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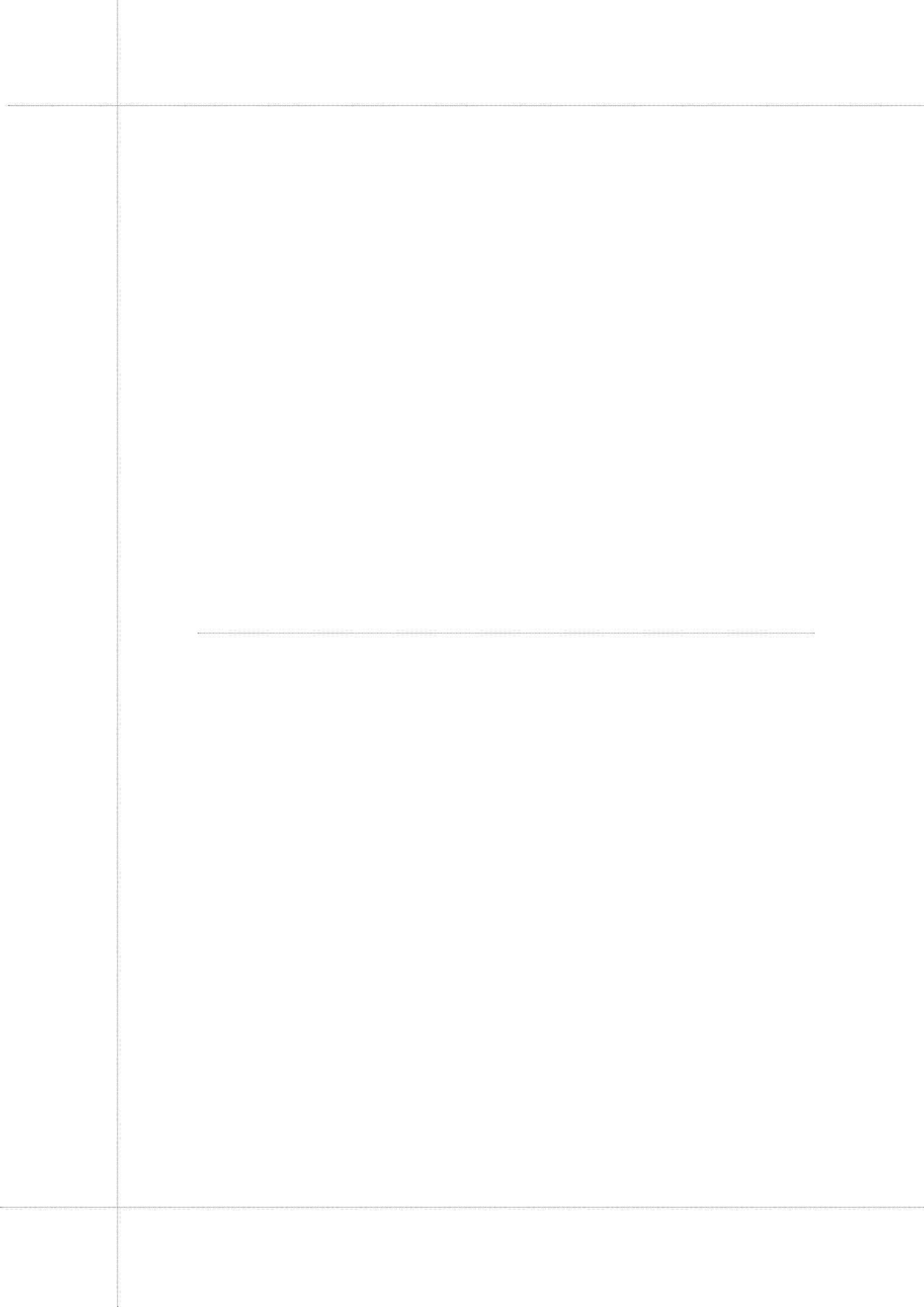
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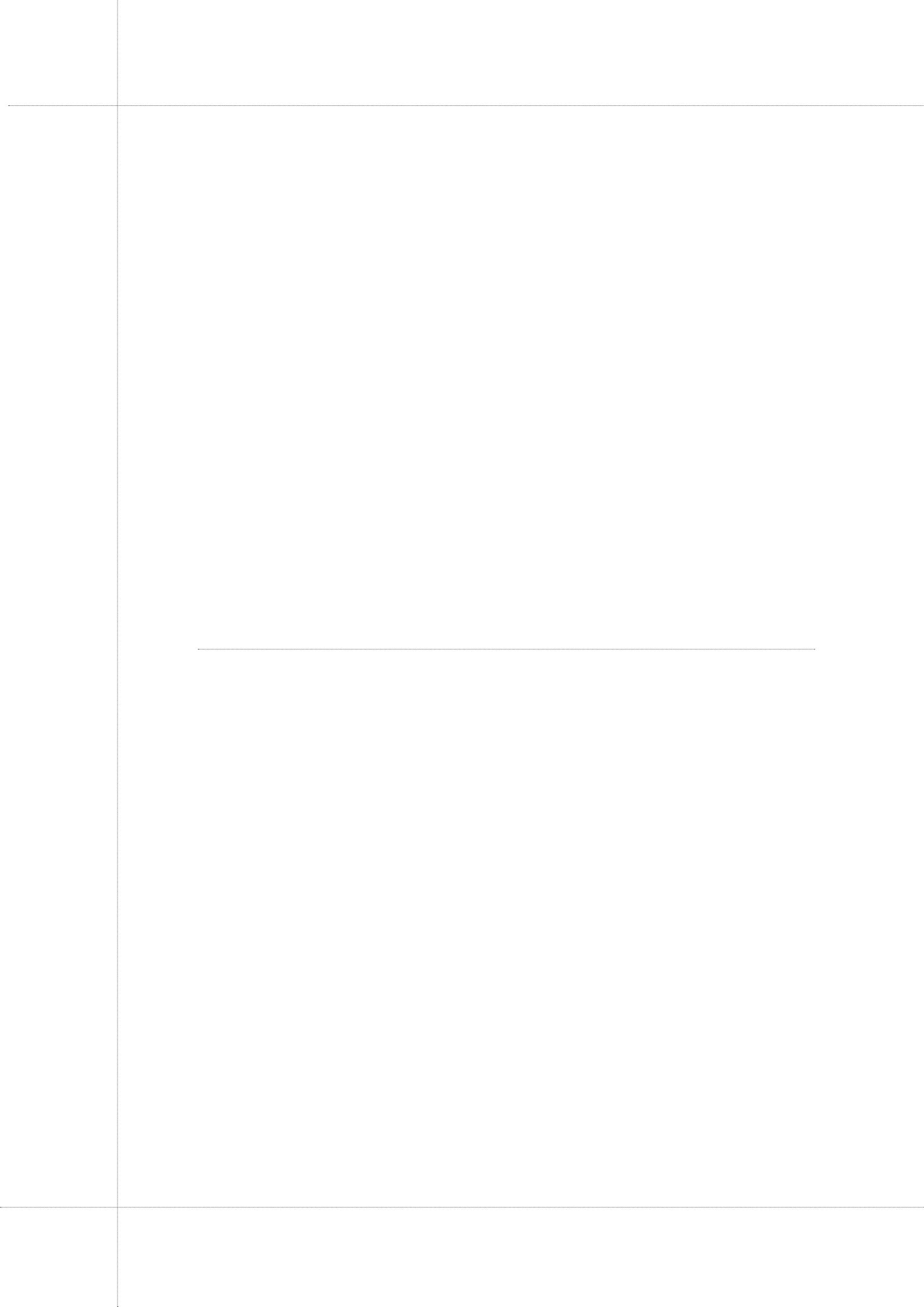
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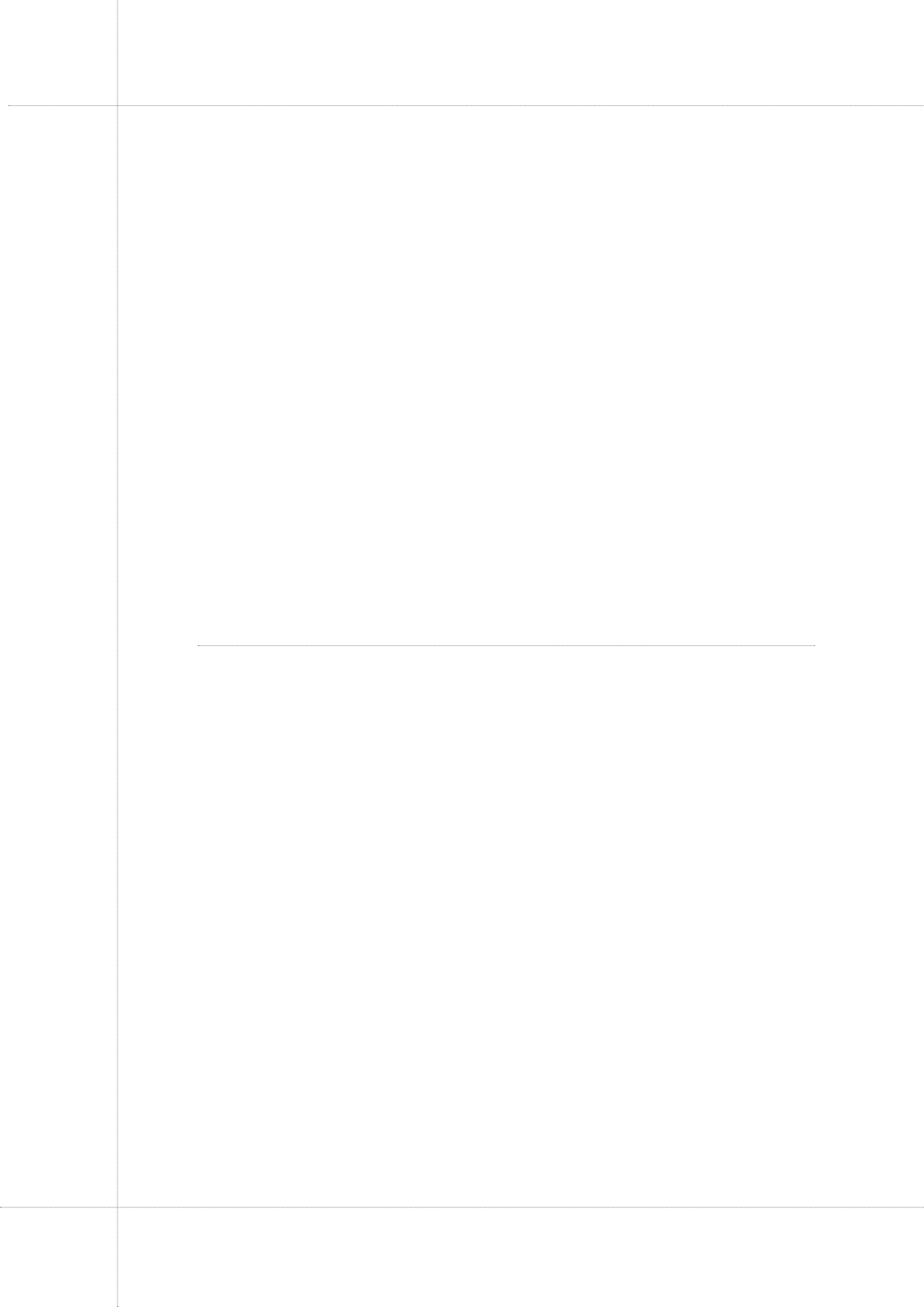
EDITOR'S NOTE

Technological innovations have certainly played an important role in the transformation of Mass communication today. The emergence of the Internet and the subsequent information age has helped to create a new medium while altering existing media vehicles.

Mass communication research will also need to continue focusing on how and why people are engaging new media such as the Internet. But majority of such studies are now happening only in the Western contexts. The cultural lacuna evident in such studies bothers communication theorists and practitioners of this part of the globe for long. Hence there is an increasing need to explore the impact of digitization and convergence on media and communication processes in the Indian context too.

Researchers within the Department of Communication and Journalism, UoK and others have tried to study diverse topics under Communication with some inter disciplinary character to fill this gap. We hope these minor research studies presented here will surely give a direction to our future communication scholars.

Dr. M. S. Harikumar
Chief Editor



Mobile phone: Concerns over Space and Uncertainty in Communication

■ DR. LALMOHAN P.*

ABSTRACT

Space has not been a major concern as time, in the question of communication. The means of communication and the process as a whole are based on the vigour with which it moves across time. The news pegs and values of journalism always try to overcome the barriers produced by chronemics rather than proxemics. This paper tries to analyse the importance of space in communication. The fundamental idea of space in communication and the possibilities are discussed. For assessing the practice of communication through different media, the philosophical questions regarding space is referred. Philosophers and sociologists Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Michael Foucault and Martin Heidegger, their works and the production of space are hence basic references of analysis. The paper tries to discuss the ways in which the mobile phone usage predominantly adheres to the basic notion of space. Space has a functional face as well as a conceptual face, produced by a sense of occupying by things, which evokes a feeling of newness. The spatial tenancy is largely considered as the objects put up within it. But when the spatiality concept is observed in detail, it has fundamental parts which are social and physical. The process of interaction between these spaces with all its intricacies, veiled during the communication, are examined. The process results in a power possession or hierarchy. This paper is only an attempt to initiate a debate on the practices occurring in the arena of new media choices. The paper tries to analyse experiences other than the conventionally oriented theories.

Keywords : Space, Mobile phone communication

Introduction

The access to any media not only enhances the freedom to enjoy the information, but the spatiality of the device, communicator and the field of communication also plays an imperceptible role. In the case of mobile phone, the device has the key principle of its functioning in that it lets one go across space. The locus of its physical spatiality is difficult to find out. The primary nature is the

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uncertainty of its physical space. In other words it is the uncertainty of the medium involved in the communication. It cannot be said virtual because its presence is quite visible. The complexity is that, it simultaneously compounds elements of virtuality and physical spatiality. The uncertainty in the process is a challenge mobile phone communication faces. Inadvertently it also produces a freedom for the medium or the device in the process of communication. The freedom of handling the device by the user has a little role in the process. In a way, the physical spatiality itself leads the user not to move beyond the functional mobility of the device.

Mobile phone communication creates a space of social cohesion. It does not allow the user to set apart his/her field of experience from the device. The multimedia facilitates a comfort of multi access. It enables a feel of attachment to the world one lives in. The unique connectivity includes information, entertainment, utility etc. Also mobile phones turn out to be a source of information rather than a medium. When a person takes a photograph or a video via mobile phone it acts as source facilitator for message production. The same when sent by the phone changes its function as a medium for dissemination.

This complexity is not one that exists because of the convolution of communication process. It rests in the complication within which the spatiality of both physical and social interacts. The liberty and rationality refer neither simply to ideas nor to practices – but to sets of complex exchanges between the two (Michel Foucault). One cannot ensure freedom and rationality as mobility unless the space as such is re organised. The practice of using a mobile phone becomes only a timely discourse in which spatiality is not a major concern. The conventional standards of communication which engages debates on the premise of theoretical frameworks and which ignores the everydayness/practices have to be reconsidered.

