

**FRIENDS, FAITH AND FACEBOOK: A STUDY ON CULTURAL DYNAMICS
AMONG ‘YO’ GENERATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

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Abstract:

Whats Up on What's app! Follow me on Twitter! Check my updates on Facebook page! These are buzz words which are pacing lives not in real world but in virtual world. Undoubtedly, new media as a democratic means of communication pattern of 21st century's tech savvy generation. The expeditious attributes of New Information and Communication Technology (NICT's) is shifting the communication life style of youth. The sea change taking place from merely using it for information to indulging in chits-chats, leaping towards celebrating festivals together which is evolving cultural explosion online. The aristocratic group of society making new media as an integral part of their lives shaping themselves ranging from happiness to sorrows, partially to wholly, slightly to extremely. In the virtual world, youth is living virtual life rather veritable life. Truly, new media being participatory catering youth's interest in numerable ways trending towards virtual cultural promotion by celebrating various religious festivals online, precipitating the vigorous cultural and behavioral shift. Such social transformation bringing change in society through posting, sharing and updating on virtual spaces irrespective of caste, creed, sex, region and religion by unifying youth to honor and eulogize each other's cultural celebrations exposing themselves as Indians. The paper revolves around how new media is contributing towards social, cultural and behavioral change amongst 'YO' generation, strengthening the feeling of Indian hood. In the traffic of virtual identity, how 'YO' generation of urban and rural area is accessing new media for cultural promotion. Authors concluded that in this era of new technological communication, overtaking the individual identity 'YO' generation is celebrating culturally-collective virtual identity though it is also concluded that there is no significant relationship between use of social media by YO generation and religious and cultural celebrations but there is significant relationship between behavior of YO generation and post related to religious and cultural celebrations.

Keywords: YO generation, Cultural, Religious, New Media, Social Media, Facebook.

Introduction:

Inevitably, new media is the powerful instrument for mobilization of people bringing them together in the networkable world where there is technological participation, engagement that leads to democratizing individual's life. The new media technologies play a prominent role in widening the communication aspect of technology. The networked facet of new media evolved social media, bringing drastic interactivity and dynamism all over the globe. This virtually realistic technology is expanding the digitalization in every aspect of human life. The influence of the social media is most significant in the way it is transforming the lives of

YO generation¹. The omnipresence of these technologies is dragging people towards its addiction.

Nowadays, digital surroundings symbolize the routine communication mediated through social media, mobile phones and internet. It is stated by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB that 'internet is mainstream media in India today' and in coming years it's going to surpass US with 402 million users². The exploded use of internet is possible just because of ASP (Average selling price) of smartphones resulting in massive surge in number of mobile internet users in India³. Social media is emerging as a dynamic tool for different kinds of communication which is fortified with ability to share information, opinion formation, networked individuals and communities and implement active participation. Gaining access to social media is one of the key reason for people to access the internet⁵. No other media has become so popular in short period of time as social media, the subset of new media.

Present technology provides user the privilege of interaction in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Along with easy accessibility on mobiles and web based technologies, social media has provided interactive platforms through which individuals earlier being consumers are shifting as prosumers⁴ with the advantage of user-generated content.

Across India, the number of people actively using social media is about 143 million, still growing at faster rate due to accessibility of cheaper internet connections and internet enabled sets at unbelievable price⁶. This media has the privilege of renovating the contours of social interaction. It introduces the pervasive change in communication with others, bringing emotions like love, friendship, family bonding, and intimacy on such platforms. Nowadays it is used for fulfilling purpose of self-expression, interaction, presentation and celebration. People are virtually connected all the time with their near and dear ones who are not present in physical surroundings but in virtual surroundings. The YO generation is so much engrossed in social media that they celebrate their special days by wishing each other on social media rather calling them or sending greetings to friends and family which used to be in early days. Every occasion is celebrated with great pomp and show through various statuses, likes, shares, comments on various social media sites. Facebook, one of the most popular and used social networking site among college students and young men in India with 34% and 27% provides the option of reminding such occasions and celebrations through notification⁷.

Research Problem: According to census report 2011, Haryana as a state comprises of the population 21,144,564 (at present its 2.53 crore) with different religious communities (Hindu 18,655,925, Muslim 1,222,916, Sikh 1,170,662, and Christian 27,185) contributes 22 lakhs internet users⁸. The state has sizeable population of young internet users, especially on Facebook⁹. Now a day's, people are moving to social media for all kind of their needs. And the youth are the top most users of such technologies and are earlier adopters of new technologies. The youth uses social media mainly for needs like entertainment, socialization,

social interaction, relationship building and for their information needs. The question arises whether YO generation of five blocks of Karnal district (Assandh, Gharaunda, Indri, Nilokheri, and Nising) capturing urban and rural population are using new media (social media) for cultural and religious dissemination of festivals and occasions. The social media today plays crucial role in everyday life issues from mere simple discussions to opinion formation, from self-expression to occasion celebrations. In such time the present research sought answers to whether YO generation use social media for celebrating cultural and religious occasions and is it helping in promoting cultural and religious thoughts evolving the feeling of Indian hood amongst them.

