



A Study on Acquaintance and Influence of Social Media and Digital Communication on the People of Rural Visakhapatnam District

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ABSTRACT

This paper intended to discuss the Social Media refers to web sites and media that allow users to interact, share, retrieve and exchange information both informally and personally one to other and one to many as well. In the present-day context social media has a potential influence in all walks of life, from information channelization to influencing the people in their decision making. People are tending and being influenced by social media. Mobile technology plays an important role in connecting people or even it may not seem wrong to say that introduction of mobile technology has lion's share in bringing the nation to an outstanding level of progress. The aim of this paper is to focus on the impact of social media on rural population in Visakhapatnam District. This paper will also try to define social media, how rural development can be through Social Network Services (SNS) and various platforms that have succeeded on SNS while also looking at the practicality of these services. The main purpose of this study is to find out the people's acquaintance, usage and influence of social media and digital communication especially the use of mobile phones, WhatsApp, face book and YouTube in rural Visakhapatnam. It was also hoped that the study would provide readers with insights which would stimulate further study in the same field but in different locations other than selected area in Visakhapatnam district and other Districts and make serious consideration of this problem.

1. Introduction

The emergence of social media changes the meaning of literacy and through its functionality. As this medium gains' momentum day by day the concept of Social Media literacy also gaining importance.

It's time for social media literacy to enter mainstream education. Learning to use online forums, be they social network services like Myspace and Facebook, blogs, or wikis is not a sexily contemporary add-on to the curriculum – it's an essential part of the literacy today's youth require for the world they inhabit. (Howard Rheingold-H.B. Review)

Social media have become increasingly popular because of the combination of both technological developments and social change. However, there are manifest differences in the ways people use social media as well as in the level of their competence. Differences in the skills to master technology and in the use of social media may result in new types of digital inequality. In order to overcome these inequalities, an extensive body of initiatives must deal with enhancing people's level of social media literacy. Unfortunately, due to difficulties in adequately measuring media literacy, the effectiveness of these efforts has not yet been determined. Hence, the main objective of our research is measuring social media literacy. In order to do so we first need to be able to accurately define social media literacy and understand how it can be conceptualized. Based on an extensive literature review, this report provides a conceptual framework for social media literacy and discusses its main building blocks. The proposed conceptual model posits that an accurate understanding of social media literacy requires more insight into people's access to social media applications, knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, attitudes and actual media use. (Mapping Social Media Literacy-Hadewijch Vanwynsberghe, ElkeBoudry, and Pieter Verdegem -EMSOC)

2. Social Media Literacy

Social Media refers to web sites and media that allow users to interact, share, retrieve and exchange information both informally and personally one to other and one to many as well.

In the present-day context social media has a potential influence in all walks of life, from information channelization to influencing the people in their decision making. People are tending and being influenced by social media. For example, 'Like many presidential elections, the election of 2016 was controversial. Unlike any preceding it, however, the primary reason for this controversy was a shift in how Americans received the information that informed their votes. For the first time in history, two-thirds of Americans relied on social media for their news (Shearer and Gottfried, 2017)- The promises, Challenges, and Futures of Media Literacy, Data & Society –Feb 18-Monica Burgler Patrick Division)

Social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Twitter, YouTube and My Space, may have been freshly marketed as great leveller as gathering in which divides of races, classes, and ethnicity. Shrestha lucky (2013) described that social media is means of connections among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks (Shrestha lucky, 2013).

'You see, when you don't have technology it's like you are in your own world and people are in their other world... It's like travelling. When you travel you need to learn a lot, if you cannot travel it's also another way of learning a lot'. By a– Kenyan Interviewee, when asked why she wants to use Facebook ("Face book is a luxury", An exploratory Study of Social Media Use in Rural Kenya –Susan P. Wyche, SaritaYardeeSchoenebeck, Andrea Forte)

3. Mobile Technology

Mobile technology plays an important role in connecting people or even it may not seem wrong to say that introduction of mobile technology has lion's share in bringing the nation to an outstanding level of progress.

