, which mention all sources of the information to make it reliable. This will help a large needy audience to access the right information and to become decisive about their health issues. In this age of information and technology, YouTube has the possibility to serve as a very economical source of health awareness in a developing country like India but with great caution.

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# Portrayal of Environmental Issues in Media with Reference to Plastic and Air Pollution Coverage in Kashmir, India

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## ABSTRACT

Kashmir is worldwide known for its scenic beauty and clean environment. It is fascinating tourists and trekkers by snow-clad mountains, charming fields and water bodies. The rapid movement towards industrialization and commercialization had posed a direct impact on components of the environment in the region. Air pollution is another threat to humans and the environment in the Kashmir valley. Kashmir has been facing a serious environmental issue for a couple of the decades. Media has to play a vital role in highlighting these issues among masses and generating awareness alike. UNESCO had declared 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 as World Environmental Day. The theme of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 was “Beat Plastic Pollution.” The researcher conducted study during the first fortnight of June 2018 and 2019. The aim of this study is to investigate the portrayal of regional media including print and electronic broadcast on the issues of plastic and air pollution in Kashmir as both issues are posing a direct threat to the environment in the region. The use of the plastic is at the peak without any proper management and implementation of guidelines. Using non-probability purposive sampling technique, researcher collected the primary data, analyzed the content of two leading regional newspapers and interviewed the concerned heads of two electronic media houses in order to know whether they could cover any environmental news/programs in their media outlets. The study concluded that the leading dailies failed to give front news coverage on the themes of plastic and air pollution and provided minimum coverage to environmental issues with respect to other beats.

**Keywords:** Air pollution, Electronic media, Environment, Kashmir Valley, Plastic pollution, Print media

## Introduction

Environmental issues, particularly plastic and air pollution have harmful effects on human beings. Protecting the environment and safeguarding the nature at individual, organizational or governmental levels, for the benefit of both the environment and humans is a good practice. The modern environmental movement started in the USA during the 1960s-70s (Gordon, 2012). This movement addresses various environmental issues through media advocacy, education and activism. Some of the most burning environmental issues are plastic and air pollution, climate change, global warming, industrial and household waste among others. Climate change today is rapidly occurring due to the ill effects of human actions responsible for disturbing and harmful out-comings such as global warming, greenhouse effect, urban heat, coal industry, etc.

Each household, today, produces tons of garbage every year. Due to the increase in demand for food, shelter and housing, more goods are produced. This

resulted in creation of more waste that needs to be disposed of. Most waste is buried underground in landfill sites. The presence of huge landfills sites across the city pose serious environmental concerns. It adversely affects human health, degrades soil quality, affects wildlife, and causes air pollution and results in climate change. Kashmir, the famous tourist destination in world known for its pristine beauty and clean environment, is facing a lot of environmental issues whether it is pollution in Dal Lake or suffocating air around the mountain peaks. People should be informed about the causes, consequences, and remedial measures of different environmental problems.

## Plastic pollution

The rapid rate of urbanization and development has led to an increase in consumption of plastic products vis-à-vis plastic waste generation. It is a fact that plastic waste constitutes a significant portion of the total municipal solid waste (MSW) generated

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across India. Plastic is non-biodegradable and remains on earth for thousands of years. The burning of plastic waste under uncontrolled conditions leads to generation of different hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), depending upon the type of polymers and additives used. However, plastic can be recycled into a second life application but after every thermal treatment/recycling deteriorates the quality of recycled plastic products.

According to Central Pollution Control Board, (CPCB, 2017 September) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, following are the major environmental issues related to plastic waste:

- Littering of plastic waste is a major environmental issue, it makes land infertile, choke the drains, on ingestion by cattle causes death and gives an ugly look of a city or town.
- Lack of proper system for plastic waste collection and segregation in cities/towns.
- Accumulation of non-recyclable plastic waste such as multi-layered laminated packaging, thermoset plastic like SMC, FRP, etc.
- Open burning of plastic waste, especially thermoset plastic waste is a major health and environmental issue, as it emits toxic gases.
- Leaching impact on soil, underground water, etc. due to improper dumping of plastic waste (containing metals and phthalates).
- Running of unregistered plastic manufacturing and recycling industries in residential areas.

Local resources are being directly stressed by growing population-mounting pressure on the environment. Changing consumption patterns are adding fuel to this menace. Major components of non-biodegradable waste comprise plastic waste, plastic carry bags, wrappers, chips packet and magazine covers. With poor waste management and sanitization systems in the state, the plastic problem has become a grave concern nowadays. In the last few decades, plastic has affected the health and life of human beings very badly. Some incidents have attracted the attention of the whole world and put a question mark about the use of plastic in daily life. Careless disposal of plastic can have dire consequences.

### Plastic pollution in Kashmir

The Government of the Jammu and Kashmir first notified a blanket ban on polythene carry-bags in June 2008, under Jammu and Kashmir Non-biodegradable Material (Management, Handling and Disposal) Act, 2007. In March 2016, ban on polythene bags having thickness above 50 microns was lifted and permitted for manufacturing and usage. Later in April 2017, government re-imposed blanket ban on below

50-micron thickness carry bags. The Government has ordered a ban on polythene on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018. Since the implementation of the ban was not effective, the Government couldn't control the plastic pollution. According to a survey conducted by Consolidated Guidelines for segregation, collection and disposal of plastic waste, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in 2017-2018, India on average receives 4,059.18 tons per day of plastic waste segregation, and 28.14 tonnes per day in Srinagar. In the same year 2017-18, Kashmir has produced 27,870,000 KGs' of plastic, (*Kashmir Walla*, 2019, April 12).

Swachh Survekshan 2019 survey conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) India, revealed that "Srinagar was among the poorest cities in sanitation in India and placed the city at 357<sup>th</sup> rank in the list of 500" (*Kashmir Monitor*, 2019, March 13).

**Beat the plastic:** India observed world environmental day 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 under the theme "*Beat Plastic Pollution*" and most of the Government and educational institutions discussed the nuisance of plastic pollution and also suggested ways to curb it. In response to the Central Government call, the Central University of Kashmir conducted a daylong programme of multiple events such as panel discussions, photography, poster competition and film screening in order to create awareness among the students and all the faculty and students took the pledge to reduce the Plastic Pollution, (CUK Press-note, 2018, June 5).

### Air pollution in Kashmir

Sources of air pollution are not limited to industrial factories, automobile exhaust, construction, and natural disasters such as forest fires and volcanic eruptions. According to a study-2013-2014, jointly conducted by a team of scientists from Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and University of Kashmir found that the air quality deteriorates significantly during the winters in the Srinagar, known as one of the world's major tourist destination and also for its pristine environment, (*Times of India*, 2018 March 11). The study also said high altitude destinations like Kashmir around the world are perceived to have a clean environment and have become preferred places for tourist attractions, but such places are slowly found to be environmentally degrading due to ever increasing tourists and associated emissions.

During summers, *Populus Deltoids* female poplar trees in Kashmir sheds a cotton-like material carrying seeds that cause allergy and aggravate respiratory disorders. This cotton has become an irritant in the recent past for the locals as well as

tourists. Understanding their potential threat to human health, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court in its order on May 12th, 2015 had directed all Deputy Commissioners to issue appropriate orders for immediate removal of poplar trees of Russian species across the Valley. The court had also cited Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. "The right to life can only become meaningful, only if a person is healthy", (*Down to Earth*, 2015, June 8). Authorities had begun cutting down the trees stating that the pollen generated from the female variety could act as a carrier of the COVID-19 virus. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has stayed on 10th April, 2020 its own 2015 order directing the civil administration to cut down Russian poplar trees in the newly created union territory, (*The Print*, 2020, April 11).

Kashmir is paying the price of 'development' that has seen the number of vehicles rising several fold in the last few years. On one hand, it is a sign of growing prosperity yet, on the other hand, it is making Srinagar and the rest of the valley's air polluted with CO<sub>2</sub> and other harmful gases. The issue of pollution is not just about beauty, but has a major impact on the horticulture in the Kashmir valley. Pampore, near Srinagar, is the only place in India that grows saffron. The valley grows apples, cherries, pears and other fruits. All these crops are in danger if the air pollution continues unabated. According to Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Department of Earth Sciences, Kashmir University, "Every year, J&K adds up to 1.5 lakh vehicles. We are forced to use our own vehicles because of the lack of efficient transport system" (*India Today*, 2018, March 11). The need of the hour is number of cars on the roads needs to be decreased to check emission of fossil fuels.

### **Purpose of the study**

Most of the earlier research studies extensively focused on climate change as the major environmental threat, even though plastic pollution is an equally pressing issue. Since the mass media's attention on plastic pollution has led to considerable interest in individual action to reduce plastic, the media frequently provides its consumers with practical and quickly realizable solutions for plastic pollution or suggestions for lifestyle changes. Although scientists know of plastic's disastrous effects on the environment and there is enough credible research that backs up the claim, people know little about the real scale and the depths of the problem. Air pollution in the valley is also increasing at an alarming rate. As many researchers have been available in the area but there is no study as from the media perspective precisely on plastic and air pollution, despite the issue being of major concern. Since no media study had yet been

conducted in Kashmir over the plastic and air pollution menace, the researcher has focused the present study on how newspapers and electronic media have covered the issues. Rössler (2018), the director of UNESCO had declared world environmental day to observe across the globe *Beat Plastic Pollution* on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and *Beat Air Pollution* (UNESCO, 2019) on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Therefore, the researcher aimed to analyze media portrayal of plastic and air pollution in Kashmir during the first fortnight of June 2018 and 2019 as environmental day 5<sup>th</sup> June falls during these days.

### **Literature review**

Okoro and Nnaji (2012) aimed to find out their stance on environmental pollution. Niger Delta, a place in Nigeria, which has been deteriorated and destroyed by oil companies including farmlands, water resources and the general ecology of the region resulting in environmental degradation and environmental pollution. The nine months study period of comparative content analysis of sampled newspapers has revealed that environmental pollution in the Niger Delta did not receive much coverage. Furthermore, all the stories on environmental pollution in the Niger Delta were hidden in the inside pages of the four newspapers. When *Vanguard* news outlet provided highest coverage among sampled newspapers, *The Guardian* had the lowest number of stories on the subject matter.

Raina and Anjum (2015) found that the whole waste is disposed off openly near water bodies and land without any proper management creating problems to public health and environment. Using systematic sampling techniques, the researchers have taken the District hospital of Rajori town as the study area and samples of waste from district hospital were collected and analyzed for three months. Wastes were collected from all the rooms of hospitals including operation theatre, children ward, ENT, blood bank, casualty ward, general wards, X-ray rooms, etc. After that they were separated into biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste and then were weighted. The average solid waste generation per bed in a ward was also calculated and sampling was done after one week in three months. The study also aims to inform people of the area about the effect of plastic and biomedical waste on the environment so that they can protect themselves accordingly. The study has been directed to the authorities to improve the present system and help in the development of the Rajouri town.

Lucas (2013) on analyzing the way the newspapers cover the environmental related news like pollution, deforestation, mining, and other apparent issues in

terms of importance. The researcher has chosen two national dailies; *the Times of India* and *The Hindu* and the news are divided into four categories. The study has used both qualitative and quantitative content analysis for primary data. The results depicts that both dailies neglected news coverage on pollution, protecting laws, editorials and letters-to-editor but other beats are focused. *The Hindu* seems fair in its approach to environmental issues rather than *The Times of India*. The study has found that print media can influence masses in terms of change in attitudes and behavior and generate positive interest towards environment among people.

Johnbabu and Sidiq (2017) used content analysis of three major English dailies of Kashmir for the period of three months to find out the prominence of environmental stories covered with respect to themes and placements. The study has analyzed 90 copies of each newspaper and employed non-probability purposive sampling technique. The researchers categorized the environmental issues into different themes viz, pollution, food, water, wildlife, forestry, etc. based on the pilot study. According to the study, *Greater Kashmir* has covered the highest number of stories followed by *Rising Kashmir* and *Kashmir Reader*. The study has found that Kashmir press covers environmental issues on an event basis but not regular beat like in other parts of the world. Aftermaths of devastating 2014 floods, few news reports were found that declined sharply with a period of time. A handful of environmental stories were found on the front pages in contrast to inside pages in all sampled outlets.

Murukutla, *et al.*, (2015) aimed to find the apparent significant increase in the volume of news reporting on air pollution in India during 2014–2015. They analyzed the content of 6706 articles, (6435 national) and (271 International) using purposive sampling technique. In the national media, there was variability but steady increase from January 2014 to October 2015 in the frequency of articles that reported on air pollution, whereas in national media, the trend was constant with distinct increments in May 2014 and in April 2015. The study titled “*Online media coverage of air pollution in India: A content analysis*” has identified many positive developments in media reporting on air-pollution and the issue had increasingly become salient in the national media.

### Theoretical framework

The researcher has tried to trace out how different newspapers in Kashmir have prioritized the environmental issues of air and plastic pollution. Newspapers obviously have different strategies, policies, and agendas. Therefore, the present study

is relevant to the agenda-setting theory of Max McCombs and Donald Shaw-1972. According to them, there is always a relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda. Traces of agenda setting can be found in the first chapter of Walter Lippmann’s book “Public Opinion”-1922, where he argues that the principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public is mass media. Agenda-setting theory speaks about the formation of public perceptions and concern of the important burning issues by the news media. The impact of mass media, i.e., the ability to effect cognitive change among individuals, to structure their thinking has been labeled the agenda-setting function of mass communication. (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

### Research objectives

1. To trace out the media coverage of Kashmir based newspapers on the specific themes of environmental issues “Beat plastic pollution” and “Beat air pollution” as UNESCO declared to observe on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and 2019 respectively.
2. To find out the frequency of the content of environmental issues in terms of various themes and units published in regional print media of Kashmir.
3. To find out the number of programmes broadcasted by Kashmir-based electronic media “Radio Kashmir” and telecasted by “Doordarshan Kender” Srinagar on the environmental issues in general and plastic and air pollution in specific.

### Research questions

1. What role does the regional print and electronic media of Kashmir play on the environmental issues of Kashmir?
2. How much space Kashmir press gives to the environmental issues particularly on air and plastic pollution?
3. How many news items the Kashmir print media have published during the first fortnight of June 2018 and 2019 as world environmental day 5<sup>th</sup> June observe every year?
4. How many programmes Radio and Television channels have aired on environmental issues especially on air and plastic pollution during the study period?

### Research methodology

The researcher has used content analysis method in order to analyze the environmental news items in newspapers based on the objectives. Content analysis is a procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information (Walizer & Weiner, 1978). Krippendorff (1980) defines content analysis as research for making

replicable and valid inferences from data and context. According to Berelson (1952), content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Whereas, Holsti (1968) says that it is any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages. In the same way, Kerlinger (1986) also defined content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

In order to elicit the opinions of the public service broadcasters of Kashmir, the researcher has used interviews from the heads of the media managements. An interview is a qualitative research technique that is typically done face-to-face and uses flexible, open-ended questions to explore the respondent's perspectives on a particular idea or situation.

### Research tool

The researcher has developed a coding sheet for analyzing the content of sampled newspapers published from Kashmir under various relevant themes such as air/plastic pollution hazards, Government (State/Central) action against air/plastic pollution, role of NGO/awareness on air/plastic pollution, legal issues and other environmental issues. Content was also classified as units of analysis such as news-stories (front and inside), editorials, features/columns and pictures/cartoons. In order to collect the data from the heads of "Radio Kashmir" and "Doordarshan Kendra", the researcher used an interview schedule for interviewing, which consists of ten pre-structured questions.

### Themes

- *Air/plastic pollution hazards*: Issues and consequences of air and plastic pollution on environment.

- *Government action against air/plastic pollution*: Actions taken or intended to be taken by the Government both central and state in controlling and combating environmental issues especially air and plastic menace.
- *Role of NGO's/Awareness on air/plastic pollution*: Non-Government organizations contribution in making the masses aware about the hazards of environmental issues especially air and plastic menace.
- *Legal issues on air/plastic pollution*: Legal issues on air/plastic pollution.
- *Other environmental issues*: Environmental issues other than air and plastic pollution.

### Unit of analysis in newspapers

- *News stories*: Front/inside page stories that are published on the first page or inside page of the newspapers.
- *Editorials*: An article that presents the newspaper's opinion on the current issue and it reflects the majority vote of the editorial board on that particular day.
- *Features/columns*: Columns on plastic and air pollution particular (environmental) issues written by a writer/columnist and features are comprehensive in nature.
- *Pictures*: Pictures or photographs captured by a photographer and published in newspapers on a particular issue.

### Sample

Sampling is a statistical technique of selecting a group of analysis from a larger group called population or it is a representative part of the population on which conclusions are drawn. The researcher has adopted a non-probability purposive sampling method for the study and it is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objectives of the study. It is also known as judgmental, selective,

Table 1: Research Design

S. No	Media	Language	Study Period	Study	n	Method
1	<i>Greater Kashmir</i>	English	1-15 June 2018 1-15 June 2019	Plastic Air	15 15	Content Analysis
2	<i>Srinagar Times</i>	Urdu	1-15 June 2018 1-15 June 2019	Plastic Air	15 15	
3	<i>Radio Kashmir (AIR)</i>	Kashmiri, Urdu, Pahri/Pahadi, Punjabi, Balti, Sheena, Gojri and English	1-15 June 2018 1-15 June 2019	Plastic Air		Interview
4	<i>Doordarshan-Srinagar Kendra</i>	Do	1-15 June 2018 1-15 June 2019	Plastic Air		
Total					60	

or subjective sampling. The time period was chosen keeping in view that the world environmental day, which has been celebrated every year on 5<sup>th</sup> of June since 1974.

The researcher has selected two Kashmir regional newspapers - “*Greater Kashmir* (English) and “*Srinagar Times* (Urdu) based on their language, circulation, history, and impact on the public as a sample of the study. The total sample of 60 issues from two dailies published in 2018 and 2019 were analyzed in terms of various themes and units for the coverage of environmental issues on plastic and air pollution.

**Greater Kashmir:** It is an English daily publishing from Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir in India. The newspaper began its publication in 1987 as a weekly and started its first daily publication in 1989. The paper has its largest base of circulation in Jammu and Kashmir, and is the most widely read English daily. The Greater Kashmir group also publishes the weekly Urdu tabloid publication, *Nawa-e-jhelum*, the Urdu daily *Kashmir Uzma*, English magazine *Kashmir Ink* and GK TV online.

**Srinagar Times:** It is 53 years old Urdu newspaper and widely known and reputed throughout the valley. It was first published in 1954 as a weekly and converted in 1964 as a daily. It has a total subscription of two million and is also known as “Key to Kashmir affairs.” The researcher has also interviewed the heads of two Public Broadcast Services *Radio Kashmir* and *Doordarshan Kendra* Srinagar.

**Radio Kashmir, Srinagar:** It is a public broadcasting service operated from “Prasar Bharti” an autonomous body under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India. It was established on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1948 when Sheikh Abdullah, the then Prime Minister of Kashmir, inaugurated the Radio Kashmir, Srinagar station and broadcast in Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi, Pahari/Pahadi, Punjabi, Balti, Sheena, Gojri and English. After state of J&K transformed into Union Territory, the name of Radio Kashmir has been changed to All India Radio.

**Doordarshan, Kashmir (DD Kashir):** It is the only public broadcasting Kashmiri language satellite channel in Srinagar. Launched in 2003, DD Kashir has been telecasting content of infotainment, entertainment serials, news and current affairs, social, cultural programmes and film programmes. In terrestrial mode, DD Kashir is available to 96% of the population of the valley. DD Kashir became a 24-hour channel from 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2000. The channel used to telecast a 14-and-half-hour programme daily. The special audience programmes cover regional languages such as Gojri, Pahari, Ladakhi, Dogri, Shina, Balti and Pashto.

**Data collection**

The researcher has collected the primary data directly from the two selected newspapers through online and archival access for the time period of 30 days (first fortnight of June 2018 and first fortnight of June 2019). The researcher has also collected the data through personal interview from the heads of the two electronic media houses AIR and Doordarshan in Kashmir.

**Limitations**

Though various Kashmir based newspapers and channels covered the environmental issues, the researcher has taken only two newspapers and two electronic media houses for the study. Though the environmental issue has continued for decades, the time period of study is only one month, i.e., first fortnight of June 2018 and first fortnight of June 2019. Though the state of Jammu and Kashmir has three divisions at the time of conducting research (before abrogation of 370 article), the researcher has taken only Kashmir based media.

**Data analysis**

The data received from the coding sheet and interviews were tabulated, treated and then analyzed for interpretation of results. Limited statistical analysis procedures were followed to carry out the analysis and presented in tables and figures.

Table 2: News coverage of plastic pollution in two newspapers: Percentage wise analysis

Newspapers	Plastic Pollution		Others Environmental issues		Total
	N & %		N & %		
<i>Greater Kashmir</i>	14		05		19
	73.68		26.32		100
<i>Srinagar Times</i>	07		09		16
	43.75		56.25		100
Total	21		14		35

Note: Newspapers published in the first fortnight of June 2018

Table 2 and 3 show that the leading English newspaper of Kashmir, that is, *Greater Kashmir* has followed “UNESCO’s declaration of the environmental theme of plastic pollution” in 2018. The paper has covered 73.68% (14) stories on plastic pollution and 26.32% (5) stories on other environmental issues in the first fortnight of June 2018. Whereas, leading Urdu daily in the valley *Srinagar Times* has given preference to other environmental issues (56.25% (9)) rather than plastic pollution 43.75% (7).

*Greater Kashmir* has covered significant number of news stories 78.57% (22) on air pollution and 21.43% (6) stories on other environmental issues during the first fortnight of June 2019, On the contrary, Urdu daily *Srinagar Times* has published only 25.0% (7) stories on air pollution and more other environmental issues with 75.0% (21).

Table 4 and 5 show that the *Greater Kashmir* newspaper had given a good number of news stories 71.42% (10), editorials 14.28%, feature 7.15% (1) and picture 7.15% (1) on plastic pollution. Comparatively, Urdu newspaper *Srinagar Times* had given less coverage on plastic pollution with six news stories and one picture. Both the newspapers have neglected to publish on the front page on the theme of plastic pollution in the first fortnight of June 2018.

Table 6 and 7 show that the *Greater Kashmir* newspaper had given more number of news stories on air pollution 68.18% (15), editorials 4.55% (1), features 18.18% (4) and picture 9.09% (2). Comparatively, Urdu newspaper *Srinagar Times* had given less coverage on air pollution with six news stories and one picture. Both the newspapers have neglected to publish on the theme of air pollution on the front page in the first fortnight of June 2019.

Table 3: News coverage on air pollution in two newspapers: Percentage wise analysis

Newspapers	Air Pollution	Others Environmental issues	Total
	N & %	N & %	
<i>Greater Kashmir</i>	22 78.57	06 21.43	28 100
<i>Srinagar Times</i>	07 25.0	21 75.0	28 100
Total	29	27	56

Note: Newspapers published in the first fortnight of June 2019

Table 4: News items on plastic pollution in *Greater Kashmir*: Unit wise and percentage wise analysis

S. No.	Unit of Analysis	N	Percent
1	News Stories	10	71.42
2	Editorials	2	14.28
3	Features/Columns	1	7.15
4	Pictures/cartoons	1	7.15
Total		14	100

Note: Newspapers published in the first fortnight of June 2018

Table 5: News items on plastic pollution in *Srinagar Times*: Unit wise and percentage wise analysis

S. No.	Unit of Analysis	N	Percent
1	News Stories	6	85.72
2	Editorials	0	0
3	Features/Columns	0	0
4	Pictures/cartoons	1	14.28
Total		7	100

Note: Newspapers published in the first fortnight of June 2018

Table 6: News items on air pollution in *Greater Kashmir*: Unit wise and percentage wise analysis

S. No.	Unit of Analysis	N	Percent
1	News Stories	6	85.72
2	Editorials	0	0
3	Features/Columns	0	0
4	Pictures/cartoons	1	14.28
Total		7	100

Note: Newspapers published in the first fortnight of June 2019

Table 7: News items on air pollution in *Srinagar Times*: Unit wise and percentage wise analysis

S. No.	Unit of Analysis	N	Percent
1	News Stories	15	68.18
2	Editorials	01	4.55
3	Features/Columns	04	18.18
4	Pictures/cartoons	02	9.09
Total		22	100

Note: Newspapers published in the first fortnight of June 2019

### Interview from authorities of Radio Kashmir and Doordarshan, Srinagar

In order to draw information about the programmes broadcasted/telecasted on environmental programmes during 1-15 June 2018 and 2019, the researcher has interviewed transmission executive of Radio Kashmir and programme head of Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar. It is found that Radio Kashmir had broadcasted 20 environmental related programmes from 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and eight programmes among them were on the special theme “Beat Plastic Pollution.” It also aired 15 programmes relating to various environmental issues from 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and eight programmes among them were on the special theme “Beat Air Pollution” broadcasted in different genres under the titles *Soun Aound Pouk* (our surroundings) weekly, *Soun Mahool* (our environment) weekly and *Aj Ki Baat* (today's Talk) daily. These programmes were broadcasted in different dialects like Kashmiri, Urdu, Pahari/Pahadi, Punjabi, Balti, Sheena, Gojri and English as well targeting whole valley dwellers. Environmental issues are also being discussed in rural programme “*Gami Baayan Hind Khattru*” (For people of countryside) broadcasts on daily basis. Besides, audio capsules around 5 minutes on different burning environmental issue are also broadcasted on Radio Kashmir FM-2 (103.5). The environmental issues are being discussed in daily women programme “Bazm-e-Niswa (women’s magazine programme) in Kashmiri language. In the study period, the first

fortnight of June 2019 all the above-mentioned programmes were continued except a programme ‘*Soun Mahool*’ (our environment).

Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar had telecasted only one programme “*Ye Sean Kayinnat*” (Our Universe) in the first fortnight of June 2018 and 2019 concerning the environmental issues in Kashmiri. Both Radio and Doordarshan have been using various formats like talks, documentaries, interviews and interactions/vox pop with environmental activists and the people. Since both the organizations (All India Radio and Doordarshan) are public funded respondents said that they couldn’t get any sponsorship for these programmes. Both electronic media organizations are of the view that these programmes will surely create awareness among masses towards making environment friendly.

### Conclusion

People use plastic materials as these are easy to carry, cheap to make and they can use for a long time. But these very useful qualities make plastic a huge pollution problem. Plastic thrown on land can enter the drainage lines and choke them resulting in water logging and floods in local areas and in cities. The problem arises when we no longer want these items and we have to dispose of them, particularly the throw away plastic material used in wrapping or packaging. The study looks into the details of Kashmir-based regional media coverage on burning environmental issues. All the stories, though they are meager on environmental pollution, were hidden

in the inside pages of the two leading newspapers of Kashmir. Radio Kashmir has broadcasted a significant number of stories on environmental issues as it has a strong listenership and had been playing a key role, especially at the time of 2014-floods. A thorough and comprehensive reporting by the regional print and electronic media could influence the people in enabling an accurate understanding of environmental issues. Instead of event-based reporting, more sustained reporting could place a much-needed lens on the public wellbeing. The media can play a potential role in society as an agent of its audience, interpreting the scientific message and eliciting a public debate for discussing the environmental hazards. In this regard, media outlets can set an agenda for the frequency of reporting and prioritizing news in terms of placement and timing. Plastic and air pollution hazards can be solved when everyone cares for the environment.

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# Global Villages: Media and Cultural Industry in Rural India

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## ABSTRACT

After 15 years of the basic study already done in three villages in India under the project ‘Television in rural Indian areas: From global village to local village’ carried out by Camille Deprez and Kristian Feigelson (IRCAV- Paris III) during February, 2001 to 2003, a comparative study has been drawn to identify whether the local spaces are really turning into the global village. It had been apprehended few years back that the cultural industry in the form of television and its entertaining content will homogenize indigenous cultures and the whole world thus be no more than the replica of the western world that is called a “global village”. A reality check of this apprehension was one of the objectives of this study. The study inquires the field of investigation on lines of longitudinal study and thus revisits the same questions along with new entrants to observe the change.

**Keywords:** Audiences, Cultural industry, Global village, Longitudinal study, Rural India

## Introduction

Since India is developing at a fast pace, urban expansion is an inevitable process. After television network expansion during 1970s with SITE, the ‘Digital India’ today is moving with expansion of maximum internet coverage to the remotest of the remote areas (Future of Digital in India Report, 2016).

## Media experiences in the Indian rural context

Ranging from traditional and folk forms to modern television and popular forms with the

recent addition of the internet, media is an integral part of society. Mass media has been seen as a “socialization agent” (Graber, 1980, p.2) strengthen the internal system of society. India, in this context, becomes a special case where the country witnesses the struggle for independence from British rule with a parallel growth of the press in India. The stalwarts and great leaders of the country used the might of the press to educate and aware people on the issue of socio-political independence throughout the freedom movement. Because of colonial history and a long period of struggle for political independence

Table 1: Indian population

	Population (in millions)	Ten-year Population growth	Population density per Km <sup>2</sup>	Sex Ratio (females per 1000 males)	Literacy Rate
Census 2001	1,028	21.54%	325	933	65%
Census 2011	1,210	17.64%	382	940	74%

Table 2: Urban and Rural Populations in India

	Urban population (in millions)	Rural population (in millions)	Total population (in millions)	Urban population (percentage)	Rural population (percentage)
Census 2001	285.8	742.2	1,028	27.81	72.19
Census 2011	377.1	833.4	1,210	31.15	68.85

Source: PTI report. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/About-70-per-cent-Indians-live-in-rural-areas-Census-report/article13744351.ece>; Census 2011 (PCS - Final Data) available at: [http://planningcommission.nic.in/data/datatable/data\\_2312/DatabookDec2014%20307.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/data/datatable/data_2312/DatabookDec2014%20307.pdf)

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based on Gandhian philosophy, “the national integration project remained a constant feature of central government policy, concerned with the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the country throughout the 70s” (Depez & Feigelson, 2004). In the 1970s, TV programmes “focused on promoting family planning, improving agricultural productivity, promoting health and hygiene, teaching the population useful techniques, supporting science and English as well as encouraging national integration”(Depez & Feigelson, 2004). However, since mass media is mostly characterized as having an inevitable element of ‘entertainment’ to attract more audiences; eventually, the low ratings of screening of social programs became a deterrent during the 1980s (Depez, 2006). It was evidenced prominently in the form of an ambitious project of a daily soap *Hum Log*, which was initially started to advocate family planning. Ultimately, “storytelling replaced advocacy” and soaps and sitcoms became part of leisure practices (Ghosh, 2013, p.71) in India, which increased more with the liberal economy model. With an expansionist system of profit-making for which it goes on to create and experiment with new products and services in the form of media content (Barker, 1999), “viewers learn and internalize some of the values, beliefs, and norms presented in media products” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000, p.15).

However, there is an apprehension that material culture is being routed through the content on TV and other media platforms and mass media is the tool for learning western practices. Critical observations on the data estimations of market research also indicate similar stories when it comes to the changing (more market driven) lifestyle of rural India. According to India Brand Equity Foundation (2018), the rural FMCG market accounts for 40% of the overall FMCG market in India in revenue terms. According to the report (Source: <https://www.ibef.org/industry/indian-rural-market.aspx>):

While market research firm Nielsen estimates India’s rural FMCG market to reach a size of US\$ 100 billion by 2025, McKinsey Global Institute expects the annual real income per household in rural India to rise to 3.6 per cent 2025, from 2.8 per cent in the last 20 years.

Nevertheless, the connections between media practices and changing rural lifestyles are not so simple to decipher by the yardstick of the cultural industry as a single component. To delve into the issue, one has to look first at the growth and development of

mass media in India, particularly TV and the internet, which have become part of households themselves (*see table for details*).

Table 3: Reach of various media (urban + rural)

Television	57%
Satellite Television	44%
Print	20%
Radio	18%
Cinema	5%
Internet	3%

Source: IRS 2010 Q3, All India (12yrs +; All SEC; Urban + Rural)

Table 4: Number of Households equipped with tele-visual material in 2014-2015 (in millions)

	2014 (NCS 8mn)	2015 (NCS 6mn)	Growth over January 2014
Total Households	234	234	
TV Owning Households	153	167	+8
Cable & Satellite penetration	145	161	+11
Digital penetration	78	84	+9

Source: TAM Annual Universe Update, 2015 (TAM Media Research)

Table 5: Television penetration in urban and rural India (2015) (in millions)

	Urban	Rural
Total Households	80	154
TV Owning Households	71	96
Cable & Satellite penetration	69	92
Digital penetration	42	42

Source: TAM Annual Universe Update, 2015 (TAM Media Research)

### **Mobile telephony and internet**

With an internet penetration among 29.55% of population (as of 2016) as compared to 1.69% of population using internet in 2003 (India: Internet Penetration 2000-2016), the India is one of the fastest growing countries in terms of internet expansion (as cited in <https://www.statista.com/statistics/255135/internet-penetration-in-india/>):

*In rural India, 48% or around 78 million are daily internet users. On the other hand, around 140 million or 83% of the rural internet user’s use*

internet once a month...Among the rural Internet users, the ratio between male to female Internet users is 75:25. The proportion of Internet users by gender in Rural India has seen much change over last year with Internet users among rural females growing at 30%. The increasing gender parity in internet usage is a welcome development (IMRB Report, 2017).

Table 6: Digital Media Users in India (2016)

Digital Media	Users (in millions)
Internet Users	462
PC/Laptop	2.76
Mobile	992
Tablet	1.9
Digital Television	84

Source: IAMA I Indian Digital Marketing Statistics 2016

There were more than 439 million mobile users in rural India as compared to 587.5 million urban users (Kaur & Marwaha, 2016). If in 2000, roughly 20 million Indians had access to the internet, by 2020; the country's online community is projected to exceed more than a billion by 2025.