Everyday Life and Space of Communication – Silence and Vibration

The spatial re arrangement that occurred by the use of mobile phones also made some changes in physical space management. The pattern of usage in a public space suggested a new way of reorganising discipline. The high/low binary prepositions of sound/tones got refashioned to the mode of vibration. The enactment of sound changed and it was almost replaced by the mode of vibration. The concept of call which had a history of practice either as sound or

text (sometimes as a gesture too) was capsized by the usage of mobile phones. Introduction of vibration mode as a concept re-built the spatiality in many ways. It upset the traditional discipline of silence. Silence which was associated till date as a soundless mean, failed to control the new way of interference. The intervening alert makes the person using mobile phone a sense of presence across space. The limitations of space and the rigidity it possesses also face challenges. An architect as which coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom (Michel Foucault). In the case of mobile phone, the spatial mobility it exercises is not an accidental one. The virtual spatiality with intersecting both social and physical spaces are countable accounts of its advantages. Apart from these; easiness to handle, mobility, multimedia facility and capacity of convergence also promoted its globally wide usage. India has crossed the one billion user mark last year. Kerala has the highest mobile penetration in India with more than 30 million connections for a population of 33 million.

The connectivity of hyper loops formed under and above the system of routine functionality, creates other domains of interactions, together with the existing ones, visible. The art of circuiting more loops of communication via a device other than the thinking mind hence forms a creative turbulence. The loops of communication have infinite possibilities to create more hyper textual links according to the device's capacity. These hyper textual lineages serve a new domain of everydayness. The everydayness thus created challenges the routinely constructed physical as well as social domains of communication. These hyper loops explore the possibility of unnatural spontaneity. The links take path that are unpredicted. This unanticipated performance of the mobile phone communication is a result of the uncertainty of its physical as well as social spatiality. Uncertainty in the communication process provides chance of unforeseen information flow in the case of mobile phones. The pattern of physically built space or any paths of communication hitherto have witnessed such a situation of unnatural spontaneity in the flow of information. These hyper loops can be formed intentionally also. But as it proceeds there are possibilities of divergence in area of interest.

“Everydayness” of this manner constitutes a space which can intersect with the space existing. The equipmental space produced (Martin Heidegger) converts the user as an agency, and the conventional source changes its status as the medium. Hence the user becomes a mere channel and appears as the source. Meanwhile the sta-

tus of the device - Mobile Phone – changes as source but appears as the medium. The control over the space or the power to stimulate or sedate the communication space arises. So the capacity of the source to lead the process matters. Hence the status of the device obviously starts its power play. It seemingly take the position of medium as its physical and equipment spaces are considered; but more as a source when its functional capacity in social spaces are counted. This dual practicing role of the device actually try to create another space of activities. This newly created space can accommodate both natural and intentional loops of communication as discussed earlier.

Intersecting the conventional Social space – “Links important than beings”

Mobile phones itself which is a part of the space together with the users, accelerate their inter connectivity to another field of experience. The capacity of the mobile phone user to simultaneously engage various domains of informational/experiential practices promotes a skill to re organise the social living space. The links become more important than the “beings” who are being linked (Henri Lefebvre). The presence of being is shaken and new avenues of links constructing a space within is formed. The criss-crossing of many spaces discredits the user or the being. Hence the occupancy by the spatiality, concentrates attention on the links, which are constituent of some other larger spatiality. The social space as referred by Lefebvre is not enough to address the problem of the newly formed spatiality which again is a social space – which has moderately pre assumed its character as something other than the visible and in its deeper understanding as symbolic power (Pierre Bourdieu). But it also seems insufficient to attend the concern of these newly formed hyper loops providing information. As Emile Durkheim argues, to take social facts as things, the information available reciprocally creates a domain of things which may or may not be the concern of the user. This kind of “thingification” of information is the new paradigm of social space which do not restrict its entities as visible or symbolic. The third option thus formed can either be the same as that of the social space of symbolic power or a new one quite unexpected. The pattern of usage determines its domain of formation.

The concept of silence as a social space contributes an idea of social control or social power (Friedrich Nietzsche). Mostly silence occupies a space of consent. Obviously it blocks the freedom to express disjoint. Disjoint means it rejects a space of commonality.

So it dismisses a scope of hindrance to reveal uncommon areas of understanding. Silence does not allow a person to receive any type of communication but it controls the message in feedback. There is a possibility to interpret the feedback. The uncertainty in communication feedback actually creates a feel of unpredictability. The argument posited here is that, an exit point of the receiver is promoted as a spatial characteristic of mobile phone usage when it sabotages the concept of silence as only a parameter associated with a sense of hearing, sound. There is more sensory variability in this mobile phone communication accommodating other trajectories of nonverbal artifacts. The device of mobile phone produces a life system which over rules the concept of silence and control over it. The social construct of discipline which is supposed to be observing complete silence in a physical space, is encountered by posing another sensory engagement called mode of vibration. The capacity of adoption of vibration mode which is envisaged by the device is not an accidental one. The new media tendency to propose privacy with transparency is realistically practiced. The counter articulation of sound or in other way transforming the vocalic to haptics has accelerated the ideas of formation of a new space, which cannot be included either in physical or in social spatiality.

A space of unusual practices

Henri Lefebvre observes topology, citing three facts. Place of encounter, Assembly and its simultaneity. Communication process from the concept of rhetoric itself has been engaged in a discussion of these three factors. But in most of the debates, it considered space as an amalgam of socio – cultural- linguistic variable. Other than the usual practice, the device mobile phone, which has created a space of new spatiality, provides a process of communication playing the role of both as a source and medium. The instrument's capacity to navigate a communication process hence earns a power to influence the flow to a large extent than ever before. Communication of the uncertain features, unaccountable for its effects, unbothered about feedback and hence demanding a re-orientation in the theoretical frameworks have been the finite results of mobile phone communication. In fact this uncertainty has paved way for MOJO exercises in the news industry recently. The visual media experiences are shifting their packages to MOJO. The very fundamental principle of news itself is unpredictability and uncertainty which have inclinations but unsure of positions it will hold. The MOJO practices readily accept this "space" other than conventional media.

Conclusion

The mobile phone practices have reinforced the concept of space as an important factor. The device goes across the usual spatiality concerns and topples down the usual concepts of silence (Hearing/ vocalics) and innovates a conjugate as vibration mode (Touch- Haptics). In a way the social practices regarding silence as a disciplinary act has been overlooked by the invention of vibration mode of operation. It extends its limit over spaces both social and physical. The strategy of mobile phone communication thus finds its main characteristic as uncertainty.

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Media and Perception on Police

■ B. SREEJAN*

ABSTRACT

Police are still a group which is negatively covered by media most of the time. Though there were sweeping changes in the selection process, pay and perks and leadership, allegations of human rights violations and corruption still haunt police forces. The study examines why the Police still attract negative coverage in press and also as to whether journalists cover police impartially).

Keywords : Police, Journalists, Human Rights, Custodial torture, Police Act, Prevention of Torture Bill, D K Basu Judgment, Gujarat riots

Introduction

In the 2016 release Malayalam movie 'Action Hero Biju', the hero Biju Paulose who is a sub inspector by profession is seen physically attacking many of the accused he has taken into custody. The movie repeatedly portrays third degree torture methods like punching a habitual offender with a cloth covered coconut and asking youngsters to cut their hair and shave their long beards as those habits don't conform to his concept of decency.

A number of senior Police officers and the then home minister lauded the film as a great work that does justice to the Police force. Throughout the movie, protagonist Nivin Pauly is seen as a manly officer who believes part of the justice needs to be delivered by the Police. He believes in judicial system but thinks that manhandling the accused is his right. Nowhere in the movie, sane voices come up and correct the officer. The case of 'Kasaba', another 2016-release

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Malayalam movie in which actor Mammooty played the lead, is no different. The character Rajan Zacharia played by Mammooty comes across as an arrogant officer who shows of deep rooted male chauvinist traces even while dealing with a woman Police officer.

It is not only the officers who come on silver screen who take law into their hands. Several Police officers in the real life too do the same. The suicide of Vinayakan of Pavaratty in Thrissur on June 17, 2017, was found out to be the aftermath of custodial torture by the Policemen of Pavaratty station¹. On March 17, 2016, Thrissur West Police took singer Martin John Challisery of Oorali band into custody and manhandled him. Martin was rounded off while he was travelling on public road and the reason cited by the Police was that he had long hair and a long beard.

Why do our Police still misbehave with public? Why do they still think using third degree torture is their right? Why do they help high profile culprits to escape from charges by suppressing evidence? This study will examine the socio-political reasons that shape up the reform-resistant behavior of our Police force and also why there is a predominantly negative coverage of Police in media.

Human Right is Right to Life

We are living in an era when human rights are treated on par with right to life. It has been 67 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly². The 30 articles of the UDHR, adopted by the UN on December 10, 1948, establish the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people. It is a vision for human dignity that transcends political boundaries and authority, committing governments to uphold the fundamental rights of each person.

Campaigns by human rights organisations like Amnesty International have created a wave of reforms in Police forces across the world. Human Rights is a serious issue of concern for responsible Police forces in developed countries. Efforts to make Police forces in India more literate on human rights are going on at many levels. In our state, there is an effective Police complaints authority. The complaints reaching these authorities often get judicious redressals too. It is also refreshing to note that in Kerala there are a number of Janamaithri (friends of public) Police stations and the officers there work closely with the people under their jurisdiction.

But, there are grey areas still. Even today, human rights violation is the complaint heard most often from Police stations. In a state like Kerala which boasts of higher literacy rates and enviable social indices, it is strange that at least a few Police stations continue

to remain as torture chambers. Interestingly, human rights violations are not committed by junior Police officers alone, the higher officials – some of them in the Indian Police Service – are also accused of grave violations including committing third degree tortures.

We may need to look at films like *Action Hero Biju* and *Kasaba* in this context. Nivin Pauly's Biju Paulose is not the first Police officer who treated human rights with utter contempt. Heroes like Prem Nazir and Suresh Gopy had done similar acts in their movies too. But, if those were the movies in '70s, '80s and '90s, our hero is blatantly violating human rights and even taking credits for that in 2016.

Reform-resistant Structure

One of the basic issues that prevent our Police force from adapting to modernization is its very structure. The soul of policing in India is still rooted in the Indian Police Act enacted by the British in 1861. The Act was the aftermath of Sipoy Mutiny in 1857 that had alerted them for the need for an act that might keep a force which would be totally under its control. Though the government enacted fresh acts to modernize the Police force, the core structure remains to be the same as it had been envisioned by the British.

In his study³, *Police Accountability in India*, G P Joshi, who was the programme coordinator, Commonwealth Human Rights initiative, says: "The British realised that to perpetuate their rule in this country, they must have a Police force that was totally subservient to the executive. The executive must exercise complete and unquestioning control over the Police force. Section 3 of the 1861 Police Act vested the superintendence of the state Police forces in the state governments. The same Act introduced a system of dual control at the district level. It put the Police forces under the command of the District Superintendents of Police, but subject to the "general control and direction" of the District Magistrates. This was done deliberately because the functioning of the District Magistrate as the chief officer of the district was considered essential for the maintenance of British rule in India. Under the system of Police governance established by the 1861 Act, the Police forces in India were unaccountable to anyone except their own hierarchy and the colonial political and administrative executive. Making the Police accountable to the community or other democratic or local indigenous institutions did not fit into the British colonial model of control."

The structure of the Police force in India still remains almost the same. The only difference is that big bosses are not British senior officials but Ministers, MLAs and ministers-in-waiting. Senior Police

officials have always pointed out that independence of Police force is a mandatory requirement for effective Police reforms.

The structure of the Police force is such that Godfathers are necessary in all levels of the force for an officer who is a little bit ambitious. Along with godfathers in the force, most of them nurture god fathers in politics too. These godfathers not only provide them a smooth career path but also ensure that their blemishes are cleared without trace.

One senior officer in the IG rank in Kerala Police recently got cleared his service book of all bad remarks he had earned because of inhumane and corrupt acts. A probe by friends in the media later found out that it was a couple of senior leaders of the ruling front who had tried to cleanse his past. The process was secretive and the top cop in the force too had to turn a blind eye as he was well aware of the political pressure.

Journalists who are active on field chance upon several such incidents and see how easily such gross human rights violation cases are settled without any harm to the violators. The only case in which a senior cop had to face serious action in the recent history might be Naxalite Varghese murder case. K. Laxmana, who retired as a DIG in the state Police, had been convicted in the case of custodial torture that led to the death of Naxal Varghese.

In another high profile recent case – Sampath custodial murder case – though the CBI has accused a few Policemen, the officers who were believed to have been orchestrated the torture, have been let off smartly. Udayakumar murder case happened in the Fort Police Station, Thiruvananthapuram, is another case being probed by the CBI and a few Policemen have been charge-sheeted in this case too.

Media Perspective on Human Rights violations

One of the best things in our country is the existence of an independent media. The media, in general, view custodial torture and other human rights violations seriously and often take a pro-victim approach. They not only report but also fight for justice for the victim through their reports and by other value added means like going into a campaign mode.

The classic example of Indian media's fight against Police's human rights violation is Gujarat riots of 2002. The whole world knew about how the Police misused power and failed to discharge its duty through media reports. If the ghosts of Gujarat riots still haunt the perpetrators, the credit must go to media and a few human right activists like Teesta Setalvad and former DGP R B Sreekumar.

But there are exceptions too. In Gujarat, while most of the national media tried to expose human rights violations, there were incidents of regional media defending the perpetrators and even spreading lie campaign for saving their skin. *Human Rights Watch report*⁴ on Gujarat riots had pointed out: While the national Indian press has played an important role in exposing the violence and official neglect or misconduct, sectors of the local press have been accused of inciting the violence.

This was the truth and those who had done such unethical act were stripped, named and shamed by social media. The Editors' guild and the Press Council of India also took serious note of their unethical stance.

If we discuss certain classic cases and try to argue that media is always neutral, it will be like trying to fill in a big hole with darkness. Majority of media organisations in the country are run by capital forces which nurture their covert and overt political ambitions. There might be only a very few media entrepreneurs who are not bothered about politics. The observation of human rights watch about Gujarat riots and regional media is relevant in other cases too. Regional media are often more vulnerable to political influence.

According to G P Joshi⁵, "It became difficult to hold the editors and management of the local press accountable for violating criminal law, besides infringing their own code of ethics, because they had the support of the state government". That means there is a kind of give and take relation between regional media and the government. Hence, if the human rights violations are done with the active or passive connivance of the government, the media will tend to collude with it and turn a blind eye towards the violation.

What if some editor wilfully decides to pursue campaigns against government unmindful of warnings? GP Joshi⁶ answers that too by quoting Tehelka episode as an example: "The government has occasionally tried to pressurize or intimidate the media, which has exposed corruption or abuse of power by politicians and senior bureaucrats. Recalcitrant media persons have been subjected to raids by income tax and law enforcement authorities and harassed in other ways."

When it comes specifically to the case of Police breaching human rights, there is one more major factor that we need to take account of.

The Police are the most closely associated government department with media. A reporter, even from his early days of the career, will have to interact with Police on a daily basis. Since crime is still a major beat in Indian journalism, cultivating sources in the

Police is a major task for all journalists. Usually a trainee reporter grows in rank along with a trainee ASP and when the reporter becomes a crime editor/chief of bureau, his/her pal in the Police might have become an IG or ADGP.

If a custodial torture happens in a Police station, the Police will act in several levels to ensure that it is not reported factually. The sub inspector of the local Police station would connect with the local reporter of the newspaper to place the first request. If there is a friendship between the SI and local reporter, the report may not go up from his desk. If it is a little graver crime and the district bureau seeks report, the local reporter files it with a warning to the SI that he had to file it out of pressure. The SI who picks up the hint will then contact the SP who will coordinate with the district bureau chief to bury the report or at least compromise its language. In some cases, the operation will reach up to the top level of both organisations with DGP and Editor colluding to bury reports of a sensational human rights violation case.

