

A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EMPOWERMENT OF SLUM DWELLERS IN KARNATAKA STATE

VENKATACHALA V S

Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Bangalore University, Bangalore
Email - dr.munivenkatappa@gmail.com

Abstract: *The social media have emerged as the alternative media of communication, participation, emancipation and empowerment of people in the world. The social media have become multi-faceted sources and resources of development centric communication in the new millennium. The social media application is top of the agenda for the stakeholders of social justice, economic equity, sustainable development and empowerment of marginalized sections of society. The social media have become effective means of social networking in all walks of life. The media scholars, scientists and technocrats have explored new avenues for better social media application for social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in the globe. The present investigation was carried out in Karnataka state to analyze the role of social media in social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women. Women Empowerment The subject of empowerment of slum dwellers assumes great significance in the present times. The question of empowerment of slum dwellers is now on the international agenda. The empowerment of women can take place at a hierarchy of different levels- individual, household, community and societal. There are also other progressive legislations which protect gender justice and equity in India. The Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Rights are the basis for making special provisions for the empowerment of women in India. The goal of empowerment of slum dwellers cannot be achieved in the absence of political will, progressive legislations, women-specific development projects and allied supportive measures (Mason, 1986:15). The state is responsible for creating a healthy environment to develop the skill, entrepreneurship and personality of women through meaningful initiatives. The development agencies, NGOs and media institutions are responsible for the attainment of the goal of economic empowerment of slum dwellers. Lack of strong movement and pro-active initiatives for women empowerment are primarily responsible for the disempowerment of slum dwellers in India (Dutta and Bhakta, 2017:11). Absence of holistic and pro-active perspective on development interventions has impeded the progress of women (Srivastava, 2018:20). A national strategy for the security and progress of women can be designed and implemented in India. A transformative approach to the empowerment of slum dwellers needs to be developed in India.*

Key Words: *empowerment, Slum dwellers, Social media, women.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Communication has progressed from symbolic drawings of Indus Civilization to Emperor Ashoka's rock edits to phonemic or etymological symbols to much recent finger printing. A significant revolutionary step in the development of written communication was embodied with the invention of the printing press, which allowed a rapid reproduction of written materials. The breakthrough came in with broadcasting which in India can be traced to British period which saw the growth of radio. It was the inexorable television that swept nation with all galore. Television is undoubtedly the king of entertainment and in the flow of information. The biggest advantage of TV is that, since it is a visual medium, its impact transcends without social, cultural, economical and educational barriers; specially, in a country like India where each one hails from a diverse background. This is one medium that is preferred across all sects and region as most popular form of entertainment. A global Deloitte study on 'Media democracy' in 2010 covering 2000 respondents confirms this domination and throws some interesting insights. As per the study, TV remains a favorite media source for most consumers across age irrespective of domicile: 92% of the respondents rank 'watching TV' as their top media source (Deloitte Study, 2010). Digitization is here to stay. Being digital, will bring in the capability to persistently enhance services, which will largely increase the number of channels and enhance the quality of reception. This will also enable the growth of new services.

Like, pay-per-view, video-on-demand, e-commerce and Internet etc. The picture and sound quality in digital is indisputably superior to that of analogue. With the present Indian government mooted 'digital India' the beginning of this new revolution is only going to grow by leaps and bounds. The major ways today where audiences receive television services are:

- Terrestrial transmission
- Cable TV
- Direct-to-Home (DTH) Satellite
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) or Ethernet borne broadband TV

Of all the new digital technologies, the one that has picked up fast and is growing strong is Direct to Home technology popularly addressed as DTH. The DTH service is a digital satellite service that provides television services direct to subscribers anywhere in the country. Since, it makes use of wireless technology, programs are sent to the subscriber's television direct from the satellite, eliminating the need for cables and any cable infrastructure. This is particularly valuable in remote and difficult to reach areas where cable and in many cases, terrestrial television services are poor or nonexistent. The mushrooming of small-sized Ku-band antennae emerging on rooftops not only in metros but also in rural areas reminds us of initial days of Doordharshan when DD antennas mushroomed all over the country. The tempo at which DTH is growing shows the trend where, DTH dish gazing at the sky is bound to escalate in the coming years. Usha Manchanda rightly terms it as 'Invasion from Skies' (Manchanda, 1998).