Table 7: Internet Users in Rural and Urban India (as of December, 2016) (in millions)

Rural	163
Urban	269
Total	432

Source: IAMA I & IMRB Report 'Internet in India 2016' (as cited in Economic Times, March 1, 2017)

The inclusion of the internet with basic telephony was the starting point of bringing the internet to everyday life. Internet enabled phone companies started to play with technology and introduced new applications every day because internet content is much beyond the simple voice-conversations, which used to be there in basic telephony. It includes text, audio, video, audio-video-text, animation, 3D in every form and genre, and the new generation of mobile phones has brought convergence in the most real sense. People are experiencing films, soaps, series viewing on their mobile phones apart from video calling and voice chatting. Phones are not only used for voice calling but also used for photography, gaming, dissemination of news and entertainment purposes. These experiences are not only urban centric but also spreading to rural areas since smart phones are user friendly and they do not need literacy beyond a basic level. On the one hand it provides space to the rural women who do not find accessibility

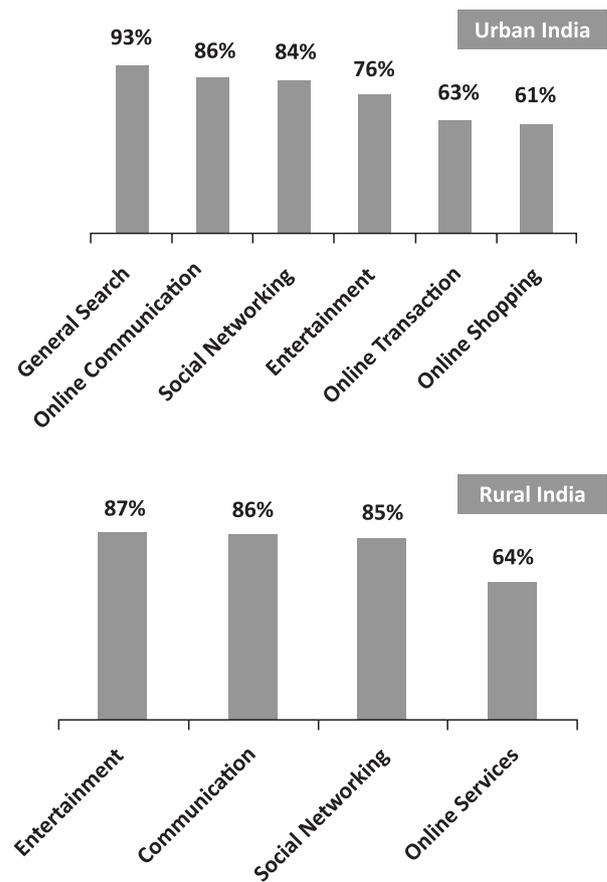


Fig. 1 shows the purpose of accessing the internet of rural and urban people, which shows that most of the urban people (93%) use the internet for general search, and in urban area most of the people (87%) use the internet for entertainment (sourced from Kaur & Marwaha, 2016).

beyond a limit in the real space even today. On the other hand because of this rural segments in India, especially the rural youth, are using smart phones to view their favorite soap-operas and to circulate selfies and small videos on social media platforms.

**Review of literature**

Earlier literature, that is, based on a study of rural parts of Gujarat, indicated the restricted access of people to the internet in 2005 and cited that the internet was not a part of rural life. However, the things have changed at a rapid rate, especially in the span of 10 years (Panos report, as cited in Devereux, 2007, p.66). Interestingly, with the internet as a revolution all over the world is seen as a new paradigm, it has been seen as giving way to a new India, where only the screen has shrunk (from TV to smart mobile phones) but the network has dramatically increased manifold. It has a clear mark on rural life in India even at the remotest level. In this backdrop, it would be pertinent to know how media literacy is taking shape and, whether on the pattern of cultural industry, it is leading to any cultural homogenization

or not. Are the Indian villages being blind consumers of western multinational brands? Or, is it just a myth to be decoded? Does rural India develop its own characteristics when it comes to traditional habits and media practices beyond the 'global' or 'glocal' structures? Are there other factors for the choices the village inhabitants make rather than the factor of 'cultural industry' in terms of rationality and irrationality proposed by Horkheimer and Adorno (1974); Adorno (1991)? With this purpose, a survey of the literature focusing on the growth assessment of various mediums in India has been conducted that reinstates the positive estimates further.

***Television: A shift from public viewing to a personalized activity***

Television in India has drastically transformed from a 'public broadcaster' to a privately owned 'entertainment industry' since the adoption of the Liberal Economic Model in 1991, particularly during the last decade. The content of TV has been witnessed in all colors and hues. From the early days of tele-serials like *Buniyaad* and *Hum Log*, which were initiated for public education (as discussed in the previous section) and mythological mega shows like *Ramayana* (1987) and *Mahabharat* (1988) to serials raising voice against the social structures, like *Shanti- Ek Aurat ki Kahani* (1994); and, even the years (1997-2005) showcasing Indian super hero *Shaktiman*, the public broadcaster *Doordarshan* itself seemed to start experimenting with content. Yet, it was trying to capture the Indian audiences with the content, which much existed in the home country.

Here, some of the scholars (Dagnaud & Feigelson, 2012; Ganti, 2012; Deprez, 2010) have extensively sketched the history of television and cinema in India through private broadcasters such as *Star*, *Sony* and *Zee Telefilms* that started with an ideological play in terms of 'western modern life' in India. Tele-series such as, *Banegi Apni Baat* and *Tara* (1993, *Zee TV*) showcasing 'high class urbane' families were quite successful in attracting Indian youth. During the same year, *Zee* also came up with the idea of reality TV based on a domestic game of Bollywood songs famous in India, i.e., *Antakshari* with the same title. By the year 2000, serials such as *Kyonki Saas bhi Kabhi Bahu thi* and *Kahani Ghar Ghar ki* (*Star Plus*) with massive studio settings and glamour and glitter of costumes came with a beginning of material culture promoted by the TV industry. Thus, the western ideology, youth aspirations and material culture, all found place in the content of Indian television, which can be called the 'cultural industry' (Indian Industry Report, 2016).

Due to emerging technology and saturation in

the urban market the TV industry is looking at rural India with high expectations today and continues to experiment with the content (IBEF update of February, 2018). In the bouquet of programming, TV channels are running programs in varied formats and genres ranging from mythology, situation comedies, melo-drama, crime-based series, reality TV, so on and so forth. Unlike the urban representation in rural areas, most of the prominent daily soaps today are also claimed to have a rural base in the plot, however, (in the distorted/exaggerated form) far from the rural reality. Particularly, the rural areas of North India becoming the space for representation in the Hindi speaking belt of India. *Na aana Is Des Lado* (2009, Colors), *Nimki Mukhiya* (2017, *Star Bharat*) are a few examples. Interestingly, the rural representation is adding the cultural industry to the urban centers in terms of a class of elitist urbanization. This has a link to the growing folk-based material industry and online shopping platforms. However, when it comes to economic ownership, the pattern of ownership remains the same – the rural material culture is exploited by the urban-based capitalists and we do not observe any contra flow here.

The ideas, aspirations, achievements and satisfactions created by Indian media in relation to Indian audiences (rural and urban) can be seen in the light of ideological processes of media as described by Croteau and Hoynes (2000):

One reason why television is often considered to be so ideologically charged is that it relies, almost exclusively, on conventional 'realist' forms of image construction that mask the workings of the camera. As a result, the family sit-com invites us to drop in at the home of our electronic neighbors and the courtroom drama allows us to sit in on a trial... Still, part of the allure of television is that it seems real; we routinely suspend disbelief while we are watching. The pleasures of television are a result of our ability to temporarily ignore our knowledge... The ideological work of television, then, lies in the ways it defines and orders its pictures of 'reality'... This reality is created and packaged by writers and producers with the goal of attracting a mass audience. The images are not simple reflections of an unproblematic reality but representations of a world. (pp.175-176)

Yet, "while the Indian media, via screen, print or voice, now reach more people in more languages than ever before, and the extent of access to information in India today outstrips any period in its long history" (Athique, 2012, p.153), the impact of television as

a culture industry could not be isolated from the ‘total cultural experience’ of villagers. It comes with a complex whole of modernity of “corporate leisure economy shaped in infrastructure of shopping malls and multiplexes”; traditionality of ‘third world’ cultures and buoyancy of the global/local cultures in living media cultures (Athique & Hill, 2007, p.147). This complex whole takes a final shape with the collective individual media-audience experiences.

The audiences read the content/text of media individually combining it with their present/past experiences and sometimes also draw inspirations/aspirations for a better future. The audiences are selective in their approach; they choose for themselves even the ideologies governed through news. “In short, our exposure to television and its self-referential ‘winking’ popular culture has made most of us rather skilled viewers who catch the references and know what they are all about” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000, p.175). The popular literature based on Indian Television also talks about the same with examples of daily soaps such as – *Gangaa* (&TV), *Uttaran* (Colors TV), *Balika Vadhu* (Colors TV), *Udaan* (Colors TV) and *Service Wali Bahu* (Zee TV) (Wanvari, 2017; Arora, 2015) (The point has been discussed at length on the basis of survey of the villagers.).

The untapped vast potential market for goods and services and growing audiences for television and telecom in rural India are being used as a center-stage to test certain theories in practice. While scholars (Landy & Chaudhuri, 2004; Kirk, 2000; Singh, 1999; Hartmann *et al.*, 1988) related the increasing media practices in rural areas to the development communication perspective, one can relate them to new media developments in the emerging contexts (Slater 2013; Don, 2013). Online content consumption has been seen in association with political economy and cultural industry theories by scholars (Fuchs, 2014). The increasing number of instances of consumer data transfer to various companies by social media giants like Facebook for commercial and political benefit actually supports these theories. However, when it comes to the local as well as individual experiences in relation to the day-to-day social life, the media practices involve a lot more complexities, since the people engaged in the media practices are not only the consumers of the given content but also are the active partners in the media processes.

A kind of ‘narrowcasting’ of local content related to any kind of issue of marginality, deprivation or social ills is reaching the masses through a networks of social media networks. Though it was apprehended as being detrimental to the public sphere and knowledge base in democratic society; however, it is

being witnessed to be a force towards inclusiveness in democracies in the world. Such narrowcasting is continuously defying the old school, i.e., Cultural Industry concept and giving way to subcultures to at least have a platform to voice their concerns on a mass scale and proving to be a cite of difference between the classical and new forms of popular culture where common perspectives on issues are getting final shapes through exposure to the varied cultural inputs.

### Objectives of the study

With the pertinent questions in relation to audience behaviour as ‘reader of the text’ vis-a-vis ‘consumer created through the cultural industry’ in the widespread media environments, the study strived to find out:

- the characteristics of the audience of rural India in the global media environment.
- the pattern of rural media practices in new digital media environments.
- the pattern of consumer behaviour of rural audiences.
- the factors of choices the rural audiences make.

Consequently, the present study does not only mark the difference between global and glocal, urban and rural, accessibility and denial, but rather wants to draw the invisible relationships between all these elements - social structure, spaces and media. The study revisits two villages in Rajasthan and one village in Kerala after 15 years to investigate the socio-cultural changes/resistance to the model of cultural industry.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study takes into account the critical theory propounded by the scholars of the Frankfurt School of Thought. Horkheimer and Adorno’s (1974) theory of Cultural Industry that talks about the mass production and distribution of cultural products and, in turn, the standardization of cultural artifacts via mass media, was later studied in light of other factors like the political economy of media, to relate the process more to the political perspective than the only economic perspective. Since the present notion of cultural industry seems near to political economy of media, it may have a local link rather than the pure western market drive. The study, thus, explores the interrelationship between cultural industry with ideology and political economy, as quoted in ‘*The Culture Industry Revisited*’ (Cook, 1996). In her work Cook (1996) emphasizes upon the need for more empirical and theoretical research in fields such as cultural and media studies, psychology and sociology since she finds Adorno’s theory as opening ‘a promising avenue’ for the same. As a

premise of study, we also notice that it is not the mere passive audience 'consumed' by the cultural industry, but the entire cosmos, including the political economy and ideology created around the active social life of audiences, referring to what Guy Debord (1974) called a "spectacle" with commodification of entire social life. It is also somewhere near Baudrillard's (1972) notion of capitalism, where all cultures have a capital value.

In order to investigate the patterns and practices of audiences, one cannot ignore the capabilities of the audiences as 'readers of the text'. Therefore, the study also included Stuart Hall's 'textual readings' – preferential, oppositional and negotiational readings within the frame of 'cultural industry'.

### Research design

With a quantitative and qualitative approach, the longitudinal study has been conducted after 15 years on the same sample. A survey was conducted in three villages Goner and Lalwari (Rajasthan), and Hariharapuram (Kerala) that included 100 respondents from each village. The sample for the survey was randomly selected. It included men and women from all age-groups. A mixed method approach had been taken to triangulate the study and one focus group discussion from each village was also included in the research design.

There were ample examples of rural-based user-generated content that defied the theories of the cultural industry and rather indicated a new pattern of cultural practices. A randomly conducted survey of the content provided the foundation for the broad questions for the focus group. It had been found that when it comes to favorite television programs or online content, the rural folk have their preferences based on not any kind of viewers' rating to the program but their individuality and their contexts to decide upon. Similarly, they also produce content for self-promotion, entertainment and to strengthen the familial and social relationships. The focus group, thus, helped in making the research analytical and was also helped in developing the questionnaire with a few open questions. The emerging patterns of media practices in rural India have been discussed in the next section in detail. The descriptive analysis is based on the survey and the focus group discussions conducted in Goner and Lalwari (Rajasthan) and Hariharapuram (Kerala).

### Data collection and analysis

#### *Media and daily village life from then to now: case studies*

With the increase in mobility in terms of

transportation and communication, rural India is seemingly changing its shape. Moreover, the representation of rural India, particularly the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Bihar in daily soaps on various entertainment based channels indicate a shift in the audience base from urban to rural. This observation prompted us to look back in the rural arena of India, where earlier TV was not a real 'infiltration making it a global village'. Therefore, the study carried out in Goner and Lalwari, two villages in Rajasthan (the same villages under investigation in 2001 and 2003), a focus group (of 8 respondents) and a survey (including open ended questions) of nearly 100 people in all age groups (men and women) were conducted to understand the media practices (in the time of multiple media exposures) and their impact the villagers' daily lives.

The population of Goner is approx. 6000 people (as per census 2011 data) out of which 4400 are on the voting list. The literacy rate is 77% and the sex ratio is 899 females per 1000 males. The occupational structure is changing from farming to the service sector since more than 50% of the population is engaged in public/private jobs, 20% are traders, while rest are farmers. Due to the government's policy to digitize television, the television has shifted and is still shifting in some areas to DTH from cable. This change is visible in Goner where every household has its own satellite connection (Dish, Tata Sky, Airtel, etc. are the service providers in the area). In the era of privatization and competition, people are no longer stuck with the Public Broadcaster, i.e., *Doordarshan*. Their first choice for content consumption on TV remains either *Star Plus/ Colours (Sony Entertainment)* or *Zee TV*.

Due to the fast pace of urbanization and the proximity of Goner to Jaipur, we can observe the changed structure of the area in socio-economic terms. People are disintegrating in to nuclear families, maintaining privacy, though the extended families are living in the same building/apartment as a single household. The structures of the households have also changed to the urban-building with modern floorings and Italian bathroom furnishings. These are well-furnished apartments which do not look like 'rural' any more. Interestingly, except a meagre, economically weaker section, most of the populace owns private vehicles ranging from two-to-four wheelers. People in Goner are well aware of car brands like Audi and Mercedes and some of them also own these cars.

Lalwari, is a small remote village located 40 Kms from the Tonk District Headquarters of Rajasthan. Lalwari is also the Gram Panchayat Headquarters. With a total population of 3534 habitants living

in some 676 households, Lalwari is far behind development in terms of education and literacy. As per the data of Census 2011, the total literacy rate of Lalwari is 41% while the female literacy rate is 13.9%. The village community is largely Rajput, a high caste of the region. Due to the low level of education, the number of children from single parents is still high at 6 to 10 children in a household.

The condition of Lalwari has not changed much in terms of road connectivity or electricity generation. It was during the 1970s when the television was introduced through SITE in a government school in the village. However, as of today, every household possesses at least one TV set. The contrasting features are smart mobile phones and internet connectivity. Astonishingly, the people here have mobile phones with workable internet connectivity. This revolution in the Indian villages has taken shape due to Jio telecom service, which is a venture of Reliance Telecom Industry. This is the same company that once brought the cheap mobile phones and is known for the Mobile Telephony Revolution in India.

As discussed in the previous study, the evolution and adoption of communication technology in India have taken place in phases. This is true for the internet and digitized communication technology as well. Within these 15 years (from 2003 to 2018), the mediated life of rural inhabitants has changed from public sector broadcaster to private television, be it entertainment or news, and it is further shifting from television to internet-based mobile phones.

### ***Cultural industries or cultural fluidity?***

The field study of Goner and Lalwari, two villages in Rajasthan attempts to highlight the ability to adapt foreign factors to their traditional socio-cultural norms. Interestingly, western values have been given room in such a manner that these villagers enjoy both the traditional as well as western modern values at times and spaces. The observed media practices and their social implications demystify concepts such as cultural industry and cultural homogenization. Though a global village is in the making, however, this global village does not seem to come in a concrete structure, rather, it is so fluid to change shapes over time and interestingly, has the characteristic of mobility of space while being located within a place.

Today, the major component of media consumption is internet enabled mobile phones. The villagers are no longer passive consumers of TV content, though; TV has become an inevitable part of their lifestyle. In Goner, except few households; most of the members in each household carry smart phones. Here, one strong observation comes in relation to the gender division when it comes to media

content consumption. Most women in the villages watch entertainment-based channels particularly *Star Plus* and *Zee*. They like to watch daily soaps, while men watch sports and news channels. Similarly, women have accounts on social media sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp (mobile applications). They click pictures, upload and circulate the content on a regular basis. “*Zyada toh family aur friends ke baare mein hi cheezein dekhte hain*” (we watch the content mostly related to family and friends), said one of the respondents. They also watch recipes for Indian dishes from other parts of the country. In Goner, men use Twitter and WhatsApp accounts more. They use it to circulate published news; governance related matters and sometimes they use it as a tool to generate sensitivity among administrators of their area to their local issues and even for online shopping and online payments. “*Is gaon mein teen saal se kuchh nahi khareeda, joote, kapde, sab online shopping se leta hoon*” (I did not buy anything from the village during the last 3 years. Whether it is shoes or clothes, I buy them online), said one of the respondents during the focus group discussion. The villagers go for online sales on Amazon, Flipkart, which they get to know either on online platforms or also from newspaper advertisements. Youth and children are active on platforms such as Instagram even more. They along with the elders take initiatives to use it as a medium for governance and development. The villagers tell how once they hashtagged their problem to the Prime Minister and the issue related to the property compensation got resolved speedily in the village. Google Map is another application popular in the village.

### ***Textual reading by the villagers is changing from preferential to negotiation and oppositional***

They are also media literate and active media audiences to a greater extent. To bring in the background of studies in relation to women as audience (Ang, 1985), we see the direct observations of Stuart Hall’s differential readings here in Goner. The daily soaps are not making them weak or passive but they get their worldview from those soaps. “*Mujhe Naamkarann serial mein Avni ki himmat dekh kar khud bhi taaqat milti hai*” (while watching the strong character of Avni in the serial, I feel emancipated from within) said Sunita, one of the female respondents. They also watch it for an emotional support while living at husband’s house. “A chocolate advertisement beautifully showing siblings on the occasion of Rakshabandhan reminds me of my family since I am very close to my brother”, said another respondent.

The villagers do watch reality television series

like *Saregama* and *Big Boss* (Johnson, 2000). They also watch their favorite programmes on online platforms such as Hotstar. Through such shows, they feel close to their favourite celebrities. Sometimes, they ‘un-lair’ the celebrities too, by noticing their negative traits during the show. They also observe the advertisements; however, they seem to be media literate and read the advertisements individually. “*Koi bhi program dekhte hue product per nazar jaati hi hai...Jaise is baar Big Boss ka sponsor Appyfizz hai...lekin usse humein zyada fark nahi padta*” (When we watch any program, we do watch advertisement as well...for example, Appyfizz is the sponsor of current season of Big Boss...but it does not affect us much) said Manoj in the group discussion.

On the question of products endorsed by celebrities, they have a clear understanding of the authenticity of product. They do not blindly follow the celebrities rather look for some form of authentication. “*Humein pata hai ki koi add karne ke liye Amitabh Bachhan ko paise mile hain...*” (we know that Amitabh Bachhan has been paid to endorse a product for an advertisement) said Harish Kumar. At times when they observe some information given in any form of content, be it a news story, feature or advertisement, they use it. “*Keral aur Mandu jaisi jagah ke baare mein humein media mein parh kar pata laga, yahaan ghumne jaana chahte hain*” (We got to know about places such as Kerala and Mandu through media...we wish to visit these places) said one respondent.

Since the media channels have gone for specific contents, kids watch cartoon channels like Disney and Hangama, which showcase Japanese cartoon series like *Doraemon* and *Shin Chan*. *Doraemon* is a famous cartoon among children in Goner. Interestingly, audiences do not have the of surfing channels during the advertisements. Kids also watch TV ads and they are fond of some products such as *Dairy Milk* chocolate, *Maggie Noodles* and *Maggie Pasta*. Jam has become a part of their routine diet; however, it should be red in colour as they watch it on television (in advertisements it is mostly red coloured mixed fruit Jam, which they see). Yet, they see and adopt the modernized practices not only through television but also from the nearby market where they find Veg. Sandwiches, Pizza and French Fries more frequent than on TV screens.

One more gender difference can be noticed in the audiences’ film viewing practices. Men from the village used to go to theaters once a week, while women were taken to the films mostly twice a year. Such films have to be critically acclaimed as well as popular and come under the category of ‘must watch’, so that women get ‘aspirations-inspirations’

for their future. For example, one of the respondents recalled how ‘*Dangal*’ centered on the village girls also inspired village folk in general. Some of the women also watch South Indian films dubbed in Hindi, on their TV screens. These are mostly formula films (also known as masala films), which provide all entertainment-based elements clubbed together. Yet, as a regular media practice, film viewing comes at last. People sometimes download the films through the internet as well.

However, the villagers are becoming more gender sensitive by making ways for women liberty to certain extent and particularly, when it comes to relaxing certain restrictions in the families of in-laws. Women have started to talk to the male elders in their husbands’ families, the length of *ghoonghat* (veil) has been shortened, and the women have started to wear *saris* instead of traditional *ghagras* at home. While visiting some tourist spots with their husbands, the young wives also wear modern dresses such as jeans and skirts. “*Social media per photo dekhte hain, toh object nahi karte, yeh unki choice hai, humein koi pareshani nahi hai, lekin ghar par abhi utni chhoot nahi hai*” (we watch the photo of younger women of family, we don’t object to what they wear, it’s their choice, we do not have any problem with it, but they are not given freedom to this extent at home as of now) said one of the respondents during the focus group.

However, when we compare this postulation in light of the present study, we find it is actually going the other way, where the local cultures are being promoted through media (especially the new entertainment industry that sees more potential in tourism as commerce in contemporary times). It is interesting to notice that the expansion of ‘scenes on screens’ to sceneries on real fabric also create a spectacle, which is much more modern when it comes to communication through mobility and travel; or, in simpler terms, visible in tourism. Thus, the new trend in terms of cultural industry makes the local cultural elements essential to be sustained since they become the ‘Unique Selling Points’ of cultural content or media spectacle in the global market. To explain Frankfurt School theorists’ idea of culture industries, Devereux (2007) writes:

...for Habermas and other critical theorists associated with the Frankfurt School, the culture industries - with their penchant for commercialism, entertainment and spectacle - are implicated in the eclipse of civil society, the rise of consumer culture and the attendant degeneration of the public sphere as a site for deliberative democracy. (p. 343)

On data analysis, one finds that media practices and media content are not the only factors contributing to the changing lifestyle, which is routed towards the West but also cannot be stated as a copy of the West either. It is the expansion of cities, urbanization of villages, British and American patterns of private education systems in India (mostly in English) along with the media content. For example, it is not the villagers who celebrate the Christmas out of fashion created by the media, but it actually got promoted by the English-medium schools in which the villagers send their children for modern education. Villagers in Goner and Lalwari do not demand specific products while watching the media; however, it is those items, which they find in the market. It is the industry that decides the fashion for them and they do not have other options. Haircuts, outfits and even the *saris*, they get in the market are same as they see them on screen.

The changing lifestyle is also caused by the factor of increasing economic accessibility. This can be understood through the observable contrast between Goner and Lalwari. While Lalwari is still struggling with the basic facilities, particularly, electricity, road connectivity and education, the people are living in poor conditions there. Though, TV and the internet have reached most households, in comparison to Goner, the villagers in Lalwari do not enjoy the benefits of modern education and do not live in much comfort. Here, though women and school going girls do watch daily soaps on TV and social media sites such as YouTube due to the inbuilt application and voice command options available on smart mobile phones, they do not know what Google is. Thus, media literacy is low and there are other factors contributing to the slow pace of change in social life. One of such factors is the problem of excessive alcohol consumption among men in Lalwari.

On the contrary, due to modern education (there are 14 schools in Goner out of which 9 are private. The village also has one college for undergraduate and post graduate level. Due to space crunch, the college has been shifted to the outskirts of the village after one year; the villagers are hopeful to see the college again in the village soon since the local administration has promised to do so.), better employment opportunities, prosperity and proximity to the urban area, Goner is adapting the comfortable life-style of the urban folk in every manner. They have LED TV sets in each room, luxury items ranging from soaps, crème, Italian toilets, and water heaters to two wheelers and cars. However, amidst the modern western luxury, they do not forget to hold their roots tightly. They also speak English but along with Hindi and Rajasthani (Dhoondhari is the dialect

spoken in Goner) and watch Kabaddi (the Indian sport) on the sports channel. The preference of the Indian consumers towards vernacular and regional language content is constantly on the upswing, with 93% of the time spent on videos in Hindi and other regional languages (www.ey.com, 2016).

Donald Trump is the only known figure among the villagers when it comes to international affairs, however, they understand the socio-politics of caste in much better ways today. Interestingly, socially, caste is not counted as a factor affecting the life-style there; however, it is still a big factor in the electoral politics of the area.

Yet, there is an implicit concern among people of age group of 40 plus. They accept media as one of the factors for disintegration of family structure along with the urbanization of life. About 90% of surveyed in this age group emphasized upon the increasing tendency among people to dramatize the events for spontaneous gains. “They go for sting operations, depict the distorted images and create sensation out of nothing either for their own publicity or to hamper someone’s image, ... this trend is increasing more due to camera enabled mobile phones and more and more media accessibility,” said one of the respondents. The increasing craze to copy the celebrities or TV stars among youth was also indicated as a negative factor generated by the media by 60% of the respondents.

In Lalwari, people buy products after watching their advertisements on TV. Though people have started to use smart phones and even use video calling, like one 23-year-old Maina Bano who used to make video calls to her family members on a regular basis, nothing much has changed from Black and White era to the time of digital media. Long back, while Roop Chand Jain (61 years) bought joint pain relief oil after watching it on TV, a student of 11<sup>th</sup> class, Om Kanwar, started to use a particular brand of shampoo and soap after watching its advertisement just three years before.

While tracing the media practices in the southern belt of India, one can go with the historical accounts of media in Kerala where regional media had been seen as harbinger of capitalism and consumerism during the 1980s. Though the newspapers or the press have remained deeply associated with the social cause, we cannot deny the fact that the advertising industry and the press grew hands in hands, at the same time. The business of advertising grew even more with the growth of the Indian language press.

Referring to the state of newspapers some saw the process as ‘homogenization’ against the diversity of languages found in India and specially the southern part of India (Jeffrey, 2010). However, the survey conducted in Hariharapuram adds something more

and different to the picture.

In Thiruvananthapuram District of Kerala, Hariharapuram is a small village/hamlet located in the main village Ayiroor (Panchayat) in Varkala Block of South Kerala. Well connected by road, the village is not very far from the state capital (50 Kilometers); the changes in its landscape are observable in terms of urbanization. The village is known as a small town by the people living in nearby areas. The village has basic amenities including electricity. Kerala enjoys the top position in literacy rate (92.9% - Rural and 95.1% Urban, as per Census 2011), however, in Ayiroor, it is 83% while in Hariharapuram, it decreases to 60%. The female literacy rate is slightly lower than the male literacy rate in the area. However, when it comes to the growth of literacy, it is higher in the female population (4%) than the male counterparts (2%). Malayalam is the prominent language, followed by English. Few of the people in Hariharapuram also know other languages such as Tamil, Hindi, Tulu and Konkani. The village is inhabited by workers. Since the village is located near to the Arabian Sea, the people still used to go to abroad for employment, mainly to Gulf countries as was the case 15 years back. The diaspora has been seen as one of the major factors of the comfortable lifestyle (houses, equipment, and so forth).

Though Hariharapuram is noticing change in terms of inevitable urbanization, not much has changed in the socio-cultural lives of people. Private television operators and internet-based social media sites are just the additions to the media practices of everyday life. TV is the prime source of entertainment. Television entertainment channels *Asianet* (Star India), *GEC MazhavilManorama* (Malayala Monorama), *Surya TV* (Sun network), *Flower TV*, *Asianet Movies*, *Kiran TV* are among the most popular channels in the region which offer emotional drama and comedy as the prominent genres well-liked among the rural folk. A new TV show called '*Comedy Utsavam*' (*Flower TV*) is their favorite while most of the housewives like to watch TV drama and series like *Parasparam* and *Chandnamazha* (*Asianet*). They also watch Hindi films and soaps dubbed in Malayalam sometimes. However, none of these programmes are based on western culture. No change is observed in English-language programme viewing. The villagers in Hariharapuram, though understand English, but they do not watch English programmes since such programmes are too foreign in a cultural setting. On the contrary, the Indian regional channels show the local cultural practices including dressing.

Mobile telephony and internet usage are additions to their day-to-day cultural life. While television is experienced as a community practice, the mobile

phone-based media is intruding the villagers' time-routine as an individual and private media practice. Most of them use mobile phones. After TV, their next favorite is Facebook followed by WhatsApp. However, YouTube is less used. One can see the causal relationship between TV viewing as the maximum and YouTube as the least preferable option. The media practices prevailed in the area also signify that the inhabitants of the village in Kerala consume media in the most basic ways. They are media literate and know the technical know-how related to media consumption, but they use it to a limited extent and try to keep the cultural shape intact.

The difference between classical and popular culture is that the media 'represented' market earlier while today, media is the market where audiences go for selecting and shopping for products. Thus, the media is the cite of market.

### Conclusion

Since the advent of media technologies and their introduction in the developing countries, they have been apprehended as a vehicle of cultural imperialism, westernization and commodification in the name of globalization. However, in India, due to its characteristic of multiculturalism, people are habitual to come across with various cultures and yet know how to maintain their root culture. Hence, in the Indian context, the rural environment defies the notion of Cultural Industry and it is safe to say that rural cultures are strongly connected to their roots. There are observable changes in the lifestyle of rural people, but those are due to inevitable factors of economic growth and inclusion of technologies in life. As far as culture is concerned, it should be seen as adaptations in order to lead more comfortable lives rather than cultural deformation.

Moreover, through the inclusion of media technologies, rural India is contributing to the process of globalization by disseminating its cultural practices and traits or simply 'the material' to the world. In the wake of global economies, rural tourism is one factor which can be seen as associated with the changing practices and cultures of certain 'urbanised villages' where the rural spaces become the cite of media content and media industry. Concerning Indian television, "The main patterns to emerge from the installation of new technologies in the country showed that...India found renewed spaces through geo-cultural and linguistic affinity in the global world to market its cultural products" (Das, 2007, p.438). It is actually either making way towards cohesion with other cultures whatsoever that come through the media or simply not at all experiencing it, rather than contesting with it. The study conducted in two

different regions of rural India with wide variety in terms of language, dressing/clothing, rituals, occupations somehow drew the similar lines when it comes to media practices and their relation with the ideologies and perceptions. The emerging patterns lead us towards the same idea of local culture in relation to the globalization and cultural industry when, “there is a complex interchange between the global and local, but also a new configuration of the personal and the social” (Athique, 2012, p.156) and globalization in the whole experience is adding to the diversity (Appadurai, 1996).

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# Folk Songs and Performances of Eastern Nagas: Bedrock of Social Communication and Development

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## ABSTRACT

The North East Region of India is the abode of approximately 225 Indigenous tribes in India, out of 450 in the entire country. The variety of tribal and ethnic communities and geographical and ecological diversity makes the region unique compared to other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Despite these sea changes, the indigenous people refused to lose their identity. The pre-literate Naga society have a large resource of folklore and oral traditions, including folk songs and dances, celebrating their joyful and vibrant life in the hilly isolated terrain of Naga Hills. Many times the theme of nature, ecology, environment, identity, and development have a significant presence within the Naga folk culture. This paper has attempted to look into the world of Eastern Nagas through an emic approach much beyond the typical academic framework and the Western epistemological turns, loaded with pre-colonial and colonial biases. Through the process of deep listening to the songs and re-reading the available text as the primary sources for the study, it also looks into the related folkloric practices through an interpretative, qualitative, and ethnographic approach taking indications from the local indigenous knowledge system and socio-cultural practices in everyday life.

**Keywords:** Eco-ethnicity, IKS, Mass media, Naga folk songs, Social communication, Sustainable development

## Introduction

North Eastern India comprises eight states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. These are havens for many ethnic peoples and tribes. Such people are living in their proud seclusion indifferent to the march of civilization in their neighbourhood. Their origin, lifestyle, livelihood, language, community organization, and religion are different and distinct. The North East Region of India is also the abode of approximately 225 Indigenous tribes in India, out of 450 in the entire country (Jacobs, 1990).

“If India is a country that boasts of ‘unity in diversity’, then the North-East is its most visible embodiment. Among the North-Eastern states, Nagaland stands out as a land of diverse tribes, systems of governance, cultures, sheer colour, and variety. As its 16 major tribes hold their festivals each calendar month of the year, Nagaland is often referred to as the ‘land of festivals. Nagaland represents sociological and anthropological gold mines because it is still scientifically unexplored.

