NEW MEDIA: PROBLEMS & PROSPECTS

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Abstract

In the present era new media or what we call www is a set of new technologies that become increasingly embedded in everyday use and is spreading very fast around the globe. Since its inception it is making tremendous efforts to educate, inform and persuade the masses globally. The new media is a form of mass media that includes Internet, podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, apps, virtual worlds and more.

The term new media is a broad term in media studies that emerged in the 80's, with its emergence it slowly broken the geographical barriers for its users and turned the whole world into a global village by breaking the boundaries and frontiers, reaching every part of the world. The new media have consequences upon the social, political and economic values of people. With the growing dominance of the Internet, blog, chat, Social sites etc, the use of New Media has already begun and consequently, communication is rapidly changing and becoming mobile, interactive, personalized and multi-channel. Internet has served as a vehicle or as a channel to convey information in a useful and easy to understand manner. This extraordinary revolution is affecting the basic structure of societies we live in. New Media is considered as an important source in helping the society in different spheres of life.

New media hold out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere,   on any digital device, as well as, interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. It is more technology driven on one hand and offer more control in the hands of user on the other hand. Although it has more positive qualities but at the same time it is also considered harmful for the users to some context. What distinguishes new media from traditional media is not the digitizing of media content into bits, but the dynamic life of the new media content and its interactive relationship with the media consumer.

This paper has discussed different positive and negative notions attached to the use of new media. The different forms of new media especially the Internet has become very important tool in India and the world   over among its users. Thus, the study aims at finding out the relevance of the new media and the problems/ prospects related to it. In this paper has discussed the effectiveness of New Media in day to day life. New Media here refers to the Internet in its newest version, Web 2.0 and mobile platforms.

Keywords: New Media, Mass Media, Internet, Social Networking sites, Problems, Prospects

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the impact of new media has been witnessed in recent years, with online platforms becoming increasingly powerful mechanisms for mobilizing popular support. India is no exception and people from all classes use the power of modern media to make their voices heard. One of the important promises of the new media is the democratization of the creation, publishing, distribution and consumption of media content (Wikipedia, 2011). New Media is a legitimate tool of persuasion and the beauty of new

media lies in the fact that we also get the counter argument to what we are saying at one place. New Media which broadly includes the web world i.e www. or the internet, mobile world and other technologies is used by the people from different walks of like especially the youths and teenagers as a medium of communication and its use has become a routine for social interactions and a method of content creations for youngsters.

What we call New Media is a global network which connects millions of computers with a number of agreed format protocol, enabling users to transfer data from one to the other. Even though the internet evolved more than three decades ago, the web was introduced only in 1991. Deuze (2003, p206) considered the internet as a hybrid medium, and online news as the fourth kind of journalism. The World Wide Web allows users to locate and view the multimedia based documents on almost any subject.

Today there are millions of users across the globe that are using internet with many more joining online every day. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) pegged the number of Internet subscribers at 164.81 million as of March 31, 2013 in India, with seven out of eight accessing the Internet from their mobile phones. India has bypassed Japan to become the world's third largest Internet user after China and the United States, and its users are significantly younger than those of other emerging economies, global digital measurement and analytics firm COM Score has said in a report. "Mobile phone based Internet usage is a key component of Indian Internet usage, In addition, many Netizens are using dongles to access the Internet. By October, the nation had crossed the 200 million mark, says a report released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI) and IMRB. The report estimates 243 million internet users in the country by June 2014, overtaking the US as the world's second largest internet base after China. The US currently has an estimated 207 million internet users, while China has 300 million.

Table 1: Internet World Users by Language
- English : 29.4 %
- Chinese : 18.9 %
- Spanish : 8.5 %
- Japanese : 6.4 %
- French : 4.7 %
- German : 4.2 %
- Arabic : 4.1 %
- Portuguese : 4.0 %
- Korean : 2.4 %
- Italian : 2.4 %
- Top 10 Languages : 84.9 %
- Rest of the languages : 15.1 %
- Total : 100 %

Source: www.internetworldstat.com

Table 2: Top 10 Internet Using Countries - 2012 Q2 – With highest no. of users in millions
- China : 538.0
- United States : 245.2
- India : 137.0
- Japan: 101.2
- Brazil : 88.5
- Russia : 68.0

