

Globalization, New communication Technologies (Social media) and Socio-cultural changes

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Abstract: Globalization is a multidimensional process and affecting almost all the institutions not only of the developing societies but also of the developed societies. It refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of global connectivity of all facets of social life. New communication technologies have facilitated the process of globalization and transformed the socio-cultural aspect of different societies in such a way that the fields of interactions are cutting across the boundaries of communities and nation states. Among these technologies, internet and mobile phones are at the top. These technologies are not only integrating various forms of media in single communication devices but also connecting people through internet enabled applications particularly social networking/social media. Now social media have becoming famous in everyday lives in today's globalizing society. They provide a context where people across the world can communicate with each other regardless of the distance that separates them. It encourages our culturally diverse world's connectivity and interdependence. Globalization with new communication technologies is also providing opportunities to popularise different kind of values, beliefs and normative aspects of different cultures of different societies to disseminate at the global level through internet (websites, blogs etc) and TV channels.

Key Words: Globalization, New communication technologies, Social media, Socio-cultural changes.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Societies throughout the world are now passing through the process of profound and rapid change. This change is closely related with the process of globalization. The process of globalization affects not only the developing countries but also has affected developed countries in last few decades. The information revolution which is taking place globally has been possible because of the developments in communication technologies which made interconnectivity at planetary level and as a result a number of socio-cultural changes are taking place (Singh 2004:3)[1]. This proposed to study the interrelationship between Globalization, New communication Technologies and Socio-cultural changes. The study will be focused on the Socio-cultural changes among the Users of Social Media.

Today the world is witnessing a major shift in the nature of technology. As we move from desktops to smartphones, make computing personal, technology is becoming fast, easy, accessible and prominent. Ten years ago, it would have been hard to imagine reading a book on a computer. But it is a reality today and no one knows what is going to happen in the next few years. Quite necessarily, the way we read, research, or write has changed so much that change is considered a ubiquitous aspect of our life today. This is true even for students studying in rural colleges in India. Consequently, educational technology, especially computers and computer-related peripherals have grown tremendously and have permeated all areas of a student's life. Not only this, computerized supervisory systems in schools, offices, malls, banks, factories, hospitals, etc., have revolutionized the system of traditional management. One of the reasons for this is the wide range of options that new communication technology offers. For instance, it is fashionable for many youths to join social networking sites and these have conversely given them a space for social mixing in a competitive and busy life. While netizens can maintain relations with thousands of friends online, sites like Facebook or Instagram also offer the option to snap ties at will. In other words, new technology today controls human desire and human relations. Apparently, the use of new technology has positively contributed to quick dissemination of knowledge and information so vital in today's "information society." Higher educational institutions in India are now trying to grapple with world standards in teaching and research, and globalization has positively contributed to the growth of a research oriented teaching in many Indian universities. A teacher needs to update himself/herself to face tech-savvy students and scholars. He/she also feels the pressure to share research findings in world for public scrutiny.

There are many instances of the use of information technology to make the public aware about instances of corruption, political clashes, or environmental violation. For instance, vivid media exposures of corruptions in the Commonwealth Games or the 2G Spectrum scam have not only activated civil society activism but also created pressures on our political and business elites to stress the value of transparency. At the global level, WikiLeaks have exposed the hidden agenda of powerful nations and their ruling elites and proved that new technology can be utilized for the benefit of mankind and world democracy. But it may as well be argued that information technology has also created a digital divide between its users and non-users. For many of the Indians living mainly in remote villages, information technology is yet a dream. This is because only 27 percent of village schools in India have electricity, compared to 76 percent of schools in towns or cities (UNESCO, 2010). Moreover, the quick-changing face of this fast growing technology has

created certain challenges for those using older versions. New technology, therefore, offers more options to those who can aptly afford to adjust with new versions in quick succession. For others, such a digital divide leads to the extension of “competitive inequality” (Beteille 2002, p. 20)[2].