Reporters will always find in awkward positions in such cases. It is the reporter who will have to coordinate with the Police for every non-journalistic mission of his media management - from getting sound permit for the Onam exhibition to settle the border dispute in the General Manager's ancestral property. When a Police officer who helps the reporter in all these tasks requests for a counter favour, it is only natural that he may have to pay heed to it.

If a newspaper or channel, reports a human rights violation by the Police in the most deserving manner, you can be sure of one thing. The Editor and Reporter of the media organization concerned have taken a huge risk in pursuing the truth, sometimes even risking their jobs.

We are indeed fortunate that despite all these hurdles, media in India, particularly in Kerala, come up with detailed reports on Police human rights violation.

Media's Double Role

Another interesting fact is that the portrayal of a particular officer or a particular Police station by media is always not in the same manner. An officer, who had been subjected to negative reporting for long, at times gets an image makeover as a saintly officer. This happens on two counts – the officer purposely tries to reform his behavior and come across as a good Samaritan to public than a terrorizing figure and the news media mostly functions in 'the present', i.e., what is happening today becomes the main story and the past is often forgot or ignored. There are smart officers who got

rid of their notoriety by deciding to take up missions on social justice and convincingly publicize those acts.

One of the questions that journalists have to face often is how can they glorify such officers who had a notorious past? In fact, it is not journalists who glorify them. They earn the glory themselves. Once, familiar with the ways of media, smart cops find it easy to use them to their advantage.

In Communication theory, there is primacy effect and recency effect⁷, both work as factors in shaping up perception. While primacy effect relates to the first impression, recency effect relates to the last impression. A positive first impression can be tarnished by a negative last impression and vice versa.

As the public memory is too short, they tend to reap the advantage of recency effect and hence wash blemishes of their past from the minds of public.

Conclusion: A Path to Reforms

As a note of conclusion, let's have a quick look at the recommendations of *Asian Centre for Human Rights*⁸:

- The Supreme Court should amend the guidelines issued in the D.K. Basu judgment to apply from the moment of summons issued by the Police or detention with the Police when acting in an official capacity.
- NHRC should distinguish in its statistics between custodial deaths through natural causes and custodial deaths resulting from abuses of human rights.
- Government should send the Prevention of Torture Bill, 2008 to Parliamentary Standing Committee for organizing public hearing to ensure its conformity with the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Government should ratify the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol; and the government of India should extend an invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

With regard to reforms in media, these points can be considered:

- Media Audit: There should be a media audit, ideally a uniform one by a joint forum of major human rights organisations that can be done on a quarterly basis. It needs to criticize media for

joining hands with violators and becoming violators themselves.

- Proper training for journalists: Organisations like Amnesty International can invest more resources and time for training journalists. Not only national journalists need training, those in the regional level, including local reporters, need to be trained extensively. Organisations can also influence universities to include human rights protection as a topic in communication curriculum.
- Self-reform and evaluation: It should come within. A journalist should take a pledge that he should never be party of human rights violation on the day he joins the profession. Let that be our Hippocrates Oath.

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Re-defining Digital Relationships: An Enquiry into the Neo-liberal Cyberscape

■ SIMI VARGHESE*

ABSTRACT

Today, we live in a digital labyrinth. Truly, the whole world is entangled in a digital haywire. Globally, legacy media had a nosedive. People seek 'instant gratification' from cell phones, Facebook and video games as traditional media often fail to provide this gratification. Active life in the digital domains creates a kind of 'social disconnectivity'. The onslaught of technology has made the media magnates powerless. The social media boom has revolutionized the modern society. A powerful and unparalleled tool to share information, mould opinions, connects people across domains and cultures, social media bring participation as never before. Amidst this hullabaloo, digital relationships have become very complex today. Online media consumption has reached gigantic proportions as never before. It had reached its saturation and health of the users gets affected detrimentally in recent years. The study tries to re-evaluate the digital relationships in a holistically neo-liberal cyberscape.

Keywords : Gratification, Disconnectivity, Neo-liberal cyberscape

Introduction

The digital conquest has spearheaded a revolution in the information landscape of the world. Though with far reaching consequences, it can never be compared to a nuclear explosion. As Daniel Sieberg has remarked in his 'The Digital Diet,' the digital invasion is more like a slow invasion of an ant colony which has been silent and is destroying many parts of our lives.' This silent incursion goes unbridled and creates havoc in the varied realms of life. The increasingly invasive digital world is going to make physical, emotional and spiritual ramifications in the domestic lives

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of populace. The digital tsunami has already set in as the tech-savvy new generation is enveloped by computers and the internet. Human life has changed tremendously thanks to the digital gadgets especially mobile phone. It has redefined our life, society, culture, language and medium in quite an amazing way. Marshal McLuhan, the Canadian archpriest of communication has remarked clothing as an extension of the skin and Radio as Tribal Drum. He might have termed mobile phone as the 'talking hand', according to communicologists. This is justified as his right hand is always engaged and seems to be attached to his ear.

Mobile Phone Society

The society's creation and welfare depend on individual collectives. The advent of mobile phones has curtailed face-to-face communication in a great way. Even in households, mutual communication has reduced. If father is accessing Facebook, mother will be busy with WhatsApp chatting. The whole family is engrossed in media communication 24x7. Never in the history of mankind, was this considered possible. Today mobile phone has attained the status of a multi-media convergent gadget. This hybrid gadget empowers us to write poems, hear music, pen messages, view films etc. Globally, studies reveal that family members in a post-mobile phone society have lost intimacy among themselves. Dr Jordan Grafman at the National Institute of Neuro Logical Disorders argues that technology is good for children's cognitive development, if judiciously used. But if imprudently used, moulds the brain in a negative way. Dr Nicholas Carr in his book, 'The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains?' reveals that while internet improves our cognitive ability, it diminishes our intellectual capacity to concentrate and contemplate.

The Stark Reality

In 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that India has one of the highest suicide rates in the world. In 2013, 'The Lancet' noted that 62, 960 young people between the ages 10 and 24 committed suicides in India. It is shocking that every hour one student ends his or her life in India. Suicide has been the prominent cause of death amongst this age group. In the rest of the world, road accident is the main reason. In 2015, Washington Post reported that India tops the list of countries in the world in case of the number of selfie deaths. The studies bear testimony of the gravity of the

situation. Though several reasons can be cited, internet addiction happens to be the major villain, says Dr Monsy Edward, consultant clinical psychologist in Thrissur. Gautham Gambhir, a player in the Indian cricket team recently disclosed another grave malady in his blog. At the time of the Indian Premier League, children had indulged in online gambling. Ms Anitha Pauline, Principal, W H Smith Memorial School, Varanasi had blurted out the information to Goutham. Students from class 6 to 10 studying in different schools in four states had participated in the gambling. Children from highly affluent families have indulged in the game, banking on their pocket money and mobile phones. Online revolution had dramatically changed the gambling field. Unfortunately, teenagers are the culprits here. The enthusiasm behind the game and the money accrued fascinate them to involve in online gambling. Ninety per cent of the cyber-crimes take place through Facebook. Even then parents have not taken efforts to divert their wards from chatting to unknown cyber friends and posting photos to them.

According to cyber laws, children below 13 years are not permitted to enter social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. If children in this age group get involved in cyber-bullying, parents will also be convicted along with them. Online games came under serious scrutiny only when many children committed suicide. The tasks for the children are determined by certain cyber perverts sitting in an online chat room. Hitherto, when our children emerged victorious after Clash of Clans, Temple Run and Candy Crush, we appreciated them for their digital competency ignorant of the enveloping trap. The children marooned in flats and study rooms turn to digital world expecting some adventure. This later on affects their physical and mental health, opines Dr Jaya A T, Asst Professor in Psychology, Prajyoti Niketan College, Pudukad. She argued that parents have to provide a colourful world for them within their domestic environs or else they will seek a colourful ambience in the virtual world.

Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants

Today the world teems with two groups called digital natives and digital immigrants. Those born after the advent of digital technology can be termed as digital natives while digital immigrants are those who were born before the digital revolution. Conflicts are common among the digital natives and digital immigrants which is often regarded as the digital divide. Ray Kurzweil, the pioneer of computer speech recognition in his book, 'The Age of Spiritual

Machines’, demonstrates a world where computers rival humans in intelligence with the increasing pace of technological change. In his second book, ‘The Singularity is Near’, he argues that in future computers and men will unite and function as a single entity. The capacities embedded in our brains get united with the speed and ability of our own computers. Kurzweil opines that there will be no difference between human brain and machine brain. Truly, it is the era of ‘technological utopianism’ where people believe that technology forms the foundation for carving an ideal society. Intimacy deficiency is the offshoot of this digital revolution. Digital intimacy (virtual intimacy) is far away from real intimacy. Technology helps us to share information, experiences and knowledge but it cannot convey emotions and feelings. Modern man considers digital encounters as more exciting than real encounters. For eg; we celebrate Onam in WhatsApp groups with great splendor while we consider it awkward to visit our neighbourhood and exchange wishes. The online dealings provide a pseudo-illusory intimacy. The fact is that we are emotionally disconnected in a digital world.

‘Social Media in India 2014’, a report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB International says that there are 143 million social media users in India as on April 2015. Social media consumption in rural areas has grown by 100 per cent over the last one year with 25 million users in rural India. The growth is attributed to the heavy penetration of smart phones in these areas. Similarly, urban India registered a relatively lower growth at 35 per cent with the total number of users at 118 million as of April. The top four metros continue to account for almost half of the social media users in urban India. The largest segment accessing social media consists of the college going students with 34 per cent followed by young men at 27 per cent and school going children at 12 per cent. Symantec, a security solutions provider, has ranked India second among nations that were most targeted for cyber-crimes through the social media in 2014, after the US.

Children often fall easy prey to the idiosyncrasies and fantasies of internet. Apart from ‘the blue whale’ there are other predators lurking in the darkness. Dr Amit Sen, adolescent psychiatrist at Children First, New Delhi recently recollected an instance of a class X student of Madhya Pradesh. The student scribbled certain words in his answer sheet which goes like this: ‘I am trapped in the game which I have been playing for the last two months. I am now in the final stage and they are telling me to commit suicide or else they will kill

my parents. Please help me.’ The boy had reached the 49th stage of the blue whale challenge, an ominous online game that forces young people to self-mutilation which culminates in suicide. Dr Monsy Edward, a reputed clinical psychologist in Thrissur opined that this is a heightened state of addiction. Internet consumption for more than 21 hours in a week will lead to addiction. He will be forced to use internet as a motor ritual even when inwardly he feels the urge to stop his usage. Restlessness coupled with depression is the impact. Availability of the medium and the peer group influence are reasons according to Dr Monsy which tempts a person to begin the usage. It’s high time we built safe spaces for our children, far away from the dark vision of the internet.

Digital Afflictions

‘Nucleus Accumbens’ is that part of the brain that controls every experience of pleasure. But an overdose of pleasure experiences brings forth detrimental consequences. Internet addiction has something to do with this pleasure over-dosage. Dopamine is the basic neurotransmitter (chemical messenger) that carries the signal to your pleasure center from different parts of the brain. As you pine for more and more pleasure, the dopamine levels climb higher and higher. This is called ‘dopamine flooding’ which results in behaviour abuse. Digital world offers addictions of varied dimensions. Our pleasure center floods with too many ramifications of pleasures. Excessive digital consumption strains the pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain that operates self-regulation. Our inability to self-regulate, forces us to spend more time in our digital world. Government of South Korea had been innovative in curbing this digital addiction. There the youth frequent ‘gaming auditoriums’ in their cities, plays games relentlessly and gets addicted to the pleasure. Consequently, the Korean government had given the clarion call to reduce the internet misuse. They are undoubtedly the pioneers in this regard. Over use of social media enhances the tendency of narcissism, which is today an epidemic among youth. Excessive media connections will lead to narcissism. In a book authored by Jean Twenge and W Keith Campbell entitled ‘The Narcissism Epidemic’, the concept and growth of narcissism is well expostulated. In the book they reveal that ‘The name MySpace’ is no coincidence. The slogan of YouTube is ‘Broadcast Yourself’. The name Facebook is just right, with its idea of looking as attractive as possible. Recent statistics reveal more facts about digital media consumption.

- People spend 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook.
- One in every nine people on earth is on Facebook.
- Wikipedia hosts 17 million articles.
- You Tube has 490 million unique users who visit every month.
- People upload 3000 images to Flickr (the photo sharing social media site) every minute.

Renowned psychologist John Suler speaks about a tendency called ‘the online disinhibition effect’ where people involved in online interaction ‘loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly’. Sherry Turkle, a social psychologist in Massachusetts Institute of Technology asserts that through over-consumption of social media, ‘we expect more from technology and less from each other’. She comments, ‘Technology makes us busier than ever, and ever more in search of retreat. Gradually, we come to see our online life as life itself’. The front page of the July 2012 Newsweek read, ‘iCrazy: Panic. Depression. Psychosis. How Connection Addiction is Rewiring Our Brains? The article unravels that the brain scan of internet addicts looks a lot like the brains of drug and alcohol addicts. Digital gadgets act very much like electronic cocaine to the brain. In 1995, Dr Kimberly Young, an expert in the field of computers founded the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery to promote research in related issues. Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) has been included in the 2013 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-V) as a real disorder. This manual is known as the bible of psychology.

Facebook FADS (Facebook Addiction Disorder)

‘Psychology Today’ reveals that Facebook and Twitter are more addictive than alcohol and tobacco. A recent study by Michael W Austin in ‘Ethics for Everyone’, claims that for certain people ‘quitting Facebook and Twitter are more difficult than quitting smoking or giving up alcohol.’ This study compiled the desires of 250 people and found that the desire for a Facebook encounter was more tempting than that for both tobacco and alcohol. Another study in the US reveals that one in five divorces now involve Facebook affairs. Improper relationships spring up on the internet and marriages are in trouble today. In this backdrop, cyber-affairs which seriously hamper relationships have to be dealt with prudently. Prominent psychologist Dr Sharon Hart May remarks that internet is

a serious hazard to marriage. It distracts couples from spending time together and making intimate bonds. 'Today's world has become so wired together, so flattened, that you can't avoid seeing just where you stand on the planet- just where the caravan is and just how far ahead or behind you are', says Thomas L Friedman, New York Times columnist. The planet has flattened only because of the advent of the internet. Internet as an interactive delivery system has revolutionized the structure, economics and culture of the media business in the US and also across the world. Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and Pixar Animation Studios, on June 12, 2005 in his commencement address delivered at Stanford University concluded his speech with the dictum, 'Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish'. This speaks volumes of the need to equip oneself with the digital smorgasbord offered on a platter.

Smart Diseases of e-world

When life becomes digital and smart, diseases become smarter. The new generation diseases entered as an outcome of the excessive online media exposure.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

When the median nerve passing through the palm experiences pressure, he gets this disease. Excessive pain in the wrist, palm, numbness in the fingers etc are symptoms. Treatment involves medicines which enhances the functions of nerves, pain killers etc. Cortico steroid injections can also be administered to the patients. Using wrist splint is also effective. In extreme cases carpal tunnel release surgery is advisable.

Guyon's Canal Neuropathy

This syndrome is an entrapment of the ulnar nerve as it passes through a tunnel in the wrist called Guyon's Canal. Though similar to carpal tunnel syndrome, a completely different nerve is involved here. Light exercises, anti-inflammatory medicines, wrist splint etc are some of the remedial measures.

Cubital Tunnel Syndrome

This condition involves pressure or stretching of the ulnar nerve (also known as the 'funny bone', nerve) which can cause numbness or tingling in the ring and small fingers, pain in the forearm and weakness to the hand.