Review of Literature:

Recent researches concluded that social media especially Facebook is most popular social media site used by college students and young adults. Undoubtedly, it is becoming vital part of the human's communication lives. More wider aspect can be seen through a study which stated that people use social media for social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, expression of opinions, convenience utility, information sharing, surveillance and watching what others are up to¹⁰. According to Alexa Ranking Facebook is the most popular social networking site in India¹¹. The study "Facebook as Social Media Tools among Muslim Youths in Malaysia" concluded the use of Facebook, to some extent, contributes to the religion understanding of Muslims youth of Nilai, Malaysia. However, this is largely relied on how they use it and how they perceive the Islamic information shared on Facebook. There is also evident that Facebook has no contribution to religion understanding among teenagers. This is due to their perceptions on the function of Facebook, and their extreme concern about the validity and reliability of the sources. Hence, the study found that Facebook's usage may or may not affect the teens understanding of Islamic faith¹². Another study "Faith in the Age of Facebook: Exploring the Links Between Religion and Social Network Site Membership and Use" stated in this study, that SNS membership and use among American emerging adults are associated with several aspects of religiousness: two religious traditions (Catholic and conservative Protestant) are associated with a greater likelihood of SNS membership (compared with the not religious) and one religious practice, scripture reading, is associated with less SNS membership and frequency of use. Study also argued that there are both sacred and secular influences on SNS involvement in respect of religiousness but the social behavior is another factor that delimit the SNS Involvement in religious foundation of reading Bible, donating money and helping needy¹³.

Objectives:

Broad objective: To study religious and cultural change among YO generation in the age of New Media (social media).

Specific Objectives:

1. To enquire whether YO generation uses social media for religious and cultural celebrations.

2. To find how YO generation behaves on the post related to religious and cultural celebrations.
3. To inquire whether celebrating various religious and cultural festivals via social media is bringing cultural and behavioral change among YO generation.

Hypotheses:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between use of social media by YO generation and religious and cultural celebrations.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between behavior of YO generation and post related to religious and cultural celebrations.

Operational Definitions:

1. YO Generation: The young generation people ranging from 20-30 years, which are considered elite class in technological terms.
2. Cultural Dynamics: The cultural dynamics deals with the shift in complexities of human shared values (transferred from generation to generation) and beliefs associated with god (holy culture) within the framework of social systems.
3. New Media: The new communication digitized technologies allied with internet, whether contextual (on demand) or technological (accessible on digital devices).
4. Social Media: The subset of new media, which enable interactivity through internet based applications and web 2.0 technologies.
 - a) Social Media Forms: The various forms of interactivity based social media applications. E.g. Facebook
 - b) Facebook: An online social networking site which provides one - to - one and one- to-many communication facility.

Research Methodology:

The qualitative method is employed for the study, Focus group interview is conducted of 100 students falling under the age of 20-25 years and 25-30 years. Karnal district consist of 5 blocks: Assandh, Gharaunda, Indri, Nilokheri, and Nising, out of each block 5 students were selected through purposive stratified sampling. Students are divided into strata's on the basis of age and block: Block 1 Assandh (Urban and Rural), Block 2 Gharaunda (Urban and Rural), Block 3 Indri (Urban and Rural), Block 4 Nilokheri (Urban and rural), Block 5 Nising (Urban and Rural). The data is collected through self-administered structured interview schedule covering 10 multiple choice question (close ended) and 2 open ended questions (excluding demographic profile, socio-economic and religious parameters) between the duration of 5 days i.e 25-30 November 2016 covering each block a day. The duration for each interview session is between 20-30 minutes. Secondly, the distance between urban block to rural block is between 10-25 kms.

Results and Discussions:

The below gender table shows female constitutes 48% whereas male forms 50 % as a respondent. More than half respondent is Hindu followed by 21% Sikh and 2% and 7% as Christian and Muslims. 38% respondents are pursuing graduation, 25% are pursuing post-graduation and 37% students have completed their graduation and post-graduation degree. The respondents belong to urban as well as rural area which constitutes equal distribution of percentage.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	48	48.0	48.0	48.0
Female	52	52.0	52.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0		

Gender Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Hindu	70	70.0	70.0	70.0
Sikh	21	21.0	21.0	91.0
Christian	2	2	2.0	93.0
Muslim	7	7	7.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Total	100	100.0		

Religion Parameter

Socio-Economic Parameters: The major percentage 51 % of students belongs to the family which constitutes the annual family income between 1lac-1, 50,000 whereas the occupation of the family is majorly shared as 45% businessman, 31% service man and 24% are engaged in Farming.