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is in the nature of qualitative and deep understanding about the concepts of Globalization, New communication technologies (Social Media) and its socio-cultural changes and interrelationship between them. This research paper is based on extensive review of literature and complexities of the above three phenomena.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Globalization

Castells (2004) believes that the concept of the network society is closely associated with interpretation of the social implications of globalisation and the role of electronic communications technologies in society. The definition of a network society given by the foremost theorist of the concept, Manuel Castells (2004 p. 3)[3] is that it is 'a society whose social structure is made up of networks powered by micro-electronics-based information and communications technologies.' As Castells shows in his book, historically, there have always been social networks: the key factor that distinguishes the network society is that the use of ICTs helps to create and sustain far-flung networks in which new kinds of social relationships are created.

According to Castells, three processes led to the emergence of this new social structure in the late 20th century:

- the restructuring of industrial economies to accommodate an open market approach
- the freedom-oriented cultural movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, including the civil rights movement, the feminist movement and the environmental movement
- the revolution in information and communication technologies

“Globalization is the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual.” (Held et.al. 1999: 2)[4].

The process of globalization has specific characteristics (Williamson et al, 1998)[5], which can be broadly categorised as follows: i) borderless ii) information technology changes iii) mobility iv) international cooperation v) talents mobility and integration vi) cultural diversity vii) liberalization viii) free trade ix) globalisation of economic activities

There are three main perspectives on globalization, (Held et al, 1999) each discussing different positives and negatives that are associated with globalization. The three different perspectives are:

- i) hyperglobalist,
- ii) sceptical,
- iii) transformationalist

Hyperglobalizers believe that globalization represents a new epoch in human history, in which all types of relationships are becoming integrated at the global level, transcending the nation states and making it increasingly irrelevant. The **skeptics** who also focus on economic aspects of globalisation argue that there is nothing new about this international economic integration. It is comparable to the period preceding to First World War. They generally prefer the term ‘internationalisation’ to globalisation. They also argue that the role of the nation-state remains as strong as ever (Singh, 2004). **Transformationalists**, however argue that globalisation is the central driving force behind the major economic, cultural, social and political changes that are affecting virtually all the world’s people today. Globalisation is seen as the overall consequences of closely inter-linked processes of change in the areas of technology, economic activity, governance, communication and so on. Developments in all these areas are mutually reinforcing or *reflexive*, so that no clear distinction can be drawn between cause and effect (Singh, 2004). Its impact can also be observed in the field of mass media communication and other social and cultural institutions of the society.

New Communication Technologies

The process of globalization in India, in last one decade, has brought many changes not only in the sphere of Indian economy but also brought ample scope for the mass media communication to expand its network at global level. Recent advancements in the field of communication technology have affected the functioning of cultural industry in India and are shaping the style of life of the people. One of the few effects of the new communication technology is the trend towards internationalization of mass communication. The question of potential and cultural effects flowing from the strength is in debate. The movement towards a global media culture has several sources. The most notable source

has been the great increased capacity to transmit sounds and moving images at low cost across frontiers and around the world. By overcoming limits of time and space and the rise of global media business and global market for media products proved to be a driving force for globalization.

In India, the process of globalization and privatization provided a momentum to cultural industry to flourish in last three decades. The advent of Satellite Television in early nineties and internet technology at the end of millennium has shaped the process of globalization of mass media in Indian subcontinent in a significant manner. The internet is the key driving force responsible for the emergence of informational society in India (Singh, V. P. , 2002).[6] The growth of computer education and advancement in the field of information technology at the initiative of the government have opened new avenues in job market particularly opportunities for self-employment. Moreover, computerization of different private and government organizations has not only improved the performance of these organizations but also helped in the growth of service sector in India. The number of internet users has increased tremendously in the recent past. The popularity of smart phone even in small towns and villages on the one hand and accessibility of computer and mobile phone to all the sections urban society including middle class women. Thus, a new form of society, i.e. 'informational society' is in making in which the information technology has to play a significant role in every walk of life.

New Media

'New media', is a term meant to encompass the emergence of digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies in the later part of the 20th century. New Media actually refer to a wide range of changes in media production, distribution and use. These are more than technological changes; they are also textual, conventional and cultural. The key terms in discourses about new media are digital, interactivity, hypertextuality, dispersal and virtuality. Most technologies described as "new media" are digital, often having characteristics which could be manipulated, networked, dense, compressible, interactive and impartial. Some examples are Internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS, DVDs and Mobile phones. New media are not television programs, feature films, magazines, books, or paper-based publication.