Tendonitis

Tendonitis is the inflammation of the wrist joints. This occurs due to the pressure which unites bones with the muscles. When using mouse too, some may feel pain. Proper rest and anti-inflammatory medicines sans steroids can be administered to the patients.

WhatsAppitis

The intense pain felt in the palm and tips of fingers due to over use of WhatsApp etc is called WhatsAppitis. Red colour and inflammation along with pain are also seen.

Twitches

Behaviour of people who often tweet unnecessarily in Twitter is called Twitches. They are always seen tweeting to others.

Nemophobia

Sixty percent of mobile phone users are said to have this disease. This situation is very complicated as those mobile users can't live without a mobile phone.

Internet and children

Excessive internet consumption among children can negatively hamper their personal and social relationships. By chatting and playing games in the internet, children often get trapped in the fantasy world of addiction. The influence which has been exerted by internet on children is tremendous. According to 2013 statistics, globally, children have fallen prey to internet consumption and they belong to the 13-19 age category. American Psychiatric Association had included Internet Gaming Disorder as one of the mental illnesses afflicting children. Legally, children below 13 years are not supposed to use Facebook. But the reality is really stark. Recently, ASSOCHAM conducted a study among 4200 parents of children between 8-13 years in Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Pune, Lucknow and DehraDun. The result has been an eye-opener to all. Among the 13 year old children, 25 per cent uses Facebook while 22 per cent users are there among 11 year old ones. Fifteen per cent children in the 10 year old category are Facebook users and in the 8-9 age categories, 5-10 percent is very active in Facebook. The shocking revelation is that for 82 per cent children, their parents themselves had created accounts for them

showing faulty ages. But most of them regret later when they find their children staunch addicts to internet. This addiction is more in the case of children whose parents are employed. ASSOCHAM Health Committee Chairman Mr B K Rao points out that the dangerous internet addiction of children make them fall easy prey to cyber bullying and online sexual abuse. In the wide world of Internet, children feel themselves anonymous while using internet. Parents can find out internet addiction among children by careful observation. If the daily consumption of internet is more than three hours, the situation is dangerous. Constant tangles at home regarding internet usage is another situation. Parents and teachers observe the child only when he lags behind others in exams. His inability to concentrate in studies, going to school without completing his homework, low attendance percentage in class, daydreaming in class etc pertain to certain symptoms of active internet usage. Consequently, their intimacy with their friends gets reduced and relations between family members lack the warmth and cordiality. Constant head ache, sleeplessness, fatigue, pain in eyes, obesity etc are some of the common problems faced by internet addicts.

Today there are so many online sites which provide free guidelines and legal advice towards online child safety. Sites like nobullying.com, lexcyberia.com, childprotectionindia.com, unicef.org, wiredsafety.org, parentzone.org etc are some of them. Moreover, cyber-crime cells function in almost all districts in Kerala.

Major Reasons

The major reasons for this internet dependency can be categorized into three: peculiarities in personality, mental and social factors. Adolescent period happens to be an open period to clarify all doubts and to gain knowledge. Constant fights between ideologies are common phenomena. Often, introverts among them fall into internet addiction. They think they are totally safe and anonymous in the wide expanse of internet. They try to conquer great heights in virtual life through online games and friendly chats, as scaling greater heights in real life is unimaginable for them. They are more interested in 'online interactive games' involving two or three online players at a time. This resulted in the official proclamation of a disease which is called 'internet gaming disorder'. Parents will realize the magnitude of the malady only after their own children get entangled in the tentacles. (e.g.: blue whale game)

Children who use internet six hours daily exhibit symptoms of depression, obsessive compulsive spectrum disorders, excessive anxiety, anger, violent behaviour, psychosis etc. Being afraid of failure and lack of confidence, these children keep themselves aloof from social relationships. Paradoxically, for mental solace and support, they largely depend on social networking sites. Studies reveal that internet games instigate violent behaviour and impulsiveness among children and negatively affect the functions of the frontal lobe of their brain. Most of the parents fail in assessing the internet usage of their children through mobile phones. It is natural that during puberty, they try to collect information about sexuality. And the internet pornography industry exploits such curiosities and anxieties of teenagers and amasses crores. Twelve per cent of the websites on internet pertain to such 'adult' sites. Among them, the most important 25 sites are visited by teenagers. This inculcates negative presumptions in their minds and gradually they end up as internet addicts. Value erosion and shallow family relationships happen to be major reasons for the aberrant behaviour of children. In the brisk, busy ways of life, parents often fail to communicate with their wards and neglect their problems.

Treatment for Children

Psychological treatment is more important in internet addiction cases. The most effective one is cognitive behavior therapy. Children are totally unaware of the trap involved in internet consumption. Therefore they often turn a Nelson's eye towards treatment. In situations of this genre, treating children from the perspective of their personality is the duty of the medical practitioner. Those who feel lack of confidence in social interventions can be administered reality therapy. Imparting training for enhancing social ability, role play, modeling etc are some of the treatment systems to be employed. Dr Jaya A T vehemently points her finger at parents for not channelizing the creative energy of children. Children often get alienated by the multi-tasking parents. Consequently, they get addicted to gadgets like mobile phones and laptops. Parents have to find time for their wards especially during their childhood years and adolescence.

Need for Emotional Care

The baton to save children from the octopus grip of online addiction rests with the parents. Parents have to create warm

relationships with their children. They should find time to communicate with their kids and share their joys and anxieties. Parents have to understand the frailties of their children and hone up their talents. Children expect their parents to correct them softly and with tenderness. Parents have to set up a congenial atmosphere at home for their internet consumption. They also must indulge in healthy internet usage. The position of computer at home should be in an open space, especially in a hall. Internet filters can also be used. Parental control features could be installed and monitored regularly. Several parental control software options have to be taken into consideration. For eg, BSecure Online, iWonderPro, Safe Eyes, Net Nanny, Webwatcher etc are certain software possibilities for parents. The founder of Shepherd's Hill Academy Trace Embry blurts out his feelings about teenagers between the ages of twelve and seventeen. As the group belongs to the digital era, they often behave like robots, hardwired and with unquenchable appetites for online media consumption. They all seem to be digital gluttons. According to Embry, kids really wanted their parents to put curbs not only on their techno-usage but also on many other aspects of their lives. Digitalia can't offer solutions to all their problems. Children want real friends, real solutions and real feelings and not virtual friends or solutions. A computer machine can't love and appreciate them. These things could only evolve from the psyche of a caring parent, adult or benefactor. They only can suggest a balanced media diet to their kids. Non digital activities like reading books, hobbies, sports etc can rejuvenate the withered spirits of children like fresh rain upon parched land.

K. Sanjaykumar Gurudin IPS, Commandant, Kerala Armed Police, Kannur had suggested certain preventive measures to help parents. Activating the safety filters in Google, Windows and YouTube will restrict the entry of unnecessary sites when children search information. Social Media too comprise such safety commands. Monitoring the online activities of children, occasional searching of their Facebook activity logs and Google histories will help evade problems to a certain extent. Parents can educate their wards regarding the hidden traps in social media. The breakdown of strong socio-cultural structures and a tempting social media has taken a toll on the mental health of our younger generation. Mr Gurudin in his book 'Is Your Child Safe?', argues that schools have a great role in building emotional awareness and instilling pro-social skills among children. He adds that state cannot shift responsibility onto parents and schools whenever situation turns topsy-turvy. Consistent

implementation of child-friendly policies will ensure emotional and social safety for them. In the Blue Whale age, holistic education becomes mandatory as teacher and student gets training in life skills.

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Mobile App as a Tool for Citizen Journalism

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of mobile Apps as a tool for citizen Journalism in India. Globally Citizen Journalism is getting more importance as smart phones and high speed internet have become a reality. The same trend is also visible in India during the last few years. In this study the use of mobile applications by the citizen journalist and the content posted by citizen journalist in India and type of content were studied. This paper further enquired about the most used mobile application and its content. It also tried to analyze the type of stories posted by the Citizen Journalist. A better understanding of the use of mobile app and its influence on the citizen Journalist in India is provided through this study.

Keywords : Citizen Journalism, Citizen Journalist, Mobile Application, tool.

Introduction

Alternative media is the most common word used to refer citizen journalism globally. It becomes a visible phenomenon in the media landscape during the start of 21st century. Academicians and Journalist's like Dan Gillmor and Jay Rosen debated for the citizen journalism in the late 1990's. But it became a reality after the development of the network of Independent media centres in 1999. Citizen journalism is the act of citizens "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information"-Shayne Bowman & Chriss Willis (We the media Dan Gillmor).

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As the smart phone use was increasing several types of mobile applications were also developed. As a result mobile applications to enable more citizen Journalism were developed across the globe. “Ohmy news” one of the popular citizen journalism sites in the world also released their mobile app. In India traditional media outlets after understanding the importance of Citizen Journalism released mobile applications which helped the ordinary citizens to upload videos, photographs and text. A mobile app is a software application developed specifically for use on small, wireless computing devices, such as smart phones and tablets, rather than desk top or laptop computers (techtarget.com).

Significance of Study

The number of telephone subscribers in India increased from 1,174 .80 million at the end of January 2017 to 1,188.5 at the end of February 2017. Showing a monthly growth rate of 1.17% as per the data by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The Indian Telecom market is second largest in the world. According to TRAI the total mobile subscriber base is 1.16 billion (upto February 2017) and is expecting to increase up to 813.2 million in 2019. Also the number of smart phone users is 340 million in 2017. And it is predicted that it will reach 468 million by 2021. Smart phone manufacturing companies are marketing the high end smart phone with high end facilities in affordable prices. So the advent of mobile phone helps in the growth of citizen journalism in India. Network providers are also providing data packs in affordable rates, this increases the number of subscribers accessing internet through the smart phone. The overall internet penetration was 31% in 2016 and the fall in the rates of internet access due to competition among the mobile service providers has contributed to increase in mobile phone as device for internet surfing.

Hence it is the right time to study how the smart phone applications were used by the citizen journalist, in the Indian context. The data generated by this study would also be significant for the future expansion plans of traditional media using Citizen Journalism and for future research studies in this area.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study was to analyze the use of Mobile App as a tool for citizen journalism in India.

The specific objectives were

1. To find out the major Citizen Journalism apps in India.
2. To find out the most downloaded and used Citizen Journalism App in India.
3. To find out the types of stories uploaded or posted by the Citizen Journalist with such applications.

Methodology

As a first phase of the study an exploratory study was conducted by analyzing the major Citizen Journalism apps that are available in Google Play Store.

The second part was content analysis. The most downloaded app was selected for in depth content analysis. The content uploaded to the app from September 1 to 30, 2017 was analyzed to find out the nature of stories uploaded.

Analyses and results

To find out the most popular apps the researcher has gathered data from Google Play Store .Based on this a chart was prepared to find the most popular Smart Phone Application used by Citizen Journalist in India (See table 1).

Table 1

Serial Number	Name of App	Developed by	Downloads	Ratings
1	Citizen Journalism	PTCAI	One Thousand	4.2
2	NBT Citizen Reporter (Nav Bharat Times)	Times International Limited	Fifty Thousand	4.2
3	TOI Citizen Reporter	Times International Limited	Fifty Thousand	3.2
4.	RU Citizen Journalist (Ranchi updates)	Team techno crats	One Thousand	4.0
5.	NT Citizen Reporter	Times International Limited	One Thousand	4.6

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6.	MT Citizen Reporter (Maharashtra Times)	Times International Limited	Ten Thousand	4.0
7.	Merinews Citizen journalism	Bizsol Advisors pvt ltd	Hundred	4.2
8.	Citizen Reporter	SEDOTS info technologies	Five Hundred	3.8
9.	Sakal Samvad	Sakal Papers Pvt Ltd	Ten Thousand	4.2
10.	ES Citizen Reporter (BENGALI)	Times International Limited	One Thousand	4.6
11.	VOX Report	VOX	Ten Thousand	4.4
12.	The CJ Rocks- Citizen Journalist	Panacea Infotech Pvt Ltd	Hundred	5.0
13.	M Reporter	Brainwave solutions	Hundred	5.0
14.	Reportube	Tsky lab	Hundred	5.0
15.	DNA News	Intersoft Solutions	Five Hundred	4.6
16.	IDA	CFI Corp international	Five Hundred	4.1
17.	ohmynews	ohmynews	Ten thousand	4.4
18.	Drudge reports	Drudge	Five Thousand	4.3
19.	Manorama Ente vartha	Malayala Manorama Co Ltd	Five Thousand	3.9
20.	My story	ZEE digital Convergence Ltd	One Thousand	3.9
21.	Boolakam	Boolakam	One Thousand	3.9

A detailed analysis of the most downloaded Citizen Journalism apps are given above, From the table we can ascertain that the most downloaded app was NBT (Nav Bharat Times) Citizen Reporter and TOI Citizen Reporter, both developed by Times International Limited which was downloaded by more than Fifty thousand users. NBT is a Hindi language app which is the common language in most North Indian states. Citizen reporter is an English Language Application. Meri news which was considered as the largest citizen journalism based news platform in India also owns a mobile App. But it was not popular like its Website. From the above table we can understand that Times International group owns 5 mobile apps in various languages

in India. A leading news organization in Kerala also owns a Mobile app. But its popularity is much less compared to Times.

Part II

Content Analysis

After analyzing the data from the Google Play Store it was found that the most popular app was NBT (Nav Bharat Times) Citizen Reporter and TOI Citizen Reporter both developed by Times International Limited. As NBT was a Hindi language App it was difficult for the researcher to analyse the content. Therefore TOI Citizen Reporter (English language app) was selected for the content analysis.

The Times of India (TOI) is an Indian English language daily newspaper owned by The Times Group. It is one of the largest circulated and oldest daily in India which was started in 1839 from Mumbai (3,184,727copies, ABC December 2016).

User can freely download the App from Google Play Store and register using their mobile number and can upload profile Picture. In the Home page there are provisions for Citizen Journalist to upload videos, photos and text. User can read the reports posted by the Citizen Journalist's from Citizen Reports Online Section. In the Citizen Reports Online there are several options like featured which shows the main stories of the day across the country and 11 important city datelines across India. The cities included in the study were Noida, Mumbai, Delhi, Gurgaun, Banglore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Kochi, Nagpur and Pune

The Reports posted by Citizen Journalist under this datelines from across various cities of India in September 2017 was analyzed.

Table 1: NOIDA - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Number of stories
14	1	1	0	2
29	1	1	0	

There was only two stories uploaded by Citizen Journalist. On this selected day most of the stories were of Hyper local category.

Table 2: MUMBAI - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	22	22	0	699 stories were filed by citizen Journalist
2	29	29	0	
3	42	42	0	
4	33	33	0	
5	38	38	0	
6	23	22	1	
7	5	5	0	
8	14	14	0	
9	20	20	0	
10	26	24	2	
11	21	21	0	
12	19	19	0	
13	24	24	0	
14	16	16	0	
15	18	18	0	
16	19	19	0	
17	25	25	0	
18	24	23	1	
19	27	27	0	
20	23	23	0	
21	28	27	1	
22	27	27	0	
23	15	15	0	
24	21	21	0	
25	18	18	0	
26	22	22	0	
27	30	30	0	
28	21	21	0	
29	26	26	0	
30	23	23	0	

As shown above 699 stories were posted by the Citizen Journalists from Mumbai at an average of 23 stories per day. As many as 42 stories were reported on September 3rd while only 5 news stories were reported on September 7th 2017. More than 300 stories were related to the garbage and Swach Bharath issues. the

next most filed categories are related to traffic jam, parking issues, roads, encroachments, traffic violations etc. All the stories were accompanied by photographs. 5 videos were also uploaded. Most of the stories deal with hyper local issues in and around Mumbai City. All the stories were written in few sentences.