Nagaland emerged as a State, from out of the erstwhile Naga Hills district of Assam and NEFA province, in 1963” (Nagaland State Human Development Report-*NSHDR*, 2004, pp 1-2).

The Report further mentioned that “Those Nagas who remained outside British administration were referred to as ‘Free Nagas’ in the ‘Unadministered Areas’. These ‘Free Nagas’ included the tribes now living in Mon and Tuensang (Longleng) districts of present-day Nagaland”. (Nagaland State Human Development Report-*NSHDR*).

The unique constitutional provision of the state of Nagaland is empowered through- “Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution provides that any act of the parliament, relating to religious, social, and customary practices of the Nagas and those relating to land and its resources shall not apply to Nagaland unless it is ratified by the State Assembly” (Nagaland State Human Development Report-*NSHDR*).

The North Eastern Hills in continuation to the Eastern Himalayas have tall mountains and tall people. The peculiar community organization, traditional knowledge, and orally transmitted

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myth and folklore kept alive the cultural identity. The traditional communication techniques and indigenous knowledge systems played a great role in preserving their traditional culture and folksongs and related community events, festivals, and performances. Like most indigenous people, Konyak also has very strong traditions that protect the environment and shun wanton destruction of ecology. They do not have a recorded history. Legends, folksongs, tales and dances, myths and traditions are their history. History has been carried down from generation to generation using oral tradition. Their daily activities with moral responsibility are living scripture and living creed for them. Konyak land begins in parts of Arunachal Pradesh and stretches over to Myanmar. They have their monarchical heads in every territory called Angh (King) ruling in a hereditary system. Socially, the Konyak Nagas are a well-organized community with social norms and strict customary law. The community's lives are governed by the Morung culture in each village. Morung is an ancient Naga traditional learning institution or dormitory for young unmarried men. It is also treated as a village guard / security house where men would sleep at night and are supposed to be in readiness to repel any night attack on the village.

“Morung, or communal dormitory, separate for young men and women, was the most important and primary traditional institution of the Naga tribes within the village community. There was a Morung for every Khel (cluster of clans). In ... every clan would have its own Morung. It was the primary educational institution that nurtured and prepared the young of every clan for life and living. All the clan/Khel/village history, folklore and legends, songs, and traditional practices, including the laws governing community living, were taught here. Additionally in some tribes Morung served as the fortress of the village, where the young unmarried men used to sleep and guard the village” (Nagaland State Human Development Report-*NSHDR*).

This traditional society is currently under threat due to rapid environmental degradation. Typical efforts at educating the Naga people have not been able to make a dent in their behavior toward the environment. Therefore, the depletion of various beneficial resources now might make it difficult for the forthcoming generations to survive.

### **The Naga folk songs and oral tradition: tools for social communication and development**

Folk songs have an important role to play in the tribal community because they signify body language, transcription, and spirit in art that reflects folklores,

which creates a semantic bridge between two cultures through transmission from one inhabitant to another. The pre-literate Naga society has a large resource of folklore and oral traditions, including folk songs and dances, celebrating their joyful and vibrant life in the isolated hilly terrain of the Eastern Himalayas (Naga Hills). Many times the themes of nature, ecology, environment, identity, and development have a significant presence within the Naga folk culture. The daily activities of all Naga tribal communities include music, dance, and other forms of art. Additionally, it fosters a sense of community among the inhabitants of the hilly region. Every cultural celebration features group performances of music and dance. The various tribes of Nagaland each have their own distinctive cultures, which may be seen in their dress, languages, music, and dance. Folk and traditional music generally fall into numerous categories, including celebration songs, war songs, love songs, marriage songs, and more.

Generally, Naga tribes sing various songs of their forefathers passed from one generation to another orally. There are also seasonal songs that describe different activities that take place during the harvest and according to the phase of agricultural activities and also during special occasions like festivals and the feast of merit, and similar social and cultural gatherings around the year. Jhum (burn and slash) cultivation and agricultural practices are the mainstay of these communities along with hunting and fishing. It's a vital link to their treasure trove of cultural heritage and collective moments from earlier times or the recent past. It's all about living and celebrating a vibrant life amid nature without any infringement from the outside world.

### **Review of literature**

The social structure, discipline, and love for their territory, people, and ways of life have contributed immensely to the development of the Naga ethos, traditional knowledge, identity, and folklore across the regions.

Tylor (1974) defined culture as: “culture and civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. According to Kaisii (2018), the morung or youth's dormitory helped to mold the person from becoming a social dissident as it was a powerhouse of knowledge and skills where individuals learned social lessons required for becoming a responsible member of society.

Kunz and Joshi (2008) opine that “As for Nagalore (Naga Folklore), the Konyaks have

several legends of interaction with Ahom kings and there are many legends and folktales among the Ao and Lotha, which mention dealings with the rulers of Assam. However, the answer to the question as to the provenance of the Naga might be found in the Naga legends, which point towards their reaching the present habitat in several waves of migration”.

The social, religious, and cultural norms of society were communicated through the morung. It was in the morung that the young people learned their history, culture, folksong, and dance through play-acting, singing, and dancing. It also trained them in handicrafts, sculptures, sports, games, defence, warfare, and other skills related to headhunting and raids. It was a premier institution for socialization, and establishment responsible for developing a sense of security and premeditated modes of meeting life situations for young people (Jacobs, 1990). There are also differences in perceptions regarding folklore and tradition (Julian *et al.*, 1990).

In the context of oral tradition and folklore in North-East India, Sen (2008) has pointed out that “In folklore circle there has been a debate. There are many and at least two opposite points of view. While one view suggests that ‘all folklore is traditional but not all traditions are folklore’ (Bascom, 1953), the other view revises it as ‘some traditions are folklore, but not all folklore is traditional’ (Ben-Amos, 1971)” (Sen, 2000, p.8). The author further explained that “traditions that involve a process of the supply of cultural elements and features that have been made available to particular social group during a long period” and concluded that “Tradition, in the real sense of the term would span the past and the present culture. The past will always be present in the present” (Sen, 2000, p.10).

Imchasenla (2020) opines that “In recent time, research scholars and government-funded projects have been supporting the revitalization process, supplemented by writing, recording, translating, filming and with all possible methods of available documentation. As a result, preserving the folk culture is ensured and able to re-articulate and re-represent their identity drawing from the rich oral traditions of the community. As Naga folksongs are still understudied, it is therefore important that more studies in folk music applying multi-disciplinary approaches such as anthropology, sociology, history, religion, and literature in the study of Naga folksongs would be invaluable” (Imchasenla, 2020. pp. 21-35).

In the introductory essay for *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz one of the most influential social scientists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century states that “To look at the symbolic dimensions of

social action – art, religion, ideology, science, law, morality, common sense — is not to turn away from the existential dilemmas of life for some empyrean realm of de-emotionalized forms; it is to plunge in the midst of them. The essential vocation of interpretative anthropology is not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others, guarding other sheep in other valleys, have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said” (Geertz, 1973. p. 30).

As a final point, it is worth mentioning the perspective of Dube (1989) that “The tribes are a sacred trust with us. They were here first. By allowing them to languish and die out we will be causing incalculable injury to an important segment of our population and a significant part of our cultural heritage”(Dube, 1989. p.19).

### **Impacts of ICT on social communication in Naga society**

In traditional Naga societies, communication maintains and animates life and integrates traditional knowledge. It runs like a thread linking the past and the present through various legends, lures, poems, and myths. The above-given forms of oral communication also constitute the cultural tradition of a given society. Traditional modes of communication persisted and continue despite efforts to introduce modern means of communication and mass media. Interpersonal communication such as word to mouth remains the prime mode of social communication in many villages of Nagaland. In recent times, access to communication and technology, mass media including emerging media tools, and social media paves the way for modernization and social changes amongst the Nagas, affecting deeply their traditional socio-cultural practices, identity, ecology, and media life. The transition of the media landscape from state-owned media to the development of independent media has led to the pluralism of voices. The internet power along with the emerging media tools of social media and mobile telephony has reached all realms of the social structure. Social media, barring geographical distances and the intrusion of media gatekeepers, provides a common platform to give voice to the voiceless as well as power to the powerless. Social media can be an important platform to awaken the minds of the people, particularly the Naga Youth for wider sensitization and timely action. It also remains effective in the development of the remotest corners of the world.

In this context, it is pertinent to note the view of Deuze (2011) “Media become the playground

for a search for meaning and belonging – not just by consumption or what Harvey calls ‘flexible accumulation’ of artifacts and ideas that would make up and reconstitute one’s sense of self-identity, but also by producing, co-creating, assembling and remixing a whole series of simulacra as milieux of escape, fantasy, and distraction’. Castells in this context has argued for an emerging culture of ‘real virtuality’ where reality itself is entirely captured by mediated communication”. Several community organizations are promoting the idea of sustainable development and eco-preservation of the environment and safeguarding the cultural heritage of Nagas, taking cues from their IKS, folklore, and traditional lifestyle, particularly in Eastern Nagaland, while using different emerging tools and media platforms for sensitizing the community to carry forward their unique way of life along with the usage of emerging/new tools and technology for development and education.

### Research objectives

1. To analyse the communication of Naga folk song content about sustainable development, eco-ethnicity, cultural preservation, and social life.
2. To look into the diversity of social communication through Naga folk songs.

### Research Methodology

**Study area:** The study was conducted in the state of Nagaland. The state comprises a total of eight districts namely; Dimapur, Phek, Wokha, Mokokchung, Kohima, Zunheboto, Tuensang, and Mon. This paper particularly focuses on the Mon and Longleng districts of Eastern Nagaland.

This paper has attempted to look into the world of Eastern Nagas through an emic approach much beyond the typical academic framework and the Western epistemological turns, loaded with pre-colonial and colonial biases. Privileged to be an insider of the Konyak and Phom communities and having proficiency in local languages/dialects, the researcher has ventured to undertake the study of the selected Eastern Naga folksong as a way of life. Through the process of deep listening to the selected songs and re-reading of the available text as the primary sources for the study, it also looks into the related folkloric practices through an interpretative, qualitative, and ethnographic approach, taking indications from the local indigenous knowledge system and socio-cultural practices in everyday life.

The composers of these melodic dictions of the pre-literate/non-literate society, where the local dialects and common language are yet to be

standardized are meant for social communication within the community and clans. Through this collective community wisdom, Nagas from Eastern Nagaland, particularly the Konyak and Phom communities are managing a hunting-gathering mode of livelihood along with Jhum/shifting cultivation also known as burn and slash cultivation for their daily sustenance and well-being in geographically difficult border regions of Naga Hills. Earlier colonial administrators, anthropologists, adventurers, and outside researchers have mainly depended on their etic approaches and methods to understand and depict the realm of the living and lesser-known cultural practices of these indigenous communities mainly depending on the local translator or easily available assistance and spending a short stint at the actual location. Their sources of data/ information have been alleged to be primarily based on colonial methodology and framework with a systemic slant, prejudices, imagination, and stereotypes.

**Universe of the study:** Indigenous People of Nagaland with special focus on Konyak and Phom Naga in Eastern Nagaland.

**Research design:** This study has adopted the qualitative/ethnographic method and content analysis. The study was restricted to rural areas of Nagaland and conducted only in the Mon district for Konyak Naga and the Longleng district for Phom Naga.

**Tools and techniques for data collection:** Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected by a researcher with an insider perspective through field visits in particular districts and acquiring appropriate information from relevant studies.

The secondary data was collected from officials’ records (including the census of 2011), journals, books, literature from social sciences disciplines, related publications, and online sources.

### Glimpses of Nagaland

Nagaland, the 16<sup>th</sup> state of the Indian Union, became full-fledged on December 1, 1963. The state is bordered by Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Assam to the west, Manipur to the south, and the Sagaing Region of Myanmar to the east. There are eight districts in the state: Dimapur, Phek, Wokha, Mokokchung, Kohima, Zunheboto, Tuensang, and Mon. The landscape is rugged, hilly, and mountainous. Saramati, in the Tuensang district, is the highest peak, rising 3840 meters above sea level. The economy of Nagaland is primarily agricultural. Over seventy percent of the population depends on agriculture, particularly on cardamom, tea, and coffee grown on plantations.

Nagaland population by religion

Religion	Persons	Percentage	Males	Females
Hindu	173,054	8.75	104,851	68,203
Muslim	48,963	2.47	28,527	20,436
Christian	1,739,651	87.93	881,927	857,724
Sikh	1,890	0.10	1,531	359
Buddhist	6,759	0.34	3,513	3,246
Jain	2,655	0.13	1,373	1,282
Others	3,214	0.16	1,620	1,594
Not Stated	2,316	0.12	1,307	1,009

(Census of India. Details of Religion in Main Table C-1-2011 (India & States/UTs)

**Ethnic groups**-The tribes of Nagaland and their population as per census 2011 are:

Tribes	Population as per Census 2011
All Scheduled Tribes	1,710,973
Garos	2,346
Kachari	13,034
Kuki	18,768
Mikir	218
Naga	1,667,712
Naga(ST)	9,507
Angami(ST)	141,732
Ao(ST)	226,625
Chakhesang(ST)	154,874
Chang(ST)	64,226
Chirri(ST)	138
Khiemnungan(ST)	61,647
Konyak(ST)	237,568
Lotha(ST)	173,111
Makware(ST)	10
Phom(ST)	52,682
Rengma(ST)	62,951
Sangtam(ST)	74,994
Sema(ST)	236,313
Tikhir(ST)	7,537
Yimchaungre(ST)	66,972
Zeliang(ST)	74,877
Pochury(ST)	21,948
Generic Tribes etc.	8,895

**Languages spoken**

Nagas speak over 60 different dialects across the state. Some of the most dialects speaking tribes are:

Languages	Persons	Percentage	Rural	Urban
Konyak	244,135	12.3394	211,736	32,399
Phom	53,674	2.7129	43,142	10,532
Ao	231,084	11.6797	144,211	86,873
Lotha	177,488	8.9708	126,859	50,629
Angami	151,883	7.6767	98,152	53,731
Chokri	91,010	4.5999	77,489	13,521
Sangtam	75,841	3.8333	55,054	20,787

Languages	Persons	Percentage	Rural	Urban
Bengali	74,753	3.7783	23,777	50,976
Yimchungre	74,156	3.7481	60,882	13,274
Chang	65,632	3.3173	47,984	17,648
Hindi	62,942	3.1813	17,280	45,662
Khiemnungan	61,906	3.1289	55,212	6,694
Rengma	61,537	3.1103	51,671	9,866
Zeliang	60,399	3.0528	46,692	13,707
Nepali	43,481	2.1977	21,746	21,735

(Census of India. 2011. 2011 Census: Language and Mother Tongue)

**Districts in Nagaland**

S.No.	Name of the District	Year - Formed
1	Kohima	1957
2	Tuensang	1957
3	Mokokchung	1957
4	Mon (carved out of Tuensang)	1973
5	Wokha (carved out of Mokokchung)	1973
6	Phek (carved out of Kohima)	1973
7	Zunheboto (carved out of Mokokchung)	1973
8	Dimapur (carved out of Kohima)	1997
9	Peren (carved out of Kohima)	2004
10	Kiphire (carved out of Tuensang)	2004
11	Longleng (carved out of Tuensang)	2004

**Data analysis**

The Naga, as (Verrier Elwin) says, are a people of whom their country can be proud: “They are strong and self-reliant, good to look at, with an unerring instinct for colour and design, friendly and cheerful, with a keen sense of humour, gifted with splendid dances and a love of the song”( Elwin, 1961). Naga folk songs are both romantic and historical, with songs narrating entire stories of famous ancestors, events, or incidents. It may not be a long narrative poem or a traditional ballad but could be a (a) love song (b) a dance song (c) a festival or celebration, and (d) a spiritual song in which the text and the tune are equally important. In love songs, the lyrical element is often dominant, showing a kind of spontaneity that the other varieties seem to lack, and it is the result of a genuine exercise of the poetic imagination.

There are also seasonal songs that describe various activities done in a particular agricultural season in Jhum fields. The themes of folk music and songs are many; songs eulogizing ancestors, the brave deeds of warriors and traditional heroes; and poetic love songs immortalizing ancient tragic love stories. An interesting feature of Konyak and Phom’s

oral narratives is that they are presented only in verse form. This shows clearly how much importance these people give to singing. Singing seems to be the most important method for people to express their feelings. The vibrancy and richness of Naga heritage and living cultural tradition are revealed through folk songs, dances, and folk performances during various occasions and festivals as a way of life. It deserves the utmost attention as the living human testament of unique cultural practices, which need to be preserved, revived and promoted for recognition worldwide.

We have analysed selected Naga folk songs and lore for understanding their importance and meaning in the context of our research as follows:

### Konyak tribe

#### Song-I

*iinyih haupak iimei lulinge tanpe hanpak.*

*iilek iimei luk pete bin shong poi.*

*Kulem wei iishe wei hiim me wangle poi thrah iimei wet lah touh.*

*Jemzu eithra thrah iimei hin hei touh. Ponla shai le wangle hah.*

**Meaning and context:** Today is the day we long for, now is the time to gather all the fruits. We are happy and giving thanks to our heavenly father for blessing us to harvest plenty of fruits. Come friends, we will go back to our sweet home with the good news of harvest to our beloved villagers. Come friends, carry the beautiful fruits. This harvest song invites friends to showcase their bountiful crops and fruits and celebrate the happy moments of life....

#### Song-II

*"O, since earth, water, and rocks existed,*

*We are the sons of Yong-wem-on-Nin.*

*O, may the boys be healthy and strong*

*May they live together united.*

*O, man and tiger, the sons of brothers*

*They ate the jungle pig's flesh.*

*O, as so many stars,*

*As the sun rises,*

*The sun in the sky,*

*O, Yana and Shayongs sons*

*So high are they in the sky."...*

**Meaning and context:** This translated traditional Konyak song depicts the way of life with bountiful nature, cosmology, and good ethical practices.

#### Song-III

*Aizu Hah me meipu shiwang wa oh koi.*

*Yeh shon me lak wa okai, me rong en ko.*

*Ko fei ferong me Nah cham.*

*Aizu hah me kanyih wangmei Lalo pha , yah shi hing sha lem nang -oh.*

*Nyo Wang ko shon koh pe to, kat fei wenling pa fe nah rong oh*

*Aiso zue zak tei tong iiniip wangpu hahso ma len, wangtei tong oh.*

*Thrizu nanguei yutiongtah yu ehingto, ko vei Wang nang ngam ching to.*

**Meaning and context:** This seed-sowing folk song during Jhum cultivation is praying and anticipating blessings for a good harvest through a good climate and supportive nature around.

Let there be plenty of fruits in the field. Let my friends see the happiness of the crops and let it be an admirable plan for the next year.

Don't let any seed spoil without growing or bearing fruits, rather we wanted to see a beautiful bearing fruit in my field.

Today we are here to care for and clean you, grow well, and bear good fruits.

Today we wanted to see good weather while we are cleaning the field with my friends, so let it be a good day and sound mind.

While we are singing our fatigue song, let my neighbours have thought with pity and mercy.

Oh....The calling of the field owner for the meal, friends let it be done faster.

Oh...this morning we saw your bright sunshine but we know it's evening now, and we realize you are going back to your place. So, we are also going back to our sweet home, goodbye sunshine, see you again.

#### Song-IV

(Nagaraja, 1994).

*Awang hahtay yenglongma*

*Wongkkhuk tatlang nyu yongli*

*Pan phang o ciing ya taw han wan wangpu lak*

*Wangsih hung long putiiv leangsung yak-ay ya*

*Wacun may-a congpu wuthang sum mong yung*

*Watiiv siimmong yungpu ayh.*

**Meaning and context:** According to Konyak's belief, many years ago a family called Akhong lived in the village of Pongkong. Even now their descendants live in another village called Tamlu village. This family once told the "firewood that by his coming this way (voluntarily) he may hurt the faces of their children.

So they requested the "firewood" not to pass that way. The firewood felt bad and from that day onwards it stopped coming on its own and people began to fetch firewood from the forest according to their requirements and eulogizing the blessed

mothers' extraordinary power.

Some mothers could prepare food for the entire family using half a grain of rice. Now no such mothers are found;

“When the mother died unhappily every good thing stopped” as firewood

used to come (on its own)- now that has also stopped now;

if there was too much weed in the field just by a stroke of a stick all the

weed would have been wiped off then - but this too has stopped now;

the singer feels extremely sad for not living in those days.

The firewood felt bad and from then onwards it stopped coming on its own and people began to fetch firewood from the forest according to their requirements.

### *Song-V*

(Nagaraja, 1994).

*Lannyang ponyu turn ni ta*

*Ying long ponyu camcam sued cim tak c*

*Pang ayh wawpu call wan longnyu tokmii nyim*

*Mungmay nyak ying pu ayh cah wan phaw nyu kam*

*Congma maylang sahyu si*

*Tokpong pa wong lang ayh tah taw sit hi pho*

*Lanwang lan su pong ayh phat ong mii lii lung*

*Wicmhi nyo pu wan u pong u phangma lutim*

*Cok wang ngoy u pong u kang ma yung ting lu*

*Kok sang nyonyu ha-u ta a kok hi sang*

*Phawyu hoy ka paw u lan nyang cong ma loy*

*Pangya loy pu lan nyang pompu a congma*

*Pang loy ongpu lan nyang.*

**Meaning and context:** The log drum is a very important item in a Konyak village. It is usually more than twenty feet in length. An appropriate single tree with a uniform trunk of that length has to be selected for the purpose. Then it has to be cut and pulled to the village from the forest. The whole procedure is a big event. This and the following song narrate about this. Thus, a boy or a young man would like to compare his life to a long drum.

I and the Lannyang tree were not to be considered the same as another tall tree

It (the Lannyang tree) grows on the top of the mountain which everyone likes

Branches grow in an expanding manner and cover a vast area

Tiger sleeps under the shade

Horned deer used to rub bodies against the tree trunk

Eagles make nests on branches

Colourful, beautiful hornbills sit on the tree

The bird chuk wang ngoy usually sits on top

Cricket sits on the trunks and sings

Those who go hunting also take shelter under the tree

Everyone takes shelter under me...Everyone leans on me...

### *Song-VI*

O wanghennyu yoy pong ma

Ongoy mihei nungtaw long

Yeng nyah wanwang pu-a ten nyu longma loy

Siimtaw maiwan yying moy yupnung wophong taw

Hahching ongy maiwan yingngoi .

**Meaning and context:** This song is about a lover waiting for his/her beloved one.

Though the night has already set in, the promised lover has not made an appearance.

It appears as if the lover may not turn up, but the hope is still there...

Sun is about to set, Ongoy (local) bird is searching for her previous (own) nest

Fish in the water are searching for their previous stone;

To me, my lover hasn't come even though it is night already

That my promised lover does not turn up.

### *Song-VII*

Yiilli pii-ci cahwan tok

Yii rpa pii-ci lenyu sangwang han ca yang

Longtuk yan ay songpu song wang ha nah yoy

Pong yin saw tay ang yong ha-o li dong caw

Li-e lak sim pii-ci a pu pa wang lam

Li yin wang lamma.

**Meaning and context:** This song expresses the mortality of the human being. And reflect upon the shortness of man's mortal life. However, the man is rich and great nothing can stop him from death. It also depicts the cosmological belief of the community and nature's supremacy over man.

The only eternal is the earth.

the only eternal ones are the sun and the moon those who live even in beautiful buildings will perish

the coronated king also will die like others

death and decay are the nature

so to die is my duty!

### **Phom tribe**

It is believed that Phom learned to develop the techniques of building houses, cultivating land and growing crops, the skills in arts, architecture and

craftsmanship, the establishing of social institutions in Mount Yingnyushang- the mythical place of their origin". This belief is also supported by the popular Phom folk song that runs as mentioned below:

### Song-I

*Oshangmeya, ObuYingnyushangmeya  
Meihongnyeibuhpunyuhukbajaha  
YingnyuApaihongmaoVannyau pu akpeih  
Jeidem nauhan pangpao Yingnyu Shangma pang.*

**Meaning and context:** On the mountain, our ancestors were at Mount Yingnyushang. Humankind are all brothers and sisters born of meihongnyu. A music tree was felled at Yingnyu Apaihong. Social customs among brethren were shared at Mount Yingnyushang.

### Song-II

(Bhalerao *et al.*, 2016)

*OH... ola baü ü Yingli Phomjat labäü ü  
OH.... obü denka aivang bü hi ba den ka  
OH..... lempü om ngoi hanshing metpai  
phongling peih  
OH..... Ketnyü len vamküjü kahdü shapham nyieh  
OH..... Yimnyü owhap loihan tap ve-ei touh nyieh*

**Meaning and context:** Oh, we are the damsels of the Yingli Phom tribe. Oh please pause for a moment, lend us your ears, even as we unfold to you the song of joy and woes of the farmers. Come Ketnyü month (December), it's time to fell our forest and clear the shrubs to prepare for the new jhum land.

### Song-III

#### KAHMU KESHO HAPAKEI

*Ohan nyu kao nyiem vang phak I shonglang shih  
Apma vangket pema thunglong kujuma  
Phom jat Phomli shum kao ya nyuk lem ongpha  
Shümlak lang-I phi-ei hepong vong kao yem  
Pai-shih vangmang phüjao yuh yang kho yem  
peih  
Pongmoi hevong küjao dapho yeang lingpeih  
Shi-yong nyio nyu len kao shu-ei yungle nyieh  
Nyü-ü man vai payü pungshu shelai nyieh  
An-aong eima meipü phunyülok.  
Heyoi pongma shemlak langnyai hupü mong.*

**Meaning and context:** Weed Cleaning Song. May we be protected from the scorching sun! May we be sheltered with the nyamvang leaves! If the year brings stiff weeds to our left and right, The farming youth of Phom Land will give them a stiff fight in the group; We pluck weeds and uproot shrubs and dry them

in the sun,

When heavy rain and storms assail us,  
We defend ourselves with balm leaf shields.

We protect ourselves from the scorching sun with our cane shields,

Though Shiyong Nyionyü (June and July) bring us starvation,

Our mothers solace us with songs;

Our fathers feed us with roots and fruits from the wood.

When the farmers work in the company, even when sunset peeps in,

The farmers decline to depart from the field!

### Conclusion

As evident, the rich system of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and eco-ethnicities of Naga folklore would also lead us to solve certain imbalances and modern man made crises including ecological and climate challenges we face in our everyday lives. It is high time to protect and preserve these vanishing wisdom and unheard voices that would open up new avenues of ideas and thoughts for a better environment and peace for the people of North Eastern India and the world apart. Magic plays an important part in determining the life and beliefs of Naga communities and is closely linked with their rituals, fertility symbols, and the folk narratives and lores of the community.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are also the need of the hour, especially in the areas of environment, ecology, and climate change. It is evident that Naga folklore and traditional knowledge are the lifelines of the celebration of community life and its land and people, flora and fauna, customs, legends, festivals, and tribal ethos and identity. The vast reservoirs of Naga folk culture are on the verge of extinction and deserve to be documented and widely disseminated through mainstream as well as social and digital media. These witty oral traditions are the bedrock of their indigenous knowledge system, distinct identity, and cultural heritage.

The study attempted to explore the importance of Naga Folk songs and oral traditions in the backdrop of the homogenization of ethnic cultures and the process of globalization. It pleads the means and ways in which they could be treasured, protected, and preserved for the future generation. It is also suggested to encourage studying Naga songs, music, folklore, and knowledge systems as part of the curriculum starting from early school to university level. There is also an unprecedented change in the oral practices, traditions, and media habits in North East India, particularly among the Naga youth. In this scenario, it is pertinent that the newer media tools,

particularly social media, which includes Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram will be a useful platform to reach out to youth, civil society leaders, and community-based organizations, educators, researchers and policymakers across the North East Region.

**Limitation and future scope:** It is just a glimpse of the vast unexplored and unheard wisdom of Konyak and Phom Nagas, still practicing a living tradition and folklore of their forefather's time amidst the natural landscape of Naga Hills. It is a maiden initiative to inspire and motivate local and outside researchers and academics to understand, explore and study the vast intangible heritage, cultural lore and as an alternative way of life using the local knowledge system and indigenous approaches like eco-ethnicity and IKS for action research or detailed ethnographic study with a large sample and in a multi-modal technique of documentation and preservation for the benefit of peoples across the regions, before the extinction of the collective oral treasure trove from the face of the planet.

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## Digital is the New Mainstream: Impact of OTT on Cinema Halls

RAHUL MAHAJAN<sup>1</sup> & SANTOSH KUMAR GAUTAM<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

OTTs offer a wide range of content not just from India but also from across the globe. Language is no longer a barrier to entertainment as evidenced by the diversity in regional and international content, which is popular in various languages, across multiple OTT platforms. OTT audiences are also watching films that are not seeing a traditional theatre release. Further, during the pandemic when producers were unable to release their films in theatres, they opted to sell their films to OTTs. There is a huge debate amongst media industry insiders, over whether OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms will elbow out cinema halls, to become the future of Indian film industry. This study is a nuanced research into the finer points of both sides of the debate, with the null hypothesis that the true cinematic experience is possible only in a movie theatre, and OTT offers a limited experience to film buffs. Therefore, the perceived threat to cinema halls due to the rise of OTT is only a temporary blip. The researcher has gained valuable insights via surveys conducted amongst young cine-goers as well as interviews with veterans of the Indian film industry and OTT platforms.

**Keywords:** Cinema halls, Content, Film industry, Over-The-Top, Pandemic

### Introduction

Films and television have been an integral part of the day-to-day lives of Indians for generations. From yester-years when tickets of blockbuster films were sold in 'black' and there used to be just a single television in an entire locality, and all neighbours would sit and watch programs together; it is now the digital age of OTTs when every individual with a smartphone can watch any kind of content anytime. It has indeed been a fascinating journey for the entertainment sector in India. And these are equally fascinating times with the foray of online digital streaming platforms into the huge Indian market.

Until the not too distant past, no Indian raised an eye-brow if there were long serpentine queues outside a cinema hall playing the latest blockbuster film of a mega-star. Then comes the Corona Pandemic and Indians, much like the rest of the world, reeled from the drastic changes that life underwent. Lockdowns were put in place and social distancing became a mantra. Offices, schools, markets, restaurants and cinemas were shut down and people were confined to their homes.

So understandably in a socially distanced world, digital segments such as over-the-top (OTT) video services and data consumption thrived. The whole

dynamic of the movie business changed with the shutting down of cinema halls and suspension of film releases. Even the mega stars (actors) from the world of films and television are today more inclined to perform on OTT platforms. Furthermore, with a sizable increase in the subset of regional language speaking consumers of OTTs, leading streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have started airing content in major regional languages. So far, only Hindi and English were the two preferred languages on OTT platforms.

Previous studies have revealed that the main consumer motivations surrounding OTTs include escapism, boredom relief and relaxation. Furthermore, a majority of respondents were found to have subscribed to OTTs, when offered a free trial period or discounted prices as part of their telecoms plan. So, watching a film on an OTT platform is much cheaper than buying tickets at a multiplex. During the pandemic, several large film producers bypassed the traditional theatrical release of their films, pushing their content onto OTTs instead. Even in the current post-corona environment, that trend has not abated.

With the phenomenal rise in OTT subscriptions, there has been an impetus in the business of low-

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budget short films. Producers are even specially making films for broadcasting on OTTs. In fact several larger films too are being launched on OTT platforms, after creating a buzz online via social media structures. Even in the summer of 2022, when the pandemic abated some-what and cinema halls started screening films from Bollywood the footfalls never reached the pre-pandemic numbers. Cinema goers still loved their films; it's just that in the two years of the pandemic, they became habitual of enjoying the latest cinema on their TV screens and mobiles. This study aims to test the null hypothesis that true cinematic experience is possible only in a movie theatre, and OTT offers a limited experience to film buffs. Therefore, the perceived threat to cinema halls due to the rise of OTT is only a temporary blip.

### Review of literature

The rise of OTT in India is undeniable. One of the key factors contributing to this growth is that OTT broadcasters are able to showcase bolder and more diverse content in comparison to traditional media, by conveniently bypassing existing broadcasting regulations through streaming content via the Internet. As Sridhar (2019) points out in the book, *Emerging ICT Policies and Regulations: Roadmap to Digital Economies*, while television broadcasters need satellite downlinking permission from the Government of India (GOI) for broadcasting their channels in the country, OTT content providers have no such restrictions.

Broadcasting regulations define 'television channel' to be a channel that has downlinking permission from the GOI. Since OTT broadcasters stream content through the Internet, they circumvent existing mechanisms. Traditional audio-visual content distribution networks that come under the ambit of broadcasting regulations are being replaced by OTT broadcasting services.

Sridhar (2019) concludes that policymakers need to take a balanced view in drafting regulations with the continuously evolving nature of OTT platforms. With OTTs typically being non-jurisdictional in nature, regulators around the world are struggling to bring them under some form of regulations. OTTs are also able to circumvent any existing regulations by constantly innovating technically. For example, to bypass regulatory barriers, many internet companies have shifted user registries to servers in Ireland in order to avoid the jurisdiction of EU General Data Protection Regulation. In the writer's opinion (Sridhar, 2019), command-and-control regulation of OTTs is not advisable. What is definitely warranted though is a 'light-touch'

regulatory mechanism that holds OTT service providers accountable for their content offerings and user data privacy norms.

The new 'OTT culture' in India needs to be sufficiently studied and regulated due to the deep impact that digital content is having on the present generation around the globe, and the likely influence it would hold in the future too. As Hodkinson (2017) says in his book, *Media Culture and Society*, culture refers to the way of life of a society or group, including values, meanings, identity, traditions, norms of behaviour and ways of understanding the world. Culture includes cinema, literature, music, art and theatre. He points out that media conglomerates control substantial portions of the culture most of us consume, by controlling the most significant and influential forms of content and the social media that most of us communicate through.

According to Hodkinson (2017), theories of media, culture and society sometimes focus on the ways media destroys social and cultural differences. Some highlight the relationship between media and a singular 'public' or nation, while others flag the potential of media to construct a universal culture. He also talks about the decline of community as a result of forces of modernity and industrialization, including the movement of populations to large, anonymous cities, increased communications and trade between previously isolated localities, and the growth of capitalist modes of productions.