The new media are communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information such as Internet replaces the "one-to-many" model of traditional mass communication with the possibility of a "many-to-many" web of communication. Images, text and sound form the core of new media. So the new media with technology convergence shifts the model of mass communication, and radically shapes the way we interact and communicate with one another. Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and art analog broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation into media which are predicted upon the use of digital computers, such as the Internet and computer games. However, these examples are only a small representation of new media. The use of digital computers has transformed the remaining 'old' media, as suggested by the advent of digital television and online publications. Even traditional media forms such as the printing press have been transformed through the application of technologies such as image manipulation software like Adobe Photoshop and desktop publishing tools.

Andrew L.Shapiro (1999)[7] argued that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources". W. Russel Neuman (1991)[8] suggested that whilst the "new media" have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Neuman, "We are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication". Neuman argued that new media will alter the meaning of geographic distance, allow for a huge increase in the volume of communication, provide the possibility of increasing the speed of communication, provide opportunities for interactive communication and finally, allow forms of communication that were previously separate to overlap and interconnect.

New media includes mobile technology and internet. Social media is one of the best example in this era of Globalization which provides the Linkage between Globalization, New Communication Technologies and Socio-cultural changes.

Mobile Phones

From late 1990s, there has been increasing interest in how information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the Internet and mobile phones in particular are used in our society by different age groups. Studies on these topics have often developed from an interest in how information technologies have changed young people's sociability and everyday life in different contexts, including school and family life. The studies have described young people as skilful and balanced information technology users, with the exception of those raising the possibility of a 'digital divide' arising between families with different opportunities to acquire new technologies for their children. In the world of the

Internet and mobile communication, young people are seen as active subjects (exerting their influence on the emergence, rules and character of social phenomena related to it).

The mobile phone has played a crucial role in the development of the contemporary information society. The contemporary society is a 'Mobile Information Society' creating opportunities for ways of life based on either complete mobility or lack of it. The owner of a mobile phone can interact with the whole world at anytime. The mobile information society can be perceived as a society where mobile technology has assumed a central role in social relations, information seeking, learning and, consequently, in people's attachment to social relationships and society at large.

Internet

Internet- a massive network of communication networks has forever changed the way citizens around the world live, learn work and communicate. Today, qualitative improvements in scientific and technological communication is brought about by the Internet which has enabled global connectivity of computers and the development of various tools and technique for networked information provision and access. The Internet also known as the "NET" is the world's largest network; in fact, it is a network of networks of computer databases and information services. It is the fastest growing means of communication today. Its worldwide reach and connection to any type of computer have broken the boundaries of communication. It is a world without bars-neither of time, space nor language. The last barrier has been broken too as language connecting software has been developed.

The Internet is the fastest way to spread information to a vast number of people simultaneously. The low cost and nearly instantaneous sharing of ideas, knowledge, and skills has made collaborative work dramatically easier, with the help of collaborative software.

Social Media

Social media is most recent form of media and having many features and characteristics. It has many facilities on same channel like as communicating, texting, images sharing, audio and video sharing, fast publishing, linking with all over world, direct connecting. It is also cheapest fast access to the world so it is very important for all age of peoples. Social networking can be defined as "a set of people and the relationships between them." Many of the social media sites are most popular on the web. Some social media sites have transformed the way where people communicate and socialize on the web. Social networking sites render the opportunity for people to reconnect with their old friends, colleagues and mates. It also helps people to make new friends, share content, pictures, audios, videos amongst them. Social media also changes the life style of a society.

India has over 12.5 crore internet users. The average usage of internet is 26 minutes a day. Currently, 87.1 billion users are accessing the internet on their cell phones and strategies are in place to further push the numbers. Top social media are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Orkut, Bharatstudent.com, Zedge.net, Ibibo.com, hi5.com, Shtyle.fm, Indyarocks, Fropper.com and Myspace.com. According to State of Media Social Media Survey Report Neilsen, 2012 As for Facebook use, India is the second largest user in the world, just behind the United States. There are 45,796,460 Facebook clients in India, which is equivalent to 3.90 percent of the aggregate population and 56.54 per cent of the aggregate online population. India has the second largest base of LinkedIn clients too. India has an aggregate 13,352,622 clients which is equivalent to 1.14% of aggregate population, and 16.48% of the online population. India is additionally the second biggest client for Google+, and as for Twitter 16 million Indians are dynamic.