Table 3 IT DELHI - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	23	23	0	410 stories were filed by citizen Journalist
2	17	17	0	
3	35	34	1	
4	0	0	0	
5	6	5	1	
6	14	14	0	
7	19	18	1	
8	1	1	0	
9	16	16	0	
10	17	17	0	
11	2	2	0	
12	12	12	0	
13	20	20	0	
14	27	27	0	
15	18	18	0	
16	16	16	0	
17	9	9	0	
18	0	0	0	
19	20	20	0	
20	16	16	0	
21	24	22	2	
22	18	18	0	
23	16	16	0	
24	14	14	0	
25	0	0	0	
26	13	13	0	
27	12	12	0	
28	15	15	0	
29	3	3	0	
30	13	13	0	

Most of the stories were related to garbage issue. Issues of road safety, parking and traffic were also reported. All the stories carried a photograph and 5 videos were also filed .There were 3 days in which no stories were reported.

Table 4: BANGALORE - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	3	3	0	92 stories were filed by citizen Journalist
2	2	2	0	
3	4	4	0	
4	2	2	0	
5	5	5	0	
6	2	2	0	
7	0	0	0	
8	7	3	0	
9	8	8	0	
10	4	4	0	
11	7	7	0	
12	4	4	0	
13	5	5	0	
14	3	3	0	
15	7	3	0	
16	0	0	0	
17	3	3	0	
18	0	0	0	
19	4	4	0	
20	2	2	0	
21	2	2	0	
22	3	3	0	
23	0	0	0	
24	3	3	0	
25	1	1	0	
26	0	0	0	
27	4	4	0	
28	4	4	0	
29	3	3	0	
30	0	0	0	

Bangalore Citizen Journalist's filed stories related to heavy traffic and garbage issues. In eight stories there were no photograph with the stories.

Table 5: CHENNAI - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	11	11	0	170 stories were filed by citizen Journalist
2	9	9	0	
3	8	8	0	
4	0	0	0	
5	5	5	0	
6	11	11	0	
7	1	1	0	
8	8	8	0	
9	9	9	0	
10	8	8	0	
11	0	9	0	
12	9	9	0	
13	0	0	0	
14	0	0	0	
15	10	10	0	
16	6	6	0	
17	0	0	0	
18	0	0	0	
19	9	9	0	
20	10	10	0	
21	0	0	0	
22	8	8	0	
23	5	5	0	
24	7	7	0	
25	0	0	0	
26	7	7	0	
27	7	7	0	
28	7	7	0	
29	15	15	0	
30	0	0	0	

All the stories from Chennai carried photographs. Majority of the stories were related to garbage issue followed by traffic problems. On an average 5 stories were filed in the month of September, 2017. Majority of the stories dealt with hyper local news.

Table 6: HYDERABAD - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	0	0	0	57 stories
2	4	4	0	
3	4	4	0	
4	6	2	0	
5	4	4	0	
6	0	0	0	
7	0	0	0	
8	4	4	0	
9	4	4	0	
10	4	4	0	
11	3	3	0	
12	3	3	0	
13	3	3	0	
14	0	0	0	
15	4	4	0	
16	4	4	0	
17	0	0	0	
18	1	1	0	
19	3	3	0	
20	0	0	0	
21	0	0	0	
22	0	0	0	
23	0	0	0	
24	4	4	0	
25	0	0	0	
26	0	0	0	
27	2	2	0	
28	0	0	0	
29	0	0	0	
30	0	0	0	

A total of 57 news stories and 2 news stories without photographs were posted by Hyderabad Citizen Journalists. Most of the stories were related to traffic violations and damaged roads in and around the city.

Table 7: KOLKATA - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	0	0	0	66 stories
2	0	0	0	
3	13	13	0	
4	13	13	0	
5	0	0	0	
6	0	0	0	
7	0	0	0	
8	0	0	0	
9	0	0	0	
10	12	11	0	
11	7	7	0	
12	0	0	0	
13	0	0	0	
14	0	0	0	
15	0	0	0	
16	0	0	0	
17	8	8	0	
18	3	3	0	
19	0	0	0	
20	0	0	0	
21	0	0	0	
22	0	0	0	
23	0	0	0	
24	8	8	0	
25	2	2	0	
26	0	0	0	
27	2	2	0	
28	0	0	0	
29	0	0	0	
30	0	0	0	

Only 66 stories were reported by the Citizen Journalists of Kolkata. All stories except one carried photographs. Most stories cover religious ceremonies, cultural news, heritage and nature. There were no stories reported on 17 days in September, 2017.

Table 8: KOCHI - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	4	2	0	39 stories
2	2	1	0	
3	0	0	0	
4	0	0	0	
5	0	0	0	
6	0	0	0	
7	2	1	0	
8	0	0	0	
9	0	0	0	
10	6	1	0	
11	0	0	0	
12	1	0	0	
13	2	0	0	
14	1	1	0	
15	0	0	0	
16	0	0	0	
17	8	3	0	
18	1	0	0	
19	1	0	0	
20	0	0	0	
21	1	1	0	
22	0	0	0	
23	4	4	0	
24	3	3	0	
25	2	2	0	
26	0	0	0	
27	2	2	0	
28	2	2	0	
29	0	0	0	
30	0	0	0	

Only 39 stories were posted under the dateline Kochi. In September 19 stories were posted without photographs. But the stories without photographs were lengthy. A mixture of topics were covered including garbage, damaged roads, stray dog menace, state film awards, FIFA under 17 world cup preparations, Aadhar, GST etc

Table 9: NAGPUR - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	3	3	0	66 stories
2	1	1	0	
3	9	9	0	
4	1	1	0	
5	2	2	0	
6	3	3	0	
7	0	0	0	
8	4	4	0	
9	1	1	0	
10	2	2	0	
11	2	2	0	
12	3	3	0	
13	2	0	0	
14	1	1	0	
15	4	4	0	
16	3	3	0	
17	4	4	0	
18	0	0	0	
19	0	0	0	
20	0	0	0	
21	3	3	0	
22	4	4	0	
23	3	3	0	
24	0	0	0	
25	0	0	0	
26	2	2	0	
27	5	5	0	
28	4	4	0	
29	6	6	0	
30	0	0	0	

All the stories were filed with photographs the content was on garbage issue, traffic issues and law breaking by corps and government officials. On 7 days there were no stories.

Table 10: PUNE - September 2017

Date	No of Stories	With Photographs	Videos	Total stories
1	1	1	0	129 stories
2	1	1	0	
3	0	0	0	
4	5	5	0	
5	7	7	0	
6	0	0	0	
7	6	6	0	
8	4	4	0	
9	5	5	0	
10	1	1	0	
11	4	4	0	
12	4	4	0	
13	1	1	0	
14	6	6	0	
15	4	4	0	
16	6	6	0	
17	0	0	0	
18	7	7	0	
19	5	5	0	
20	1	1	0	
21	6	6	0	
22	5	5	0	
23	3	3	0	
24	0	0	0	
25	6	6	0	
26	0	0	0	
27	6	6	0	
28	5	5	0	
29	5	5	0	
30	5	5	0	

All stories were posted with photos. Majority of the stories were related to garbage and traffic issues.

GURGAUN

No stories were filed by the Citizen Journalist during the month of September 2017 from Gurgaun

Findings and Conclusion

It was evident that mobile applications were widely used by citizen journalists of major metro cities in India. The researcher has found that TOI citizen reporter as the most downloaded app. Citizen journalist from Mumbai followed by Delhi had filed maximum number of news stories. Mumbai and Delhi Citizen Journalist's uploaded video graphs and many photographs to the stories they posted. In Metropolitan cities majority of the stories were related to garbage segregation, water scarcity, traffic related issues, illegal constructions, civic amenities and safety issues.

In Kolkata the news stories filed by citizen journalists had variety of content. They have filed stories related to their culture and heritage. Most news stories were accompanied with photographs. It indicates that the citizen journalist are aware of the importance of photographs when telling a story. Sophisticated smart phone cameras have helped most of them to take the photos of the events and upload them with their reports.

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Elements of Neo Realism in the Malayalam Movie 'Ottaal' (2015)

■ DEEPAK NAIR G*

ABSTRACT

Neorealism is a film movement started in Italy in 1943, through the movie 'Ossessione'. This moment came to an end in 1952 with a movie 'Umberto D'. It has influenced cinemas throughout the world. Still its influence continues. Malayalam film director Jayaraj's highly acclaimed 2015 movie 'Ottaal' is an example of the continuing influence of 'Neorealism' on world cinema.

Keywords : Neorealism, World cinema, Ossessione, Umberto D, Jayaraj, Malayalam cinema, Ottaal

Introduction

Now it has become impossible to spend a day without being surrounded by moving photographic images. These images have considerable impact on our life too. When the still photographs began to move, the movie came into existence.

The origin of cinema dates back to 1888, when a French inventor named Louis Le Prince shot the movement of horse carriage, when it was passing through 'Leeds bridge' in England. At that instance 'Cinema' was born.

According to the film history that we follow now, the first exhibition of cinematic images took place in France in 1895.

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Lumiere brothers presented before the audience the realistic portrayal of events, which were captured using their camera. Workers leaving the factory (1895) were the first event they recorded. It was also shown at the night's exhibition at Grand café, Paris. Lumiere brothers documented actual events and they were known as 'actualities'. Actualities had the element of realism in them.

'Realism' in art was a reaction against the Romantic Movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their main concern was to show reality through art. Realism tried to recreate images as they appeared in real life. Later it was accepted in literature also.

When we think of realism in film the very first image that will come to our mind will be that of 'Documentary'. Documentary originated from the French word 'Documentaire', meaning travelogue or illustrated lecture. The term 'Documentary' was coined by John Grierson in 1926, while reviewing the film 'Moana' by Robert Flaherty. The term is synonymous with recording of facts and evidence.

By the second decade of the twentieth century film making became better established and key movements developed. Through technological advancements the film makers were able to portray reality than ever before. Realist film movements such as Poetic realism (1930-38), Neo realism (1943-52) and Dogme 95 share these common features.

- Location shooting
- Natural lighting
- Long takes
- Hand held camera movements
- Unscripted dialogues
- Documentary influence
- Focus on working class

Italian Neorealism

Italian neorealism refers to the set of films which were produced in Italy after the end of the Second World War. Critics all over the world describe this period as the 'Golden age of Italian Cinema'. The movies which were released under this banner were mostly shot on

location, portrayed the life of poor and working class and employed non professional actors. All these were done to give a sense of reality to the subject matter which is being portrayed.

Roberto Rossellini's 1945 movie 'Rome open city' is often considered as the first neorealist movie. But according to critics Luchino Visconti's 1943 movie 'Ossessione' presented 'Neorealism' even before Rossellini. The movie was banned by the authorities because it portrayed the ugly face of reality than any other Italian movies, that has done before. Other main works which falls under the tag of Neorealism are *Shoeshine* (Vittorio De Sica, 1946), *Paisan* (Roberto Rossellini, 1946), *Germany, Year Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948), *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948), *The Earth Trembles* (Luchino Visconti, 1948), *Bitter Rice* (Giuseppe De Santis, 1949), *Stromboli* (Roberto Rossellini, 1950), *Bellissima* (Luchino Visconti, 1951), *Miracle in Milan* (Vittorio De Sica, 1951), *Rome 11:00* (Giuseppe De Santis, 1952), *Europe '51* (Roberto Rossellini, 1952), *Umberto D.* (Vittorio De Sica, 1952). Many film historians consider *Umberto D.* (1952) as the final addition to the stock of Neorealism movies.

Factors behind the birth of Italian Neorealism

After 1930's Italian cinema was dominated by a kind of escapist cinema. They were referred as Telefoni Bianchi or White telephone films. Film critics then who used to contribute articles to film magazine 'Cinema' like Luchino Visconti, Gianni Puccini, Cesare Zavattini, Giuseppe De Santis and Pietro Ingrao, vehemently attacked the theme and content of 'White Telephone films' and clamored for a different type of cinema which embraced reality.

It was also a reaction against the glitz and glamour of Hollywood movies.

The Second World War and its aftermaths had made the life of the people there difficult. Film directors there considered as their moral responsibility to portray the life as it is through the medium of Cinema.

Even before the official birth of Neorealist movies, the elements of Neorealism can be found in the works of famous Italian directors like Alessandro Blasetti's 1942 movie '*Quattro passi fra le nuvole* (Four steps in the clouds) and Mario Camerini's 1932 movie '*Gli uomini, che mascalzoni!*' (What Scoundrels Men Are!).

Poetic realism a film movement which had its existence in France from 1930 -40 ,influenced Neorealism ,especially the movie 'Toni' (1935),directed by Jean Renoir,which portrayed the life of immigrant Italian coal mine workers . Neorealist director Luchino Visconti assisted Jean Renoir in the making of this movie.

Many film critics opine that the , Street films, a movie genre from Germany which specialized in the portrayal of the life of poor and struggling working class has considerably influenced the philosophy of Neorealism. The influence of G.W.Pabst's 'Joyless Street', a movie which came under 'Street films 'genre on Neorealism is palpable.

'Verismo' the literary movement which used to prevail in Italy during the second decade of the twentieth century and the works of great 'Verismo'writer then Giovanni Varga has influenced the principles of Neorealism.

Characteristics of Neorealist Movies

They were generally filmed with nonprofessional actors (It doesn't mean that professional actors had never been able to act in these types of movies). It was to give roughness in look and performance.

- They were shot almost exclusively on location.
- Low budget film making.
- Themes revolve around the problems faced by poor and working class.
- Documentary flavor in treatment.
- Inclination towards socialist doctrines.
- Shot mostly in *Mis-en-scene* style.
- Mostly had children as the main protagonists
- Most of the movies have unhappy endings.

Influence of Neorealism on Indian cinema

The influence on Neorealism on world cinema is really amazing. New wave a cinematic movement which had its birth in

France during the late 1950's has been heavily influenced by the characteristics of neorealism like location shooting and employing of nonprofessional actors. The Eastern European films especially Polish film school films and Free cinema of England has been influenced by this movement from Italy.

Prominent Indian directors like Sathyajith Ray has been heavily influenced by Neorealist movies and the influence can be easily found in his Apu Trilogy. Do Bhiga Zameen (1953) an offbeat movie by Bimal Roy is the result of his viewing of Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948).

Malayalam parallel cinema since 1955 with the release of Ram Das's 'Newspaper boy' has been very diligent in portraying human conditions and struggles a person undergoes in his day to day life, in a realistic way. Prominent film director Adoor Gopalakrishnan began his illustrious career through the 1973 movie, *Swayamvaram*, which has an undertone of 'Neorealism'. The movie 'Swayamvaram' shows the hardships that a couple undertakes for their daily existence. His second film 'Kodiyettam' (1978), also fall the Neorealism genre. Since then many directors have also made movies with Neo realistic flavor.

One of the best example come of late is Jayaraj's 'Ottaal', released in 2015. Ottaal employs such stylistic devices such as shooting on location, employing non- professional actors, child protagonist, focusing on the life of ordinary people and working class, use of local dialects and conversational speech as well as documentary style of shooting that is found common in Neorealist films.

About Ottaal

Ottaal /Trap (2015), the movie directed by Jayaraj is an adaptation of Anton Chekov's short story 'Vanaka'. Total duration of the movie is 81 minutes. It is the first movie in India to be released online on the same day as its theatrical release. The movie has won the prestigious 'Crystal bear' award at Berlin Film festival and other national awards also.