Mobile Banking: banking transaction has partly changed from paper to mobile banking or internet banking. It also benefits the environment in saving the trees. The most noticeable thing is that the users using this facility of technology are also increasing. The user can not only view his balance, he can create his own account, apply for loan, etc. that is he can do all banking transactions with the help of mobile banking. Also, now there is facility of ATM in the villages. So, there is development in banking sector also. Mobile Banking has two advantages over the traditional forms of banking. First, it is available 24 hours a day and therefore meets clients' banking needs at any time. Second, it is possible wherever mobile internet is available and thus saves clients trips to banks

The media today has well and truly spread its wings. The use of social media has drawn significant role in recent years. An increasing number of practitioners have started using social media in their teaching. From being limited to the whims of a few individuals, it has come a long way to become a means of social participation. This has been facilitated by the advent of the social media. Social media, with its immediate and amplified reach, has transformed the way people interact with each other. This is significant because information and social awareness have emerged as important factors of human empowerment. The focus of this paper is to delineate the relationship between social media and Rural and Tribal India.

Social Networking Services: The aim of this paper is to focus on the impact of social media on rural population in Visakhapatnam District. This paper will also try to define social media, how rural development can be through Social Network Services (SNS) and various platforms that have succeeded on SNS while also looking at the practicality of these services. People have always been looking for ways to connect and network with each other. And, in this age of digitization, people have found ways to be socially active on the internet, which is possible with the advent of the numerous social networking platforms and apps.

As of today, there are numerous online social networking services that are intensely penetrating into nook and corner of the world around. We cannot undermine the pace of the social media and the impact on people lives. Today it is not surprising to say that there will be less literacy or no literacy among the people, but social media presence and practice by the people across all corners due to the presence of mobile phones. It is not a surprise that young generation have addicted to social media in such way that they cannot leave the gadget.

Social media sites have also grown in numbers by leaps and bounds. As per the statistics revealed on Statista, approximately 2 billion users used social networking sites and apps in 2015. And, with the increased use of mobile devices, this number is likely to cross the 2.6 billion mark by 2018.

The following statistics will present over view of the penetration of social media across the globe and by their nature and type and their presence.

Table: 1

Social Networking Site	Type of Site	Active users per Month
Facebook	Networking with all kind of people and organizations	1.59 Bn
Youtube	Video Sharing networking	1.57 Bn
Whatsapp	Messaging & Chat	1.2 Bn
QQ	Messaging& Chat	853 M
We Chat	Messaging& Chat	697 M
QZone	Sharing Photos, Videos and songs	640 M
Tumblr	Micro blogging	555M
Instagram	Photos and Videos	400 M
Twitter	Tweets	320 M
Google +	Messaging& Chat	300 M
BaiduTeiba	Social Network forum	300 M
Skype	Video and Audio Chat (Talk)	300 M
Viber	Messaging& Chat	249 M
SinaWeibo	Hibrid of Twitter &facebook	222 M
Line	Massaging & Chat	215 M
Snap Chat	Image messaging	200 M
YY. Com	Group Video Chats	122 M
Vikontaket	Russian Facebook services	100 M
Pinterest	Photosharing & Bookmarking	100 M
LinkedIn	Professional networking	100 M
Telegram	Messaging (with encryption)	100 M
Reddit	Content and voting platform	100 M
Hike	Messaging &Chat	100 M
Flickr	Photo sharing	90 M
Taringa	Experience Sharing	75 M
Musical.ly	Lipsynching Video sharing	66 M
Tinder	Speed dating app	50 M
Four Square	Location search (City Guide)	40 M
RenRen	Facebook services with moods	30 M
DOTS	Creating &Gaming	30 M
Tagged	Friendship & Dating	25 M
Stumble upon	Intelligent social networking	25M
Badoo	Dating	20 M
My space	Music sharing	20 M
Mixi	SN services (Japan)	20 M

(Bn: BILLION, M: MILLION)

4. Need And Significance Of The Study

It is imperative that social media's presence and its influence of all walks of life on today's world and especially from the age group of 18 to 30 years are very active on social networking. This research provides an insight into the level of penetration of social media among rural population in Visakhapatnam District, the study further reveals the level of acquaintance and influence of various social media sites among different age groups with different social economic back ground of rural people in the district

As a very limited research is done in this area in Visakhapatnam district, this study provides how the rural populace is using the various social media sites and their active and differential participation with various social networking sites. It was also hoped that the study would provide readers with insights which would stimulate further study in the same field but in different locations other than selected area in Visakhapatnam district and other Districts and make serious consideration of this problem.