- Germany : 67.5
- Indonesia : 55.0
- United Kingdom : 52.7
- France : 52.2

Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstat.com

New media differs from traditional 'old' media in its structures of ownership and participation and directly challenge the monopoly on mass communication possessed by traditional media producers: 'The internet has fragmented and decentralised the context in which communication occurs' (ibid, 2009). New Media help people to connect , it easily collaborate with other people and create new content ,services ,communities and channels of communication that help people to deliver information and services. Geniets (2010) also finds that new media provides a potential break with old social hierarchies: 'new technologies give individual producers of media content more freedom, and empower them to expose, interact with and reveal backstage behaviour related information about themselves as well as others to a mass media audience'. However, while new media, overall, is identified as an agent for (generally positive) social change, its effects are not gender neutral.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "**New media**" is defined as an interactive forms of communication that use the Internet, including podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and more. Basic definition of 'new media' provided by Google web definitions and Wikipedia which defines it as 'on-demand access to content any time, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation. Another aspect of new media is the real-time generation of new, unregulated content' (Google web definitions, Wikipedia). Most technologies described "new media" as digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible and interactive. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS and DVDs. It does not include   television programmes, feature films, magazines, books or paper- based publications, unless they contain technologies that enable digital interactivity (Wikipedia, 2011).

The rise of new media has increased communication between people all over the world. It has allowed people   to express themselves through blogs, websites, pictures and other user friendly media. People of all ages and backgrounds are online and using new media tools for a variety of reasons such as searching of information and connecting with others. Globalization is taking place at a very fast speed as a result of the evolution of new media technologies. New media makes it possible for *anyone* to create, modify, and share content with others, using relatively simple tools that are often free or inexpensive and it radically breaks the connection   between   physical   place   and   social   place,   making physical location much less significant for our social relationships.

According to Carry (2010), the media today are more diffused and chaotic than ever. According to Mia Consalvo the term new media is ambiguous and relative—what was new in the early 1990s (World Wide Web pages, for example) became mundane and accepted within a decade and was quickly replaced by newer new media such as digital video recorders and Weblogs. Moreover, many new technologies (or media) fail to take the path predicted for them in their use or future development (Marvin, 1988).

New media requires a computer or mobile device with Internet access and the product is called website. Every website has an address. To see a website one needs a computer. On every computer there is an icon, called internet explorer. After clicking on it, a screen opens up, after typing the address of the website, it opens up. Then one can see and read whatever is posted on website.

Internet is just a world passing around notes in the classroom," said American television host and stand-up comedian Jon Stewart about the whole World Wide Web. The Internet is one of the greatest inventions of the 20th Century as it has significantly changed the way modern people communicate. Internet – as a master medium and a revolutionary hybrid of the traditional medium offers an opportunity of two way communication feedback loop. Due to its speed and world wide reach it has created a "global village", in which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door, it has opened up windows of opportunity for many people. Using the Internet, users can easily disseminate information to people across the world. One of the innovations in recent years has been the use of internet as a form of new media., the creation of different websites that focus on different subjects in terms of education , literacy , health , knowledge , lifestyle and many more areas have been proliferated. Today it is possible, to find anything related to anything by typing keyword searches using a reliable internet browser.

Internet help people to connect , it easily collaborate with other people and create new content ,services ,communities and channels of communication that help people to deliver information and services. The Internet power as the platform for the World Wide Web is manifested in Metcalfe's Law, which states that "the power of the Web is enhanced through the network effect produced as resource links by network members" (Esplen & Brody, 2007, p.14). This means as the number of people in a network grows; the connectivity between members also increases (Ibid.). This characteristic enabling network members to connect to one another is said to increase social capital among network users.

Apart from Internet other forms of New Media are:
- **BLOGS:** Blogs are website with regular updates and typical combine text, image (graphics or video), and links to other web pages.
- **MOBILE:** Mobile is a way of receiving, viewing and /or sending information to and from celluar phones and other wireless devices.
- **PHOTO SHARING SITES: Photo** sharing sites allow to literally "share photos", online with friend family and colleagues, like Flickr.
- **SOCIAL BOOKMARKING:** Social bookmarking is a way to store, organise and search your favourite webpages on the Internet.
- **TEXTING:** - Text messaging is a way of sending information to and from cell phones and other personal digital assistants (PDA's) like tablet.
- **WEBCAST /WEBINARS:** A webcast is a way of broadcasting over the internet. A webinar is a specific type of web conference.
- **MASHUPS:** A mashup is a website "that combines data from more than one source into a single integrated tool".
- **PODCASTS:** Pod casts (a blend of the term "I Pod" and "broadcast") are audio or video files that you can listen or watch on your computer or on a variety of media devices like i Pod and cell phones.
- **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:** Social networking sites are online communities that give opportunities to connect with, or provide resources to friends, family, clients and colleagues with common interests.

- **VIDEO SHARING SITES:** Video sharing sites allow to upload and share online videos similar to photo sharing sites. You Tube is the most well known of these types of sites.