Synopsis of Ottaal

The movie 'Ottaal' addresses one of the common problems that world is facing, i.e. forced child labour. The film is also a dedication to all the children who has lost childhood due to labor.

The film begins with the boy 'Kuttapayi' writing a letter to his grandfather in a secret manner. Then the movie runs to a flash back mode. Here we see Kuttapayi and his grandfather are working to herd ducks from one place to another. Through dialogues we come to know that Kuttapayi's parents are dead and it has become the responsibility of the grandfather to raise Kuttapayi. Kuttapayi now enjoys life with his grandfather and works as an assistant to his grandfather.

Due to poverty the Grandfather takes him out of school as he could not afford the fees. He now finds a friendship with a boy from well to do family named Tinku. Tinku's mother shows a genuine interest in Kuttapayi and teaches him to learn. But Tinku's father is perturbed by the friendship of his son with Kuttapayi and they are forced apart.

When the grandfather realizes that his days have been counted, he starts worrying about the boy, when he isn't around anymore. Acting upon the assurances of Mesthiri, he decides to send Kuttapayi to work at a cracker factory, and coaxes the boy to agree with him, by lying to him that he is being sent to a school.

The final shot we see Kuttapayi posting the letter, which we were shown, he writing in the beginning to his grandfather. In that letter he pleads to his grandfather to come and rescue him from the situations from which he is living right now. Since the address of his Grandfather is not appropriate, we can imagine that letter will not reach its destination and there will be no change in Kuttapayi's life.

Although the film shows no avenue for hope to Kuttapayi's wishes. It makes aware the depth of child labor worldwide through an end title and urges the viewers to condemn child labor.

Neorealist Elements in *Ottam*

One of the most common stylistic elements of Neorealist films is the user of actual locations instead of studio sets. The location of the movie is Kuttanad, its rivers and paddyfields. The scenery shows vibrant landscape of 'Kuttanad'. It reminds us of the beauty of Island of Volcanoes in Roberto Rossellini's 1949 movie, 'Stromboli'. Neorealist film makers preferred actual locations to give a sense of reality to the subject they undertake.

Italian Neorealist film makers wanted their films to have believable characters. The casting of non professional actors in major and minor roles contributed to the believability of characters. In

‘Ottal’ too Jayaraj casts non professional actors for the major roles. The person who plays Grandfather is a mahout in real life and Ajin Shah , the boy who dons the role of Kuttapayi also face the camera for the first time in their life.

Another technique which is employed by neorealist directors to give believability to the characters is through dialogues. Here characters are told to render dialogues local dialect Luchino Visconti’s ‘La Terra Trema’ cast fisherman of Sicily in all roles and the film was shot in Sicilian dialect, making it one of the truly Neorealist movies of all times. In the movie ‘Ottal’ Jayaraj does not resort to standard Malayalam that we hear in Malayalam movies. The major characters speak ‘Kuttanad’ dialect.

Neorealist movies mainly dealt with the life of poor and working class and ordinary people. In ‘Ottal’ too the life of poor duck farmers of are portrayed.

Neorealist movies give importance to child protagonists. For example, neorealist movies such as *Shoeshine* (Vittorio De Sica, 1946), *Paisan* (Roberto Rossellini, 1946), *Germany, Year Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948), *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948), *Bellissima* (Luchino Visconti, 1951) has child protagonists in the lead. Here to the story revolves around Kuttapayi, an orphan.

Neorealists believed that camera was the extension of the eye, They wanted to capture the visuals in an unobtrusive manner with out much gimmicks and they employed minimalist lighting, hand held shots etc. In ‘Ottal’ to the director used only minimal lights in capturing visuals .But he used ‘drones’ and ‘cranes’ for aerial shots.

Neorealist movies have documentary flavour . Eventhough the neorealist films are shot in a fiction format, the treatment will have enough scope for documentary style footages. Famous examples are fishing scene in ‘La Terra Trema’ (1948) and ploughing the paddy fields in *Riso Amaro* (1949) and life in Slums of Milan in ‘*Miracle in Milan* (1951), etc.

‘Ottal’, has many shots ,which are having documentary flavor, like herding of ducks, paddy fields, child laborers scenes etc.

Most of the Neorealist movies have unhappy ending .In ‘Ottal’ too we have an unhappy ending. The main characters of neorealist films are good people in extremely serious situations to whom bad things happen. The audience could identify with the characters and feel empathy for them. ‘Ottal’ creates empathy towards Kuttapayi in

the mind of viewers and make people wish that the boy could reunite with his grandfather, but it is sure that it won't happen.

Hence we can conclude that 'Ottaal' (2015) is one of the latest additions to the neorealist genre from Malayalam movies.

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Methodological Approaches employed by Political Communication Researchers

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary Political communication research is largely an interdisciplinary field of study with mixed methods, multi analysis and advanced statistical techniques .This paper tracks down the methodological progressions of the political communication discipline from the most commonly used observational method to the latest technique of using multiple methods and multiple analyses in a single study. It started out with quantitative method, a predominant method of political communication research and transposed into other methods like qualitative content analysis and multi experimental studies .Survey method using questionnaire, experiments, quantitative content analysis were the initial established analytical measures while the focus group studies, historical studies and visual analysis studies were hardly comprehended by the researchers .In the digitally sophisticated settings of the current period the procedures like data collection, surveys ,experiments, textual analysis etc are heavily depending on the virtual conveniences .The recent published studies demonstrates the trend of using innovative methodologies which combine different methods and different modes of analysis in a particular study permitting the discipline to mature as authentic and appropriate.

Keywords : Political Communication, Methodology, Qualitative, Quantitative, Content analysis, Experimental, Mixed methods, Multi analyses

Introduction

Political Communication encompasses the sending and receiving of messages like in any other form of communication process but the construction of politically applicable messages makes this genre entirely unlike from other communication forms. Even though it can trace its past from the earliest classical studies of Aristotle and Plato, modern Political communication research is precisely an interdisciplinary field of study accomplishing notions from Communication, Journalism, Behavioural science, Political

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science ,Sociology, Psychology, History ,Rhetoric and other similar fields. The status of Political Communication Research was well documented by scholars like Nimmo and Sanders (1981),Swanson and Nimmo ,Anne Johnson (1990),Doris A Graber (1993,2005) Lynda Kaid and Erik P Bucy (2004,2009). The diversity of research methods experimented by the Political communication scholars has been developing and widening over many decades since the creation of Political Communication Division within the International Communication Association (ICA) in 1973.

The methodological evolution of the field being instigated from observational method moves on to embark upon the quantitative methodology mainly by practising survey research ,content analysis and experimental research and occasionally into qualitative studies such as historical and focus group research. In modern times communication concepts have become more carefully defined, better indicators and more refined methods have been developed to test them. More sensitive measures of media use, tested through more precise methods, then capture political effects more accurately. (Doris A Graber, 2005)

Even though the careful observation practices of communication behaviour researches did not match up with the well rated modern methodological approaches this type of dependable methods can also yield best results. The main reason, it seems to be is that insightful observers analyse communication in context, taking into account the historical, social, cultural, economic and political situation surrounding particular messages. Unfortunately the much modern research is more narrowly focused and fails to do that (Berger, 2000; Gunter 2000)The emphasis of the research through these years has remained persistent and it revolves around the questions stated by the eminent social scientist Harold Laswell in an essay published in 1969.He urged the scholars to assess the nature and consequences of communication by assessing

- a) the significant nature of the senders of political messages
- b) understanding the content of the message by the receivers
- c) receivers' experiences , approaches and attitudes
- d) the form and substance of messages
- e) the impression leaves out by the communication channels on the messages and,
- f) the effect of the messages on various levels of our society

Political communication research has developed more sophisticatedly since 1970 with innovative methods and measures paving way to swiftly encompassing it in to a well dynamic and investigative field .In spite of these advances eminent scholars like W Lance Benett and Shanto Iyyengar (2008) pointed out that theoretical developments have not kept pace with social and technological changes .But many social scientists have disapproved regarding this criticism. Few have questioned whether the foundations of political communication research are in fact as insubstantial as these critics claimed (Hobert et al 2010).

Later the focus of Political communication research has shifted from political messages to the media implicated unreal situations that the people perceived. Political communication studies are now becoming more methodologically refined and integrate more mixed methods and uses different modes of analysis into a particular study. Panel designs, survey experiments, and multi experimental studies are gaining importance because online modes of data collection lower costs, thus facilitate the researchers to practice new modes .While coming into data analysis apart from the common descriptive and correlation statistics researchers use factor analysis, path analysis , multilevel modelling, mediation analysis, and other advanced statistical techniques. The demonstration of statistical prowess has come at the expense of qualitative approaches to media and politics research, which have generated productive ideas over the decades; these former staple of the field remain scarce, except in specialized outposts and divisions (Barnhurst, 2011).

Political communication research is elaborating its universal appeal with highly authentic innovative research methods. Here are the major methodological genres.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative method generally concentrates on survey method, experimental studies and content analysis coding technique or quantitative content analysis. Many social scientists in the early years of political communication research had used the scientific methods for testing message impacts in political speeches, election campaigns and advertising effects. Generally the substance of the quantitative research method is significantly affected by the effectiveness of data processing, analysis and interpretation.

Survey methods allow political communication researchers to

find out communication activities and influences, political leanings and actions, media use and perceptions by using predictive modeling, either as stand-alone independent variables or in with individual difference scales to show moderation effects. Probability sampling allows researchers to reach a large, representative sample of respondents, conforming generalizability and to calculate the amount of sampling error in a study. (Erik P Bucy 2014) Data gathered by means of door-to-door interviewing (face to face interviewing) have the best response rate. It was still performed by some government agencies and in census method to reach each and every population, was once the standard method in survey research but this method of interviews are expensive and not the most effective way of reaching certain locations which are remote and unsafe areas.

The greatest methodological advancement in survey research was the computer assisted self-administered interview techniques and analysing methods. Households without Internet facilities are sometimes given a laptop and free online access to facilitate the participation process .In telephone surveys also video displays are used to support the respondents by providing the needed clues to respond it precisely. The technological advances have made surveys more reliable and faster, permitting accurate assessment of reactions to events that are breaking rapidly (Wyatt, Katz &Kim 2000)

The new researchers incorporate mixed methods in a single study, so the researcher has several options regarding the priority of the research. The researcher can choose a method to give emphasis or can select both methods in the same way. Mixed model research comprises both quantitative and qualitative tasks being mixed in more than one stage of the study. Multiple model studies enable researchers to document content or opinion trends in the first step of data collection and then tests hypothesis around the elements in the second step to generate fuller findings and more complete conclusions.(Erik P Bucy 2015) Hybrid population-based survey experiments embed an experimental design within an online survey, allowing researchers to randomly assign participants to conditions and treatments and then generalize beyond a narrow pool of convenience sample volunteers (Mutz, 2011).

Triangulation (using multiple data sources) method examines the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. Mixed methods theme may also use different sets of measures to triangulate findings, such as incorporating the results of a survey design with detailed observations from a set of in-depth

interviews and case study analysis to help confirm research outcomes. 'Triangulation' reduces the inadequacies of single-source research. It has had a long history back to Campbell and Fiskel (1959) and social science research of the early 20th century and involves incorporating different methods such as content analysis, panel studies, focused interviews, and other methods, into a single comprehensive project through different perspectives.

Numerous refined analytical techniques are used in Political communication research for coding the message content. Measures are individual or composite variables typically used as predictors, outcomes or mediating variables (Bucy and Holbert 2013) The widely used analytical tests that gave new impetus to coding the media content are multi-level modelling. Mediation analysis, regression analysis and network analysis. Apart from this technique many physiological approaches of the respondents are also used for analysing the content. Physiological outcomes use bodily signals as evidence of cognitive, emotional, and motivational activation. Psychophysiological measures include, among other indicators, skin conductance, heart rate, facial muscle activation, and the startle reflex, generally thought to index arousal, attention, emotional valence, and aversive activation, respectively (Potter & Bolls, 2011). The eye ball comparisons of speeches and the galvanic skin response test are also helpful in analytical techniques. These techniques are mainly useful in voter choice studies and the analyses of advertisements of political parties.

Content Analysis has been extensively used to define the content of Political communication messages (Benoit, 2007; Kaid & Johnston, 2001). Unlike other disciplines it had its origin in the communication discipline itself. Content analysis is also used in the agenda setting study to analyse the published/telecast content of the news media with surveys of public to investigate relationship between news content and the attitude of the news audiences (Mc Combs & Shaw, 1972).

Generally content analysis concentrates the text components of messages. By scientifically assessing the textual material that is by coding practices it can be directly converted into quantitative data by interpreting the texts, also called quantitative content analysis. Refinements in computer coding constitute the most important methodological developments in quantitative content analysis research (Doris A Graber) For evaluating the computer readable texts various software packages have been designed. Some analysis

programmes provide researchers with dictionaries that have been pretested for their usefulness in detecting specified textual content-the ideological orientation of a message .With the help of theses programmes one can create their own wordbook for research use and can be applied to the text content, audio and video messages.

Political communication researchers mainly use five types of sampling. Even though Census methods sampling is not a popular one but in certain cases like content analyses of television series and in during election studies this method is commonly used .Random sample method is the most widely used method of sampling texts .Stratified sampling, a subdivision of random sampling method, are also used by researchers to ascertain that a particular group are represented in this sample to ensure credibility for the study. The other sampling methods used are purposive and convenience sampling. Purposively selecting sample texts of two newspapers for a comparative study comes under purposive sampling and the convenience sampling does with the availability of the text matter and the same time it is enduring with many critical views like it fails to generalize the population and lacks credibility.

Experimental method is commonly used by researchers to study the impact of media messages and it is usually seen as a reliable method to analyse the campaign messages and advertisements .Studies reveal that many researchers are now keen to choose the experimental method to avoid extraneous information usually that occurred in other methods of research studies although it is unnatural in nature. The foremost benefit of choosing experimental studies is that the researcher can act as a catalyst in getting the exact response concerning with the subject .In fact it allows researchers to get much more dependable casual inferences by demonstrating the audience response to media messages. At the same time the researcher can diverge from the specifics of the message details to another perspective to know which of its part created the impact.

The unnatural surrounding (laboratory) made by the experimental researchers is a major problem posed by the researchers as critics claim that message impact may be entirely different from natural settings. In the laboratory settings where subjects are exposed to a single stimuli at a time may not give the precise results like in a multiple interacting stimuli which sets in a non-experimental method (Doris Graber , Shanto Iyengar).

With the sudden dissemination of the internet, experimental research overcome the shortages and proved it as a genuine method in par with the conventional methods. The sampling difficulty was also not an issue as it administered a greater reach to the audience. These methods significantly alleviate the concerns over the generalizability of experimental research and as a result experiments now represent as a dominant methodology for political communication researchers (Shanto Iyyengar).

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methodology comprises a variety of methods including image analyses, unstructured and structured interviews, group interview, narrative and rhetorical analyses, qualitative content analysis, cultural readings of texts, critical analysis and historical analysis. Qualitative works on political communication studies that are published in different journals are mainly based on interpretative, historical, critical, rhetoric analysis and fieldwork that concentrated only on interviews and observation (David, Daniel Rasmuss). According to some scholars qualitative method of research is considered as a more dependable method because they can impart data which can appropriate the original meaning and opens up a chance to interpret with new ideas about the content beyond what quantitative findings can adept.