Hodkinson (2017) opines that the media is a homogenizing and uniting force that eradicates cultural differences. In his work, he also suggests that a culture industry that promotes new styles, symbols and crazes or trends offers little opportunity to form genuinely distinctive communities, leaving youth to pick and mix from the plethora of pre-mediated options. The book has aided this researcher to understand the term culture and other phenomena that affect the culture of a particular society. It was also understood that if left unchecked, media conglomerates can control substantial portions of culture by controlling the most significant and influential forms of content, and the social media that most of us communicate through. Culture is ever evolving through migration of large communities to the urban cities that result in intercultural communication.

In India, the impact of the advent of OTTs has been felt in several ways. Chatterjee and Pal (2020) have shared the findings of their investigation into consumer behaviour brought on by technological advancements, in reference to the impact of OTT content on film and television consumption in India. As mentioned by Chatterjee and Pal

(2020), audiences are extending their patronage to OTT platforms not only because it is a newer technology, but also due to the overall behavioural changes brought on by globalisation. The advent of smartphones and cheaper internet connections has facilitated online video streaming. As a result OTT platforms for streaming films and series have grown exponentially. The effect of OTTs on movie theatres and cinemas was, however, more keenly felt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vaidya *et. al.* (2022) pointed out how OTT platforms are gaining momentum in India with each passing day. The study elaborates on the trends pertaining to the consumption of OTT content among Indian youth, particularly during lockdowns. The author find that the majority amongst the sample youth considered in the research had subscribed to more than one OTT platform. Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hotstar were found to be the top three preferences. The other finding was that during extended lockdown, subscriptions of OTTs and their consumption had increased substantially. Many youth consume OTT content for over two hours a day. The genres that were most popular are Action, Comedy, Sitcoms and Horror. A majority of the respondents in the study believed that these OTT platforms had a positive impact on their lives. However, they reported problems of headaches, fatigue, back pain and eye strain, due to prolonged usage.

The change in viewing habits of Indians due to OTTs, especially as observed amongst the youth, has had a negative impact on the number of footfalls in Cinema Halls. Bhirani (2020) points out that lockdowns during the peak pandemic period had a cascading effect on the Indian film-making ecosystem, leaving the exhibition sector in a limbo. It is pointed out that the number of direct-to digital movie releases on streaming platforms has since accelerated.

Bhirani (2020) writes that pandemic-era lockdowns put a stop to all film shootings and post-production activities came to a grinding halt, affecting the film-making and film-exhibition business badly. Actors, junior artists, daily wage workers and technicians were suddenly out of work. With film theatres being shut, consumers confined to their homes began to explore content on the many digital streaming avenues. The author informs that the Multiplex Association of India and exhibitors across India had made their dissent clear, after some films had locked deals for a direct-to- OTT release at the beginning of the national lockdown. Over 20 films took the direct-to-digital route in deals ranging from a speculated Rs 35 crore to Rs 150-plus crore.

Ormax Media (2022) in its Report Card

2020-21 *Streaming originals in India*, offers several interesting insights into the box office performance of Indian films during the pandemic. It is not surprising that Corona restrictions severely impacted the box office performances of films in 2020 and this continued in 2021. Across all major streaming platforms in India, 233 original shows and 117 original films were launched in Hindi over these two years. These numbers do not include properties whose original language was not Hindi, but went on to do well in Hindi. The films' number is understandably boosted because a large part of this period was affected by the pandemic, which meant several theatrical films were released direct-to-OTT instead.

Interestingly, in 2020-21, Telugu cinema was the strongest industry with a 28% share of the box office collections (Box Office India Trade Network, 2021). Of the top 10 films in these two years, four were from the Telugu film industry. There were few major Hindi film releases during these two pandemic years and Hindi cinema's share of the box office fell from 44% in 2019 to 27%. In the survey conducted by Ormax Media Report (2022) it was found that almost 82% of the respondents missed having the big screen experience and were eagerly waiting for the reopening of Cinema Halls.

India Brand Equity Foundation (2022) in its *Media and Entertainment Industry Report* concludes that in 2020, Disney+ Hotstar led the Indian SVOD market, with 41% share in the total market. The company's subscription base increased from 8 million users in April 2020 to 25 million users by the end of 2020. Disney+ Hotstar was followed by Eros Now, with 24% share, and Amazon Prime Video with 9% share. The report also estimated that 90% of subscriptions for Eros Now were bundled users. It was concluded that Eros Now took advantage of its strategic collaborations with telecommunication companies like BSNL, Reliance Jio and Idea Cellular; along with its ties to pay TV operators like Airtel, Tata Sky, Binge+ and Xstream.

The India Brand Equity Foundation (2022) report informs that in 2020, Netflix was the fourth leading platform in India, with a 7% share and a 4.4 million subscriber base. By 2030, India's over-the-top (OTT) entertainment industry will be worth US\$ 15 billion. The report further states that by 2025, regional language consumption on OTT platforms is expected to surpass Hindi language, which accounted for 45% of the total time spent in 2020.

### **Research objectives**

The objective behind this research is to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how OTT (Over-the-

Top) platforms have gained traction with the Indian audiences; and whether the popularity of OTTs has sounded the death knell for Cinema Halls in the country.

### Research questions

This study is aimed at answering the following questions:

- Is OTT (Over-the-Top) the preferred medium for consumption of entertainment content in comparison to other audio-visual platforms?
- Is the rise of OTT in India a threat to the survival of Cinema Halls in the country?

### Research methodology

To best analyse the query that OTTs have gained significant traction in India and pose a threat to Cinema Halls in the country, this research first studies the various factors responsible for the phenomenal rise of OTT in India. The study then explores why and how OTTs are changing consumer preferences towards traditional audio-visual media like films. The research aims to explain the various reasons for the increasing popularity of digital streaming services, especially amongst the youth, and whether these preferences constitute a temporary blip or are indeed a threat to the survival of Cinema Halls as Indians know them now.

The process followed for the research was through the quantitative method, via online surveys as a research tool. The qualitative method (interview and sampling) was also used.

### Population

1. For data collection via the quantitative method, the universe is composed of young adults in the age group of 16 to 35 years. Their profile highlights are that they are active consumers of platforms providing audio-visual entertainment content digitally, including OTTs; they come from diverse backgrounds from the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Assam, Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab and Karnataka. In the quantitative method, data was sought from a sample size of 500 young adults via questionnaires. Out of this pool, 442 responses were received in the survey. Data from these 442 respondents were analysed for this study. Out of the total, 69.5% of these respondents are in the age group of 18 to 20 years.
2. For the qualitative method (Interviews), data were collected from eight individuals, comprising two film producers; two producers creating OTT content; two senior management

professionals from the OTT industry; one film journalist; and one senior functionary from an advertising agency, specialized in cinema advertising.

### Sampling

- i. **Subhash Ghai, Director, Producer and Screenwriter known for his most notable works include Kalicharan (1976), Vishwanath (1978) and Karz (1980):** Recipient of many national and international awards Subhash Ghai has been honoured by the United States Senate. He was the former chairman of the entertainment committee of trade body CII and a member of FICCI, NASCOM and Tie global and its alliances. He has been on the jury of Emmy awards for three years, and also on an international panel on film piracy at Cannes Film Festival in 2008. In December 2013, the International Confederation of NGOs and United Nations conferred the Karmaveer Chakra upon him for his contribution in the field of cinema. Subhash Ghai introduced the concept of a film insurance policy in Bollywood for the first time with his film ‘Taal’; and he was also the first one to initiate banks into financing movies. He was the first Indian film producer who converted his company into a corporate public company in 2000 as Mukta Arts Ltd.
- ii. **Abhishek Jain, National Film Award winner Director and Producer for his film ‘Wrong Side Raju’ (2016) for the Best Feature Film in Gujarati at the 64th National Film Awards:** Abhishek Jain is known for his Gujarati films ‘Kevi Rite Jaish’ (2012) and ‘Bey Yaar’ (2014). In 2021, he directed Hindi-language comedy drama film ‘Hum Do Hamare Do’. He got recognized as a ‘Trendsetter of the year 2012’ followed by ‘Innovation achievers award for contribution in Films & Advertisement’ by the Gujarat Innovation Society a felicitation initiated by the Government of Gujarat.
- iii. **Abhinamyu Singh, recipient of Dadasaheb Phalke Film Foundation Award and 64th National Award for the Best Animation Film ‘Mahayoddha Rama’.** As the CEO of Contiloe Pictures, he is well-known for television shows such as ‘Bharat Ka Veer Putra – Maharana Pratap’ (Sony TV, 2013), ‘Chakravartin Ashoka Samrat’ (Colors, 2015) and ‘Swaraj’ (DD National, 2022): Abhimanyu Singh produced over 100 shows and two feature films under his banner Contiloe. The company has produced nearly 7000+ hours of content. His company was the first to bring Motion Capture

Technology to the small screen. He is often called the pioneer in producing Historical and Mythological shows.

- iv. **Rahul Kumar Tewary, Director of much acclaimed serial 'Radhakrishn' (2018) on the channel Star Bharat:** Rahul Kumar Tewary is one of the leading producers of the Indian television industry. He has been in the business for over a decade and is known for creating unique shows, which have changed the dynamics of the Indian television entertainment genre. His company Swastik productions made history in 2017 by producing India's first global series 'PORUS'. It is the first production house to own a 100% IP right of a primetime TV series in India.
- v. **Kumar Ahuja, COO of Eros International Media Limited, an Indian motion picture production and distribution company, based and originated in Mumbai:** Founded in 1977, this is one of the leading production and distribution companies in India. Eros Now is a subscription-based over-the-top, video on-demand entertainment and media platform, launched in 2012. With over 224.0 million registered users and 39.9 million total paid subscribers from over 150 countries worldwide, Eros Now is one of South Asia's leading OTT platforms, with the biggest catalogue of movies and music in several languages including Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali and more.
- vi. **Rahul Jain, Head - Digital Public Policy of Amazon India, is the public face of Amazon Prime in India. He is the one interacting with the government and taking care of the concerns of the government and policy for Amazon:** Amazon Prime Video is an American subscription video on-demand over-the-top streaming and rental service of Amazon. The service primarily distributes films and television series produced by Amazon Studios and MGM Holdings or licensed to Amazon, as Amazon Originals. The service also hosts content from other providers, content add-ons, live sporting events, and video rental and purchasing services.
- vii. **Anant Vijay, recipient of the National Award for Best Writing on Cinema and a senior journalist with the largest Hindi Daily Dainik Jagran:** Anant Vijay is a senior journalist, columnist and author with more than two decades of journalistic experience. He got the National Award for best writing on Cinema. His Sunday column in Dainik Jagran on cinema, art and culture is widely read. He has written twelve

books across various genres.

- viii. **Jayant Choudhary, Senior Manager Operations at Salvos Advertising and Marketing Pvt Ltd. - One of India's oldest and leading cinema advertising agencies:** Jayant Choudhary has been associated with Salvos for over two decades. The company has been in the business of cinema advertising for over five decades.

### Findings and analysis

Data and information collected through administration of questionnaires were studied carefully. Different findings from the responses received and data collected in relation to research questions are as follows:

#### *Cinema Halls - No longer the most preferred medium for watching Films*

A total of 442 youth responded to the question on the frequency of their visit to cinema halls; 48.2% (213) of the youth participating in this survey said that they only go to cinema halls once or twice in a year. Whereas 14.9% responded that they do not go at all to cinema halls to watch films. In addition to this, 35.3% answered that they go to cinema halls every month; and only 5.9% are frequent cine-goers, who go to film theatres every week.

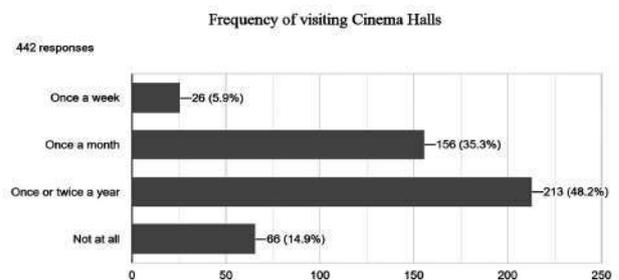


Fig. 1

#### *OTT - Becoming a medium of choice for watching films*

Out of 442 responses, 42.5% (188) of the participants preferred to watch films every week on an OTT platform; 35.7% (158) watched a film on

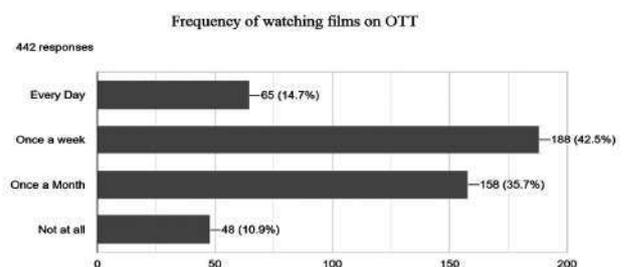


Fig. 2

OTT every month; 14.7% (65) watched a film every day on an OTT platform; and 10.9% (48) never watched a film on an OTT platform.

**Change in the cinema going habits amongst the Youth in the last few years**

Out of a total of 442 youth respondents to the question if the number of times you visit cinema halls to watch films changed in the last few years, 42.1% (186) of the youth said that their visits to cinema halls have decreased. Whereas 17% (75) have said that they never go to a cinema hall to watch a film. However, 16.5% (73) respondents said that the frequency of their cinema hall visits has increased and for 28.3% (125) respondents the number of their visits to cinema halls remains the same.

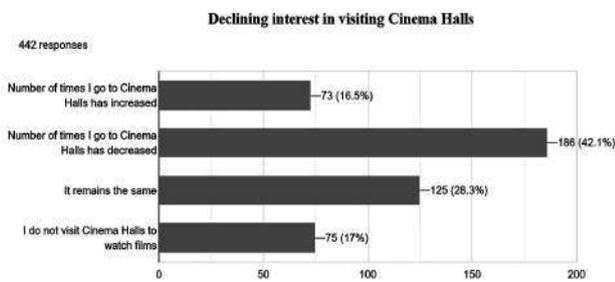


Fig. 3

**Platform preference of the youth for consumption of entertainment content**

A total of 442 youth responded to the question on platform preference, out of which 86.4% participating in this survey, selected OTT as one of their mediums of choice for consuming entertainment content. Only 100 (22.6%) selected cinema halls as one of the mediums of choice for their entertainment needs and 289 respondents selected only OTT as a medium of choice for consuming entertainment content. Whereas 13 respondents selected Cinema Halls as the only medium of choice for watching entertainment content; 16 respondents preferred OTT, DTH and Cinema Halls; 10 respondents chose OTT, Cable

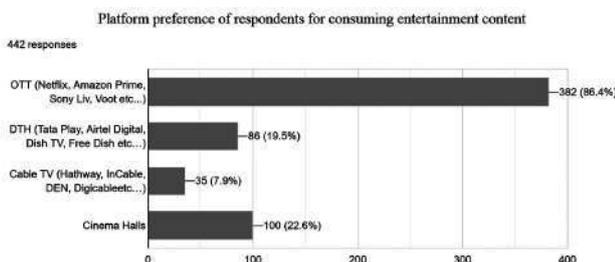


Fig.4

and Cinema Halls, 1 chose OTT, DTH and Cable, 34 respondents favoured OTT and DTH, 8 selected OTT and Cable, 58 selected OTT and Cinema Halls and 5 respondents chose all 4 platforms OTT, DTH, Cable and Cinema Hall as their preferred platform for consuming entertainment content.

**Findings from the focused interviews with eight individuals related to the research questions**

All eight interviews were different as they concerned the individual perspective of each of the interviewees. The objective was to understand whether film producers feel that OTT has or will in any way dent the film industry; and alter the way films are being consumed by the audience in cinema halls in India.

Subhash Ghai, a well known Indian film director, producer and screenwriter feels that the film Industry has suffered due to the advent of OTT platforms in India. He also says that due to the pandemic, while audiences could not visit Cinema Halls, they had easy access to OTT content. The habit of watching films on OTTs has continued even in the post-Corona environment. Audiences still want social distancing and are avoiding crowded film theatres. He adds that the Indian film Industry is too well established to be threatened by OTT platforms, but he acknowledges that tie-ups with OTT platforms to release new and old films has made it a good business for the Indian film Industry. He also feels that OTT has widened the scope for more divergent topics and genres of acting to be explored by Indian filmmakers. He concludes that the Indian Film Industry and OTT platforms are in a win-win situation.

Abhishek Jain, famous Gujarati film maker, also says that the film industry has suffered damage due to the popularity of OTT. He says that it is cheaper to watch films on OTT as compared to cinema halls and acknowledged that to be one of the reasons for the popularity of OTT platforms as a medium to watch films over cinema halls. Though he is a firm believer that big cinematic productions are best enjoyed in cinema halls, he grudgingly admits that audience preferences have changed with the advent of OTT, and the Indian film industry is playing catch-up.

Rahul Kumar Tewary of Swastik Productions is of the opinion that the youth is attracted towards OTT and the main reason for that is the privacy factor, which was not available with traditional mediums. One can watch content, which may or may not be suitable for community/family viewing. Besides, there is the convenience of viewing content at the time of one’s choosing, which is also a major factor in the rise of OTT in India.

Abhimanyu Singh, CEO of Contiloe Pictures says that youth between 16 to 35 years of age group have shifted from other platforms to OTT to fulfil their entertainment needs. He feels that the reason for this is the availability of wider choice of content and also the availability of bold content on OTT. Privacy and flexibility of time to consume content is another big reason for this shift.

Kumar Ahuja, COO of Eros International Media Limited says that the audience is certainly shifting towards OTT purely due to convenience as well as the wide range of content available from not just India but from across the globe. He believes that content is truly king now and language is no longer a barrier, which is widely evident with the various popular shows in different languages across multiple OTT platforms.

Rahul Jain, Head digital public policy of Amazon India, similarly believes that during the peak time of the Pandemic, no new content was available on the traditional mediums of entertainment, whereas a wide choice of content was available on OTTs; so the youth shifted to viewing OTT. Other factors influencing the choices of the youth include the absence of bold content on traditional mediums and the privacy and flexibility of time that OTT offers for viewing content.

Anant Vijay, recipient of the National Award for Best Writing on Cinema says that when the world of films and entertainment was in crisis due to lockdowns during the Corona, on-demand video streaming platforms or over the top (OTT) platforms worked to salvage it. When cinema halls were closed and people stopped leaving their homes, people chose OTT for entertainment. OTT watchers and internet search data confirmed this. Not only in the metros but also the audience of smaller cities showered their love on this medium. In April 2020, smaller cities and towns had the most downloads. In the four months from April to July 2020, about three crore people downloaded these platforms. However, he points out that along with this attraction for OTT content came several cases of litigation over the violence, sexuality, abusive language and depictions of religion on OTT platforms. He opines that controversies have their place, but this medium has given people an option of entertainment, which has a lot of variety. Many web series were made about the stories of small towns, which the audience liked very much. He does acknowledge that OTT has affected the business of cinema halls. People now wait for a film to be released on OTT, as it is a cheaper medium. If a family of four goes to watch a film in a multiplex, it costs them almost two thousand rupees. Ticket price matters a lot to an

average Indian.

Jayant Choudhary of Salvos Advertising and Marketing Pvt Ltd says interestingly that with new Censorship Laws in India, the day might come when OTT becomes at par with TV or Cinema. He believes that OTT will soon fall back to the level of television or films in the country since OTT platforms are presently at an advantage only due to lax censorship.

### Analysis

With a tantalising difference of opinions as well as many agreements over the OTT phenomenon in India, industry experts believe that although Cinema Halls will always be a special experience, which does not mean that the other potentials of the industry should not be tapped into. In this futuristic view, the setbacks in the number of release windows for movies and the availability of theatres, is seen as a short-term tactical compromise, leading to a very big leap for the industry at large. The entertainment sector of which films are an integral part, can in the long-term make many significant gains. Some of these are – opportunities for investments; a wider reach for creative content; opportunities for job creation; increase in industry talent pool; proliferation of content in terms of its diversity, quantity, style and quality. Visual representations can also be more inclusive in terms of issues raised, ease of consumption, languages and geography.

Some industry insiders, however, believe that the audience interest in OTT content is just a phase and it too shall pass. The view here is that to protect a multi-billion-dollar cinema industry, all hands on deck would exercise patience and restraint to think of innovative sustainable models for the film industry's survival. Protecting the annual revenue stream would be the priority and responsibility of all stakeholders in the business of cinema. Budget planning is shifting and every aspect of film-making is being revaluated and re-imagined. Nobody, including the discerning Indian audiences, wants cinema halls to suddenly become irrelevant.

This optimistic view, however, is being seriously challenged by the formidable rise of OTT in India. Usage of OTT platforms among the Youth rose exponentially during the lockdowns. These platforms function with AI (artificial intelligence) algorithms that keep recommending films and shows based on the consumers' past viewing habits and preferences. There is data available automatically for AI algorithms to use based on what has been watched by the user at any time. Factors such as easy user interface, customisation, content quality and perceived enjoyment, have an important and

positive impact on users attitude towards OTT media. Besides this, users appreciate the captivating characters onscreen, the complex and original narratives, as well as the lack of commercial breaks. These advantages that OTTs possess over traditional mediums like cinema halls and satellite/cable television have proven to be a game-changer in the entertainment business.

On the flip side, the youth can get very distracted due to the anytime-anywhere access to content, which leads to binge-watching. This often leads to lack of sleep, infringement on family time as well as a drain on physical/emotional energy. Other unintended negative side-effects of excessive screen-time include procrastination of work, addiction to questionable content and increased lethargy. Despite these short-comings the period of the pandemic has made people (particularly the youth) addicted to individualized entertainment and the attraction of watching films in theatres has abated somewhat.

When films can be accessed for as little as a rupee a day through an OTT subscription, why would India's large middle-class and larger rural populations pay for a much more expensive movie ticket at a cinema hall? Only the cost of digital data could be a deterrent and data is becoming cheaper by the day. So, with the growth of OTTs, language and region are not barriers anymore for showcasing localized content and talent. Actors in mainstream and regional cinema as well as those from television now do not have to aspire to be seen in only Hindi entertainment content to be famous in the country. They can claim satisfaction in knowing that through OTT platforms, their work can reach and be appreciated by audiences in the whole of India and even abroad. Dubbed content is popularizing South-Indian language films amongst Hindi speaking audiences.

In recent times the phenomenal success that films like 'Baahubali', 'Pushpa', 'KGF: Chapter 2' and 'RRR' have enjoyed through their releases on OTTs are just few of the examples from an ever-growing list. Due to OTT platforms, regional cinema in India has come up in a big-way into a pan-India consciousness. Earlier while the term 'Indian Films' conjured up images of only Bollywood productions, now increasingly a global audience is getting introduced to and recognising India's regional-language films as well. Even actors who may not be fluent in Hindi or English are finding this phenomenon a welcome change as it has opened up completely unforeseen opportunities for them.

While on the one side, the community of actors is enthused by the plethora of opportunities that

OTTs offer, the owners of single-screen theatres and multiplexes are in a soup over the competition. Data analysis reveals that hundreds of single-screen theatres have shut down for good, whilst the footfalls in multiplexes are nowhere near the figures of the pre-pandemic era. In comparison to watching a film on OTT, the erstwhile cine-goer may now find the cost of a film ticket prohibitive. Indian subscribers of streaming services are sensitive to prices/subscription fees of OTT services. This also includes money spent on the data that is consumed in watching OTT content. Competitive pricing, therefore, is an important factor in the choice Indians make in the entertainment sector.

### Discussion

OTTs have increasingly become conversation starters for youth in social gatherings and even online. The plethora of content in social media and on OTTs has enabled discussions on various topics of interest. Indian youth is very self-aware and often well-travelled within the country and even abroad. OTTs satisfy a healthy need to expand their views and perspectives via informative shows and documentaries. Besides creating awareness about other cultures, OTT programming also makes the youth sensitive towards several contentious socio-political issues.

Despite the well-established rise of OTTs in India, there are contentious issues surrounding OTTs, such as:

- OTT tech increases the chances of piracy as content stored in the digital format is vulnerable to illegal downloading, thus infringing on copyrights of content owners.
- Lax censorship is an issue since OTT platforms are lightly regulated in comparison to offline films and television, with minimal checks and balances for anti-monopolistic behaviours and public interest responsibilities.
- Concerns exist regarding possible disruptions and undesired changes to India's social fabric due to the content on OTT platforms.
- With VoD services being accessed over a public medium, the Internet, OTT platform operators have not needed to obtain licenses from the government to operate in India.
- There is also a view that OTT content poses a threat to local or domestic broadcasting industries that are vital to Indian democracy and cultural expression.
- It is argued that OTT platforms are not complementary to traditional media in reality since their approach is consumerist in principle, which is contrary to the values of traditional

broadcasting.

- There are legitimate concerns that the rising penetration of OTTs into the Indian market has increased their capacity to accumulate, sell, compromise and misuse consumer data.
- For all intents and purposes, OTTs do not seem to be sufficiently regulated to safeguard public interest.

After a prolonged campaign by parents and teachers alike against obscenity and violence in digital content including on OTTs, policy makers were obliged to come up with the reformed IT Rules (2021) to regulate the digital media space. Some key points of the IT Rules are that Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs) need to observe due diligence such as appointing personnel for compliance; If needed, SSMIs will have to help identify the originator of certain information published on that particular platform; SSMIs are also required to deploy technology-based measures for identifying certain types of content.

The rules stipulate a framework for regulating curated audio-visual content. For resolution of complaints by users or victims, SSMIs are required to provide a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism having varying levels of self-regulation. Various OTTs are engaged in disagreement with the government on the matter of censoring the content available on the platforms. For example, a film that is available on an OTT platform may be less censored than in a cinema hall. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is tasked with censoring films in India.

To mitigate the threat felt by cinemas vis-a-vis the interest in producers to release their films directly onto OTT platforms, there is a view among industry experts that this is a phase that will pass. This section of industry insiders believes that film theatres and streaming platforms will continue to co-exist. Overall revenues might become difficult to compute due to the absence of box office figures but the quantity of content will increase along with an emphasis on quality. These film professionals are confident that despite a slow start to the business, the audiences will return to cinema halls after becoming tired of being confined in their homes. The human need for interacting with others, spending time with family and enjoying the outdoors will break the shackles of pandemic-induced social behaviours and lure back cine-goers.

The pandemic-induced fear factor governing audience behaviour has forced the film industry to think innovatively and consider adaptable changes

to the cinema-going experience. In the race against the successful run of OTTs, there is renewed interest in building pod-like cinemas providing social distancing, and heightened chatter around drive-in cinemas. In the meanwhile, multiplexes and single screen theatres have decided to wait it out, pinning their hopes on mega-film releases with super-stars to lure back audiences.

## Conclusion

The Indian film industry, which is also the world's largest, has film studios in Mumbai (known as Bollywood), Chennai (nicknamed Tollywood), Hyderabad, Kolkata and Bangaluru. Together, this industry churns out over a 1000 films a year. Indian films have fans globally and not just amidst the diaspora. The Indian film industry is composed of Hindi films, indie cinema, regional movies and art-house cinema. The Indian film industry has been supported by a vast film-going public for well over a century now. It would be a pity to see Indians withdraw that patronage in the era of OTTs. However, considering the phenomenal rise of OTT in India, as has been well-established in this study, the researchers are led to conclude that it is a null hypothesis that the true cinematic experience is possible only in a movie theatre and OTT offers a limited experience to film buffs. Therefore, the perceived threat to cinema halls due to the rise of OTT is only a temporary blip. The hypothesis found to be more feasible, at least in the near future, is that OTTs have gained traction with the Indian audiences and do pose a threat to cinema halls in the country. A similar study conducted in the future though may just as well provide surprising and contrary revelations.

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# Exploring Reasons for posting WhatsApp Status updates and Fear of missing out

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## ABSTRACT

WhatsApp status is a popular way to share ephemeral updates among contacts. New status features were introduced recently, so it is pertinent to study their ripples on our social fabric. Online surveys, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to gauge the use patterns and reasons why people post status. Sharing information in their area of interest, followed by travel were found to be the top two salient reasons. However, youngsters in the age group of 18 to 25 years gave first priority for sharing political and religious views. Those in the age group of 26 to 55 preferred travel. Gender differences were also salient as women gave comparatively higher priority for sharing emotions through status. Most respondents post status regularly yet they spend less time on it and have a low level of affinity towards it. Online survey reveals that people do not have a high level of fear of missing out on rewarding experiences (FOMO) when they see the status updates of others, yet the findings from the interviews and focus group discussions point to the existence of FOMO albeit on a moderate scale. Survey findings revealed that too much importance is not given to online images from WhatsApp status updates, but interviews and discussions indicated considerable importance assigned to them. The survey relied on participant's self-reported behaviour but interviews and focus group discussions checked their actual usage patterns.

**Keywords:** Affinity, FOMO, Online image, Status, WhatsApp

## Introduction

In the present day media scenario, social media are becoming commonplace and popular. With the shift from traditional face-to-face communication to the advent of technology, has social media captured interactions? Or is it a hype created even as the audiences have their feet firmly on the ground. These are questions society needs to ponder on. Founded in the year 2009, WhatsApp is the most popular global mobile messenger app with more than two billion active users worldwide, amounting to 26% of the global population (Ruby, 2023).

WhatsApp status is an update that disappears after 24 hours. Initially, it was just a text string. There were a few pre-set status messages – sleeping, busy, or available, that were meant to be updated regularly and were termed 'about'. The Status feature as we see it today has come a long way as new features were added in 2017 and 2023. This is a pointer to its increasing visibility, popularity and influence. Now status has been expanded to images and moving pictures.

Recently, a new feature, Status Profile Rings, was introduced; it is a blue circle appearing around the profile icon of only those contacts who have posted new status updates. Several new features are user friendly such as quick emoji reactions to status and more flexibility to choose or filter the desired audience for each status update.

We need to ponder over the true meaning of the term 'status'. Is it linked to an online image? Social media such as WhatsApp have mirrored an intense focus on the self, driven by our hunger for self expression and cyber fame. Status updates, profile pictures and selfies are today a big chunk of the social fabric of our society. As a society, are we giving undue importance to our online image as we immerse ourselves in the virtual world?

Several questions come up, such as the reasons why people post and update status. What is the extent of time and effort put into it? The affinity for status updates. Do people experience the fear of missing out (FOMO) and excitement when they see the status updates of others? Is there an underlying current of

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dissatisfaction and unnecessary apprehension when we look around at others? These and related questions form the crux of this study.

### Review of literature

There is a paucity of literature on WhatsApp status updates, more so in the Indian context. A few studies have probed some aspects of status updates.

Using critical discourse analysis and textual analysis, Al-Shishtawi (2019) portrays how the structure and norms of the language are changing when people use language to express status in Jordan. Informal language is used often, with abbreviations such as OMG, BTW and repeating some letters in a word to emphasize, such as ‘keep caaalm’ and so on. Often, informal language is simplified, abbreviated and conditioned to fit into the context. Informal language can be viewed as a way of portraying private identity. Occasionally, we all portray our private selves while using informal language. Individuals give specific identities of themselves to others through self representation when sharing experiences. The qualitative study analysed 300 statuses and classified them into different types; religious, social, personal (emotional). A sizable chunk (36%) used it to express their religious faith and beliefs. Quranic verses were popular, as it is a Muslim country (Al-Shishtawi, 2019).

In a similar vein, Busabaa *et al.* (2022) explores from a socio linguistic perspective, how young Yemeni people use status as a form of announcement to express personal, humourous, sentimental, cultural, political, social and religious issues. The most prominent category was again found to be religious. Status is used as an announcement to express feelings and identities. Often, it is used to present an image of themselves to others. Fairclough analysis was used to probe the production and perception of the linguistic text. The attitudes of students towards linguistic elements are analysed. As WhatsApp constitutes a part of the public sphere where public discourses are generated and shaped, Mangeya and Ngoshi (2021) explores the construction of black Zimbabwean identities through WhatsApp status updates. Data was collected for one year through online participant observation and meanings were generated by Multimodal Critical Discourse analysis.

People post their status and their thoughts in the public domain. These posts are presumed to project the sender’s identity. The discursive processes involved are crucial for the appraisal of how identities are constructed or obfuscated. Language is at the centre of identity construction or obfuscation. Identity construction or obfuscation is examined from

three levels of analysis; lexical, textual pragmatic and interactional. Observation and group discussions were used to appraise the discursive socio-semantic meanings of the status and posts on social media. But are these identities constructed or obscured on social media? Using appraisal and social constructionism theoretical framework Jakaza (2022) argues that identities are largely obfuscated rather than constructed on social media. They are never unified. The fragmentation of identities in differing situations and contexts complicate the obfuscation of identities making them unintelligible at times.

Singh (2022) opines that the need for instant gratification is linked to the psychology behind WhatsApp status. People seek attention and distract themselves from feelings of loneliness and insecurity. Status updates are used when confronted with relationship issues. Searching for quotes that resonate with their situation and posting as status, targeting the individuals with whom they have differences of opinion. When they are unable to communicate certain messages to a target audience directly, they resort to posting status. They get satisfaction when it is seen by the concerned people. Yet at times status does not reflect reality. Moreover, exposing sensitive personal details can make people vulnerable to exploitation. Do status updates reflect personality traits? Marshall *et al.* (2015) examined 555 Facebook users to analyze the personality predictors of Facebook status update topics. Why do people post status about certain topics? The motives and traits of people that influence the topics people choose to update about and the frequency of updating. Those who had low self esteem and were insecure about their relationships were not likely to update about romantic partners, while narcissists, self centered and egotistical people have a tendency to update about their accomplishments, such as, their diet and exercise routine. They have a need for attention and validation. An online survey was conducted by psychologists to measure extroversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. And their Facebook accounts were studied to see what their status updates said about them.

The research literature surveyed above portrays how social media status updates are being used in divergent ways by societies worldwide. This study seeks to help in understanding the functional relevance of WhatsApp status updates from an active audience perspective.

### Objectives

- a. To assess the use patterns of posting WhatsApp Status updates in terms of (i) regularity and (ii) time spent.