5. Methodology

'If I learn carpentry from an illiterate carpenter only, I know, how to do work, but if I learn from a literate carpenter, my thoughts will be stimulated ', (Mahatma Gandhi)

6. Objectives Of The Present Study

1. To study the socio-economic background of the sample population with respect to their Age, Sex, Marital status Occupation, Income and religion
2. To study the Opinions of the sample population on various social networking sites
3. To find out the familiarity and usage of mobile phones and mobile technology
4. To find out the level of acquaintance, usage and influence of Social Media and Digital Communication.
5. To find out which social networking sites are more popular in rural Visakhapatnam

7. Limitations Of The Study

Besides various Social Media Networking and Digital communications, the study limits to three main social media sites as these are more popular in the district and usage of Mobile phones and digital cards.

8. Selection Of Sample For The Study

The Visakhapatnam District consisting of 43 Mandals. Out of 43 Mandals 9 Mandals are selected by simple random sample method. In view of the constraints such as budget and time, it is decided to collect data from 9 mandals. The researcher has selected 9 mandals out of which 6 mandals from rural and 3 mandals from tribal area. The researcher intended to collect the data from the rural areas

The sample for the present study covers 46 villages which include 872 respondents who are actively participated and responded. District data summary is provided in the below table.

Table 2 District population summary (census -2011)

Population (persons)	4,288,113	Population sex ratio	1003
Population (males)	2,140,872	Population growth rate	11.89 %
Population (Females)	2,147,241	Area	11167 sqkm
Density	384 per sq km		

Table 3 Urban and Rural population statistics (Visakhapatnam district) –Census 2011

Urban Population	2,037,458	Rural Population	2,250,565
Urban Males	1,027,235	Rural males	1,113,637
Urban females	1,010,223	Rural Females	1,137,018
Urban sex ratio	983	Rural sex ratio	1021

Table 4 Sample distribution of by their caste wise

Caste	Frequency	Percent
SC	146	16.74
ST	272	31.19
BC	352	40.37
OC	102	11.70
Total	872	100.00

Table 4 shows that, majority of the participants 40.37 % (352) are BC community, 31.19 % (272) of the participants are ST community, 16.74% (146) of the participants are SC community and the rest of 11.70% (102) are OC Community who are taken up for the present study.

Table 5 Sample distribution of by their religion wise

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Hindu	701	80.39
Muslim	76	8.72
Christian	95	10.89
Total	872	100.00

Table 5 shows that, majority of the participants 80.39 % (701) are Hindus, followed by 10.89 % (95) of the participants are Christians and the rest of 8.72% (76) are Muslim minority who are taken up for the present study.

Table 6 Sample distribution of by their occupation wise

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Cultivation	479	54.93
Employee	111	12.73
Daily Wage	102	11.70
Business	31	3.56
Housewife	149	17.09
Total	872	100.00

Table 6 shows that, majority 54.93 % (479) of participants occupation is cultivation, followed by 17.09% (149) of the participants as Housewives, 12.73% (111) of the participants are employees, 11.70% (102) of the participants are daily wage workers and the rest of 3.56% (31) participants are doing business who are taken up for the present study.

Table 7 Sample distribution of participants by their age wise

Age	Frequency	Percent
15 to 20 Years	79	9.06
21 to 25 Years	356	40.83
26 to 30 Years	257	29.47
Above 30 Years	180	20.64
Total	872	100.00

Table 7 shows that, majority 40.83 % (356) of the participants are in the age group of 21 to 25 years, followed by 29.47% (257) of the participants are 26 to 30 years age group, 20.64% (180) of the participants are above 30 years age group and the rest of 9.06% (79) participants are 15 to 20 years age group who are taken up for the present study.

Table 8 Sample distribution of Participants by their gender wise

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	695	79.70
Male	177	20.30
Total	872	100.00

Table 8 shows that, majority 79.70 % (695) of the participants are female category respondents and the rest of 20.30% (177) participants are male category respondents who are taken up for the present study.