The total number of TV owning households in India which was estimated at 153 million in 2011 -12 has increased to 168 million in 2014. Out of this, Cable and Satellite households are 145 million and Digital connection households are 78 million as per TAM Media Research 2014. The digital household has seen 8% growth in past one year.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The social media have become effective sources and resources from the points of view of social networking and social capital development of marginalized sections in modern times. Prominent studies concerning the present topic of investigation include – Mason, (1986:15), Kapur (2001:12), Bhatia (2002:01), Biju (2003:02), Deshpande (2005:07), Venkatesh (2006:23), Choudhury (2007:04), Vasanthakumari (2008:22), Rajan (2009:17), Desai (2010:06), Kumar (2011:14), Thakur (2012:21), Rathnamma (2013:18), Cornwall (2014:05), Shettar (2015:19), Drame (2016:10), Dishman (2017:08), Krasnova et. al. (2017:13), Dutta and Bhakta, (2017:11), Srivastava (2018:20), Zaei et. al. (2018:24), Premlata and Jukariya (2018:16), Donohoe (2018:09) and Zarya (2018:25). The synthesis of the available literature confirms that the subject of social media intervention for social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in Karnataka state has not drawn the attention of researchers to a considerable extent

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Scientific research on the nature and forms of discrimination and social exclusion faced by women and weaker sections is essential in modern times. The social media have emerged as effective means of participatory communication and development of the women in India. Social media are widely used for the social networking, social capital development and empowerment of slum dwellers in the globe. The review of literature clearly indicates that adequate scientific investigations were not carried out in India on the role of social media in the social networking, social capital development and empowerment of slum dwellers in Karnataka state. Hence, the present study assumes great professional significance in a pluralistic society like India.

The advent of satellite television in the 1990s is a watershed in the history of television broadcasting in this country as it changed the television landscape forever and led to issues that we are still grappling with. Indian television suddenly became much for entertainment driven (Page and Crawley, 2001; Singhal and Rogers, 2001; Singha, 1998). Various theories and research suggests that mass communication can act as a positive agent of social change for some people while impeding and obstructing change for others (Johnson, 2000). It is seen many research studies which relate to media effect on human psychology where it states that, media creates a psychic mobility among people living in countryside societies in turn, resulting in geographical and social mobility owing to people's longing for modern life and salaried employment of the cities. The image created by media more so of television brings about a longing for change in rural areas. This change in behaviour and attitudes results in change of culture of a society, which slowly adopts new ways and means (Thussu, 2009). There are few popular studies like that of Binod Agrawal, Melissa Butcher, Arjun Appadurai who deal with cultural dimension of transnational television the focus is more on content. There are many research studies that talk of media influence on culture with reference to urban areas like media influence on urban youth in Karnataka, Devdas & Ravi (2013) , Firoz (2014) and Jha (2013) speaks of influence of DTH in Dehli Metropolis. When we look into the changing space of culture in rural context as satellite television is making direct inroads into rural areas and since India is opening more towards multinational media entrepreneurs and stretching its arms towards digital India where the vision is to get every village connected digitally, television viewing will undergo a sea change and thus will also affect the changing cultural space in the society.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

With the role of social media in social networking, social capital development and empowerment of slum dwellers in Karnataka state being the thrust area, the research proposes to:

- Assess the access of social media among the slum dwellers in Karnataka state.
- Analyze the role of social media in the social networking of slum dwellers in Karnataka state.
- Evaluate the role of social media in the social capital development of slum dwellers in Karnataka state.
- Explore the role of social media in the empowerment of slum dwellers in Karnataka state; and
- Suggest appropriate strategies for better social media intervention for the empowerment of slum dwellers in Karnataka state.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY :

The present investigation was carried out by (Chakraborty, 2016:03) on the conceptual framework offered by the scholar who has found a positive relationship between social media centered social networking and social capital development in Indian context.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The present study was conducted on the basis of survey research methodology. Questionnaire, interview and non-participant observation were the major tools of primary data collection. About 360 respondents were approached for the purpose of primary data collection. Incidental sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling techniques were followed in selecting the respondents. These methods of selection also give significantly correct results.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY :

Accessible Social Media - Facebook (100%), Whatsapp (100%), YouTube (92.78%), Instagram (87.78%), Messenger (87.22%), Yahoo.com (86.67%), Twitter (86.11%) and Google+ (75.56%) are accessible to the respondents. Inaccessible Social Media - PLP Community Hub (100%), Meetup (100%), Medium (100%), Kik (100%), Ask Dot (100%), XING (100%), e-Telegram (100%), Flickr (85.0%), Tumblr (80.56%), Talk (79.44%), Pinterest (78.89%), Quora (77.22%), Snapchat (76.11%), Reddit (71.67%), Skype (71.67%), Wechat (70.56%), Hike (66.67%) and LinkedIn (66.11%) are not accessible to the respondents.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF SLUM DWELLERS

- Social media have enabled the slum dwellers to assert their rights and privileges (87.78%).
- Social media have enabled the slum dwellers to understand the issues and concerns of their lives (73.89%).
- Social media have enabled the slum dwellers to improve social mobilization for empowerment (87.78%).
- Social media have enabled the slum dwellers to participate actively in progressive social movements for empowerment (77.78%).
- Social media have enabled the slum dwellers to participate actively in the progressive political movements for empowerment (85.0%).