- b. To gauge the affinity levels towards WhatsApp Status updates.
- c. To analyse the reasons why people post WhatsApp Status and see if gender and age have a bearing on it.
- d. To assess the use patterns of checking WhatsApp Status updates of other people in terms of (i) regularity and (ii) time spent
- e. The study looks at the prevalence of FOMO amongst people and correlates it to gender and age.
- f. To throw light on the importance given by people to their online image and correlating it to gender and age

### Methodology

An online survey of 54 participants was conducted in 2023 using Google forms. Purposive sampling was adopted and only those who post WhatsApp status updates were included in the sample. Since gender and age were the key demographic variables being studied, the sample ensured equal representation of males and females. The age group of 18 to 55 years was the focus of this study as it is the most productive time frame in a person's life. The first group was of young adults in the age group of 18 to 25 (48.1%) and the other was from 26 to 55 years (51.9%). The sample carefully ensured equal representation in both age groups. A pilot study of 15 participants was also conducted.

An informal, semi-structured interview was conducted with five individuals. Two focus group discussions were conducted with six participants each who post WhatsApp status updates. The contents of WhatsApp status updates of those who were interviewed and participated in focus group discussions were studied for two weeks.

### Operational definitions

**Affinity:** Affinity is an indicator of audience attachment to WhatsApp status updates as well as its importance in their lives. Alan Rubin's Television affinity scale (1981) was adapted to assess the importance given to WhatsApp status updates among the participants.

**FOMO:** A unique term introduced in 2004 to describe a pervasive apprehension that one is missing out on exciting events or rewarding experiences currently happening elsewhere, often aroused by posts seen on social media. It was first conceptualized using Self Determination Theory (SDT), which was developed by Ryan and Deci. In this study it has been defined as the apprehension aroused by viewing WhatsApp status updates of others.

### Scope and limitation

The social implications of status updates are relevant and interesting. One limitation was that the bulk of the sample was drawn from Kozhikode and Malappuram districts in Kerala, a state in India. Only a few samples were taken from Mumbai. Children and senior citizens above the age of 55 were not included. Moreover, the online survey relied on the participant's self-reported behaviour. This could not be cross checked with their actual usage patterns. Interviews and focus group discussions partially filled this gap.

### Theoretical framework

The study is based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The active audience paradigm examines media behaviour from the audience member's views. As Swanson (1992) explains, the audience is not passive in the face of the media but is active and endeavours to use media content to serve their own interests and purposes.

The theoretical underpinnings of FOMO were first conceptualized using Self Determination Theory (SDT), which was developed by Ryan and Deci. SDT proposes that intrinsic motivation for reward is essential in promoting mental health. Intrinsic motivation comes when one feels socially connected to others. FOMO is a negative emotional state resulting from unmet social relatedness needs (Elhai *et al*, 2021).

### Analysis

#### 1. Usage patterns

An analysis of the use patterns of posting WhatsApp Status updates in terms of (i) regularity and (ii) time spent came up with interesting findings. As seen in Table 1, a sizable chunk of the sample was updating status every day (24.1%), another 22% were updating it often.

Table 1: Regularity of Posting WhatsApp Status Updates

Regularity of Posting WhatsApp status	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	13	24.1
Thrice a week	12	22.2
Once a week	8	14.8
Rarely	21	38.9
Total	54	100.0

The time spent was analysed in Table 2, to understand their engagement with status updates. An overwhelming majority (79.6%) said they spent less

than half-an-hour a week to posting status updates. Only 7.4% opined that they spent more than an hour. This could be partly attributed to the fact that posting status is often not a time consuming process.

Table 2: Time Spent on Posting WhatsApp Status Updates

Time Spent on Posting WhatsApp Status	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
> 30 minutes	43	79.6
30-60 minutes	7	13.0
< 1 hour	4	7.4
Total	54	100.0

**2. Affinity**

Affinity is an indicator of audience attachment. Uses and Gratifications researcher Greenberg (1974) advanced the affinity concept and Rubin (1981) developed the television affinity scale. This scale was adapted to assess the attachment to status updates here. The scale consisted of five statements and a Likert scale was used. Respondents indicated their level of agreement and disagreement. These scores were summed up to constitute the affinity index, which could range from 5 to 15. The higher the mean score, the higher the affinity.

The analysis based on such a schema revealed that the mean affinity score was a mere 8.77

(standard deviation 2.53; standard error 0.34) indicating that respondents had less than a moderate affinity to WhatsApp status updates. One plausible reason could be that status updates are becoming commonly used only recently after the introduction of new features and affinity has not yet firmed up.

**3. Reasons for posting status updates**

Sharing information in their areas of interest emerged as the top reason for posting status updates followed by travel and making announcements.

This was followed by sharing political and religious views and displaying achievements, sharing emotions and so on as portrayed in Table 3. Earlier studies in Jordan and Yemen found religious messages popular as status. However, here religious and political messages are found in the fourth position. Weighted scores were calculated for each reason to rank the reasons in order of preference.

Table 3.1 studied if gender influences reasons why people post status. Sharp gender differences are not apparent as the top three preferences of males and females are sharing information in their areas of interest, travel and making announcements. Yet women gave more priority for sharing emotions with a weighted score of 50, compared to 16 for men.

However, age seems to be an interesting factor with a strong influence on why people are posting

Table 3: Rank List of Preferred Reasons for Posting Status Updates.

Reasons for Posting Status Updates	Choice I		Choice II		Choice III		Choice IV		Choice V		WS	Rank
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Share information in my areas of interest	11	20.37	8	14.81	10	18.52	6	11.11	4	7.41	133	1
Any other	4	7.41	1	1.85	1	1.85	1	1.85	15	27.78	44	8
Convey relationship issues to loved ones	0	0.00	1	1.85	4	7.41	0	0	1	1.85	17	12
To advertise my business	3	5.56			3	5.56	3	5.56	0	0	30	10
To display my achievements	3	5.56	3	5.56	6	11.11	9	16.67	5	9.26	68	5
To make announcements	11	20.37	6	11.11	8	14.81	7	12.96	3	5.56	120	3
To reduce loneliness	2	3.70			2	3.70	4	7.41	6	11.11	30	10
To seek attention	2	3.70	5	9.26	1	1.85	5	9.26	4	7.41	47	7
To send a message to a specific person	2	3.70	2	3.70	1	1.85	3	5.56	4	7.41	31	9
To share emotions	4	7.41	5	9.26	3	5.56	7	12.96	3	5.56	66	6
To share political, religious views	4	7.41	12	22.22	6	11.11	2	3.70	1	1.85	91	4
When I travel	8	14.81	11	20.37	9	16.67	5	9.26	6	11.11	127	2
Habit	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.70	2	3.70	6	13
Total	54	100.00	54	100.00	54	100.00	54	100.00	54	100.00	810	

Note: WS: Weighted Score

Table 3.1: Preferred Reasons by Gender

Reasons for Posting Status Updates	W S Male	W S Female	Weighted Score
Share information in my areas of interest	66	67	133
Any other	29	15	44
Convey relationship issues to loved ones	6	11	17
To advertise my business	23	7	30
To display my achievements	33	35	68
To make announcements	59	61	120
To reduce loneliness	14	16	30
To seek attention	33	14	47
To send a message to a specific person	12	19	31
To share emotions	16	50	66
To share political, religious views	46	45	91
When I travel	68	59	127
Habit	0	6	6
Sum total	405	405	810

Note: WS: Weighted Score

Table 3.2: Preferred Reasons by Age

Reasons for Posting Status Updates	W S	W S	Weighted Score
	18-25 yrs	26-55 yrs	
Share information in my areas of interest	67	66	133
Any other	17	27	44
Convey relationship issues to loved ones	4	13	17
To advertise my business	16	14	30
To display my achievements	35	33	68
To make announcements	51	69	120
To reduce loneliness	8	22	30
To seek attention	24	23	47
To send a message to a specific person	14	17	31
To share emotions	30	36	66
To share political, religious views	71	20	91
When I travel	53	74	127
Habit	0	6	6
Sum total	390	420	810

Note: WS: Weighted Score

status updates. As seen in table 3.2, the younger group gave a top preference for sharing political and religious views with a weighted score of 71 compared to a score of 20 for the older group for this reason.

#### 4. Use patterns of checking WhatsApp status of other people

Social media is intrinsically linked to interpersonal relations and checking out on what others are up to. Data regarding the regularity of viewing status updates of other people yielded interesting results. As

depicted in Table 4, nearly 65% of the respondents viewed the status of others every day.

Table 4 Regularity of Viewing Status Updates of Others

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Everyday	35	64.8
Three times a week	5	9.3
Rarely	13	24.1
Never	1	1.9
Total	54	100.0

Table 4.1 Time Spent on Viewing Status Updates of Others

Time	Number	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	35	64.8
30 minutes 2 hours	14	25.9
More than 2 hours	5	9.3
Total	54	100.0

Yet as seen in Table 4.1, they spent less than 30 minutes in a week on this. Only a miniscule 1.9% never viewed the status of others. The heavy users who spent more than 2 hours on this were 9.3%. While checking out the status updates of others, keeps us informed, at times it can lead to dissatisfaction amidst an undue apprehension that one is missing out on exciting events in the lives of others.

**5. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)**

FOMO is considered a problematic attachment to social media, which can adversely affect productivity, academic performance, sleep, mental and physical well being, it is pertinent to probe if it is commonplace in our society.

Since FOMO is a complex socio psychological phenomenon, analysing it requires detailed FOMO scales and can be done only as a separate study. This is planned for future endeavours. The present study is an exploratory study of the issue in relation to WhatsApp status updates.

In order to study the prevalence of FOMO, two statements were included in the questionnaire. For each statement, respondents had to choose from five response choices, which indicated different levels of agreement. These statements were a reflection of the apprehension people experience when they think other people are having a good time, aroused by WhatsApp status updates of others.

1. “When I read other people’s WhatsApp status updates I feel anxious that I may be missing out on some important event or happening”.

Table 5

Responses	Number	Percentage
Always	3	5.6
Sometimes	17	31.5
Occasionally	6	11.1
Rarely	11	20.4
Never	17	31.5
Total	54	100.0

Here we can see that around 37% of people are feeling worried either always or sometimes that

they are missing out on some important event when they see the WhatsApp status updates of others. On the contrary, more than half the respondents rarely or never experienced any anxiety on this matter (Table 5).

“When I go through the WhatsApp status of other people, I feel that others are having rewarding experiences from which I am absent.”

Table 5.1

Responses	Number	Percentage
Always	2	3.7
Sometimes	10	18.5
Occasionally	9	16.7
Rarely	18	33.3
Never	15	27.8
Total	54	100.0

Again we can see the same trend in the second statement too, as 61% of the respondents rarely or never felt worried that they were unable to experience the rewarding experiences of others as described in Table 5.1.

From the analysis above, we can presume that FOMO is not prevalent at a worrying scale. Gender and age also did not have any significant influence on the prevalence of FOMO.

**6. Online image as in status updates and demographic variables of gender and age**

The importance respondents gave to their online image as portrayed by WhatsApp status updates was an objective of the study also, how it correlates to the demographic variable gender (Table 6).

Amongst the total respondents' opinion is divided with 16.7% of the total respondents, considering it very important, while 27.8 % do not attach any importance at all. Combining the five point scale into three categories, we can see that 29.7% attach considerable importance, while 33.3% are neutral and 37.1% attach very less or no importance. However, significant differences, based on gender and age, are not seen.

As of now, respondents have not assigned much importance to their online image from WhatsApp status updates. The chi square tests reveal no significant differences based on gender and age. It is reassuring that presently a vast majority is not giving undue importance to online images.

The study also probed how frequently people check the feedback for their status updates, as it could give an inkling of the importance they assign for their online image through WhatsApp status

Table 6: Importance given to online image in status by gender

Level of Importance	Female N (%)	Male N (%)	Total N (%)
Very important	5 (18.5)	4 (14.8)	9 (16.7)
Important	2 (7.4)	5 (18.5)	7 (13.0)
Neutral	9 (33.3)	9 (33.3)	18 (33.3)
Less important	3 (11.1)	2 (7.4)	5 (9.3)
No importance	8 (29.6)	7 (25.9)	15 (27.8)
Total	27 (100.0)	27 (100.0)	54 (100.0)

Note: Pearson  $\chi^2 = 1.663$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.797 All figures in parentheses represent percentages

updates. Those who check more frequently are likely to assign more importance. 25.9% of the respondents were checking the feedback every hour while 37% were checking every 2 to 6 hours. This could be an indication of the importance given.

### Interview and focus group discussions

A deeper insight into various social implications of Whatsapp status updates was garnered through informal semi-structured interviews with five people, and two focus group discussions, consisting of six people who post status updates. The findings from these collaborated with some of the findings from the online survey; however, they gave a different flavour on a few points. Many of them opined that their own and other's status updates helped them to keep abreast of news in their friends' circle. A few opined that it is an experience linked to their emotions, a few students said they posted status for posting news updates. The online survey collected data on self reported behaviour of the participants, which was not cross checked with their actual usage patterns. In interviews and focus group discussions, this gap was filled and Whatsapp status updates of participants were looked into for a period of three weeks. Higher affinity was noted here to posting updates.

The fear of missing out (FOMO) was accepted by more than half the participants, more so amongst the youngsters. Travel has become more common in the global village and several participants agreed that status updates are the trend while traveling. On seeing the photos of these exotic destinations, given by others, FOMO is experienced. In the case of those who regularly post updates, there is a pressure

to post updates while traveling or during important occasions as otherwise they are worried if people will think something has gone wrong. Occasionally they opine that they are enjoying less and pretending to enjoy more. The main point of difference between the online survey and the interviews was the acceptance of prevalence of FOMO. The online survey collected data on self reported behaviour of the participants. It was not cross checked with their actual usage patterns. In interviews and focus group discussions, participants were frank on this issue and said they experience the fear of missing out often when they see the status updates of others.

Their image in the virtual world created by whatsapp status updates is important to participants. There is a tendency to flaunt your lifestyle or the great time you are having. They opined that in general they are spending considerable time in posting status and viewing status updates of others. Occasionally they do binge watch the status updates of others, spending a long time at one stretch. Most of them check the feedback for their status updates often; whether this affects their productivity at work remains to be analyzed. It is also an indicator of the importance they give for the online image created by status updates. Many are aware of privacy settings, yet they use it rarely. The extent of replies they receive for status updates from their contacts in the form of comments or likes usually range from 10% to 30%.

The rising popularity of Instagram among youngsters was mentioned. The online survey showed that 57% of the respondents were posting status content on other websites. The findings were similar in interviews and discussions too.

Some stated that they don't post personal stuff on Instagram, as they use it more to experience different places, ideologies so on. On other aspects such as reasons for posting updates, their views were on similar lines as concluded in the survey.

### Discussion

Social implications of WhatsApp status updates were probed. The findings negated the popular notion as respondents were found to have only a less than moderate affinity to status updates. This moderate attachment was in evidence across the demographic variables of gender and age. Perhaps this could be attributed to the fact that new, user friendly features were only recently introduced and affinity is yet to get firmed up. In fact many WhatsApp users don't post status updates. A moderate affinity can perhaps be interpreted as an appropriate usage of social media and spending time more productively.

The salient reasons for posting status updates was found to be sharing information in their areas of Interest followed by travel and making announcements. A striking finding in this study is regarding the differences in reasons for posting status updates based on age groups. While the youngsters cited sharing political and religious views as their first priority with a weighted score of 71 as against a corresponding score of 20 amongst the older group. These figures speak for themselves as they indicate how youngsters are using status updates in our political landscape and in our democracy. The older group is not yet widely using status updates for sharing religious and political views. This has wider ramifications in tools for political and religious communications too. Gender differences were seen amongst men and women with the former giving top priority for travel while women opted for sharing area of interest. Unlike men, women gave high priority for sharing emotions through status; their weighted score of 50 for this reason was three times that of men.

The use patterns in terms of regularity and time spent reveal that too much time is not spent on it and even though a majority uses it regularly, yet most of them spend less than 30 minutes in a week on it.

Is there a fear that one is missing out on exciting events currently happening elsewhere? The online survey indicates that at present people are not having a high level of FOMO when they see the status updates of others. Yet the interviews and focus group discussions point to the existence of FOMO albeit on a moderate scale amongst the respondents. The survey reflects only a moderate importance to their online image portrayed by their WhatsApp status updates, again this finding is contradicted in

the interviews and focus group discussions.

### Conclusion

This study is significant as it indicates the reasons why different categories are posting status updates. Doubts arise if popular apprehensions about social media can be a little exaggerated at times. There is only moderate affinity to WhatsApp status updates and only limited time is spent on status updates. Undue importance is not assigned to online images and symptoms of FOMO are not visible in our social fabric. Perhaps, the findings lead to calibrated and conscious self-expressions suited for active audiences who are not seeking blind gratifications, but specific and goal oriented media uses. All these could be indications of a healthy approach to social media. Yet there is need for a word of caution as some unhealthy trends are seen in the interviews and focus group discussions, particularly in the context of FOMO and importance given to online image. Moreover, it could be also due to users moving to Instagram of late. Since status updates are continuously evolving with new features, it is pertinent to study the ripples they cast on our social fabric. As this is an exploratory study, longitudinal studies with a global sample could give a complete picture.

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# Analysing Strategies Employed by National Political Parties to Engage and Influence Young Voters

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## ABSTRACT

India has the highest number of Facebook users in the world. This reflects its influence in India to a great extent. The younger generation is more in vogue. This is why everyone from the entertainment industry to the business world is using Facebook to influence the youth. Political parties are also not untouched by the influence of social media sites. The year immediately before the elections is called the election year, in which the parties make their election strategies. Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections scheduled to be held in 2024, all the national political parties (NPPs) are busy formulating their election strategies. The impact of Facebook and new media on the election results of 2014 and 2019 has been tested. Every party has its IT Cell that keeps working on collecting data from FB users for their strategic use. Constantly, all political parties try to influence the votes of the youth through Facebook. This study aims to find out the type of messages political parties send to the youths during elections and how those messages affect the youth in determining their vote. A qualitative method has been used in this study, and the opinions of Delhi's youth has been taken.

**Keywords:** Facebook, National political parties, Youth, New media, General elections

## Introduction

According to Facebook, its mission is to “give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together.” Today, Facebook is widely used social media website. It is being used for promotion, publicity, dissemination of information, entertainment, and communication. As a result, it has revolutionized the world of social networking sites. The users find a way to share photos, videos and texts with their friends. The site enables users to share, comment, and like any post, which makes communication or feedback more engaging. Due to affordable mobile internet and pocket-friendly smartphones in India, the reach of the internet has increased manifold today. According to Statista.com, as of January 2023, there were 314.6 million Facebook users in India, and this number is steadily rising. The leading data provider website estimated the social networking sites to penetrate 60% by 2040, while India’s total population was estimated to be around 1.5 billion by 2040, indicating a very large user base for Facebook in the country. Now, 314,600,000 is a huge figure, and political parties, especially the national political parties (NPPs), of India cannot oversee this. “With the introduction of

more advanced forms of new media, an emerging community of research and practice seeks insight into how to use such technology to re-engage individuals in the democratic process (Macintosh & Tambouris, 2009).”

Therefore, political parties have tried to capitalise on the growing popularity of Facebook among the youth. In terms of campaigning, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections set new standards by making the historic shift from the traditional modes of campaigning to high-tech methods. “During the 2014 parliamentary general election in India, all political parties and candidates heavily used social media to mobilise voters (Narasimhamurthy, 2014).” Election campaigning on new media, especially Facebook, has emerged as a new alternative for political parties. This study demonstrates that the political parties in India have been driven to use new media to sway young voters. With this in mind, NPPs in India began to spread information about their election campaign agenda on Facebook in an attempt to win the support of young voters. Nearly all the NPPs ran their election campaigns on their own official Facebook accounts (OFA). Following this, election campaigning started on Facebook in almost

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every assembly election. National political parties like the BJP and INC are at the top of this. A lot of money was invested in new media during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections as well, and Facebook turned into an election battlefield for candidates. Political parties engaged youths virtually since they had less time to directly attend meetings or demonstrations. “The populist and digital strategy of the BJP marked a major trait in the 2019 election, which was largely a social media app-based election, The Communist Party of India also started the “CPIM Digital Campaign”, where they invited the youth volunteers to be a part of their digital platforms. West Bengal’s ruling party, the AITMC, launched new initiatives to highlight the achievements of the State Government. The INC’s social media cell has followed the BJP’s social media strategy of focusing on star campaigner Rahul Gandhi, projecting his common man identity and attacking the BJP as a pro-corporate and anti-people government (Sinha, 2021).”

The influence of new media was visible in the 2022 Gujarat assembly elections. About 40% of the posts on the BJP’s official Facebook Account and Twitter handle were related to the Gujarat elections. The AAP, which was contesting in Gujarat Assembly elections for the first time, shared more than 95% of the content from its official Facebook Account related to the party’s activities in that state. This is an example that how physical advertising has tremendously seen a downfall. “Politicians use social media as an effective tool of publicity. The volunteers of the BJP party indulged in conversation with common people and understand their form of mind and attitude, which helped them achieve major success with the use of electronic media (Dogra & Kaur, 2021).” This type of campaigning will be observed in an enhanced and systematic manner on the new media, notably on Facebook, just like it was seen in the elections of 2014 and 2019. All the NPPs are paying attention to the upcoming developments in the new media. Facebook has now moved towards meta technology. It has established links with applications like WhatsApp and Instagram. The social media giant “Meta” has opened a new facility. The company is enabling users to access different services simultaneously. Users will be able to link several Meta accounts and update settings on Meta platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp from a single location. “Facebook is crucial because of its unique feature; targeted advertising, which allows advertisers to place customized ads for different users based on demographics, behaviour, internet, and various other parameters. In theory, the same political party

can show a contradictory message to two different people – without the other person ever knowing of the activity in a parallel Facebook universe (Adhana and Saxena, 2019).” So the use of Facebook in election campaigning will be in most priority for NPPs.

### Review of literature

According to Stier *et al.* (2018), social media has evolved into one of the most common forms of communication for candidates during election campaigns. Candidates can directly connect with voters, mobilize supporters and shape public opinion thanks to websites like Facebook and Twitter. On the one hand, Magin *et al.* (2017) conducted a study to determine the impact of Web 2.0 on political campaigns. According to the study, one advertising strategy cannot be implemented in another nation. Therefore, research on political campaigning should concentrate on the framework conditions in certain countries at that time rather than the US model of campaigning.

On the other hand, Borah (2016) tried to find out the use of Facebook in US presidential campaigns held in 2008 and 2012. The study reveals that Obama’s page received more “likes” and “shares” on humour posts. Research shows that user often dislikes negative campaigning. Stetka *et al.* (2019) conducted a study on the 2013 Parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic. The study demonstrated the value of social media as a new instrument for political campaigns. They further described that all significant political parties used Facebook as a communication platform; but that new and ‘alternative parties’ mostly used it to mobilize against the government. Comments and responses demonstrate that these profiles draw Facebook users, who also responded. In addition to the ones mentioned above, numerous studies have already been carried out in which various research issues were investigated. However, no particular study based on the impact of NPPs’ Facebook posts on young users was prominently highlighted. Therefore, the goal of the current study is to uncover fresh information regarding the aforementioned research problem (Stetka & Vochocová, 2014).

### Research objectives

- To find the status of Facebook posts of national political parties received by the youth.
- To explore the impact of NPPs’ Facebook posts on youth’s vote determination.

### Research questions

- What is the status of Facebook posts of national

political parties received by the youth during the general elections?

- What is the impact of NPPs’ Facebook posts on youth’s vote determination?

**Research methodology**

As this study is focused on NPPs and how they utilized the new media in general elections, Delhi has been selected for this study because it is home to most of the NPPs’ Headquarters. People from different states have settled in Delhi. As a result, heterogeneous data can be collected. The sample was made up of young people between 18 and 29 years old. The data were gathered using purposive sampling. The researcher created a questionnaire titled ‘A study to find the role of NPP’s Facebook posts in the youth’s vote determination’. It was based on quantitative parameters; Yes, and No. The survey was divided into 2 sections including 15 questions. While creating a questionnaire, attention was given to ensuring that the questions were well balanced and should cover all relevant topics. Attempts have been made to construct validity.

A pilot study involving 30 young Facebook users from Delhi was conducted to assess the validity of this questionnaire. The new questionnaire was created after adding suggestions and changes from the 15 experts who were contacted directly and online. Only respondents who were registered to vote in Delhi, between the ages of 18 and 29 years, who used Facebook were chosen for the study. Purposive sampling was utilized in this instance to achieve the goals. Approximately 250 persons were contacted during the data collection process, out of which only 180 Facebook users consented to answer. In addition to sending Google Forms personally, the researcher used WhatsApp and e-mail to contact the respondents. The respondents filled out the questionnaire in their homes, workplaces, colleges, and markets and submitted it electronically or on paper. A sample of 180 respondents was collected; among them, students enrolled in postgraduate and doctoral programs at Delhi University, IP University, IIMC, IGNOU, and private educational institutes. Some employed, self-employed, and unemployed respondents provided their opinion.

**Data interpretation**

The objective of this study is primarily concentrated on studying the use of Facebook by NPPs to sway young voters. FB users were divided into three categories to conduct the data collection process. Figure 1 shows the age group of 18 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years, and 26 to 29 years. Young Facebook users who answered the survey made up

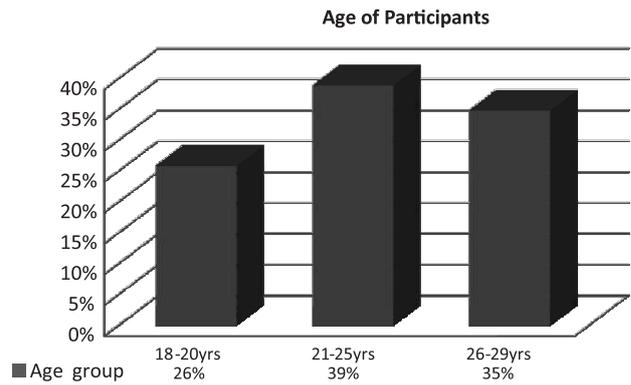


Fig. 1: Age of participants

26% of 18 to 20-year-olds, 39% of 21 to 25-year-olds, and 35% of 26 to 29-year-olds.

**1. Time spent per day by youth on Facebook**

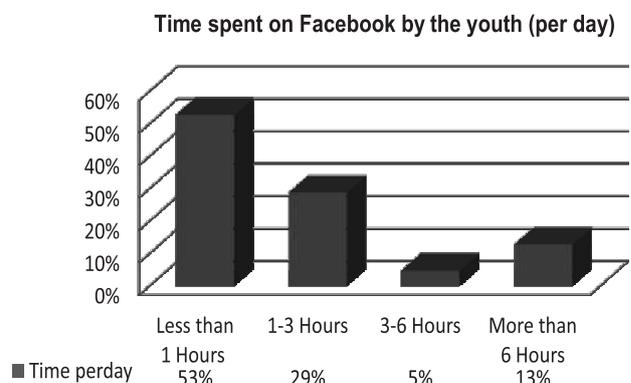


Fig. 2: Time spent per day by youth on Facebook

Figure 2 shows how much time youth spend each day on Facebook. Out of the total, 53% of teenagers claimed to use Facebook for less than an hour per day. Whereas, 29% of teenagers said they use Facebook for one to three hours every day. While 5% of young people admitted to using Facebook daily for three to six hours. Remaining 13% of teenagers said they spend more than 6 hours a day on Facebook.

**Youth’s friends on Facebook**

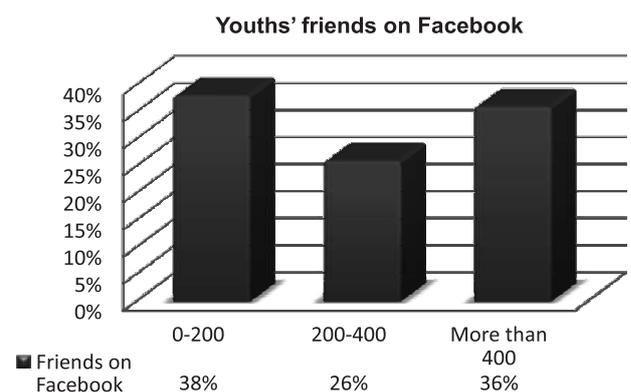


Fig. 3. Youth’s friends on Facebook

Figure 3 shows the status of young users' Facebook friends. Out of the total, 38% of youths indicated that they have Facebook friends between 0 and 200. Whereas 26% of young people reported having 200 to 400 friends, and 36% said that they have more than 400 friends.

**Facebook posts that youth like to read**

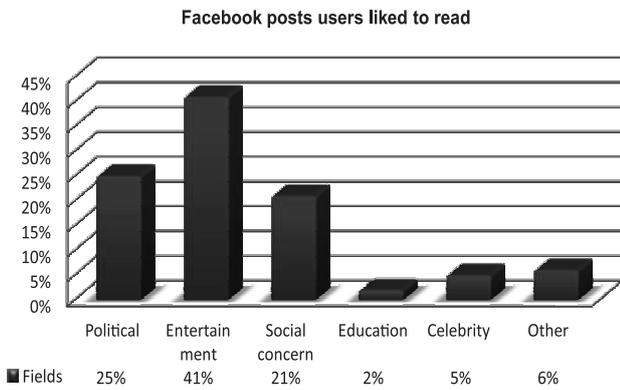


Fig. 4. Facebook posts that youth like to read

Figure 4 indicates the kind of Facebook posts the youth like to read. In their opinion, 25% of young Facebook users replied that they like to see political posts on Facebook. Whereas 41% of the youth responded that they like to see entertainment posts. While 21% of youth thought that they only liked to see posts related to social concerns. Moreover, 2% of youths like to see education-related posts, 5% of youth like celebrity posts, and 6% like other posts.

**Followers of national political parties on Facebook**

Figure 5 shows the response of youths to the national political party on Facebook.

Out of the total, 61% of the youth were followers of the Bharatiya Janata Party on Facebook. Whereas 18% of youth were followers of the INC, 14% of youth were followers of other parties and 7% of youth were not following any party on Facebook.

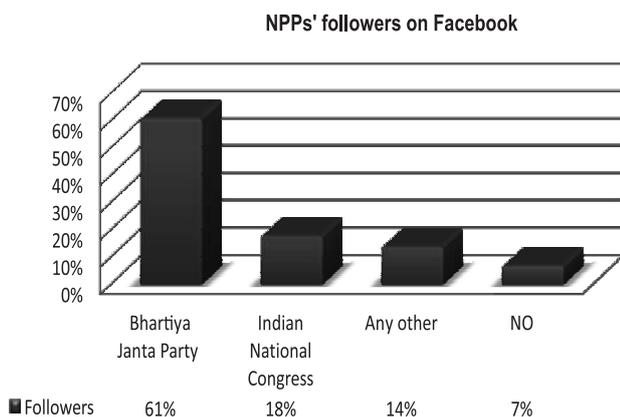


Fig. 5. Followers of national political parties on Facebook

**Political posts that youth received per day during General Elections 2019**

**Election campaigning FB posts received by the youth (per day)**

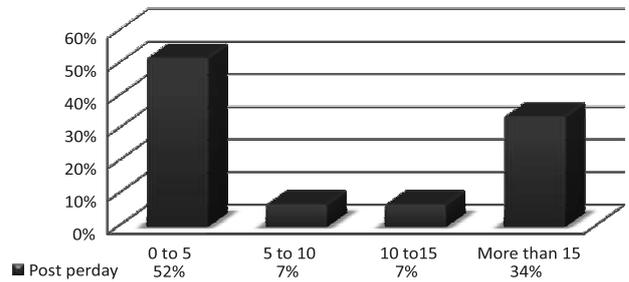


Fig. 6. Political posts received by youth per day during general elections 2019

Figure 6 shows the status of political posts youth received per day during general elections in 2019. Out of the total, 52% of youth admitted that they received 0 to 5 posts per day related to the election campaign of NPPs during the 2019 general election. Whereas 7% of youth said that they received 5 to 10 election campaign posts of NPPs. While 7% of the youth responded that they received 10 to 15 posts per day, 34% of youth replied that they received more than 15 election campaign posts from the NPPs.

**Format of the NPPs' posts youth received**

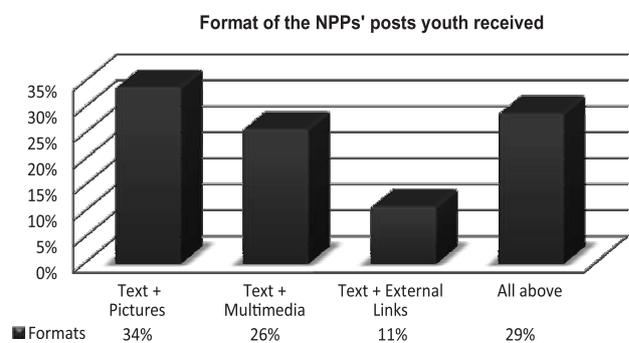


Fig. 7. Format of the NPPs' posts received by youth

Figure 7 displays the format of the NPPs' posts that youth received per day. Out of the total, 34% of youth believed that NPPs utilized text+picture format posts, while 26% of youth said they saw text+multimedia posts and 11% of youth received text plus external links during the election campaign on Facebook. While 29% of young people replied that NPPs used all of the aforementioned methods for uploading election campaign material.

**Time spent on reading the political posts by youth (per day)**

Figure 8 shows the consumption of time by youth per day in reading political posts. Out of the total,

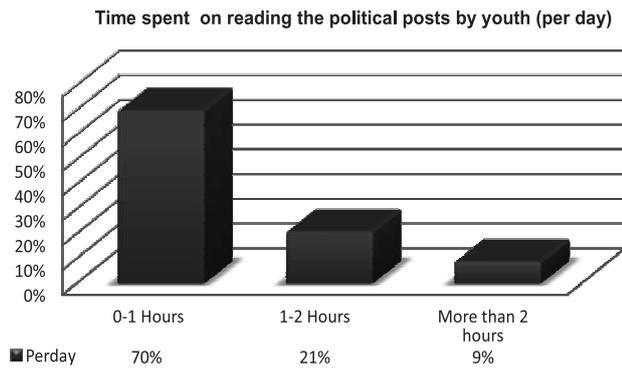


Fig. 8. Time spent on reading political posts by youth (per day)

70% of youth said they spent an hour reading NPPs’ election campaign posts daily. While 21% of young people spent one to two hours per day and 9% spent more than two hours reading the posts from NPPs’ official Facebook page.