Qualitative content analysis facilitated many political communication researchers to identify long lasting concepts that helped to move on with novel ideas for decades. In the early days of television, Horton and Wohl (1956) introduced the concept of *parasocial interaction* or tendency of viewers to form one-sided social relationships with television personalities. This forms the basis of many other studies of political entertainment. As broadcast news matured, Meyrowitz (1977) described a *middle region of politics* enabled by electronic media that blurred the public and private behaviors of candidates and officeholders to convey a sense of visual intimacy. With the growth of political message management, Levy (1981) documented how on-air reporters began to impart their stories with judgmental words or phrases that signalled how the journalist felt the story was tainted, a process called *disdaining the news*. And with the birth of political interactivity, Beniger (1987) articulated as *pseudo-community* a new form of mass personalization that disguised human-machine interaction as interpersonal communication. These

examples clearly shows how the qualitative content analysis can generate ideas with enduring values.(Erik P Bucy)

Focus groups, usually comprises of 10 to 12 participants permitting the researchers to test the formation of responses of the group members that is to provide a comprehensive and thorough exploration of a topic about which little is known. It has also been considered as a method to assist other forms of research like quantitative method. While analysing political messages and video footages for experimental studies with the help of focus group, the researchers can explore many new interpretations in the study. The members of the focus group assure impulsive reactions which will not transpire in other research methods. So a researcher can expect a free flow of acknowledged information from the participants' side. Despite having these kinds of remarkable positive vibes the focus groups have some noteworthy drawbacks too. There is no scope for a generalisation in the results as these kinds of study were focused in small sizes. The subjective nature of the analysis may lead to unfair readings of the findings.

Analysing the results of qualitative methods is not so easy for researchers .It derives a meaning from

Inductive process of exploratory analysis, theme identification, and iterative coding. Fitting qualitative outcomes within existing deductive frameworks requires flexibility and researchers must recognize that humanistic techniques yield findings that are complementary to, but not always directly supportive of, quantitative findings. (Erik B Bucy)

Conclusion

While analysing the Political communication research methodologies over decades the researcher can come to a conclusion that it has been experiencing a continuous reformation and has almost attained as a vigorous and vibrant discipline. Innovative statistical measures and more specialisation processes are practised by the researchers. Automated monitoring devices and computer reproductions are gaining much approval and substituting its performance similar to a human brain mechanism. Qualitative methods are attaining more significance when this automated devices have been perceived as healthy by the scholars and are equipped for a wider elucidation. An array of data gathering techniques and analysis taken from other social science research methods will also gain to

control the researchers. With constantly changing circumstances of the technological and political condition, the researchers should express their willingness to crisscross the long standing conclusions and their legitimacy. Being in an epoch of more social media users than the traditional media users and the dissemination of messages has far more direct impact and reach to the public indicates that the media researchers approach towards the *modus operandi* should change. The new generation of political communication researchers should step into the realm of new methods while the contents of new media lead off to numerous commendable debates in public. The deep rooted method of message analysis is not sufficed to gauge the inner dimensions of the political messages put forward by the authorities. To attain new methodological dimensions, a new generation of political communication researchers should emerge with renewed thoughts and insights to fill the vacuum created by the new technological innovation.

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The Role of Mass Media in Rural Health Communication: A Micro Level Study in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Mass media play a critical role in disseminating public health information, improving health knowledge and changing health behaviours. Kerala has a unique position in the health sector of India with relatively better living conditions and health facilities for the population. Though the rural- urban divide is narrow on infrastructure and awareness of health in Kerala many still needs to be done to improve the overall living conditions of people in the remote villages. It is in this context this micro level study was carried out to understand the role and impact of popular mass media in Malayalam. The major objective was to find out the most reliable and effective source for health communication among the people living in a hillock village in the Idukki district of Central Kerala. An opinion survey has revealed that the daily newspapers followed by Television and internet play a key role in disseminating news on and about Health to rural population. The gender and education of the people were also found to be decisive when it comes to the reading preferences and selection of various categories of news, features and articles from the print media.

Keywords : Rural- urban divide, micro level study, hillock village, opinion survey, reading preferences, health communication

Introduction

Kerala has a unique position in the health sector of India with relatively better living conditions and facilities for people than other states. ‘Kerala model of development’ was widely acclaimed for a long period of time. High literacy rate and other socio-political factors have helped to improve the health care system in the State.

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With a massive penetration of all kinds of media, Kerala has a distinct place among the union of states which were formally organized based on the language after the independence of India. Print, visual and digital media have a strong presence in Kerala. The print media in Kerala has a history of more than 250 years while the electronic and digital media are of recent origin.

‘Health’ has been a favourite subject matter category of news item in most of the daily newspapers of Malayalam for a long time. It was in 1903 the first specialised health magazine in Malayalam, *Dhanwanthari* was brought out by P.S.Warrior, the founder of Kottakkal Arya Vaidyasala, a premier Ayurveda hospital in Northern Kerala. By 1990s, many more professional magazines specialising health were emerged in Kerala. *Mathrubhumi Arogyamasika* was the pioneer among them, and it was started publication in 1997 with the motto ‘Ariviloode Arogyam’(Health through knowledge). *Arogyam (Malayala Manorama)*, *Ayurarogyam (Kerala Koumudi)*, *Arogyamangalam (Mangalam)* are the other leading health magazines in Malayalam.

State government uses different types of media for the fruitful dissemination of health information. Health reports, leaflets, public service advertisements, documentaries, short films, informative presentations, web portals and online campaigns are some of them. These information campaigns are implemented through the Primary Health Centers (PHC) and NGOs. Digital media is also utilised for health communication recently.

Review of Past Research

The researcher has reviewed some of the past studies related to the current work. Many studies have established the significant role played by various forms of media in health communication.

According to ‘Unite for sight’, one of the International public health organization, effective health communication equips the public with the tools and knowledge to respond appropriately to health crises such as flu outbreaks, HIV/AIDS, malaria etc. The impacts of proper dissemination of health knowledge such as ‘high level health communication which catalyses behavioural changes on a societal level and galvanizes entire communities into action were explained in detail’.

In ‘*The role of media in health promotion*’, the Unite for

sight also states that; ‘the mass media, in the form of Radio and Television, are an effective way to persuade target audiences to adopt new behaviours, or to remind them of critical information. Besides informing the public about new diseases and where to seek help, they can also keep the public updated about immunization campaigns’.

According to Mr. Avian Influenza, one of the prominent health communicators, the media is an important ally in any public health situation. He opines that media serves the role of being a source of correct information as well as an advocate for correct health behaviours.

The mass media can ‘empower rural populations to fight major causes of infant mortality such as diarrheal dehydration and diseases which can be prevented through vaccination, inform large numbers of people of seasonal or daily variations for such activities. Informing about the availability of new products or services, teaching new health skills such as how to mix oral rehydration solution, promote new health behaviours, motivate ad hoc or organized listening groups, and increase community acceptance of health workers’ are some of the major contributions by media, says Boyd, Barbara L. and William D. Shaw in their work, *Unlocking Health Worker Potential: Some Creative Strategies from the Field*.

In the study titled *An Emerging Issues in Private and Public Healthcare System of Kerala*, Lekshmi S., G.P.Mohanta, K.G.Revikumar, P.K.Manna have reviewed the health care system of Kerala which lacks appropriate revitalisation. The conduct of community health services, environmental and health awareness programmes, education and communication campaigns through drama and other folk media, mass media, are inevitable in the current scenario of Kerala’s health needs.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the present study was to analyse the role of media in health communication at a micro level in the state of Kerala.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To find out the role of media in creating health consciousness among the people living in a rural area
- To identify the most reliable source of media for information regarding lifestyle diseases

- To find out the most effective means of health communication at the micro level (Villages)
- To identify the most credible media for health information

Methodology

A self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. A sample of 100 respondents was chosen from an age group of 30-75. The study locale was Kurichippadam ward (5th ward) of Alakkodu Gramapanchayath in Idukki district. The researcher has purposively selected Alakode, since this Panchayath was the award winner for the best implementation of Health programmes in the district of Idukki by Govt. of Kerala in 2016.

Analysis and Findings

Sample Description

The study sample consisted of 100 respondents of age group 30-75. Simple random sampling method was employed to select the respondents.

Sample Description by Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Total	100	100

In the whole sample, the male and female representation of the respondents was equal.

Table 1: Routine health practices adopted by the respondents

Responses	Male N (%)			Female N (%)		
	Physical Exercise	Diet Control	Both	Physical Exercise	Diet Control	Both
	10 (20)	16 (32)	24 (48)	6 (12)	18 (36)	26 (52)
Total	50			50		

It was found that everyone is looking for a better health, and for that they follow certain routine health practices. Physical exercise and

diet control were the two popular methods the respondents adopted to stay healthier. From the above table it can be ascertained that a combination of physical exercise and diet control were practised by majority of the respondents (48 percent of male and 52 percent female).

Table 2: Better health practices- Sources of information

Male N (%)				Female N (%)		
Responses	Through media	Through doctor	Both	Through media	Through doctor	Both
	20 (40)	22 (44)	8 (16)	18 (36)	21 (42)	11 (22)
Total	50			50		

The table shown above (Table 2) indicates that 40 percent of male and 36 percent female depend upon various media to know the latest happenings on and about health. This indicates the significant role of media in disseminating health practices. Men were more dependent on media for information regarding health while women were less dependent.

Table 3: Reliance on media for health awareness

Responses	Male N (%)	Female N (%)	Total (%)
Greater	16 (32)	10 (20)	26 (26)
Average	30 (60)	38 (76)	68 (68)
Not at all	4 (8)	2 (4)	6 (6)
Total	100		

The above table (Table 3) shows that media plays a key role in creating health awareness among the mass. 68 percent of respondents have felt that the media have influenced the health habits of the public. 26 percent of the respondents have strongly agreed with the idea of

a greater dependence on media for the creation of health awareness. This is a pointer which reflects the major contributions of the media in generating high awareness about issues on and about health.

Table 4: Life Style diseases & Sources of Information

Responses	Male N (%)					Female N (%)				
	SSLC (%)	+2 (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)	SSLC (%)	+2 (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)
Daily Newspaper	10 (20)	4 (8)	8 (16)	10 (20)	32 (64)	10 (20)	12 (24)	6 (12)	10 (20)	38 (76)
Health Magazines	0 (0)	4 (8)	2 (4)	10 (20)	16 (32)	4 (8)	2 (4)	8 (16)	4 (8)	18 (36)
Television	6 (12)	6 (12)	4 (8)	12 (24)	28 (56)	2 (4)	6 (12)	4 (8)	2 (4)	14 (28)
Radio	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	2 (4)	6 (12)	2 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)
Internet	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)	6 (12)	20 (40)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)	4 (8)
Health Workers	4 (8)	10 (20)	8 (16)	6 (12)	28 (56)	10 (20)	6 (12)	6 (12)	2 (4)	24 (48)

Lifestyle diseases pose a big challenge to health status in the modern society. People are conscious about the habitual disorders and they depend much on media to know about various ailments resulted from following an unhealthy lifestyle. As there were so many sources of media, the researcher has allowed the respondents to choose multiple options as indicated in the above table.

The study showed that daily newspaper as the most prominent source of information regarding lifestyle diseases. The above table reveals that the number of female respondents who consumed print media for news regarding lifestyle diseases was greater in number than the male respondents. Television was found to be the second most preferred source for information on lifestyle diseases. Education of the respondents has played a key role in the selection of medium for information regarding lifestyle disease. The health magazines were read more by readers who have more educational qualification, i.e. who possess degree and above.

Table 5: New Communicable diseases- Sources of Information

Male N (%)						Female N (%)				
Responses	SSLC (%)	+2 (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)	SSLC (%)	+2 (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)
Daily Newspaper	8 (16)	10 (20)	8 (16)	12 (24)	38 (76)	8 (16)	10 (20)	12 (24)	8 (16)	38 (76)
Health Magazines	0 (0)	2 (4)	2 (4)	6 (12)	10 (20)	2 (4)	2 (4)	2 (4)	2 (4)	8 (16)
Television	6 (12)	8 (16)	10 (20)	10 (20)	34 (68)	6 (12)	4 (8)	6 (12)	2 (4)	18 (36)
Radio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)
Internet	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Social Media	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)	4 (8)	8 (16)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Health workers	4 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (12)	10 (20)	8 (16)	4 (8)	2 (4)	2 (4)	16 (32)

The communicable diseases are a major threat for the society. People depend more on print media to get more information about the communicable diseases prevalent in the state. The second most preferred media was Television. Health magazines stood at third position as a source of health information on communicable diseases. As shown in table 5, people depend more on daily newspaper (76 percent) to know more on and about communicable diseases.

Table 6: Sources for health communication

Male N (%)						Female N (%)				
Responses	SSLC (%)	+2 (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)	SSLC (%)	+2 (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)
Daily Newspaper	4 (8)	8 (16)	0 (0)	6 (12)	18 (36)	4 (8)	6 (12)	6 (12)	4 (8)	20 (40)
Health Magazines	0 (0)	2 (4)	2 (4)	2 (4)	6 (12)	2 (4)	4 (8)	4 (8)	2 (4)	12 (24)
Television	8 (16)	2 (4)	6 (12)	6 (12)	22 (44)	4 (8)	1 (2)	1 (2)	4 (8)	10 (20)
Radio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)
Internet	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)	0 (0)	2 (4)
Social Media	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	2 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)
Health workers	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total N	50					50				
	100									

The researcher has also tried to find out the most effective source for health communication by studying the opinion of the respondents. The above table shows that people consider daily newspaper (36 percentage of male, 40 percentage of female) as the most effective source of health communication. Television stands at the second position. Health magazines were in the third place as a source of health communication.

The chart given below shows the most credible and objective media chosen by the respondents as a source of health information. Most of the respondents have preferred print media as a credible source for health information. Compared to health magazines, credibility of newspaper as a reliable medium for health information was found to be high (male 20 percent and female 30 percent). Compared with internet sources, television was the most credible medium (male 22 percentage, female 12 percentage)

Chart 1: Most Credible Media for Health Communication

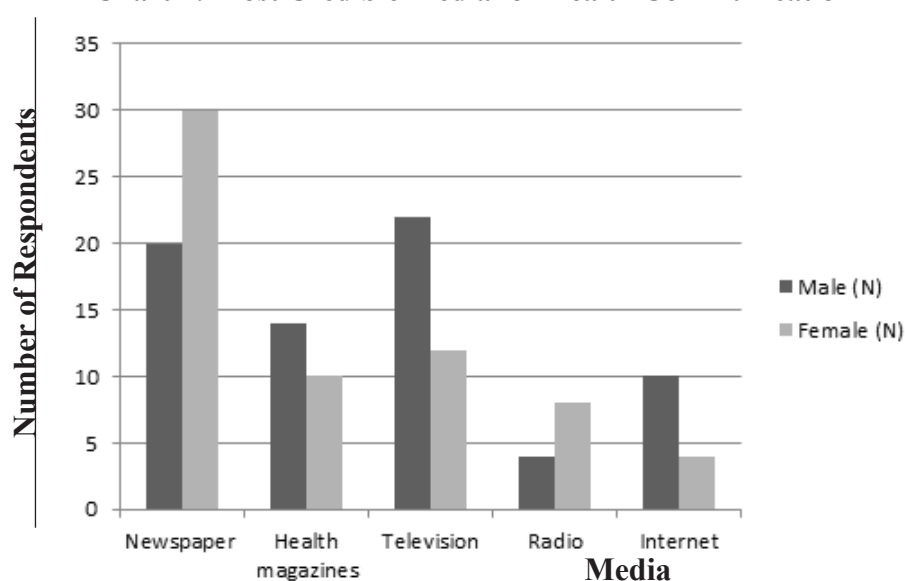


Table 7: Most sought after media for information regarding health

Responses	Male N (%)					Female N (%)				
	SSLC (%)	Plus Two (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)	SSLC (%)	Plus Two (%)	Degree (%)	PG (%)	Total (%)
Daily Newspaper	10 (20)	2 (4)	6 (12)	8 (16)	26 (52)	8 (16)	8 (16)	8 (16)	4 (8)	28 (56)
Health Magazines	0 (0)	6 (12)	2 (4)	6 (12)	14 (28)	0 (0)	4 (8)	4 (8)	2 (4)	10 (20)
Television	6 (12)	8 (16)	6 (12)	10 (20)	30 (60)	4 (8)	8 (16)	4 (8)	4 (8)	20 (40)
Radio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)	2 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (8)
Internet	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)	6 (12)	8 (16)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)	4 (8)	6 (12)

Discussion and Conclusion

Health communication has much to celebrate and contribute. The field is gaining recognition in part because of its emphasis on combining theory and practice in understanding communication processes and changing human behaviour. Kerala society is becoming more and more conscious about health status of their individual members. They rely various media forms to get the latest information on and about health. This study illustrates that majority of the respondents (98 per cent) are concerned about their health status. People consider media as a significant source for health knowledge besides their information they gain through routine consultations with doctor. Hence media has become an integral player in bringing about health awareness at the individual level.