SIGNIFICANCE

The term new media is a legitimate tool of persuasion and the beauty of new media lies in the fact that we also get the counter argument to what we are saying at one place because they break boundaries and frontiers, reaching every part of the world New Media which broadly includes the web world i.e www. or the internet , mobile world and other technologies is used by the people from different walks of like especially the youths and teenagers as a medium of communication and its use has become a routine for social interactions and a method of content creations for youngsters. The new media have consequences upon the educational, social, political and economic values of people. New media hold out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as, interactive   user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. What distinguishes new media from traditional media is the dynamic life of the new media content and its interactive relationship with the media consumer. New Media cannot reach the people in the rural belt of the country owing to the digital divide. Youths especially women are moving to new media to get information about everything ranging from education, shopping to news and lifestyle products. Use of new media in the recent years has given a tremendous growth by the people from different walks of life. On one side it has shown positive results on the other side it is leading to negative results like the excessive use of internet substitute other activities like book reading , writing , indoor games , physical exercises etc.

This paper has discussed different problems and prospects in a broader way attached to the use of new media and aims at finding out the relevance of the new media along with its characteristics, limitations, uses and the suggestions related to its use.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW MEDIA

New media has certain unique characteristics which distinguish it from other media and make it superior. In fact the new media is the combination of all the earlier known media and thus can be exploited for different aspects be it education, empowerment, health shopping , online learning etc . They are a disparate set of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitization   and being widely available for personal use as a communication device. The new media   are not only or even   mainly concerned with the production and distribution of messages, but at least, mainly concerned with processing, exchange and storage. The features that distinguish websites from other Media are: multimedia, speed for updating information, horizontal distribution, decentralization, accessibility, no hierarchy, no censorship and interactivity (Lasica,1996). Interactivity is the primary characteristics of new technologies and it has caused a considerable reassessment of communication research (Rice and Williams, 1984: 35; Heeter, 1989: 221; Morris andOgan, 1996; Pavlik, 1997; Rafeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Ha and James, 1998, 459). According to Ward the Specific characteristics of online journalism are hypertext, interactivity and multimedia (Ward, 2002, p20-22).

Osei-Hwere and Carlson (2008:166) implies that when you have more media invented to take over or complement the old ones, then such media are termed - new media''. According to McQuail, cited by Baghdady in Pecora, Osei-Hwere and Carlson (2008), there are four main features that characterise the new media. These features are as follows:

- **DECENTRALIZATION** of encoded content.
- **A HIGHER CAPACITY** regarding transmission, which overcomes the former restrictions of cost, distance and capacity.
- **INTERACTIVITY** New media is known for its ability to involve the audience. This is known as interactivity. In comparison to other media forms, new media has the most evolved feedback system in place. In case of new media this interactivity is not only fast but also of diverse type.
- **FLEXIBILITY** in deciding on content and usage patterns (McQuail, 1994:21).

The other characteristics of New Media are:
- **CONNECT** people with information and services.
- **COLLABORATE** with other people—including those within your organization or community.
- **CREATE** new content, services, communities, and channels of communication that help you deliver information and services.
- **MULTIMEDIACY** use of multimedia is an important component of online journalism.
- **HYPERLINK** – it means mentioning links of related sites in news, features etc.
- **IMMEDIACY** – it means that any information can be updated immediately. Which keeps the users updated with the most recent information.
- **USER FRIENDLY** - New Media is user friendly and easy for use.

NEW MEDIA: PURPOSE, USE & LIMITATIONS

New media is a legitimate tool of persuasion and the beauty of new media lies in the fact that we also get the counter argument to what we are saying at one place. Youths, teenagers, film stars, politicians especially women are moving to new media to get information about everything ranging from education, shopping to news. According to the report released in June 2013 titled "Women & Web Study", out of the total 150 million Internet users in the country, around 60 million women in India are now online and use the Internet to manage their day-to-day life. With easy access to Internet at homes, cyber cafes, offices and growing adoption of smart phones, the Internet is being used by youngsters for a variety of things ranging from online education , downloads , health , shopping ,watching movies and chatting etc. More than 60 million people in India use social networks – equivalent to the total population of Italy India is home to a staggering 934 million mobile subscriptions – equivalent to more than 13% of the world's entire population Social Networking continues to be the main driver behind much of India's increased online activity, although social media penetration in India remains remarkably low at just 5%.Facebook continues to dominate India's social media landscape with more than 60 million active users, and the world's most popular platform show no signs of slowing either, adding a new Indian user every single second.