**Reactions on NPPs’ FB posts by the youth**

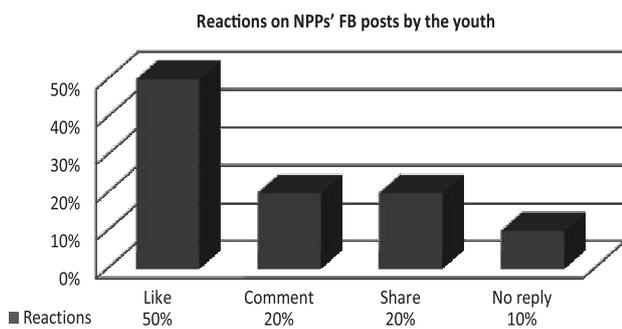


Fig. 9. Reactions on NPPs’ FB posts by the youth

Figure 9 depicts how youth responded to NPPs’ posts. Out of the total, 50% of young people indicated that they “liked” the NPPs’ posts. Although 20% of the youngsters claimed to have “commented” on the posts, 20% claimed to have “shared,” and 10% said that they did not react at all to the NPPs’ posts.

**Youth issues raised by NPPs in FB posts**

Figure 10 depicts how young people responded to the topics brought up in the FB post. Although 3% of respondents thought NPPs had brought

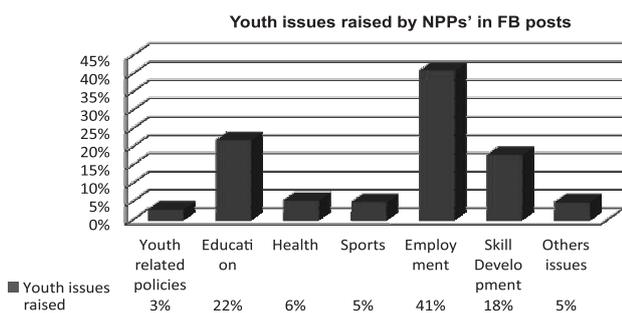


Fig. 10. Youth issues raised by NPPs in FB posts

up the topic of “youth-related policy” through their OFA, but 22% of young people said that “education”-related topics were raised. Whereas 6% of young people stated “health” was the issue, 5% claimed “sports,” 41% said “employment” was the problem, 18% opined “skill development,” and 5% answered the posts brought up other issues concerning youth.

**Target age group of NPPs**

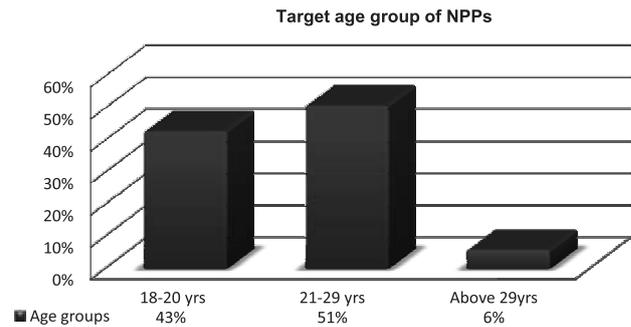


Fig. 11. The target age group of NPPs

Figure 11 depicts how young people responded to NPPs’ target age group. The youth believed that 43% of NPPs posts attempted to sway users between the ages of 18 and 20 years. According to 51% of opinionated, NPPs were targeting users between the ages of 21 and 29 years. Whereas 6% of young people said the posts were intended to have an impact on young people above the age of 29 years. In reply to some other questions, the study’s findings also indicate that 83% of youth liked the NPPs’ appeal on Facebook for first-time voters, while 79% of respondents said that they received the maximum number of posts from the BJP, followed by the INC (11%).

**Issues in young voters’ minds at the time of voting**

Figure 12 shows that 54% of respondents had concerns about youth’s expectations, 13% had concerns about the nation’s economy at the time of voting, 11% had concerns about national security, 13% had concerns about a stable government, and 9% had other concerns.

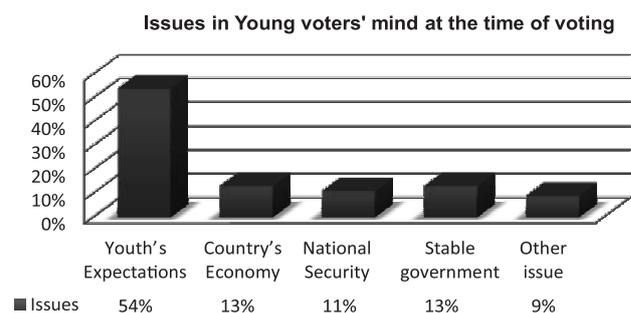


Fig. 12. Issues in young voters’ minds at the time of voting

***NPPs' posts developed a political understanding of youth***

**NPPs' posts developed political understanding of youth**

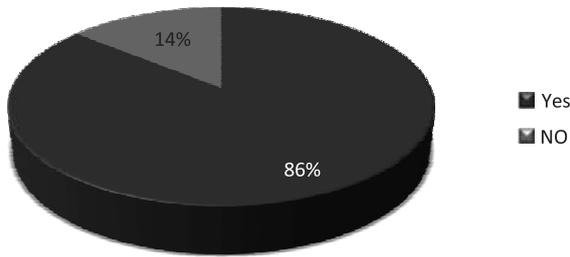


Fig. 13. NPPs' posts developed a political understanding of youth

Figure 13 demonstrates that while 86% of youth believed that NPPs' posts had enhanced their political understanding, 14% of youth were not agreed with this.

***Role of NPPs' FB posts in youths' vote determination***

**Role of NPPs' FB posts in youths' vote determination**

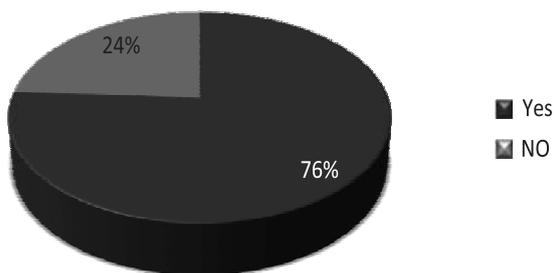


Fig. 14. Role of NPPs' FB Posts in youths' vote determination

Figure 14 displays that 76% of youngsters agreed that NPPs' FB Posts played an important role in Youths' vote determination while 24% of respondents said no.

***FB's role in election campaigning for NPPs***

Figure 15 shows that 76% of respondents said Facebook had a substantial impact on NPPs' electoral campaigns while 24% of youth disagreed with this.

**FB's role in election campaigning for NPPs**

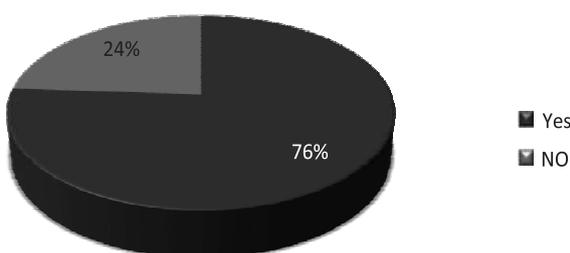


Fig. 15. FB's role in election campaigning for NPPs

**Data analysis**

“Indians got habituated to the newfound luxury of the internet and social media and spend most of their time online. Like every other business out there, politicians and their parties as an entity are making their presence felt online and in fact, making use of these platforms to influence people’s minds and political opinions. Politicians have adapted to the changes these social media platforms brought and make their presence felt in any new networking applications garnering mass attention from citizens (Abheeshai, 2022).” The widespread use of the internet has been made possible by the low data rate and high levels of internet connectivity across the nation. In both urban and rural areas of the country, young people now use the Internet extensively in their daily lives. When it comes to Facebook, data from present research reveals that the majority of Internet users spend less than an hour there. The study looks at how, after entertainment, youth like reading posts related to political news. According to data from the study, youth believed that NPPs shared 0 to 5 posts every day throughout the election to sway their decisions to support the party. Less than half of the youth spent two hours or more reading posts connected to elections, although 13% of youth thought they received more than 15 posts every day. If we correlate this to the habit of reading NPPs postings, we find that youth spend less than an hour reading election-related posts. It can be inferred that the youth used less than an hour of their internet time for these advertisements, but when looking at the youth’s Facebook usage, it is clear that there was an overlap between the times spent reading the NPPs’ posts and the time spent on Facebook. This indicates that young people used Facebook to read these posts. The results of the study demonstrate that NPPs shared more posts in the text+picture format, where the subject was covered by using text and images, and graphics of well-known NPP leaders. Memes were extensively used to troll the opposition. The parties used this to contrast themselves with the opposition party; most of the posts displayed the party’s accomplishments and included audio and video posts in addition to text and other multimedia formats. This format featured speeches from senior party leaders as well as live telecasts of rallies and public gatherings.

Short films of one to five minutes in duration that were relevant to the party’s achievements were also presented. Altered films, including troll videos from any news channel, were also shared. This was the best HD-quality shoot and was given proper treatment linked to the election campaign. Only a very small portion of posts that had text

with external links was shared. The majority of the links had access to videos of rallies, meetings, and other events on YouTube. It also included links to websites, blogs, and news sources. The most widely shared posts were based on youth issues. The NPPs posted occasionally about their campaign against the rival party and social issues. The number of young people who follow the OFA of NPPs must be taken into consideration when estimating the reach of the posts to the youth.

The study reveals that the maximum number of respondents follow the official Facebook account of the BJP, followed by the INC and other NPPs. The impact of the NPPs' posts on youth is evident from study data when we look at the figure of users' reactions. It may be assumed that the concerns brought up by the NPPs were likely appealing to the youth, which would have helped the NPPs attract their attention. According to the analysis, the majority of the posts were related to employing youth. While roughly half of the posts were concerned with young people's skill development.

According to the study, a significant proportion of posts were directed at people between the age group of 18 years and 20 years. This group is assumed to be the first-time voters, and NPPs tried their best to sway them through Facebook posts. The majority of posts were concerning youth between the age of 21 years and 29 years. This group of young people was thought to be under skill development training or looking for jobs, or employment somewhere. Most youths considered that the BJP is their favourite NPP, followed by the INC and other NPPs. This makes it quite clear that the BJP enjoyed far greater support from young people than other NPPs. The BJP was ahead of other parties in the election campaign through its OFA.

The study demonstrates how the NPPs' election campaign on OFA encouraged young people to support the party. As a result of these posts, young people were able to comprehend politics and pick the best party for them out of the available ones. The young responders acknowledged that the NPPs used the OFA for this. The respondents opined that Facebook posts from the NPPs' election campaign influenced young people to support that party.

When asked about Facebook's participation in the election campaign, the youth responded that social media played a crucial role. The youth also believed that Facebook is proving to be beneficial in election campaigns. Another finding from the study shows that because the election campaign was conducted on new media, young people kept getting information about issues. As a result,

they were aware of all the major news during the election. It can be inferred that it might have played a significant role in deciding their votes.

According to research, the BJP's Facebook posts were more effective in influencing young people's voting decisions. It indicates that young people thought it was more impressive and impactful. The NPPs made optimum use of Facebook for campaigning through their OFA to reach out to youth and increased their use of Facebook for campaigning. Political parties communicated regularly with young people, and studies have shown that youth not only read those messages but also responded to them. This is a good sign for the parties.

The study explores that youth follows an official Facebook account of the political parties. This might be interpreted to suggest that there was two-way communication taking place. Facebook is providing political parties a significant platform to engage with youth, and young people were also participating by reacting to the posts. In a democratic setup, youth must interact with political parties and share their opinions. The youth believes that political parties have been using Facebook to garner support. The younger generation also thinks that Facebook posts from political parties significantly impacted how they voted. Its impact was also seen in the state assembly elections in addition to the general elections in 2014 and 2019.

## Conclusion

This study aims to determine how youth reacted to NPPs' Facebook posts and investigate the impact of NPPs' Facebook posts on youth's vote determination. The Facebook users' responses were taken into account during this procedure. The year 2023 is considered the year when political parties, especially national political parties, prepare for the upcoming legislative election. This research explored how Facebook contributed significantly to the recent general election and how it would continue to do so by disseminating political messages of NPPs in the upcoming election. This study also reveals that, despite the NPPs' extensive election campaigning, youth believed the BJP's campaigning to be more effective than other NPPs. The study also shows that Facebook played a crucial role in developing political understanding among youth. Facebook is currently adopting meta technologies. Facebook has established links with applications like Instagram and WhatsApp. Facebook is continuously modifying itself to make it more user-friendly, which will help both other

users and political parties. The NPPs are developing a comprehensive plan to connect with young voters. The study also shows that Facebook played a crucial role in developing political understanding among youth. The key findings of this study can be deduced from the fact that youth thinks Facebook helped them determine their vote. Meta says, “We believe that the collective discussion of social issues by political figures, brands, and advocacy groups can influence the way that people think about a topic—helping them to change their mind or solidify their point of view—or even influence the way that people act—changing their buying behaviour, whom they donate to, or importantly, whom they vote for—which may affect real-world outcomes, such as elections.” The specially created Facebook page by Meta Technologies can help find information on how to use Meta Technologies to create a community spreads the word about NPPs’ campaigns, raise money, find volunteers, and encourages people to vote. The page provides information about the election campaign in numerous PDFs. This study, therefore, concludes that NPPs can benefit from technological advancements in meta technology and advanced features. This study also demonstrates that NPPs can greatly benefit from using Facebook to promote their campaign to voters. It can be inferred from the outcomes that Facebook can be useful for the NPPs to influence young voters in future general elections also.

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# Communication for Development as a Tool for Empowerment and Community Engagement

RENU SINGH<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand how a participatory approach of communication can be helpful in engaging and empowering the village community. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* is an NGO dedicated for the social service and empowering the village community through organic farming, village industrialization and sustainable development. It has created various self-help groups, conducted seminars and regular monitoring is done to mobilize the community to switch to organic farming. They motivated the villagers to form village industries and marketed their products through e-commerce sites, set their shops in villages and at the *Magan Sangrahalaya* Centre. The products of village industries like organic spices, jaggery, juice, etc. are organic, pure and eco-friendly and have provided livelihood to various households in Wardha district. This has motivated various Non-Government Organisations and farmers' self-help groups in Wardha to opt for organic farming and market it themselves. The study aims to understand how the participatory form of communication has increased the level of involvement and empowerment and sense of belonging of the community with the *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti*. The research tries to understand the process of community empowerment and sustainability through communication. Thus, the research utilizes the interview method with open-ended questions.

**Keywords:** Behaviour change, Development, Empowerment, Participatory communication, Self sustainability

## Introduction

The development of a nation depends on the prosperity, equality, and empowerment of society. The present research focuses on how the village community can be engaged through the tools of communication for their prosperity and development. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* is a non-government social service organization. It works on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and is committed to the empowerment of women and rural community of Wardha district, Maharashtra. It has formed various self-help groups of women and helped them in getting loans to set up their small-scale industries. The Samiti had ensured the farmers and women entrepreneurs to provide them a market and to sell their goods with sufficient profits. The Samiti has a marketing outlet in Wardha city, Maharashtra as well as it utilizes virtual platforms like e-commerce websites and social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. In the present research the community of *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* means all the people directly and indirectly associated with the *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti*

along with the farmers pursuing organic farming, women entrepreneurs working in village industries, customers interested in its organic products, etc. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* connects with its community by making its workers, farmers and women entrepreneurs their brand image and its unique selling point is the direct involvement and intervention in the lives of villagers to make their life prosperous and healthy. It regularly conducts meetings with the farmers and has appointed coordinators at the village level and is in close contact with women entrepreneurs and self-help groups to understand their problems and solve them as early as possible. Thus, the present research focuses on how communication can serve as a main tool for sustainable behaviour change of the community and can empower them and can make them financially independent.

## Review of literature

Communication for development (C4D) focuses on the grassroot participation and holistic development of society. The communication

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for development is also referred as social and behaviour change communication. In the process of communication for development, the participatory mode of dialogue, debate and negotiation is given preference so that communities can think about their profit and loss and take the appropriate decision for themselves. The World Congress on "Communication for Development" (2007) defined communication for development as "a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change". Such two-way, horizontal approaches to communication include public hearings, debates, deliberations and stakeholder consultations, participatory radio and video, community-based theatre and story-telling, and web forums. The UNICEF 2017 Report on Communication for Development defines it as "an evidence-based process that is an integral part of programmes and utilizes a mix of communication tools, channels and approaches to facilitate dialogue, participation and engagement with children, families, communities, networks for positive social and behaviour change in both development and humanitarian contexts". Thus, the Communication for Social Change Consortium (2006) concluded that "Communication for social change is a process of public and private dialogue through which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need to improve their own lives. It utilizes dialogue that leads to collective problem identification, decision making and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues".

Communication for development is mostly concerned with the grassroots communities, so to increase their participation, local resources should be taken into consideration. The local flavour increases the interest and sentiments of the people. They are more knowledgeable about their local culture, language, eating habits, dresses, nature, and their environment. Thus, the traditional knowledge system of the community proves to be nature and environment friendly. The main characteristics of communication for development is that it is based on dialogue. It supports social change and helps in sustained behaviour change. Communication for development is sensitive to local culture.

The Case Study Compendium by UNICEF *Communication for Development, 15 state case studies, 2013-17* (2018) presents how communication for development interventions have empowerment effects on society. The case studies

were reviewed by C4D specialists of the respective state of India and then reviewed by the UNICEF reference group. C4D intervention was done for the issues like child marriage, child and maternal health, promotion and protection of child rights, breaking taboo and culture of silence, immunisation, etc. In most of the case studies it was found that C4D intervention has compelled communities to reflect and revise their opinion regarding the taboo and superstitious issues of the society.

The Sonagachi Project: A Case Study Set in India (Dasgupta, 2009) incorporates "the guiding principles of participation communication paradigm and serves as a relevant case-study for planning sustainable interventions among disempowered or marginalised groups across the world". In the Sonagachi project, the target population, the sex workers were not considered as passive recipients, rather they were treated as change agents. The project did not utilise the mass media tools but rather focused on "face-to-face interactivity". The dialogue initiated by the sex workers with their peers effectively helped in disseminating awareness about sexually transmitted diseases and safe sex behaviour.

This study also utilises the principles of participatory communication paradigm in creating sustainable behaviour change among grassroots community as well as providing them with better occupation ideas along with their empowerment and mobilisation.

### **Indian perspective of communication for development**

Mahatma Gandhi always believed in a decentralized society that can develop with equality and self-sufficiency. He envisioned India as a republic with self-sufficient autonomous village communities. Gandhi dreamed of an independent republic village that can prosper with unity and harmony. He opined that villagers could opt for other forms of occupation along with agriculture to strengthen their economic and social status. He promoted rural industrialization and encouraged the community to invest in small-scale village industries. In Wardha, Maharashtra Mahatma Gandhi spent his last phase of life and inspired many of his followers to establish village industries and empower the community. He set up All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA) for innovative and scientific ways of research. He even established the Magan Sangrahalaya, a museum to showcase the technology and science behind village industries. The process of village independence and self-sustainability can be achieved through the

participation and empowerment of the grassroots community. Communication for development is a tool to disseminate information, mobilise, motivate and persuade the community to participate in the process of development related works. It can empower the community and is focused on the decentralization of power. The “Gram Swaraj” vision of Mahatma Gandhi can be achieved through communication for development.

The study to understand how *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* has intervened in the lives of village communities to implement the “Gram Swaraj” vision of Mahatma Gandhi. The study also tries to understand how communication for development is employed for the empowerment of the village community. Mahatma Gandhi observed in 1944 that the museum should not be a static picture of the techniques, but should be a dynamic window on evolving techniques in rural industrialization. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* started the mission of awareness and mobilization of the community from the year 2005. The present research aims to understand whether the mobilized behavior change is self-sustainable, and whether it has empowered the community or not.

### Objectives of the study

- To study how interpersonal communication can be helpful in behavior change of the farmers.
- To study how communication for development through self-help groups can help in better decision making and empowerment of women.
- To study how village industries and communication for development can provide opportunities for community engagement.

### Research questions

- Is interpersonal communication helpful in behavior change of the farmers?
- How communication for development through self-help groups is helpful in better decision making and empowerment of women?
- How village industries and communication for development can provide opportunities for community engagement.

### Methodology

The present research employed a case study method to understand the social and behavior change and empowerment process of the community through communication for development. In-depth interviews were conducted with the focus groups to understand how village industrialization process helped them in empowerment. The farmers associated with *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* and

involved in organic farming were interviewed in small groups. In-depth interviews made us understand how they were motivated to switch to organic farming, are they satisfied with it, problems they faced and whether their behavior change is sustainable or not. Interviews were taken by the coordinators of *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* who are a direct link between the community and the Samiti. They have also used social media like WhatsApp to disseminate information and participate in virtual discussions. Interviews of the Chairperson and Executive members of the Samiti were also taken to understand the communication strategy and participatory initiatives taken by the Samiti. In-depth interviews of women members of the self-help groups were also taken to understand how their involvement in village industries have empowered them. The website of the Samiti, its social media accounts were also considered to understand the involvement, communication and participation of the community.

*Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* utilizes communication for development in two modes: dialogues with the farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, etc. at the grassroots level to mobilize them to involve in organic farming and making natural and sustainable products. It includes interpersonal communication, regular meetings, participatory communication, social media, etc. The second level of communication is with the customers, online consumers, national and international visitors to the museum, artisans, workers direct communication with the consumers during exhibitions, workshops, etc. The participatory form of communication and community engagement by *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* can be understood from the flowchart (Fig. 1).

### Magan Sangrahalaya

Mahatma Gandhi started All India Village Industries Association in 1934 to revive and nurture rural industries through science and technology. The new process, techniques and machines were brought to the knowledge of the public through exhibitions. He also inaugurated Wardha Haat in 1936 to provide the market for village industries products. In the year 1938, Mahatma Gandhi thought of a museum to showcase the evolving techniques in rural industrialization developed at All India Village Industries Association. Mahatma Gandhi wanted a dynamic museum that would disseminate information on new modes of production to the common man and help the poor. Now, *Magan Sangrahalaya* is taken care of by *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti*. The museum now consists of four display wings - Mahatma Gandhi, Khadi,

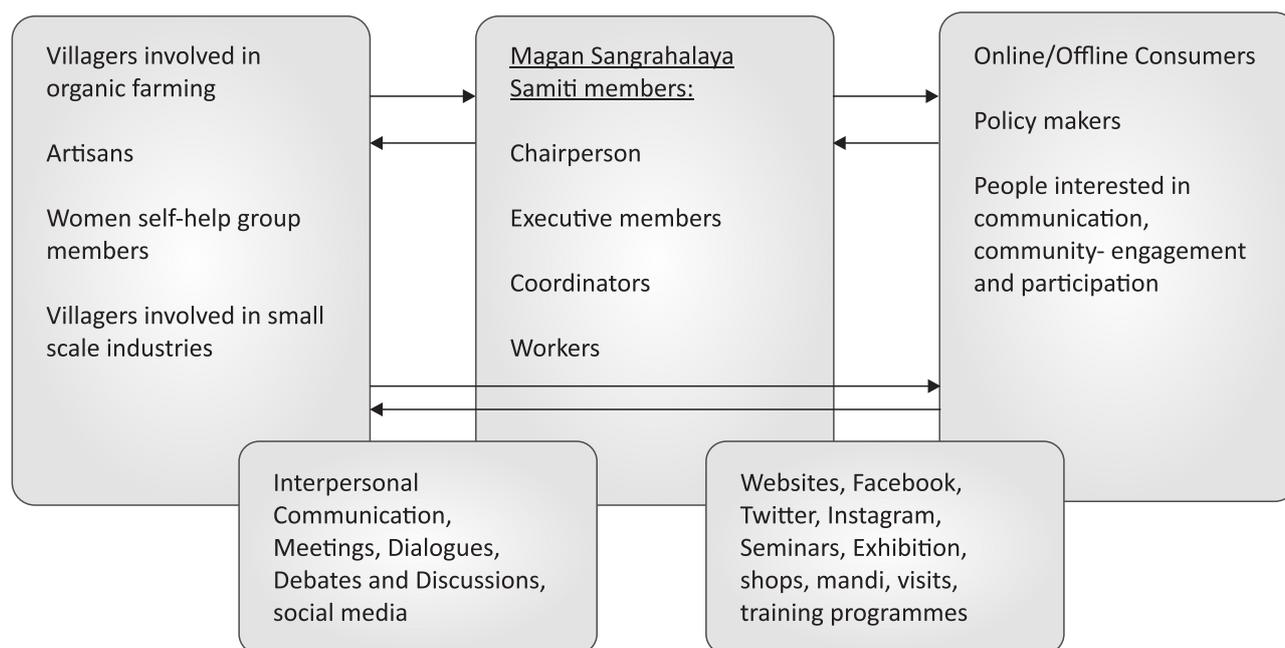


Fig. 1

Village industries, and Appropriate Technologies. The museum holds seminars, conferences, workshops, training programs, demonstrations, etc. to sensitize people about village economy and rural industrialisation. The premises of the *Magan Sangrahalaya* consist of an organic restaurant named Rasoi. The Rasoi restaurant is popular for its traditional Marathi cuisine and the unique selling point of this restaurant is that it is totally organic. It utilizes organic grains, pulses, spices, cold-pressed oil, and cow milk procured from local farmers and self-help group workers. A mud guest house is also there to accommodate few guests. The Prakrutik Jivan Kendra, an alternative health centre based on Nature Cure and Ayurvedic Massage is also located in the *Magan Sangrahalaya* campus. Magan Organic Khadi shop and Gramodyog shop sell products that are locally made by local people using local resources.

The campus also hosts a Magan Mandi that provides the market support to local organic farmers to sell organic vegetables, fruits, grains, spices and seeds at a fair price. This is a venture to strengthen the organic movement, boost rural economy and mobilize socially committed and ecologically conscious consumers. The museum showcases 32 rural industries including – food processing, agriculture tools for small farmers, edible oil, non-violent honey (from wild rock-bees), non-violent leather (leather from naturally dead cattle), pottery, handmade paper without cutting trees and non-edible oils. It also exhibits industries based on wood, palm, bamboo, lac, grasses, jute, plant roots, metal, glass, seashells, paper mache, stone, mud,

lime, horn, and cow dung.

### Communication for development as a tool for community engagement and empowerment

1. **Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti (MSS) disseminates information to the farmers regarding the benefits and prospects of organic farming:** Organic farming requires the knowledge of our traditional and indigenous culture. It also requires the combination of innovation and science. Organic agriculture helps in the sustainable environment and in the long run helps human beings to bond with mother nature. But the idea of organic farming comes with various inhibitions in the minds of farmers, so it needs awareness to be created among farmers to adopt and accept it.
2. **Mobilised the farmers for organic farming:** The non-government organization has mobilized the villagers of the Wardha district to opt for organic farming. They continuously interacted with the farmers and gave them the confidence that the Samiti will buy the organic products in 20% more price than the market value. The Samiti provides the farmers indigenous cotton seeds and are in regular contact with the farmers all along the year. There are various coordinators appointed in each village, so that the farmers can easily approach them in need of any advice or help.
3. **Regular monitoring regarding the problems in agriculture or functioning of village industries:** The coordinators have also made various WhatsApp groups of farmers to provide

them information about latest news related to their organization or organic farming. Each farmer is in close contact with the *Magan Sangrahalaya* with the help of WhatsApp and other social media platforms. The coordinators ensure that even if there are problems with worms or insects; the farmers are encouraged to use pure natural and herbal pest-control techniques.

4. **Educate and train them in organic farming and entrepreneurship:** When MSS started the movement of natural/organic farming, by mobilizing thousands of farmers to shift from chemical to natural farming techniques, IDRF funded the construction of a building and setting up the first natural farming centre in Wardha. This centre for organic farmers runs a training centre, farm produce processing unit, workshop to repair and manufacture improved farm tools, an indigenous seed bank and organic cafeteria. In a time span of 10 years, more than 10,000 farmers have been trained in organic farming technology at this centre.
5. **Behaviour change:** It took a lot of efforts to create awareness among farmers to opt for organic farming. The farmers were quite used to using chemical fertilizers to increase their yield, to use pesticide to kill insects and germs so it took a lot of communication to convince them to use organic methods to fight with the diseases or germs. The market for organic farming has increased tremendously and the demand is high for genuine products.
6. **Empowerment of women through communication for development:** In the year 2005, MSS took up the mission of empowering the underprivileged rural women with productive skills and entrepreneurial ability. MSS conducted several meetings, orientation programmes to motivate women to attend the training programmes held in different national technical institutes to learn the art and science of entrepreneurship. It has trained 1400 self-help group members in 40 national technical Institutes located in 20 states in India. After receiving the training, they were assisted in setting up rural enterprises. The women were also supported by MSS to get loans to set up their small scale industry. MSS joined hands with other agencies like India Development and Relief Fund that helped the Samiti to purchase a spacious building along with a small well, adjacent to the main road. India Development and Relief Fund enabled the Samiti to carry out extensive repairs, extensions and installations in the building and
- house seven enterprises. These eco-friendly enterprises were solar processed food products, small utility items, spices, pickles, papad, waste paper products and school bags manufacturing that provided direct employment to 30 rural women. MSS mobilized 12,000 rural women and formed 1005 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in 125 villages. Self-help groups promoted participatory communication among the women members and it gave them confidence to handle the issues of banks and their rural industries.
7. **Use of interpersonal communication and social media with the community:** The members of MSS remained in constant touch with their community through regular meetings and field visits. The coordinators appointed were in one-to-one contact with the farmers so that they could give solutions to their issues related to organic farming. They made several WhatsApp groups to be in constant touch with the farmers. The social media was utilized in disseminating information related to seeds, rainfall, irrigation, herbal pest control techniques. Farmers usually enquire about the solution of the agriculture related problem through social media.
8. **E-commerce website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram pages for marketing of the final organic and other village industry products:** *Magan Khadi* has become a renowned and established brand. The *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* had launched an e-commerce website for the marketing of khadi products. It has its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. People from all over the world visited Sevagram and Pavnar Ashram and they were motivated to visit *Magan Sangrahalaya* as well. They were motivated to buy the eco-friendly organic khadi materials and organic food products. These people became loyal customers of the organic products and utilized the e-commerce and social media sites to place their orders.
9. **Marketing outlets by Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti:** In the premises of Magan Sangrahalaya, a Magan Organic Khadi shop and a Gramodyog shop are there to sell products that are made by local people using local resources. The campus also hosted a Magan Mandi that provides the market support to local organic farmers to sell organic vegetables, fruits, grains, spices and seeds at a fair price.
10. **Sensitive towards local culture and traditional knowledge system:** In Vidarbha region people consumed the flax seeds oil that was healthy and apt for the ecosystem but now people started using Soyabean oil, that is, not good for their

health. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* has started an awareness programme in Vidarbha to return to its original eating habits. In the various talk shows on community radio, social media and through interpersonal interaction with the members of *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti*, villagers are encouraged to return to traditional eating habits, naturopathy, yoga and ayurveda.

**11. Empower the community and make them better decision makers:** In the initial years of self-help groups the coordinators of *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* used to monitor the working of the self-help groups, their bank related issues but later the women started handling their issues on their own. They maintain their records and handle their loan and bank issues themselves. The visit of banks and other panchayat offices provide them confidence to handle economic issues. Borrowing loans on the name of the lady of the house provide them the sense of pride. The women are given permission to attend the meetings of self-help groups. The confident and active women associated with the *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* have also participated in politics and other fields. Many of them were elected as Sarpanch and Zilla Parishad. Some have opened their shops and others have invested in other small-scale industries.

**12. Influencing policy decision:** The condition of khadi workers was always discussed on national and international forums by the chairperson of the *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti*. The Government of India directly monitors the khadi industry through the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. It is promoted by the Government to project it as the brand of the country. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* is leading the 'Tel Swaraj' movement. The movement is to bring awareness to consumers regarding the hazards of unhealthy imported oils and requesting them to revert back to healthy, fresh, locally made flaxseed and groundnut oils. It is creating awareness about the need of promoting the decentralized Gandhi's Ghani (Wooden oil expeller) - a traditional method of oil processing that was popular in India. It can be helpful for the country to fight from various health diseases and make it healthy and prosperous.

### Analysis and discussion

*Magan Sangrahalaya* took meetings and talked individually with farmers, artisans and women self-help group members to understand their problem and to find the best solution for them. The farmers were motivated to start organic farming

and they were given proper training. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* does not leave the farmers after disseminating information; rather it has deputed coordinators in each village for regular monitoring and direct communication with the villagers. The problems with agricultural land and crops vary from one soil to another, so each farmer needs to be in close contact, so that they discuss about its solution with the experts and other community members. The coordinators work as the mediators who bring the issues of the farmers before *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* and everyone collectively brainstorms to solve the problems. Thus, the farmers are not left alone to deal with the issues like heavy/low rainfall, insects, crop disease, etc., rather *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* is continuously in touch with them all round the year and even buy the promised amount of the crop from them at 20 percent greater price than the market. The *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* premise allows the farmers to sell their organic vegetables and fruits to the local people. The confidence and affinity that the Samiti members provide to the farmers through dialogue and interaction motivates the villagers to switch to chemical free organic farming.

*Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* has encouraged women to make their self-help groups so that they can get loans for their startups. Women who get loans for building their homes or other household activities have a sense of pride. They are given respect in the family and their opinions are taken into consideration. Women started visiting banks and other offices with confidence. Thus, self-help groups are not an opportunity for occupation; rather, they are also a gateway for women to register their presence in society. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* facilitated many self-help group workers to train in various national technical institutes to polish their entrepreneur skills. This type of exposure provided them confidence to establish small-scale industries based on organic spices, organic drinks, indigenous food products, rural bakery, organic jaggery unit, edible oil unit, cow dung-based enterprises, forest-based enterprises, etc. The exposure and opportunity to deal with the issues of self-help groups, banks, village industry, constant participation in meetings, exhibitions, workshops, etc. has boosted the confidence level of the women. This increased self-esteem and self-confidence have enabled 21 women self-help group members of the Samiti get elected as Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat Member (Member of Village Council) and Zilla Parishad Member (Member of District Council). Some have been appointed by the District Rural Development Authority as field officers. These women are

politically active now-a-days and participate in the discussion related to politics and society.

To make the products of khadi and village industries popular among the consumers, it had to be cost effective and user friendly. *Magan Khadi* is a popular brand because it continuously experiments on its design without compromising on its quality. It has started making t-shirts and beautiful kurtas and kurtis for its consumers. The artisans as well as consumers share a special bond with the threads of organic cotton. The joy of association with an eco-friendly sustainable and pure local material like khadi gives a sense of pride and accomplishment. It is a symbol of Indian culture, sophistication, and simplicity. *Magan Sangrahalaya* has connected the artisans, workers, organic cotton cultivating farmers, shop keepers, consumers all in one thread of khadi and made a garland of love, affinity, and ownership. All have become a member of one extended family. The websites, Facebook pages, Instagram and Twitter accounts not only display the *Magan Khadi* fabrics, but also raises the awareness about the lives and struggles of the artisans and workers indulged in the khadi manufacturing process.

The loyal customers visiting the *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* shops in the premises knew the taste and flavour of organic spices, juice, jaggery, etc. made by each self-help groups. The women entrepreneurs utilize the local resources creatively so that their manufacturing value is less and the product is herbal and eco-friendly. Plants like wild palm grew abundantly in some parts of Wardha region so it was utilised as making broom for the use of local villagers. The Doodh Koda (*Tomentosa dinctoria*) is a softwood tree that grew wildly in the forest of the Vidarbha region. This wood was generally used as fuel but in Andhra Pradesh, it was used for making toys and utility items. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* invited artisans from Andhra Pradesh and trained a team of women in the art of using Doodh Koda wood for manufacturing educational toys, buttons, key chains, incense stick stands, birds and ornaments. These products were coloured with natural lacquer and were eco-friendly and harmless for small children and toddlers. The utilisation of local resources in village industries makes the behaviour change of the community more sustainable. The entrepreneurs also used the traditional and cultural ways of manufacturing the edible organic product, so that the nutritious value of the product is not lost.

## Conclusion

*Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* has facilitated the village community with the information of organic

farming and its future prospects. The Vidarbha region is quite infamous for the poor conditions of the farmers and their suicide case. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* made an important intervention in the lives of the villagers by making them aware of the new and sustainable trends in farming. They reminded them of Mahatma Gandhi's message of creating rural industries and manufacturing goods from their raw agricultural products. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* mobilised people to participate in organic farming and encouraged especially women to start self help groups. It helped women members to train them to become entrepreneurs. It showed them the path to become self employed and helped them in getting loans for their start-ups. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* buys the organic products from the farmers and women entrepreneurs and sells them online and offline to the customers. It even provides machines and other technology to its members to use them in manufacturing or processing their raw agricultural products. Now the women have learnt to run their self-help groups themselves, get their loans and maintain their records. Thus, *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* not only disseminates information to its community, but also joins hands with them to ensure their participation and empowers them to become better decision makers. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* has played a significant role in sensitising the country regarding the farmers, workers and artisans involved in khadi industry and other small scale industries. It has created awareness on organic farming, hazards of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It also has raised awareness on the usefulness of cold-pressed oil or the decentralized Gandhi's Ghani (Wooden oil expeller) a traditional method of oil processing. It is also creating awareness about our cultural and traditional cuisine. Communication for development is not only about dissemination of information to the community and public, but also it enables people participation to find the solution for them. *Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti* has not only created awareness about organic farming and sustainable village industries, but also has involved and participated with the community to form an eco-friendly, sustainable and participatory organisation that can successfully do its business for the benefit of its community.

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## Print Media in the Age of E-publishing

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### ABSTRACT

This paper stresses upon the publishing of literature through e-mode of communication. Technology enables a major restructuring of the process of publishing and distributing paper documents. In the traditional process, the design is primarily made for high-volume and high-quality documents. This process has inefficiencies, like infrequent long-print run requires storing documents, which become obsolete between runs and the 60% of the total cost requires for delivering these documents spend on storage and transportation. All the obstacles like long delay, limited circulation, quality, expenditure on printing and postage, etc. are disappeared by producing document through e-publishing. In e-publishing, the documents are stored electronically, shipped over a network, and printed as and when they are needed and the major benefits result from reducing obsolescence, eliminating warehouse costs, managing and reducing or eliminating delivery time. It has improved the publishing process tremendously. The biggest advantage is that correction can be done at each and every stage of making revised e-book. To know the advantages and disadvantages of both e-book and printed book a survey has been conducted among faculties and scholars of Amravati Campus of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication. This helped to make an analysis and conclusion of knowing the viewpoint of both faculties and scholars regarding e-books and printed books.

**Keywords:** Commercial printing, E-book, E-publishing, Journal, Magazine, Print scenario

### Introduction

Information is an important resource in the knowledge society and its management is very different and unique from traditional data management. It requires total professional approach in order to plan, implement and monitor the information effectively. Greater accessibility of knowledge, information, services, accessible to various stakeholders at national and international level is very critical for agricultural research and development (Bharti & Hans Raj, 2009; ICAR, 2009). We need communication with small-scale farmers, reaching to them and need commercializing their activities, as they are centre for increasing productivity at the grassroots (NAIP, 2010; Tiwari, 2008). The printing industry itself has generally been undergoing enormous structural and technological changes for several years. Apart from the changes affecting the traditional printing sector, the integration of new media (e.g., CD-ROMs and online services) into existing product offers the greatest challenge to the graphics & arts industry in

the years to come.

Electronic media, as is the case with print media, also involve a chain of creation and transmission, which depends on the specific form of the media. The first stage in this process consists in generating the contents, for instance, for recordings of audio or video tapes. In some cases, information is converted from one medium to another, such as from conventional film to video. In the case of web pages though, content can also be computer-generated, thus allowing for the use of content from both the real and the virtual worlds. The description of an animation can be considerably more compact and efficient than the transmission of the video sequence. Therefore, the actual animation may only be executed on a final output device such as a powerful presentation computer (Nath, 1998).

E-books will continue to grow, and continue to exist, because it is becoming part of the growing electronic world. There are reasons to be optimistic that e-books and print books could both co-exist in the future together. The idea of e-books fully

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replacing print books, for those who prefer their books printed in ink on paper sounds saddening (Mashhour, 2015).

### Applicability of e-publishing

There are numerous reasons for adopting e-publishing; some are elaborated as under:

- Long delay in research paper publication: Due to heavy dependence on manual processes and postal communication for article submission and review.
- Limited circulation and access: Due to printing cost considerations and limited marketing, the research journals had limited circulation.
- Problem of attracting good quality research for publication: Authors prefer to publish their research in journals that provide them with fast and professional peer review, wide distribution, and online status.
- Due to higher postage costs, very few international authors working in frontier areas of agriculture and allied research used to submit their work in print journals in the past, but due to e-mail facilities and the online submission process, this scenario has changed now.
- Research article reviewing could be done only nationally due to high cost and time constraints.
- Difficult to keep track of the processing of an article.

### Review of literature

#### Print scenario

Surveys on the significance and use of print media prove that the need for printed publication is growing worldwide. This is indicated by the fact that at the end of the millennium, *Time Magazine* acknowledged the socio-cultural significance of the invention and utilisation of book printing and elected Johannes Gutenberg's work as the most crucial event of the millennium. The print media include all newspapers, newsletters, booklets, pamphlets, magazines, and other printed publications, especially those that sell advertising space as a means of raising revenue. Commercial printing refers to print products that are produced occasionally (e.g., catalogues, brochures, leaflets, business cards, etc.). Periodicals are printed matter that appears periodically (e.g., newspapers, journals and magazines). Publishing houses and companies are the typical clients for periodical printing. There are a number of journals, magazines, periodicals, bulletins and newspapers being published in India in a dispersed manner by the government as well many

private publishers and agencies. The production of a newspaper is mainly financed by advertising inserts and advertisements. For this reason, the ultimate consumer price for a newspaper is relatively low (Kippan, 2001).

Amazon's last 10- to 13-year-old milestone was unsurprising to industry observers. The company said in July 2010 that sales of e-books outnumbered hardcover books, and in January, the same was valid for paperbacks. For Amazon, though, the milestone is a proof that it has successfully leaped from a print business to a digital one, a transition that has challenged most companies that sell media. It also sets the stage for Amazon to introduce an Android tablet computer, which was expected in 2011. E-book reading would most likely be a centerpiece of the device, which would have significantly more functionality than a Kindle to compete against the iPad (Miller & Bosman, 2011).

"Digital readers are not a replacement for a print book; they are a replacement for a stack of print books," said *Ron Hawkins*, Vice President for portable reader systems at Sony. "That is where we see people, on the go, in the subway and in airports with our device." Book publishers also seem to be preparing for the kind of disruption that hit the music business when Apple introduced the symbiotic combination of the iPod and its iTunes online service. This year, with Sony's Reader drawing some attention and Amazon's imminent e-book device on their radar, most major publishers have accelerated the conversion of their titles into electronic formats. "There has been an awful lot of energy around e-books in the last 6 to 12 months, and we are now making a lot more titles available," said *Matt Shatz*, Vice President for digital at Random House, which plans to have around 6,500 e-books available by 2008. It had about 3,500 e-books available for the last few years. Amazon has been showing the Kindle to book publishers for the last year and has delayed its introduction several times. In the fall of 2007, a photograph of the device and some of its specifications leaked onto the Web when the company filed an application with the Federal Communications Commission to get approval for its wireless modem, which would operate over a high-speed EVDO network (Stone, 2007).

Since its debut in 2007, the Kindle has become synonymous with e-book reading devices. Although the Kindle was not the first e-book "reader," as these devices are commonly called, it quickly became the most successful. Even with competition from other devices such as the Apple iPad or the Indigo-Chapters Kobo, the Amazon Kindle still holds 55%-

60% of the e-book market (Doody, 2013).

Amazon.com launched its online bookselling site at a time when it expanded its network and became the backbone of many more online stores. The idea of a company trusting a third party to store its proprietary data did not take off overnight. But Amazon can thank Apple's iPhone for unleashing a tsunami of small companies trying to build apps for the device. Many of those apps, including dating service Tinder and the "Candy Crush" games, tapped Amazon's systems because they were simple and affordable. As the iPhone became ubiquitous by 2010, so did Amazon Web Services. Alibaba, Google, Microsoft, and IBM have offered tough competition. But Amazon has established itself as a leader in cloud computing, and, by 2017, it generated \$15 billion in sales (Easter & Dave, 2017).

The erroneous belief that a new medium will completely replace a previous one is nowhere more evident than in discussions surrounding the emergence of electronic text. Having previously fended off the challenges of the phonograph, motion pictures, radio, and television, in the early 1990s, the book was seen as finally having met its match in the computer and the internet (Bath *et al.*, 2018).

### **Elaboration of mass media**

The first printed pages appeared more than 500 years ago, since then, the media has been delivering information and entertainment. In this century alone, dramatic developments have taken place in mass media. In 1900, there was no radio, television or internet; newspapers dominated the media market, with virtually no competition. It is remarkable to see how far society has come since then. Media today has evolved into a multi-faceted entity that has become an integral part of our life. Using available technology, such as the internet, we can now communicate with one another anywhere on Earth or in Space instantly. Evolution of mass media takes you through an exciting century of media advances and trends.

During the 40s, radio became the dominant form of media during and after the World War II, as it could provide war information much faster than newspapers, and people desired current news of the war situation and of their relatives fighting overseas. However, newspapers still supplied daily information and advertising; while, the television came to dominate the media industry in 1950. Radio and print media was to compete with television that seemed to give the best of both media: pictures and sound. With the advent of television in the 1950s, print media and radio were forced to rethink their

approaches towards the new audio visual media.

During the 50s, the radio and television technology offered great potential for the communication of anything man can hear or see more, quickly and cheaply to a large audience at one time. Similarly, the print media also performed as a basic communication tool for the entire human population. But still there were lot of anonymity and lack of feedback. To realise the potential of mass media for social progress and development, (i) the media personnel alter their approach to suit the acceptance level of the people; (ii) new communication policies, which sufficiently localized in content decentralised in set up giving scope for upward articulation of feedback; and (iii) integrated approach to communication where the planners should consult at the beginning of the planning stage, and continue to guide the planners (Wilson & Gallop, 1954).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the media consisted mainly of newspapers and various periodicals. Newspapers and magazines dominated the media in the second decade of the 20th century. In 1900, there was no radio, television or internet; newspapers dominated the media market, with virtually no competition. Today, using available technology, such as the internet, we can communicate with one another instantly anywhere on Earth or in Space.

Whereas in 1962, the "satellite communications" news reports from around the world were transmitted directly, giving television unprecedented power to communicate significant world events in real-time. The digital media's saw an explosive growth in the 1980s, especially television. Satellite television reported events across the world live. With competition from 24-hour cable television news, many newspapers disappeared. Cable news and subscription cable television also rose in popularity, competing with network television. Television has become the main media of mass communication. The first television broadcasts for a mass audience began in 1936 in Germany and the UK. Regular mass TV broadcasts in the United States began in 1948.

### ***The internet links the world***

As the 20th century was coming to an end, a new media was born—the Internet. It links people through their computer terminals with modems connected to telephone lines. With the Internet, electronic publishing and chat rooms sprang up, allowing individuals to express their opinions freely to a large global audience. With minimal technical know-how, anyone could put his or her comments

and views on air without the huge expense of traditional publishing. Also, advertising searched for new ways to use new media to promote their products. The number of people accessing the net nowadays is incalculable. Public libraries and even cafes offer consumers access to Internet. Most users are university researchers, government officials, students, scientists, reporters, and journalists.

### ***The evolution of electronic publishing***

The scope of the term electronic publishing can be interpreted in many different ways. For example, it could be considered to include all forms of electronic aids to authors, from simple word processing capabilities to actual typesetting and/or mark-up tools, as well as networking support to collaborative authorship and electronic communication among authors, editors, referees, and other participants in the publishing process. The use and dissemination of electronic media can be regulated with protection rights which are, however, relatively easily infringed; this applies particularly to digital data where the copy is just as good as the original (Gill & Green, 1996).

The technological impact of book publishing is that right through the editing, production, promotion, storage, and distribution of books, technology has added both efficiency and complexity to the book publishing business. In the new technology, at its leading edge, the medium coalesces into the content seamlessly and, inseparably, which seems to point toward a clear convergence between publishing through the print and electronic media. Regarding the cost of production of books, he has revealed that as rapid technological advances replace traditional methods of book composition and design, international publishing houses are able to lower their cost of book production dramatically (Kaula, 2002).

The computerization has entered in publishing organisation. Typesetting, data storage and processing have numerous applications in publishing business as in any other business. Communication technology continue to advance rapidly and person active in book publishing must be constantly alert to developments in this field that affect or could in near future affect the book publishing industry (Israel, 1983).

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the trends and scripts of print for the future and
2. To find and explore the changes that emerge in the traditional printing sector with the integration

of new media.

3. To know the viewpoints of the academicians and students of one of the regional centres, that is, Amravati of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication.
4. To draw suggestions and recommendations after conduction of the survey regarding perception of faculties and researchers on way forward of printing industry in India.

### **Research methodology**

The study uses two types of qualitative methods. Firstly, secondary data were compiled through an in-depth literature review and from scholarly publications that indicates on the present trends and scenarios of print for the future and evolution of electronic publishing and its advantages over printed copy. Secondly, the primary data were created and analysed via a survey conducted among the faculties and the students of the regional centre of Amaravati Campus of the IIMC.

While analysing the printed matter worldwide, packaging and label printing show strong growth, while the other product segments, such as advertising and commercial printing, newspapers, catalogs, magazines, and books, show a moderate increase. There is an enormous variation in growth between individual regions and countries. Hence, the most excellent future growth rates are expected in India whereas the highly developed economies will show only slight increase. The printing industry as a whole has generally been undergoing enormous structural and technological change for several years.

The role of artificial intelligence, specifically in the publication sector, was also analyzed, and it was observed that AI is being applied to all parts of the value chain except customer service. Whilst the highest proportions of these publishers are already using AI (to some extent) for content acquisition and development, three-quarters are using or plan to introduce marketing and sales solutions within the next 2 years. The most common AI-assisted task to date is content classification (for example, using Metadata tagging to improve the discoverability of their content). The publishers have realised the benefits of adopting AI in their publication program (Publishers Association, 2020).

The part of artificial intelligence, specifically the publication sector, was also anatomized and observed that AI is being applied to all corridors of the value chain except client service. Whilst the loftiest proportion of these publishers are formerly using AI (to some extent) for content accession and

development, three-diggings are using or plan to introduce marketing and deals results within the coming two times. (Publishers Association, 2020).

A survey research method has also been utilised to know the viewpoint of researchers, students and teachers of a specific institution. This was just to supplement the results acquired from the literature review and to have even primary data analysis apart from the secondary one.

For the survey, a judgmental sampling is done both to avoid error of opinion and to have a specific result. For sampling, the Amravati Centre of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication is selected. There are 47 universal members for the survey on campus. Out of these 47, responses were received from 34 participants. So, in the judgmental sampling process, the size of the sample size would not depend on the actual universal size. As the actual universal sampling of convenience or random sampling is in millions, the participants are required to be at least in hundreds or in thousands; thus, the double-digit participants counted for 65% of the population or selected universe, that is, participating in the survey. The survey is finally of great value in this sense. This was also done to know the viewpoint of the specific population or have the perception regarding the publication industry of academicians and students of IIMC, Amravati.

### ***Changes in the traditional printing sector***

The trend towards the one-man press due to increasing automation of all the steps in the process of a printing house will not only create an enormous potential for innovation in the field of machinery and equipment but also in processing in the coming years. The best example of this is in the area of prepress, where technological developments mean that the average expected product life cycle of the equipment is only 18 months. Printing processes are being increasingly controlled and adjusted electronically, which leads to consistent high quality and greater productivity. Digital workflow also means that productions are completed more rapidly. Hence, more than half of the orders for commercial printers arrive in digital form. This is the only way of shortening delivery times for print products and meeting the high customer demand for quality.

The information and communication sector is expected to provide a positive impulse for the printing industry. Recently, electronic publishing has revolutionized the world of prepress. The use of computer-to-film, computer-to-plate, and computer-to-press systems is already widespread and is

undergoing continuous growth. In order to achieve a smooth flow of digital data from prepress via the press to post-press, the integration, networking, and digitalization of all processing steps are essential.

### ***Integration of new media***

Beside the classical areas of activity the production of print media other services are becoming more important. Hence the design of print media, the creation of multimedia products (CD-ROMs, Internet sites, print media in combination with electronic media, etc.), consulting services, and individual training are being requested more and more by the printing and publishing industry. The increasing power of electronic media (especially CD-ROM & Internet) will increase competitive pressure on the print media and partially replace print products while at the same time creating new print jobs. Despite strong growth in electronic media, the market for print media remains large and attractive since a high proportion of the ever-growing advertising expenditure flows into print media, and the demand for print and electronic media especially worldwide is increasing. As the Internet continues to grow, the sale of goods and services via data networks is increasingly regarded as a new method of generating sales by many businesses. The customer is able to choose from an almost unlimited range of goods 24 hours a day. All that is needed is a personal computer (PC), which the customer uses to connect via modem to the net. There are large global differences as far as online connections of the Internet are concerned. At the turn of the millennium Internet users are creating great problems for advertising agencies. In about 80% of cases, the internet users are male, around 30-years old, educated, and have a passion for computers. Sixty percent of all users visit fewer than ten web sites per month. Hence, it is impossible for advertising agencies to reach a particularly differentiated target group, in contrast to the possibility of targeted advertising messages in individual print media. Whether and at what rate the Internet is exploited depends to a considerable extent on the acceptance of the new technologies by a broad population base.

Since publishing implies production and distribution, however, the term refers most obviously to the generation of publications in electronic form or, at least, with the aid of electronics. In this more restricted sense, electronic publishing can be considered to have evolved gradually over a period of about 30-years, the evolution having the following manifestations:

1. Use of computers to generate conventional print-on-paper publications. This development can be traced back to the early 1960s. The use of electronics to print on paper is not a completely pedestrian application since it allows new capabilities such as printing on demand and even the production of customized publications tailored to individual needs.
2. The distribution of text in electronic form, where the electronic version is the exact equivalent of a paper version and may have been used to generate the paper version. For secondary publications (indexing and abstracting services), electronic distribution began early in the 1960s. For primary journals, the development occurred somewhat later.
3. Distribution in electronic form only but with the publication being little more than printed on paper and displayed electronically. Nevertheless, it may have various “value-added” features, including search, data manipulation, and alerting capabilities.
4. The generation of completely new publications that exploits the true capabilities of electronics (e.g., hypertext and hypermedia, electronic analog models, motion, sound).

**Data analysis and discussion**

The survey was conducted among all the faculties and students of Amravati campus of IIMC.

The replies received from them were analysed and accessed for coming to a conclusion and drawing the actual perception of the participants of the survey.

When the participants were asked the first question, that is, do you prefer e-book or printed book to read, the reply received was recorded in the below-mentioned table and the pie-chart representation of the same was derived.

Figure 1 shows the highest percentage of respondents of this institution preferred both kinds of books, that is, both printed books and e-book were preferred by 59%. Twenty-three percent of the respondents preferred printed books. Around 2% preferred e-books and 1% liked none.

Table 1: Graphical representation of preference of books to read by IIMC Amravati members.

Do you prefer e-book or printed book to read?	
View options	
Both	16 responses
Printed book	15 responses
E-book	2 responses
None	1 response

The total number of students and faculties in Amravati IIMC campus are 47 and among them 34 of the respondents replied to this question. According to Table 1, 16 respondents said that they preferred reading both mode of books, that is, both e-books and printed books. Fifteen respondents replied that they prefer printed books whereas 2 opted for e-books. Only one said none.

Table 2: Tabulation of responses on reasons of printed books lagging behind

Why are printed books lagging behind?	
View options	
Costly	13 responses
Both	12 responses
Inconvenient	5 responses
None	4 responses

Table 2 shows that 13 respondents considered cost as the reasons of printed books lagging behind. Of the total of 34 responses 5 considered

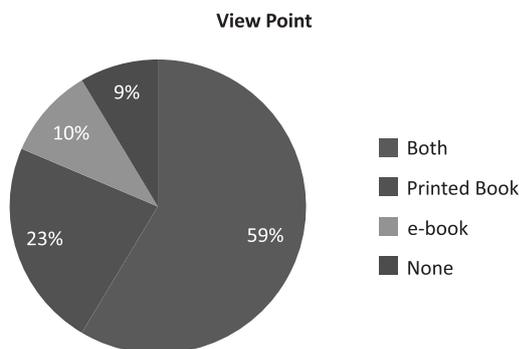


Figure 1: Percentage representation of the viewpoint on mode of books preferred by the academicians and students of IIMC-Amravati.

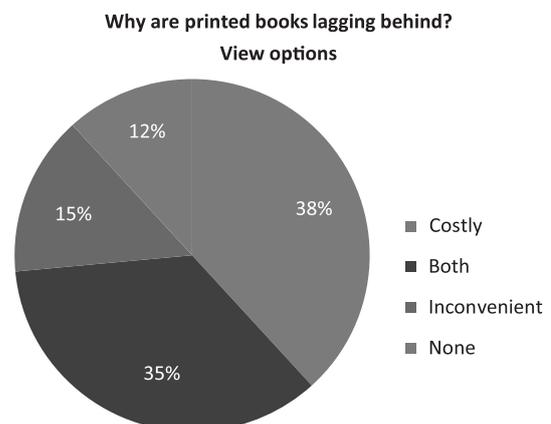


Figure 2: Percentage of responses on causes of printed books lagging behind.

inconvenience of carrying hard copy books from one place to other as reason whereas 12 respondents considered both the cost and inconvenience as reason of hard-copy book loosing the race. Four respondents opted for option none.

Looking into the details of figure 2, we find that 38% of the respondent said that the cost was the reason lagging behind of the hard-copy printed books in the present day whereas 15% of the total respondent considered inconvenience to carry as the reason of printed book falling back in race. Nevertheless 35% were of the opinion that both cost and inconvenience in carrying from one place to other was the reason behind printed book loosing popularity.

When we look at Table 3, we can see that the 2 out of 34 participants didn't respond to this question. Three of the total respondents said that the convenience was the reason for them to opt for e-book for their studies. E-book is cheaper than printed book was the reason of 9 respondents for accepting e-book as means of study. Two of the respondents opted for easy to commute as the reason for accepting e-book for study means. One of the respondent said that the facility of font size change in e-book is the reason to accept it for study means. Seventeen respondents said that convenience, cheaper than printed book, easy to commute, font changing facility all four reason counted for e-book being accepted as means of study.

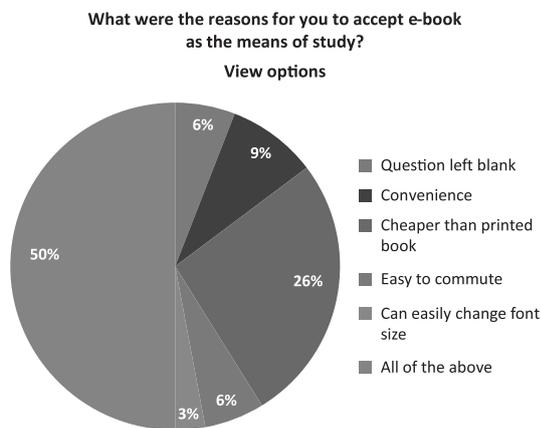


Figure 3: Graphical representation of result of reasons of accepting e-book survey

Table 3: Tabulation of reason of accepting e-books

What were the reasons for you to accept e-book as the means of study?	
View options	
Question left blank	2
Convenience	3
Cheaper than printed book	9
Easy to commute	2
Can easily change font size	1
All of the above	17

Looking at the graphical representation of figure 3 we can see that 50% of the respondents opined that there were four reasons for e-book being accepted as means of study and the reasons are convenience, cheaper means, easy to commute and can easily change font size.

Table 4: Survey result of accessing popularity of e-book in future

Do you presume that e-book will not be so popular in future as it is today?	
View options	
No	12
Yes	5
Maybe	17

Table 4 shows that out of 34 respondents, 17 were not clear if the popularity of e-book will reduce in future. Five among all the respondents were clear that popularity of e-book will reduce in future. Twelve out of the total were clear that e-book is going to retain the popularity as it is in present day.

Do you presume that e-book will not be so popular in future as it is today?  
View options

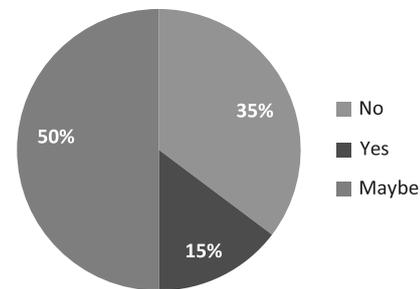


Figure 4: Percentage representation of replies received regarding future popularity of e-book

Graphical representation on percentage of responses on popularity prediction of e-book in future was presented in Figure 4 via a pie-chart. Through this chart we come to fact that the 50% of the respondents were not clear if the e-book will be popular in future as it is today. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were clear that the e-book will succeed in retaining its popularity in future.

Table 5: Survey on whether e-book be main academic book in future

Will the e-book be the future main book of academics?	
View options	
No	14 responses
Maybe	13 responses
Yes	6 responses
Question left blank	1 response

Table 5 is the representation of the data received on the survey of accessing if e-book is going to be future main academic book. Among the 34 participants of this survey, one did not reply to this question, 6 replied that it will be the future main book of academics, 14 said that it can not be the future main book of academics, while 13 respondents were not clear in this matter and replied "maybe."

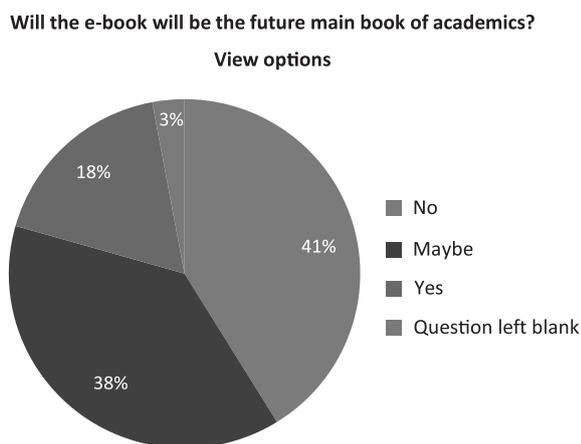


Figure 5: Percentage representation of accessing future prospect of e-book

Through Figure 5, it is clear that 16% of the respondent were optimistic regarding the prediction of e-book achieving the status of main academic book in future. Forty percent of the respondents were clear that e-book cannot receive the status of main academic book even in future. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents were not clear about it.

#### Viewpoints of all respondents on e-book

- In some topics, printed books are essential, but when we consider quality, cost, and availability, e-books are important.
- Printed books are easy to read.
- I think printed books are good as compared to e-books because while reading e-books our eyes are on screen, which can harm us.
- Printed books are time-consuming and costly; rather, e-books are cost-effective.
- There is a need to make a good supply chain of printed books.
- E-books are easy to carry anywhere and printed books are easy to copy for notes.
- E-books are available anytime and printed books are easy to learn
- E-books are cheap and easily available, but in the respondent's opinion, printed books are far better than e-books for many reasons.
- Printed books are more effective than e-books.
- Books that are costly need to be converted into e-book format so that they will be helpful for academic and other purposes.
- E-books can't replace printed books because they are uncomfortable and harmful to our bodies. Respondents said that they can't depend on e-books in the long run.
- Even though e-books are more convenient, printed books have their own importance.
- E-book is easy to handle. But topics read from print books can be remembered in mind for a long time was the viewpoints of some respondents.
- Both come with their own pros and cons; while e-books are easily accessible and convenient to carry along, they can cause strain on the eyes and add to our expenses for better devices, whereas printed books, though easy to read, are hard to carry and handle and not easily accessible. So a participant of the survey said, "We can share an e-book with anyone throughout the globe, but this is not possible in the case of a printed book."
- Printed books are convenient and better than e-books, as e-books have so many disadvantages that really affect the eyes and distractions that come with e-books; therefore, priority must be given to printed books over e-books opines one of the respondent.
- "I always prefer printed books for reading and also for study," said a participant.
- "I would like to prefer a printed book because to read it we remain focused and there is less chance of distraction," expressed a respondent.
- E-books are more convenient and cheaper than printed books.
- E-books are readily available for the readers. "We can read it anytime and anywhere but printed books are more in demand," said a participant.
- Both of them have their importance in their respective domain. Most of the time, e-books are more convenient and handy, but printed books become heavy and are not very portable. But the real essence of knowledge lies in printed books; e-books are merely a simplified version of the same, but they cannot and should not replace printed books in the near future.
- Printed books are convenient, easily accessible, and do not affect the eyes; we can have a personal touch; whereas e-books require a power source, i.e., a battery. So, a participant think printed books are far better than e-books.
- E-books have made it convenient for students to carry their content everywhere. However, printed books provide a better environment and are not hard on the eyes.
- Meanwhile, e-books affect the eye and cause severe headaches.

- Both e-books and printed books have different importance.
- E-book: It has portability and convenience. Reading a printed book does not require batteries or electronic devices.
- Both e-books and printed books have become an integral part of our modern life in this digital era.
- E-books are all about convenience, and print books are about emotions.
- E-books and printed books offer distinct reading experiences. E-books are digital, portable, and often more convenient for travel, while printed books provide a tactile and nostalgic experience, with the scent of paper and the satisfaction of turning physical pages.
- Printed book is easy to read.
- Printed book is very nice and easy to read.
- E-books are convenient to read and carry but come with drawbacks, such as the requirement of high-quality devices and distractions on devices.
- E-books are convenient and time-saving, and printed books do not require electronic devices.
- Both e-books and printed books will flourish in the future.

**Conclusion**

**Strategy for e-publishing**

- There is usually a delay of several months after an article is written before it is published in a print journal. This makes journals not an ideal format for disseminating the latest

research. However, scientific journals still play an important role in quality control, archiving papers, and establishing scientific credit. In general, the electronic material uploaded to the preprint database is still intended for eventual publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

- Electronic publishing (EP) is also known as online publishing, e-publishing, and web publishing; whereas the term electronic publishing is primarily used today to refer to the current offerings of online and web-based publishers, the term has a history of being used to describe the development of new forms of production, distribution, and user interaction with regard to computer-based production of text and other interactive media.
- The biggest advantages of adopting EP are earning extra revenues, global visibility of research knowledge and technologies, quality improvements of articles and authors, enhancement of readership and subscribers, efficiency gains, keeping up with market trends, and the biggest gain is going towards green publishing. It requires knowing the needs and demands of different stakeholders, i.e., authors, editors, librarians and readers. The e-publishing requires awareness of the various technology issues and alternatives, continual investment as technology develops, training of staff, and staff recruitment, to meet the demands of new systems and increased co-operation with publishers and other partners.

**Paper versus electronic publishing**

Table 6: Clear discrepancy between paper publishing and electronic publishing.

<b>Paper publishing</b>	<b>Electronic publishing</b>
Slow, post-based communications	Rapid e-mail and web-based communications
Large paper filing systems	Compact electronic filing systems
Hard to record and analyse journal information	Easy to record and analyse journal information
Editing on paper	Editing on screen
Typesetters re-key data	Typesetters use authors original data
Hard to retain control to re-use data	No warehousing required
High direct mailing costs	No direct mailing costs
Papers published together in issues	Papers published individually when ready according to predetermined schedules
Reader’s ‘notice’ a new issue has arrived	Readers alerted to new papers
One reader at a time in an institution	Many readers at a time in an institution
Need to search out citations	Direct linking to citations
Poor data on usage	Rich data on usage
Permanent	Impermanent
Payment by subscription only	Payment by subscription, licensing, pay per view
Hard for third party to disseminate data	Easy for third party to disseminate data

- It is worth noting that whilst authors can be considered content suppliers, they should be more accurately viewed as customers. With the exception of the very top journals, authors will go elsewhere to publish if they don't receive the service they demand.