Types of Social media

Social media has come up with the new path of transforming the citizens. First ever change of social system chiefly utilizing Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Wikis.

Globalization and Socio-cultural changes

Globalization has introduced many socio-cultural changes eg. in our economy, society, culture, and politics. Globalization is not a unidirectional process and there are several contrary trajectories, which have generated opposite reactions. Hence, along with homogenization of certain aspects of Indian culture, globalization has also helped in accelerating the growth of self-consciousness and cultural identities. The growing disparities among different segments of Indian population and the resultant unevenness in the spread of a global culture also proliferates diversity. As a corollary, several aspects of our custom and tradition continue to exist side by side as there is both adoption and rejection. The process of globalization is, therefore, much broader, complex, and multifaceted. The challenge today for us is to recognize and respect plurality and multiplicity as a better model of globalized social life.

According to Yogendra Singh (2000)[9], the distinctive historical phenomenon of globalization of culture today or the new challenges that it poses for the humanity can be traced to its unique technological base which has revolutionized the concept and quality of the systems of production, communication, social organization and social interaction. He noted the following five dimensions of contemporary globalization:

- (a) Revolution in communication technology rendering global circulation of messages and symbols in the shortest possible time and proliferation and diversification of technological means for doing so;
- (b) Circulation of finance capital on global scale searching for markets and economies of scale through international division of labour and structure of wages with introduction of high technology;
- (c) Homogenization of consumer products and market processes both in the realms of commodities and cultural symbols, styles and behavioural pattern;
- (d) Enlargement of the scope of electronic media through telephony, television, fax, e-mail, Internet, etc., influencing political values, ideologies and movements; and
- (e) An intense degree of circulation of manpower across countries and cultures leading to homogenization of cultures on the one hand and an elevated sense of cultural identity and distinctiveness on the other (Singh 2000: 71-72). Such characterisation of contemporary globalization led Singh to agree with Arjun Appadurai that modern technologies of communication outcross the boundaries of real time and real space in social interactions.

As the current phase of “accelerated globalization” is markedly different from the old ones, any believe that the quality of resilience that Indian culture had shown earlier is slowly diminishing now. The possibility to produce and augment virtual localities in a “runaway world” (Giddens, 1999) [10] along with *detritorialization* of persons, images, objects, and ideas (Appadurai, 1996)[11] looms large notwithstanding distinct socio cultural boundaries.

Mobile Phones, Internet (New Communication Technologies)and Socio-cultural changes

The discussion on the influence of new communication technologies on our culture will remain incomplete if we do not stress on the importance of mobile phones and the Internet in our lives. The Internet and mobile phones have enlarged our “freedom” of space and time. Electronic media have made it possible to put human beings in touch with one another as never before. From this point of view, the new technology has become helpful in expanding and maintaining a “relational society” even if our traditional social bonds have become weak. A circulation of cultural objects has accompanied the global circulation of money and people in the world today. It is worth noting that the number of cell phones and computer users in India are increasing sharply every day. As per the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) statistics, there were nearly 300 million cell phone subscribers in the country by the middle of July 2008 apart from 39.18 million land phone users. But by October 2010, the number of mobile phone users had crossed 706 million. With this, the total telephone subscriber base in India, both wireless and wireline connections combined, touched 742.12 million. As a result, the overall tele-density had reached 65 percent by the end of 2010. Similarly, the Internet as a medium of interaction is of late growing at a faster rate. Thus, according to Google India, the total number of Internet users in the country as on December 2010 is 100 million, 40 percent of whom are mobile Internet users (*The Times of India*, 2010). During the last three years, the number of mobile Internet users has gone up from 2 million to 40 million. With smart phones getting cheaper day by day, one may expect the number to touch new highs in years to come.

4. CONCLUSION :

Apart from the increasing need of such devices for greater connectivity, revolutionary changes in the nature of cell phones (containing multimedia facilities like music, FM radio, video, camera, voices, text messages, Internet, touch screen, mobile banking, etc.) including reduction in their prices have also contributed to their popularity. From one point of view, cell phones empower people to engage in meaningful communication while allowing privacy, physical distance, and spatial mobility.

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