Political parties use the new media for carrying out their political activities. "New media helps to build a personal rapport, may be, more effective than door-to- door campaigning. Google hangouts are encouraging real time feedback from the public . Such hangouts for effective reach and reinstate the fact that politicians are available for the masses through advanced tech support. On 16th March Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi used the Google Hangout platform for the first time to interact party worker's from different states.In the information age, Political campaigning on social sites stands to benefit the parties in influencing their potential vote bank, its range and reach is restricted to a small audience. With the intelligent new media use "Aam Aadmi Party scored well. Armed with a group of techies, the party collected maximum donations via this media. AAP leader Yogendra Yadav announced that anyone can fix an appointment online with

him," It is also observed that the political parties are given more attention to the new media nowadays. It can be seen that along with door-to-door and mass-contact canvassing, the battle lines are being drawn in the world of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and apps for the Assembly polls 2014, The big two, the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as well as the others, are not letting go of traditional means to win votes, but none wants to be trailing online. Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is reaching out to smartphone-wielding voters through the 'Shiv Raj' app . The app, which can be downloaded from Google Play, tells people about 25 key welfare schemes the CM launched. In Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is building on its social media presence. The AAP too has downloadable apps for streaming in data (photographs/videos/FB updates/Twitter posts) and a web-based channel. New media offers politicians and political parties a chance to reach a broad and diverse audience. Unlike traditional media, which reach only a small portion of the society. These implications show that political parties in India has recognized the potential of new media to reach the masses. but the extent to which it is recognized is not very large because our country is still a rural country where a majority of the population is still residing in the rural areas. Though the rural area is electrified, there is immense power cut and a lack of proper telephone facility. As a result internet facility is a distant dream for such remote areas of the country.

There are different purpose of the new media like surfing internet , chatting , communicate , downloads , games , watching movies , online shopping etc .Users can share information on products, promotions and special events with one another through email, status updates, instant messaging or text messages. Users can also browse one another's stated interests and link to websites they like or dislike.

One of the advantages of the new media is that it is relatively cheap, when compared to the traditional media and it helps in socializing & it is an instant information provider tool and showcases the truth. On the other hand it has got some negative impact like surfing Internet is becoming substitute and we are getting addicted to it. It is possible that surfing internet may substitute other activities that promote concentration such as reading, games, sports, writing etc. New Media cannot reach the people in the rural belt of the country owing to the digital divide.

There are some disadvantages related to the use of new media for instance we spend a lot of our time on social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter etc. which leads to lack of concentration and hampers other activities. People are starting to interact with each other online instead of doing it face to face. There is no control on what we share on the Internet; a file one share on the Internet can spread so quickly and can be perceived as something different than firstly intended. Sometime fake news /videos are uploaded on the internet, which spreads very fast at an uncontrollable rate and it's hard to get it off. These deliberately misrepresented video are shared online and it leads to violence, a You Tube grab of the fake video circulated during the Muzaffarnagar riots created the tension between two communities. Pirating has become more powerful because of new media as files can be shared more freely and to a bigger audience.

Though the new media has vast applicability in day to day life, it has got certain limitations that are listed below:-

- **Limited to a privileged group** – still internet facility is a distant dream for poors and in villages.
- **Out of reach of rural audience** – people living in rural areas are still deprived of the new media.
- **Language is a problem while communicating**- New media is known for its ability to involve the audience in which language of communication plays an important role

- **Lack of computer education**- The majority of the population in our country is lacking in basic computer education, because of this use of Internet is limited to a sizeable population.
- **Cost of installation /set up is high – Since** the installation /set up charges are high the cost of owning computer, internet connections, etc. is not affordable by a large population.

CONCLUSION

The penetration of New Media is taking place at a very high speed, with Internet Penetration and speeds being low compared to develop Nations. The mobile sector has greater penetration in all strata of population and is showing tremendous growth. Apart from this mobile phone based Internet usage is a key component of Indian Internet usage; In addition, many Netizens are using dongles to access the Internet. By October, the nation had crossed the 200 million mark and estimates 243 million internet users in the country by June 2014, overtaking the US as the world's second largest internet base after China. The reach and penetration of the Internet and Mobile is widespread and substantial making the use of new media easy. The new media can be used for getting support for a party or a candidate, during elections, because it is persuasive, informative and educative. Political parties and candidates are using the new media to carry out their political activities because it can be used to reach a very large group of people. New media reaches to a broad and diverse audience at a faster speed as compared to traditional and old media, which reaches only a small portion of a population. New media is relatively cheap, when compared to the traditional media and it helps in socializing & it is an instant information provider tool and showcases the truth. On the other hand it has got some negative impact like surfing Internet is becoming substitute and we are getting addicted to it. However, one of the challenges of the new media is lack of technology and irregular power supply.

To sum up New Media is considered as an important source in helping the society in different spheres of life. Since the emergence it is slowly broken geographical barriers for its users and turned the whole world into a global village reaching every part of the world. With the growing dominance of the Internet, blog, chat, Social sites etc, the use of New Media has already begun and with its use communication is rapidly changing and becoming mobile, interactive, personalized and multi-channel and the penetration of new media is taking place at very high speed.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Internet Facility**- Cybercafe should be set up in the villages with the help of Gram Panchayat /local bodies.
- **Training** – Short training programmes should be organized to give the learner's some useful tips and basics of internet.
- **Softwares in Hindi and other local languages** – should be made easily available.
- **Awareness** – regarding the use of new media should be created in its users.

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