### *Issues to consider*

There are a number of technological issues, which needs to be considered while going for the e-publishing. These can be:

#### 1. *Technology partners*

Does an organization go it alone or use a service provider? In the former case, the publisher has one less barrier between itself and its customers; it retains full control and is protected from the collapse of a third party, but the investment, both at the outset and in upgrading, is high. The second option means a loss of control but requires less initial investment and upgrading the service provider provides.

#### 2. *Staff*

Traditional paper publishing requires a high degree of administration. Total electronic publication automates many of these administrative duties allowing staff to concentrate on more complex, less routine duties. Even simple electronic alternatives can reduce the need for clerical support as there is no need to hand write a letter for it to be retyped; automated e-mail lessens clerical requirements. Staff will need to be trained and operations reviewed to allow for the new electronic systems and workflows. Staff will generally need to be more highly skilled and flexible, though staff costs overall will not be significantly reduced.

#### 3. *Content suppliers (authors and editors)*

Authors are generally keen on electronic publishing as it allows for speedier publication, and the use of their discs means less proofreading. It is possible to use highly developed manuscript tracking systems that automate all of the tasks involved in submitting and reviewing papers, e.g., acknowledging new papers, chasing referees, chasing papers being revised, and monitoring the referees' effectiveness and the journal's content. These systems can remove the 'black box' element of traditional publishing whereby authors never know where a paper is after they've submitted it other than by ringing up administrative staff. They give authors a better sense of control and free up staff time for more complex duties. The downside is the high cost of purchase, implementation, and use. Middle solutions are possible that are less costly

but less efficient. These tend to use e-mail as the basis of communications but still have a significant human need for administration. The 'black box' remains.

#### 4. *Production*

On screen editing from author's discs allows the publisher to retain more control of the data. Copy editors can tag with XML or SGML as they edit to allow the data to be published directly to the electronic medium. There is no need for typesetters or printers. Proof-reading costs can be reduced. Even if paper journals remain, editing on screen allows the editor to apply XML/SGML not the typesetter (or to edit XML tagged copy from typesetters). This enables the publisher to retain a high degree of data control. XML/SGML mark up also allows for easier re-use (re-purposing) of the data for other products and for retrieval by search engines.

Publication can be in PDF or HTML. The former is essentially identical to a printed page, is easy to read and print off, but has little added value. The latter is more interactive, and allows for better citation linking; but it is more expensive to produce and less easy to read when printed off.

#### 5. *Purchasers*

Traditional subscription models can sell journals produced and disseminated electronically. But as many people can read one copy, publishers may want to consider licensing use according to the number of potential users. An alternative might be to permit pay-per-view access whereby readers pay for only what they use (there might be different rates for read-only or for read and print). A mixture of all these revenue streams could be developed to allow for different purchaser requirements.

Note that a move away from subscription models, especially towards pay-per-view methods, would mean less up-front cash for the publisher and so make cash flow harder to control. The method of access is also important. IP access is more secure but requires that a librarian register the range of IP addresses with the publisher. This limits access by researchers working at home or abroad whose PCs are out of the IP range. Passwords enable access anywhere in the world but are less secure, and not many people want to remember all the passwords from different publishers. Purchasers also receive electronic journals on the day of publication rather than on the day of arrival after postage. They will no longer need to worry about non-delivery, and publishers will save the cost of repeat postage to

fulfill non-delivered issues.

#### 6. *Readers*

In a paper environment, readers have to visit the library to see if a new issue of a journal has arrived and if it is available. For electronic journals, readers can be alerted of a new issue and access it immediately from their desktop. They can also select whatever articles they want to be alerted to according to their interests. Search engines allow them to search a publisher's offerings for papers of interest.

#### 7. *Marketing*

Librarians can more easily monitor electronic journal usage. It is, therefore, important that a marketing strategy is developed to encourage the usage of your journal. This means attracting good authors and alerting readers to content that will interest them.

Electronic communications allow the development of targeted marketing to both readers and authors. Electronic Tables of Contents alert readers to new issues (or in a single article model, to just-published papers that interested them). Authors can be quickly and easily informed that their latest article is now published online. Authors in other publishers' journals can be quickly informed by mail of the advantages of publishing with you.

Early internet marketing has tended to give away material for free until a critical mass of users has accrued. At this point, producers have tried to charge for the material. The success of this strategy has generally been mixed and a downside has been an assumption that everything on the internet is free.

#### 8. *Operations*

All operations inevitably have to become customer-focused: production departments must streamline operations to provide rapid production from the receipt of a manuscript; publishing departments must work with editors to streamline the peer-review process to ensure decisions are made more quickly; IT departments must develop user-friendly software that stores data for easy analysis but which fits in with internal and external operational requirements.

The functional approach, whereby papers were passed from one department to another with as little communication as possible, will not work in an electronic environment.

As with all strategic developments, moving to electronic publishing requires making choices together with a firm aim of where the organization is going and why. Developing an electronic publishing strategy requires a root and branch review of all

operations in all functions. It is essential to be aware of what your suppliers and purchasers want, and what you have the resources to provide. In all but the wealthiest of publishers, a mixed paper-electronic economy will develop, but even for a mixed approach, operations should be reviewed to ensure all areas are acting in alliance to meet the customer's needs and the organization's aims.

#### ***Perception on e-books and printed books***

Through survey we have concluded that people have happily accepted e-book but they are practically and emotionally connected to printed books. So, in the long run, both printed books and e-books will survive together.

More than 50% of the respondents of the survey are in favour of both printed books and e-books. Even the future of printed books in academic institution is going to be alive.

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## An Analysis of the Folk Dances of the Baiga Tribe

NAGENDRA KUMAR SINGH<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Every culture and community has its own representation in society through its internal traditional culture. In the same way, Baiga tribal community, which is one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), has its own tribal identity. They have their own traditions, which is followed by every member of the community. This is part and parcel of their tradition. Baigas have their own traditional dance form and songs is performed by community members. They are not formally trained but their traditions makes them to be the folk dancers. Every member of the community learns the dance form reaching at the certain age. It is in their religious belief, customs and rituals. Sometimes they perform folk dance to please the Gods and Goddesses they worship. Both men and women equally participate in the dances. In some of the dances, only men participate and in some dances only female participates. In some dance forms, neighbouring village of the same community also participates. Tapadi Dance, Bilma Dance, Dussehra Dance, Reena Dance, Suwa Dance, Saila Dance, Vivah Nritya, Bhadauni Nritya, Parghouni Nritya and Chherta Nritya are some of the folk dances, of the Baiga's. In this paper, exploration of some of the major folk dances of the Baiga tribe is undertaken. The present paper aims to discuss the traditional folk dances of the Baiga tribe and their importance.

**Keywords:** Community, Culture, Customs, Folk dance, Tradition

### Introduction

The movements and expressions are fixed in different forms of dance and thus are carried by the new generations afterwards and it becomes a tradition then. Different forms of dance are a great legacy of the tribal people. There is not much written proof of the tribes about their lifestyle and many are vanished. One can know about the tribe through their folk culture and tradition. Their folk dances speak about their culture, their feelings, their happiness, and even their sorrows. Drinks and dances are two important socio-cultural and religious aspects of tribal life (Tiwari, 1997). They perform dance and songs in their every ritual. It is sacred part of their tradition. They believe that through their dances and songs, gods and goddesses will be pleased and will forgive them from any sin.

However, in present-day India, the term “tribe” holds minimal cultural or social significance. Instead, it has evolved into a rallying point for political awareness within the country. Similar to caste or regional identity, tribal identity is rapidly transforming into a political instrument that symbolizes demands for special treatment,

aspirations for separation, and, in certain instances, acts as an obstacle to national unity. Culture was created by man, yet it has its own limitations and carrying capacity. For the smooth existence of humans throughout the world, a new phenomenon called globalisation evolved with the rise in material and moral density. In terms of the globalization process, it is expressed in many perspectives with reference to various people. The benefits of globalisation have not completely reached indigenous regions.

The vivid cultural history of indigenous tribes all around the world is captured in the captivating form of tribal dance. These dances, which are steeped in history and custom, demonstrate how closely people are connected to the natural world. Within many cultures, tribal dancing has significant social, spiritual, and ceremonial importance in addition to serving as an entertainment. The complex intertwining of tribal dance with nature mirrors the deep relationships indigenous cultures have with their surroundings. These dances frequently feature natural components like animals, celestial entities, or other occurrences as a tribute to the ecology that

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supports their existence. Tribal dance honours the balance and interdependence between people and the natural world by emulating the motions and traits of diverse species or natural forces. It acts as a reminder of the high regard and regard for the environment that these people have.

Baiga dance is meant for different aspects of the life. These tribes dance during birth, they dance during death. During sowing and harvesting season, they perform different dance forms to start the new cropping season. It makes them happy to perform dance during harvesting. It is the part and parcel of their culture and tradition (Tribe, 2011). There are many dance forms performed by the Baigas. In some dances, all the member of the society takes part equally. During their communities' performance, only the same community member will take part in the dance form. Other community's members are not allowed. "Mahua" (Country Liquor) drink is their favourite drink, which make them happy and energises them to perform better. They get happy if someone visits them and ask about their dance forms. Most of their dances and songs begin during the Dussehra festival. Saila and Parghouni dances are performed by males only and some are performed exclusively by females such as Suwa, Reena and Tapadi. All males and females perform Karma, Dussehra, Jharpat, Bhadouni and Bilma dances together.

Dance is an offering to the environment around Baiga, to continue their healthy life. "They claim that their dance is a kind of prayer to nature and its mighty Gods and it is equivalent to a prayer that invokes, propitiates and gives thanks" said one of the Baigas of Anuppur district in Madhya Pradesh, India.

Tribal dance is a testament to the richness and diversity of indigenous cultures worldwide (Jain & Sharma, 2009). It serves as a gateway to understanding the values, traditions, and spirituality of these communities. Preserving cultural identity, carrying spiritual and ceremonial significance, celebrating the natural world, and fostering social cohesion are just some of the many aspects that make tribal dance a remarkable art form. As we appreciate and respect tribal dance, we contribute to the preservation and appreciation of indigenous cultures, ensuring that their invaluable heritage continues to inspire and enrich our global cultural tapestry (Premi & Mitra, 2014).

#### **About Baiga tribe**

Baigas are one of the primitive tribes. They are also categorised in the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs). Still in most part of the country,



Fig. 1. Baigas dance in their traditional new attire with men and women

they reside in forests and remote areas. They are mainly found in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and neighbouring states. The present study has been taken from the Baiga of the Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh. In Madhya Pradesh, they reside in the forests and remote areas of Shahdol, Anuppur, Rajendragram, Baiga Chak and Chada, etc.

Elwin said that the Baigas were the country's original founders (Elwin, 1955). Baigas are one of the primitive tribes that use pre-agricultural technologies, with low literacy rates. Baigas have their own material culture because they live in jungles or away from the mainstream society where no proper infrastructure exists (Elwin, 2007).

The heart of India, Madhya Pradesh, makes up the highest proportion (4,14,526) of Baiga tribes (Census 2011). The Indian government's report shows their population growth over the past decade; the other demographic data shows disappointing figures among them for the level of literacy (Singh & Singh, 2020). According to DN Majumdar, the tribe is "a collection of families or common group bearing common names, the members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos, regarding marriage professions and have developed a well assured system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations."

In Madhya Pradesh, among the 4,14,526 Baiga tribes, 2,07,588 are males and 2,06,938 are females. Most of the Baigas live in rural areas. (Singh *et al.*, 2019). There has not been much improvement in their economic life but there has been a lot of change in their lifestyle (India, 2019). The majority of the Baiga live in rural areas according to census results. According to the Anuppur census data (one of Madhya Pradesh's Baiga tribe dwelling districts), there is a total of 3,58,543 Scheduled Tribe population, of which only 30,211 are Baiga tribes (Singh & Mishra, 2019). They are very dispersed

and settled in difficult geographical terrain in rural areas at a distance from each other as there is no proper road to them (Mondal, 2022).

### Review of literature

Pattnaik (2022) discusses about the folk dance. He explains that it is a type of dance that depicts the culture and way of life of a particular nation or region. Ethnic dances are not all folk dances. Folk dance is a very significant aspect of our tradition and identity, and ritual dances or dances with a ceremonial basis are not regarded to be folk dances.

Malathi (2020) discusses about a vast variety of dance events that are now performed in India under the heading of contemporary dance. It includes dance routines created for Indian movies, contemporary Indian ballet, and other artists' experiments with traditional classical and folk dance forms. Their works have included songs related to the Ramayana, Lanka Dahan, Panchatantra, and Shiva–Parvati, among other things.

According to Olvera (2008), cultural dance is a useful kind of exercise that supports the physical and mental health of groups of people who often participate in less physical activity. To further understand how and when ethnic dance could be employed to encourage physical activity, more research is required. Practitioners should think about non-traditional kinds of physical exercise that are given in collaboration with community organisations (Olvera, 2008).

According to Pulnik (2010), dance occupies an important place in the social structure of all human cultures throughout history. The commonly accepted definition of dance describes it as a means of human expression through movement. However, dance extends beyond mere movement. While movement is indeed a crucial aspect of dance, it can be regarded as a unique artistic form that relies on the expressive gestures of the human body (Pulnik, 2010).

In order to examine the present status of study in the area of Indian dance from the best possible viewpoint, the article by Chatterjee (1996) talks about the research started in the 1940s and 1950s that led dance research in a certain direction, and continues with some noticeable alterations. Thus, the dancing body and the rehabilitation of technique have received the majority of research attention. In this article the study is embodied, taking an embodied, kinaesthetic shape, allowing for the specification and formulation of specifics of a performative tradition in order to develop criteria of 'correctness' in technique, of *angasuddhi* (purity of movement), and *saustabha* (purity of line)

(Chatterjee, 1996).

According to Georgios (2017), the tribal Greek traditional dances may be taught using the music-movement education and creative dance technique, which can assist to preserve and pass on a significant amount of our cultural inheritance to future generations. Only through knowing about their country's history and culture will future generations be able to discover their own identity and make the best of the past in order to live more happily today and build a brighter tomorrow (Georgios, 2017).

According to Soni and Pradhan (2017), a Baiga's daily activities include singing, dancing, and music. Their music and lyrics are passionate and full of love, and their dances are fascinating. They contribute to greater social harmony and lessen social negativity and boredom. Additionally, a uniform has been created for the entire troupe to wear as a distinguishing feature. Their dancing technique is also modified to meet the needs of modern auditoriums and amphitheatres (Soni & Pradhan, 2017).

### Research objectives

- To explore the various dimensions of folk dance of the Baigas in India that promotes inter-cultural dimension of Indian society as a whole.
- To investigate the influence of dance and lifestyle on the Baiga people.
- To understand the role of dances in festivals.

### Research methodology

A Research methodology is required to examine the performances holistically, combining anthropology (using participant observation and interview) with folkloristic methodologies (textual and contextual research). Different techniques can be integrated through a multi-dimensional view of historical background of dances. This gets particularly evident when it comes to studies of ritual and performance.

Secondary data collection method and interview were conducted by the researcher. The information related to Baigas is mostly taken from websites and journals, etc.

### *Some of the Folk Dances of the Baiga Tribe*

#### *Parghouni Dance/Nritya*

Baigas enjoys each and every moment with joy and cherishment. They feel happy with their small community and follow their rituals strictly. In every ritual, there is dance and song. From birth to death, they have their own folk tradition. Parghouni dance is their traditional dance drama performed during

marriages. It boasts of beauty and chivalry. It is implemented by party of the bridegroom on the way to the house of the bride. When the Barat approached near the house of the bride, the family of the bride receive the Barat. Parghouni dance is performed during that moment. This tradition is seen in many communities.

The male members of the wedding party begin dancing with sticks in their hands and Pharsa (a type of arm with a flat sharp edge and a wooden grip) (Mathur, 1994). They switch firearms and demonstrate their combat abilities. The men dance furiously to the loud sound of the drums, making various face movements and mouth-swirling sounds. The elephant is occupied by the bridegroom's father. His amusing actions and gestures excite the audiences who have gathered to watch this dance drama and performance.

The marriage party members often behave as warriors and make various kinds of movements, pretending to be in some combat. Often, they perform dance around the elephant making different movements. Their mime and mimicry is all about creating an atmosphere of fun and showing off their bravery. The marriage party is given proper reception by the side of the bride after Parghouni ceremony. The bride's father comes along and receives his Samadhi (Subramanyam & Mohan, 2006).

#### *Suwa Dance/Nritya*

This dance starts in the months of October and November, during Gaura Vivah. Baiga people dance in the daytime during these days, and sing Gaura Geet with great pleasure at night. It is a feminine dance. They do not use any type of musical instrument in this dance form. They just jump and clap with rhythm. A beautifully painted wooden parrot is held in a well decorated colourful earthen pot or basket with the sheaf of new paddy crop. Paddy grains are kept in the basket at certain places / parts. One of the girls in the group is known as Sugi who holds the pot on her head. They go and dance right in front of every village house. The women dance in circular motion. They get farewell from each house and blessed with grains in exchange. They keep the grains in a basket. Sometimes the householders also give cash to them, which is distributed equally among the dancers.

#### *Dussehra Dance/Nritya*

The dance form generally starts from Dussehra and ends during Diwali. This is a dance of marriage-eligible young boys and girls, provides them with the opportunity to select their life partners from the

matches available. Dussehra dance is named after the festival of Dussehra, which is also called as Vijayadashmi.

For performing dance, unmarried girls and boys with some elderly couple group together. Males and females have their own different dance groups. If a village's female group goes on to another village, then only the males of that particular village join them for dance. In the reverse situation, if a village's male group goes to another village upon invitation, then only the females of that particular village do this dance (Babu & Panda, 2016).

They joke during this dance party, and also drink Mahua liquor. The elderly women play a great role in this dance. They are the connecting figure to bring the young boys and girls eligible for marriage. The young boys and girls are then introduced. It is a great time for the girls and boys to know each other during this dance period. The male dancers go back to their villages. The villagers welcome them and offer drinks and the dance starts again. It is great opportunity for the males and females to choose the life partners of their choice and later it is arranged by the elders.

#### *Chherta Nritya*

The Baiga community performs a dance play called Chherta Nritya that is similar to the elephant dance. Various masks depicting wild animals are used in this dance. Drums play loudly and rhythmically in the background. The Hindu festival of Chherchhera, which takes place in the Shukla-paksha of the Hindu month of Poush (January-February), is when Chherta Nritya is commemorated. The majority of those who take part in this dance are kids and teenagers.

The dancing troupe performs the Chherta dance while touring the hamlet during the festival. The phrase "Chher Chhera Chherata, Kothhi Ke Dhan La Herte Hera" (which translates to "Chher Chhera Chherata, bring wealth to our house") is chanted by the crowd. Following a successful grain harvest, the entire community congregates around water body to prepare supper. At this moment, a few kids pretend to be crows and try to steal the prepared meal. Other kids take on the role of guardians, keeping the birds away and securing the food. The play comes to an end at this point, and everyone joins in for group supper.

#### *Reena Dance/Nritya*

The Reena Nritya is performed by Baiga females. It is mainly danced during the festival of Deepawali. On the day of Deepawali, the Baiga people assemble in the morning in the open ground.

Some people keep fast on this day and those who keep fast have to cross between the calf legs. Later, a troupe of female dancers visits every single village house. They visit every home in the community. During the Reena dance, they would maintain a Dauri (bamboo basket) in the centre. Rice is kept in the basket. Parrot that is made up of wood are kept above it and some incense sticks lit on it. People give grains to the dancers, which at the end of this festival is distributed equally among the dancers. They play their musical instruments during this and also sing songs.

#### *Bilma Dance/Nritya*

Bilma simply means disengagement or desertion. It can be called as Vidai dance. In the wave of anticipation both boys and girls dance together. This is crowded group dance performed with no set structure. After the dance they chant emotional Bilma songs. This is danced at the wedding or at the bride's farewell time. The boys dance enthusiastically and the girls dance here and there, just shifting their hands. It shows the girls' sorrow at a bride's departure from the village. Because a girl's marriage keeps the lads in the hamlet happy, they dance with zest and vigour. The Nagada players and dancers assemble near the Dhuliyas for dancing and screaming "Kiring-Kiring" (Mathiyazhagan *et al.*, 2007) on Nagadas, the Dhuliyas use a rapid rhythm. Everyone starts dancing right away, mixing guys and girls, stooping low and leaping up and down swiftly.

#### *Bhadouni Dance/Nritya*

This is just one type of marital dance. Once the bridal party reaches the village, the female leaders perform this dance, while the Baratis stay in the house's courtyard. One of the common trend seen in marriages are abusing to the Baratis in the form of song, which is also seen among Baiga. For in-laws, the women use the foul or violent terms to taunt them and dance on the beats of nagada and timki for sometime.

#### *Tapadi Dance/Nritya*

Tapadi primarily features female dancers and does not incorporate any drum rhythms or musical instruments in its performance. In this dancing style, just clapping is performed by moving here and there in two rows; hence, it is named Tapadi from the Thapedi word for clapping (Kunda, 1973). They sometimes face one other and sometimes glance in different directions. This sort of dance can be seen in many cultures. Finally, they form a circle and clap their way around each other. Tapadi dance

incorporates three distinct genres of dance forms. First, the females form two lines and clap to each other. After a moment, one row of females returns to the other row in second formation, and dancers bend their knees, wave their palms, and applaud enthusiastically. Finally, in the third arrangement, all the rows connect to form a broad circle facing down in the centre to repeatedly bend down and stand up.

#### *Vivah Dance/Nritya (Marriage Dance)*

As the name suggests this is the marriage folk dance of the Baigas. During their marriage ceremony the community performed this dance and enjoys the function. They assembled together at the house to dance and sing. During the function they lift the bridegroom (Dulha) in lap and dance. Commonly, they call it 'Dulha Nachauni'. When they reach to the brides home, they perform the same dance with the bride. They lift the bride in the lap and dance vigorously. This is Dulhan Nachauni. They enjoy the dance with full energy and enthusiast. Lifting Dulha and Dulhan are the part of the rituals of the Baiga marriage. Many other dances are also performed like Bilma, Bhadouni, and Parghouni. In this dance the boys and girls attractively dress up with fine pairs of dress and ornaments on the occasion of marriage (Gautam, 2011). While dancing in Dussehra, Bilma dance is also played between the girls and boys of two separate villages in inter-village.

#### **Findings and analysis**

The wide classification of indigenous and extremely diverse practises based on the application of terms like "classical," folk and tribal to the fluid reality. The process with "tribal dance" as a notion, a category, and a reality was then examined. All of these categories seem to be a component of "heritage making."

In India, the idea of "tribal dance" has to be particularly examined and critically analysed. The ancient opposition of caste, Hindu society, and "peoples of the plain" to the word "tribe" is widely recognised.

However, several ethnographers (including Riskey in 1901, O'Malley in 1911, Elwin in 1952, and Ghurye in 1963) saw their blending with the Hindus and interpreted it from various theoretical perspectives. The word "tribe" originally had associations with "hill" and "forest" regions and its "primitive" residents, whose distinguishing traits included "Dancing" "playing," and "developing music."

Specific dance styles were given on the occasion related to it (e.g., "Bilma dance,"



Fig. 2 Baigas dancing and singing with drum (Dholak)



Fig. 3. Baiga tribe dancing with mask (Mukhauta)



Fig. 4. Baiga women in their traditional attire in Reena dance form

“Paraghouni dance,” and many others), festivals (e.g., “Dussehra dance,” “Reena dance,” etc.), or ceremonies (e.g., “Suva dance”, “Chhetra dance”). The phrase “tribal dance” seems to denote some level of “generalisation,” covering “very different” phenomena of social and ceremonial movements and activities.

The movements and expressions are fixed in different forms of dance. They follow their tradition from one generation to another. Baiga people lives in jungle and they strictly follow their traditional culture. Different forms of dance are a great legacy of the Baiga people. They try to convey every message through dance and song. It has been found that they do not expect more.

#### Further scope of research

This research has presented the groundwork for the traditional folk dance of the Baiga tribe. There is much work that remains to be completed and many

other detailed aspects that can be used in improving this research. There are a number of research areas that can be elaborated upon as suggested below:-

1. It would also be interesting to study the role of dress in different dance style of Baigas.
2. Another aspect to consider in future work is to associate the dancing pattern and recent changes because of socio-cultural impact in music, singing techniques, instruments and dancing pattern.

#### Conclusion

Within indigenous communities, tribal dancing is essential for promoting social cohesiveness and a feeling of togetherness. It bridges socioeconomic, gender, and age divides to bring people together. Tribal dance fortifies ties and fosters a sense of belonging through synchronizing motions that build bonds and interpersonal interactions. Individuals can strengthen their sense of cultural identity

and cohesion by participating in group dancing activities.

The tribals are very happy with their lifestyle. But here question arises since the lack of facilities make them backward (economically) so they are not able to live like mainstream communities. Once they will be provided with basic needs at their place, this will protect their tradition as well as their culture; however, coming in touch with the mainstream communities mixing them with their tradition and culture. There is not much written proof of the tribes about their lifestyle and many are vanished. Tribes are recognised through their traditional values. Their culture and heritage is part and parcel of it. Some dances are meant for only men and some for only woman. For certain dances the entire member of the group participates fairly. Only the same group member can take part in the dance form during their appearance at their societies. Members of other communities are not permitted. “Mahua” (country liquor) drink is their favorite drink. The dances like Suwa, Tapadi and Reena are performed only by female members while the Saila, Parghouni, etc. are performed by men. Both males and females dance together performing Karma, Dussehra, Jharpat, Bhadouni, and Bilma. Dance is an offer to the Baiga environment, to continue their healthy life. They did dance to express joy and not for any other reason. But now it has been seen that this indigenous community is getting away from their tradition. It is a matter of study and research.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest. Most of the dance-related aspects are discussed with the Baiga tribe by Vivek Kumar, who is a Research Scholar of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak.

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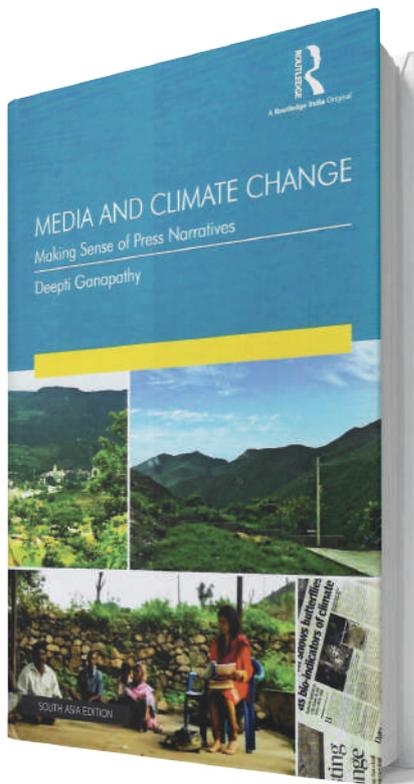
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# BOOK REVIEW

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## Media and Climate Change - Making Sense of Press Narratives By Deepti Ganapathy



*MEDIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE - Making Sense of Press Narratives*

Author: Deepti Ganapathy

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This book looks at the media's coverage of climate change and investigates its role in representing the complex realities of climate uncertainties and its effects on communities and the environment. This book explores the socio-economic and cultural understanding of climate issues and the influence of environment

communication via the news and the public response to it. It also examines the position of the media as a facilitator among scientists, policy makers and the public. Drawing extensively from case studies, personal interviews, comparative analysis of international climate coverage and a close reading of newspaper reports and archives, the author studies the pattern and frequency of climate coverage in the Indian media and their outcomes. With a special focus on the Western Ghats, the book discusses the political rhetoric, policy parameters and events that trigger a debate about development over biodiversity crisis and environmental risks in India. The media has a critical role in engaging the public on the implications of climate change. This book plays an important role in setting out the evolving recognition of this role. Most people understand key issues based on what they see in the media; this places an important responsibility on journalists to be evidence-based in their representations.

This book will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of environmental studies, especially climate change, media studies, public policy and South Asian studies, as well as conscientious citizens who deeply care for the environment. This book provides a balanced and informed analysis of India's environmental governance that focuses on managing the impacts of development while staring at a biodiversity crisis. With a much-needed positive tone and in a lucid manner, the reader gains a deep and rich insight on the conundrum that the media faces while mediating between the policy makers and environmentalists as they unravel the multidimensional and complex nature of climate change in India.

This comprehensive book looks at climate change in the unique and fascinating locale -

the Western Ghats, home to around 50 million people. This community is nestled in an ecosystem that is defined as one of the world's eight "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity. How does climate change impact this vulnerable part of the world, and how is it understood by its inhabitants? Focusing more on the latter question, the author explores press narratives and media reporting of climate change and how they impact public and political discourse.

The media act as a historical record relevant to its readership. Far from merely an observer, the media is both an outcome and an antecedent of social debate. Recognizing this duality, it is vital to recognize that the media is an organisational actor whose output is subject to multiple political pressures. The book appropriately takes an expansive view of what we call 'media' today, examining both traditional and digital media. And, in a very interesting twist, the book explores how the 'digital divide' poses challenges for marginalised communities to have a voice in the climate debate in India. The author explores how they construe and make sense of the news coverage related to climate change and how can they become effective activists in this narrative if the media would mine them as a credible source.

The reality of not being able to communicate the most pressing issue of our times is disturbing. A more disturbing fact is that the implications of climate change are not reaching the most vulnerable sections of our society. The hands that grow our food are not empowered to understand the shifting dynamics of environmental issues. Our farmers and marginalized labour force do not understand that 'no rain' or 'more rain' is a cause of concern that could knockout their very survival.

When the capital of India is held to ransom by smog for a couple of days every year and media reporting focuses on blame game and sensationalisation, it is a cause of concern. When news reports relating to climate change appear in the columns of main editions or are splashed on prime-time television only if there is a natural disaster, there is a political agenda or the news warrants coverage because world leaders are meeting in Paris or Bonn it is worrisome.

The media's stance to cover news related to climate change has to shift gears from doomsday reporting to sustainable reporting. The media must feel a sense of their responsibility in empowering readers to make them feel a part of the problem and urge them to find a solution. This will lead towards 'Climate Action.' An empowered reader

will feel encouraged to know the policies put forth by his government, and he will take active part in the process of policy formulation. An empowered citizenry will strength the process of policy making. Governments have a major role to play in shaping the outcome of climate change, and they need to feel a sense of urgency, which can be brought out through consistent media reporting and people's intervention in the policy process.

This book is an opportunity to narrate through qualitative and quantitative work on the intersections between media reporting of climate change and its implications on policy decisions. The major area of authors' work is situated in the Western Ghats. The Western Ghats can be considered as the microcosm of biodiversity. It is India's rainforests a thriving ecosystem in the southwestern peninsula of India, rich in its biodiversity, a treasure house of endemic species, spanning an area of 1,64,280 square kilometers.

Journalists, editors and media owners have a critical role to play in the narrative of climate change. The role of the media in addressing the challenges of global climate change should not be restricted to science or environmental coverage. This is an issue that is interdisciplinary at its core affecting economies, communities and policy decisions. The role of the media must shift from disaster narratives to developing solutions.

Through this book, the author tries to draw attention to the major themes and frames that emerge in media reporting. Journalists are faced with challenges from a range of actors on the field, in the corridors of power and inside their establishments. Climate change is a complex area of reporting, and unraveling the complexities of this issue is a daunting task that the media is facing. Today, climate change is not only an environmental issue, but it has also become a people's issue and calls for action to be taken from ground-up.

The media can demonstrate a key role in shaping the discourse of climate change by communicating frequently upon public perception and policy agenda. This will influence the way in which climate change will be understood and acted upon by the public at large. In doing so, the author has not been able to position this book based on international relations, trade and economics, as well as emerging and developed nations. This is where scholars who are working within their disciplines must engage in cross-national and interdisciplinary studies to unpack the layers of complexities that could lead to

region-specific understanding of this problem; so that policy interventions can be much more meaningful and specific.

The time is not too far away when future generations may never know the taste of honey, hear the croak of a frog, drink pure water from a mountain stream, smell the forest air or see a butterfly flitting across clear blue skies. They may be on their way to developing applications that give us a whiff of this sensory element. Through the insights that this book provides, the media industry can invest in specialised coverage at the intersection of climate change, environmental policy and law to focus on covering the politics and policy of climate change, to help key decision-makers distill climate and environmental policy issues.

This book highlights the central role played by press narratives not only in speaking for the environment and the nature of climate change but also in putting the spotlight on the crisis within

newsrooms regarding the editorial policies, such as the stance taken by a publication to choose to report or not to report on climate change. This book expands the possibility of providing access to mainstream reporting of climate change and climate action to journalists wanting to do so and to showcase to the reader the spectrum of decision-making and implications that can come out of relentless reporting by the media on the process of governance and policy decisions.

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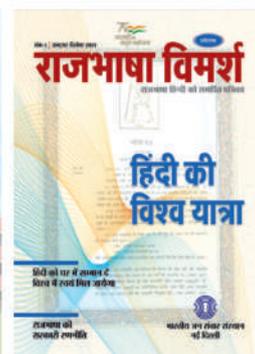
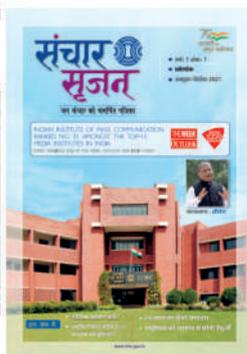
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### EDITING STAGE

If the paper is accepted for publication, it has to go through at least two editing stages. It may also be noted that all the accepted papers are subject to the modifications/alterations required by the Editors at any stage of the editing.

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