Family Income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Upto 50,000	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
50,000-1,00000	38	38.0	38.0	49.0
100000-150000	51	51.0	51.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Total	100	100.0		

All most all students are using smartphones and use Facebook and WhatsApp. The students are more verse in Facebook as compared to Twitter and other social media sites. They have just little exposure of Instagram, Flickr, and sites like Twitter contributes only 22%. But it is mark able that they use Flipkart and Amazon for online shopping which contributes 37%. It

was asked how they access Facebook, 78% of them are accessing it on smartphone and rest 22% are accessing it on desktop and laptops.

RQ 1 Use of social media for posting related to religious and cultural celebration?

Almost all the respondents post in the form of like, updating statuses, comment and in fact they share the content especially related to religion. Most of them have given example of posting pictures of village temples and sharing pictures of god and goddess on Facebook. Another question was related to frequency of sharing such content the following are the results below in the table:

Type of Post

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Update Status	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
Like	36	36.0	36.0	70.0
Share	2	2.0	2.0	72.0
All above	28	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Total	105	100.0		

Frequency

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Always	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
Often	45	45.0	45.0	81.0
Sometimes	17	17.0	17.0	98.0
Rarely	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Total	100	100.0		

RQ 2 YO generation's behavior on the post related to religious and cultural celebrations.

The respondents were asked whenever they see any post related to any religion or culture how they react whether they ignore it or perform an activity. The respondents stated that 67% like it especially on the statuses updated by their friends and family and also comments on the post of asking to type "Amen", "Jai Mata Di", and "Jai Sai Baba" and so on. Along with this a question was asked why you like or comment on certain post among other multiple choices respondents answered because of respect in heart and they worship them with 67% and 23% rest 10% have not answered.

Activity at SMN on following Festivals:

Religious Festivals	Always	Often	Sometime	Rarely	Never
Holi	71%	26%	3%	--	--
Diwali	36%	58%	6%	--	--
Good Friday	6%	1%	18%	24%	51%
Christmas	26%	58%	16%	--	--
Guru Purab	26%	38%	36%	--	--
Baisakhi	25%	52%	23%	--	--
Eid-ul-Fitr	45%	42%	13%	--	--
Bakri-id	42%	20%	38%	--	--

RQ 3 Celebrating various religious and cultural festivals via social media is bringing cultural and behavioral change among YO generation.

To answer above research question following statements were asked from the respondents carrying 5-point Likert scale:

Sr.no	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	SMNs provide platform for celebrating festivals, occasion whether cultural, religion, regional etc.	42%	47%	11%	--	--
2	SMNs provide platform for virtual celebrations of festive	37%	47%	16%	--	--
3	SMNs provide platform to greet people on their festive whether from Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian religion	34%	51%	15%	--	--
4	SMNs provide platform that minimize physical distances during religious and cultural festivals.	41%	57%	2%	--	--
5	SMNs provides platforms to celebrate various cultural and religious festivals.	53%	34%	13%	--	--
6	SMNs are minimizing cultural and religious difference among different religion.	33%	61%	6%	--	--
7	SMNs provide platform to initiate feeling of brotherhood among different religion	31%	65%	4%	--	--

8	SMNs are the platform which brings people of different religion at on place.	37%	48%	15%	--	--
9	SMNs platform promotes feeling of Indian hood among different religion people	51%	49%	--	--	--
10	SMNs brings us on one platform to celebrate different cultural and religious festival together.	27%	61%	12%	--	--

Pearson's Chi Square statistics indicates that there is no significant relationship between use of social media by YO generation and religious and cultural celebrations as $X^2 = 0.867$, $p = 0.333 > 0.05$ and there is significant relationship between as $X^2 = 0.765$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$ behavior of YO generation and post related to religious and cultural celebrations. Hence, $1H_0$ is accepted whereas $2H_0$ of the study is rejected.

The open-ended questions are also asked that how new media helping in promoting cultural thoughts amongst YO generation out of 100 responses few are mentioned as:

Promoting Cultural Dynamism

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	100	100.0	100.0	100.0
Its innovative medium bringing all people together of different religion and region.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
May be because Facebook is disseminating our thoughts and views.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
New media is bringing change in overall thinking of youth.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Nowadays everything is on Facebook.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
We post related to our culture same way other also do it creates exposure to their culture.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0

Yes because it is a place where there is no reservation of thoughts.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Yes, people from different places share their culture through their posts.	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Conclusion:

The study concluded respondents from different economic background and blocks of Karnal (Haryana) uses Facebook as most popular social media networking site and also use it for posting for culture and religious content. They also perform activity as like, share and comment on the content related to other culture and religion. The YO Generation of Karnal mainly use Facebook to socialize on-line with peers and they also have people of different religion on their social media networking site. The use of Facebook, to some extent, contributes to their cultural and religious understanding. However, this is largely relied on how they use it and how they perceive the cultural and religious information shared on Facebook. There is also evident that Facebook has contribution in promoting cultural and religious thoughts leading to cultural dynamics in the era of new media. This is due to their exposure towards the subset of new media i.e. Facebook and the content posted on it and their activity. Hence, the study found that Facebook as new media is bringing the feeling of Brotherhood, Indian hood and Indianism among the YO Generation of district Karnal (Haryana).

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