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

H1. The social media are not accessible to the slum dwellers of society in Karnataka state. A good number of social media are not accessible to the marginalized sections of society in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands disproved according to the data analysis.

H2. The social media have not played effective role in the social networking of the women of society in Karnataka state. Social media have not adequately contributed for the social networking of women of society in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

H3. The social networking has not adequately contributed for the social capital development of the slum dwellers of society in Karnataka state. Social networking has not significantly contributed for the social capital development of the women in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

H4. The social media have not contributed decisively for the empowerment of slum dwellers in Karnataka state.

Social media have not played a vital role in the empowerment of the slum dwellers in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

8. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The empowerment of slum dwellers is a challenging task. The stakeholders of social justice, economic equity, good governance, judicious development and human rights protection have to give a serious thought to the subject of empowerment of slum dwellers in India. The implications of the study in general terms are presented as follows.

SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION RELATED IMPLICATIONS

The policy makers should ensure adequate social media application for women centered development in India.

- The policy makers should ensure optimum use of social media for social networking and social capital development endeavors of slum dwellers.
- The policy makers should facilitate constructive use of social media for social network
- Development, social capital development, social transformation and economic development of slum dwellers of society.
- The policy makers should encourage women to use social media as alternative sources and resources of emancipation and empowerment.
- The rural development and Panchayat raj institutions should harness the potentials of social media for the inclusive development of the women.

SOCIAL NETWORKING RELATED IMPLICATIONS

- Social media should become a new platform for the mobilization of ideas, resources and empowerment of slum dwellers.
- Social media should create social networking for transformational social learning and action among the slum dwellers.
- Social media should facilitate the development of social networking for the expansion of human collaboration among the slum dwellers.
- Social media should enable the creation of social networking for political organizing and action for the women.
- Social media should contribute for social networking for better coordination among various agencies at different levels for the slum dwellers.
- Social media should facilitate social networking development for strategic intervention and lobby action for the slum dwellers.
- Social media should strengthen the social networking for better transnational advocacy networks for the slum dwellers.

SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT RELATED IMPLICATIONS

- Social networking development should be undertaken to facilitate greater institutional trust and collaboration for the social capital development of slum dwellers.
- Social networking development should be ensured to facilitate greater inter and trans-disciplinary collaboration for the social capital development of slum dwellers
- Social networking development should be achieved to promote community preparedness, participation and action for social capital development of slum dwellers
- Social networking development should be accomplished to ensure consistent collaboration between the government institutions, corporate houses and non-government agencies for social capital development of slum dwellers.
- Social networking development should be ensured to promote creativity, entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities for social capital development of slum dwellers.
- Social networking development should be achieved to promote social entrepreneurship and system dynamics for the social capital development of slum dwellers.
- Social networking development should be accomplished to facilitate a new paradigm shift for the social capital development of slum dwellers.

EMPOWERMENT OF MARGINALIZED SECTIONS RELATED IMPLICATIONS

- Social media intervention is required to create better awareness among the slum dwellers about protective, affirmative and promotional measures.
- Social media intervention is essential to obtain adequate means of organized activism at various levels for the empowerment of the slum dwellers.

- Social media intervention is crucial for the development of life skills and managerial competence of the slum dwellers.
- Social media intervention is vital for the betterment of production and productivity of the slum dwellers in various walks of life.
- Social media intervention is solicited to achieve social justice, economic equality, political participation and cultural transformation of the slum dwellers.
- Social media intervention is necessary to facilitate emulation of success stories and adoption of best practices for the empowerment of the slum dwellers.

9. CONCLUSION:

The international organizations have also called upon the stakeholders of empowerment of slum dwellers to implement series of affirmative programmes for the benefit of women. The present investigation clearly emphasizes that social media have to go a long way in the empowerment of the slum dwellers and other weaker sections through meaningful and constructive nation building endeavors. The social media intervention for the social networking development, social capital development and empowerment of the slum dwellers has become highly crucial in India.

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