Table 9 Sample distribution of Participants by their marital status wise

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	861	98.74
Unmarried	11	1.26
Total	872	100.00

Table 9 shows that, majority 98.74 % (861) of the participants are married category respondents and the rest of 1.26% (11) participants are unmarried category respondents who are taken up for the present study.

Table 10 Sample distribution of Participants by their family income wise

Family Income per month	Frequency	Percent
Below Rs. 12000	752	86.24
Rs. 12000 to 36000	71	8.14
Above Rs. 36000	49	5.62
Total	872	100.00

Table 10 shows that, majority 86.24 % (752) of the participants family income per month was below Rs. 12000 followed by 8.14% (71) of the participants family income per month was Rs. 12000 to 36000 and the rest of 5.62% (49) participants family income per month was above Rs. 36000 who are taken up for the present study.

Standardization Of The Tool And Item Validity

All the responses made by the respondents showed significance of the items. **Garrett** says that “Chi–Square test provides a method of comparing the observed frequencies with the theoretical frequencies that are to be expected. The difference between the observed and expected frequencies are squared and divided by the expected number in each case and the sum of the equation χ^2 (Chi-square)”.

Table 11 Item Analysis for Tool employed

USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION			
1	Do You Have Mobile Phone	9.80*	0.04
2	Are You Aware of the Social Media	22.90**	0.00
3	Do you use Whatsapp	12.80*	0.01
4	Do you use Youtube	32.60**	0.00
5	Do you use Facebook	18.80**	0.00
6	Do you use Bank Cards?	24.60**	0.00

9. Findings And Summary Conclusion:

The participants have actively presented their opinions on various usages of Social Networking and their interactions. The below table represents the percentages of usage of Mobile phones, Bank cards and different social networking sites. Total 872 participants responded.

Table 12

S.NO	STATEMENT	YES		NO	
		NO.	%	NO.	%
A	DO YOU HAVE MOBILE PHONE	558	63.99	314	36.01
B	DO YOU USE BANK CARDS	476	54.59	396	45.41
C	DO YOU USE WHATSAPP	468	53.67	404	46.33
D	DO YOU USE FACE BOOK	623	71.44	249	28.56
E	DO YOU USE YOU TUBE	479	54.93	393	45.07

Besides social Media penetration and active usage, the face book usage represents 71.4 % while you tube usage represents 54.93 % and WhatsApp usage represents 53.67 respectively.

The Participants expressed more positive response with 79 % on Social Media and Social Media and Digital Communication.

According to their Gender, female category participants (Mean=17.56) expressed high perceptions with respect to Social Media & Social Media and Digital Communication than that of male category participants (Mean=16.97)

According to their age group, above 30 years age group participants (Mean=17.96) expressed high perceptions with respect to Social Media and Digital Communication than that of 15 to 20 (Mean=17.13), 21 to 25 years age group (Mean=17.35) and 26 to 30 years age group participants (Mean=17.28).

According to their marital status, married category participants (Mean=17.46) expressed high perceptions with respect to Social Media and Digital Communication than that of unmarried category participants (Mean=15.64).

According to their occupation, housewife occupation of participants (Mean=18.05) expressed high perceptions with respect to Social Media and Digital Communication than that of cultivation (Mean=17.39), employee (Mean=17.11), daily wage labor (Mean=17.23) and business occupation of participants (Mean=17.13)

According to their family income, Rs. 12000 to 36000 family income per month of participants (Mean=18.55) expressed high perceptions with respect to Social Media and Digital Communication than that below Rs. 12000 (Mean=17.31) and above Rs. 36000 family income per month of participants (Mean=17.76).

10. Educational Implications

1. Create awareness through social media in relation to development of the rural population.
2. Educational videos, Governmental programs videos, Agricultural oriented videos and Testimonies of successful rural people videos to forward through social media.
3. Government need to prepare plan how to educate rural people through social media in various levels.
4. N.G. O's need to involve for motivating the rural people towards social media and its importance.
5. Government need to conduct workshops for proper implementation of the Digital Technology in the all the levels of organizations in our society.
6. Do more research for strengthen the rural population through social media.

11. Suggestions For Further Research

1. Further, researchers may conduct studies to compare between the districts of Andhra Pradesh state to ascertain similarities and differences.
2. Further study of the same nature can be conducted in the State Level.

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