Contemporary living habits of the society raise a number of health issues and threats. The permeation of lifestyle diseases is one among them. Cancer, Cardio vascular diseases, Lung disorders, Hypertension, Diabetes may considered as major lifestyle diseases prevail in the society. The print media, especially the daily newspaper was found to be the most preferred medium chosen by the respondents as the best health communication source. Television as the second most preferred medium.

Cost effectiveness and reach of the daily language newspaper might have helped them to reach the top spot. The news items, articles, features, columns and info-graphics published in the newspaper attracts and influences the reader's perceptions on health. It also contributes a wide variety of health information which supports their day to day health needs.

Daily newspaper was found to be the most reliable medium for the respondents to know on and about information regarding health(male 52 percentage, female 56 percentage). The male preferred Television as the most preferred medium(60 percentage); while female respondents have opined daily newspaper as the most favored medium(56 percentage).

Respondent's educational level played a significant role in the selection of the media. For example, health magazines are more read by people who possess degree and above as their educational qualifications.

Radio is found to be the least preferred medium as a source of health communication.

As an audio-visual medium, the scope of knowledge diffusion through TV is higher than newspaper, while it lacks the credibility factor in some instances. But compared to internet sources, the respondents have considered television as a better medium for health communication.

The gender and education status of the respondents have played a significant role in the selection of the information sources. Though the health magazines provide a wide variety of health related knowledge, it is consumed mainly by the respondents who have higher educational qualification such as Graduation and above. This indicates that specialised magazines of health are not consumed by people with lesser educational background.

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The Effect of Information Overload in Digital Media News Content

■ RENJITH R.*

ABSTRACT

Post-modern society witnessed enormous changes in technology and innovations. As a result, the quick access to relevant information became a nightmare. The digital media contents became abundant and it turned impossible to retrieve useful information when needed. News media also faced such an information overflow. Accurate 'news' became hardly accessible. The internet world delivered manipulated and fake news, thus the integrity of the media is lost. The credibility of the digital media is questioned. This study tries to figure out causes of information overload and how it affected the digital media news content. A survey is conducted to know, how young generation is affected 'Information overload' and tries to find out how they cop-up with the problem. This study also tries to propose empirical answers for this mess. Technology itself has solutions for this problem. Proper use of technological inventions and tools will help us to cop up with 'Information' and 'News' overload.

Keywords : Information Overload, Social Media, Mass Media, Digital Age, News Apps, Information Society

Introduction

The term 'Information Overload' became a cliché nowadays, but it is the major problem that modern society faces. It is ubiquitous and impossible to quantify its extent. The information available now is astonishing and is still continuously growing. An accurate statistics is unable to produce.

This is an age of information explosion. The information database of the world is ever expanding. News media is also producing large amount of information every minute. Information

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Communication became more cluttered. A digital media user receives thousands of information bits every moment and his cognitive ability is unable to process this huge amount of data.

News media organisations are passing through quick and inevitable changes. As in many areas of human life, news media also welcomed new technologies. A huge change is happened in no time, but soon countless problems elevated.

The available information became abundant. News, a part of existing information too became excessive. During the past few years the growth of social media was quick. It helped to easily manipulate, duplicate and share information. All information including news content is manipulated and faked. Thus the problem became worst.

Research Design & Methodology

Data was collected through intensive literature survey, observation and interviews. Content analysis method is used to study the nature of news content in online media. Two online news portals (www.mathrubhumi.com & www.thehindu.com) have been chosen to study the nature of online news content for a period of one month. (November 5 to December 4 of 2015). To study how news is disseminating through social media the news content in *facebook.com* is observed for period of 30 days. (November 5 to December 4 of 2015).

A survey was conducted among college students to study how *Information Overload* is affected their academic and cognitive aspirations. Simple random sampling technique is used to choose samples. A sample of 200 students of 18 to 25 age group was selected for this purpose. Both under graduate and post graduate students were included in the study. The scholar also interviewed 10 research scholars to confirm how intensively the *information overload* was affected our research field.

Objectives

The study had five major objectives. They were,

1. To understand, what really the *Information Overload* is, and how it affected 'genuine information'
2. To analyse the impact of *Information Overload* in digital media news content

3. To ascertain as to how *Information Overload* has influenced our cognitive abilities
4. To examine as to how *Information Overload* affected academic arena
5. To suggest some pragmatic solutions for the problem of Information Overload

What is Information Overload?

Information Overload is a situation where the presence of too much information prohibits a person to find out required information and it causes difficulty in decision making. It is also called **infobesity** or **infoxication**.

The information can be in the form of texts, images, sound, videos etc. The viral videos in YouTube, countless emails in our inbox, the endless stream of interesting articles on Facebook, innumerable tweets per second in Twitter are some examples of overloaded information. The huge amount of information causes our brain to function stressfully. This will affect our thinking pattern. Our decision making system will remain confused. It will stop us from making good decisions or interrupt from choosing a right option. We will end up by making wrong or delayed decisions.

Information overload had been recognized and addressed as a problem long before in mid-nineteenth century. Scientists like J. Murray Luck, assistant professor of biochemistry at Stanford University, pointed out that they are failed to reassemble appropriate information for their research work. Later in a report of the U.S. President's Scientific Advisory Committee's in 1963, addressed the same problem. The phrase '**Information overload**' is first mentioned in '*The Managing of Organizations*', a book by Bertram Gross in 1964. But it was popularised by the futurologist **Alvin Toffler** in 1970, in his book '**Future Shock**'. He predicted that information abundance will cause big problems in near future.

Information overload became a menace in academic and business sectors. When two or more type of information is available in the same subject or idea, there is a possibility of misperception. But here the available information is literally massive. Digital media provides thousands of web pages in fraction of a second in a single search. It becomes hardly possible to pick the required bit of information within the available time. Information becomes useless when it could not be accessed in right time.

Digital Media

Nowadays all the media devices became digital in a sense. But, in this study, online media and equipment including computers, smartphones, tablets, phablets, etc. are considered as digital media.

World Wide Web became common for the last half a century. Advent of modern computers caused information to duplicate and spread faster. Social media became a 'must' in everybody's life and allowed people to become news editors or manipulators. These duplicated information spread through World Wide Web. Many of the information are manipulated. People started to access news content through digital media, which mainly include online media. Thus digital media devices connected to the internet have a significant role in causing Information Overload.

Information Overload in News Content

News Overload is a part of information overload. The news content produced by media organisations and other sources becomes profuse. Different news organisations are treating same news event differently. As a result numerous versions of the same news would be produced.

Nowadays internet, more specifically, social media is spreading the different versions of the news in no time. The audience has a profound role in disseminating these news items. They are choosing a version which is supporting their views and ideologies and sharing. The vested interest in a particular subject leads to misinterpretations. In fact, most of the time these manipulated information is sharing through the internet. Thus the real audience became confused. The vast amount of information prevent them from accessing the right information.

News is also an information and it gets polluted by duplication and manipulation. By analysing and confirming all the information accessed from the net in the same topic, the right information could find. But the user will lose enormous time and productivity. Thus *News Overload* too causes problems in day-to-day life of the audience.

Information Overload: Causes

Nowadays devices having internet access, like computers, smartphones, tablets and many other digital devices are the major

mediums to diffuse information. A wide variety of sources are there to run-off information. Social media and other online resources are the primary cause of information overload. The same news item is repeatedly distributed from different news sources. These information could be fake and authenticity is always dubious. The primary reasons of information overload are,

1. Widespread access to the Internet
2. Rapid rate of new information production
3. Social Media and Internet Sharing
4. Ease of information duplication and transmission
5. Increasing number of information channels of the same news content
6. Absence of tools to organise information
7. Lack of content filtering tools
8. Ignorance in accessing the sources using various information tools
9. Ambiguities in available information
10. Contradictions with newly created information

Information Overload: Consequences

When considering the societal consequence, information overload is always disrupts social development. It prevents accumulating new knowledge, thus delays new inventions. Persons are the building blocks of the society. Thus, personal consequence do matter. Some of them are mentioned below,

1. Causes Untidiness
2. Kills Time
3. Increases Stress and Anxiety
4. Destroys Self Confidence
5. Challenges cognitive capacity
6. Analysis Paralysis
7. Reduces Productivity
8. Fails to stay in-focus

9. Stops from taking decisions and actions

10. Monetary Loses

Information overload causes confusion in absorbing facts, which in turn causes to reduce peace of mind. The lack of attention reduces concentration in works. Overloaded information causes to lose precious time. Thus we will lose productive outcome. Information Overload leads to spend more time to catch the necessary information. This reduces available time and causes stress and anxiety. Information Overload often causes *Analysis Paralysis* or Paralysis by Analysis. It is a state of never taking a decision or action by over thinking (analysing), as a result paralysing the outcome.

Technology and Mass Media

Technology has specific purposes in human life. We used technology to improve our lives. Man used some techniques to make fire. These techniques are the first form of technology that propelled human growth. Each generation of the human kind improved existing technology or invented new.

Mass media adapted latest technology to flow information. State-of-the-art technologies are incorporated in gathering, processing and disseminating the news. The very same technology is used by the audience to receive the news. Technology allows a journalist to send a news story as soon as it occurred to the audience. New technological gadgets allows a user to know the latest updates live.

Communication technology is a collection of technological inventions which helps to communicate fast and effectively. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed a massive progress in the field of communication technologies.

Technology always helps us to improve the quality of our lives. We incessantly used technological advancements to accomplish our tasks perfectly and without any flaws. But, there were many side effects for the use of technology. One of them is Information Overload. The focus of information overload increased when information technology grown.

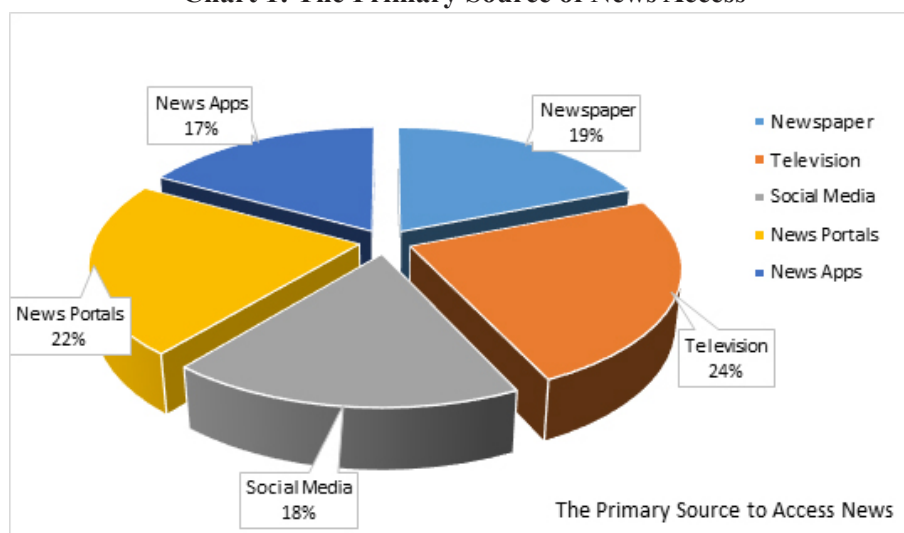
We are prone to get addicted to those technological supplements. Nowadays, people get up in the morning and first check their smartphone for new updates. They are always online and are virtually connected to their friends. But, often it becomes an addiction.

It is true that technology help us to do a task quickly. It make possible to communicate fast. But also it consumes more time too. People always use the very same technology for entertaining themselves. Most of the time unwanted and time killing communications occur. As a result productivity declaims fast.

Analysis and Findings

As part of the study the researcher has conducted a survey among 200 college students to know their news habits and the effect of *Information Overload* in them. Also a content analysis is done in two news portals to know the nature of digital news content. The researcher also analysed the sharing of news content in *facebook*.

Chart 1: The Primary Source of News Access



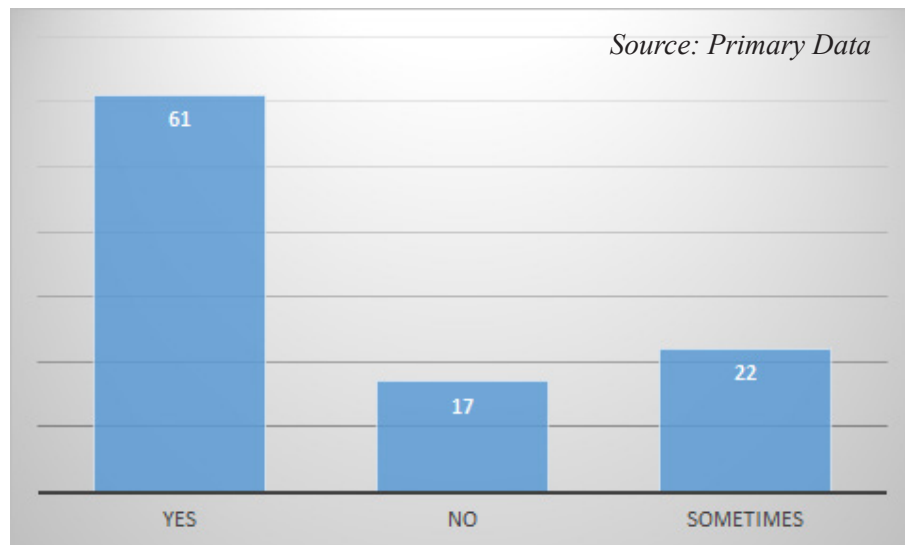
The *Chart 1* shows that 57% of the respondents depend internet based services as a primary source of news access. The other 43% depends conventional media like Television and Newspaper.

68% of the respondents believe that social media is a cause of information overload. 61% of the students also agrees that they are affected by information overload (See *Chart 2*). 56% of the students strongly agrees that *Information Overload* influence their academic activities. 23% of them partially agrees to this argument. 21% of the scholars disagrees with this statement. They believes that academic activities are not always depends online researching. Books, personal

interviews, surveys and participant observation are also the methods of data collection. Experts will also help to reach accurate data. Consulting with experts is a good method to eradicate the problem of congested information sources.

40% of the respondents are using News Apps to know daily news. They are interested in using apps which has a collective news database from various news sources. That is they are not interested in using independent news apps of the news media organisations like *The Hindu*, but they use news apps like *dailyhunt* (formerly *newshunt*) which is a collaborative news app of numerous news sources. It even supports regional language news sources.

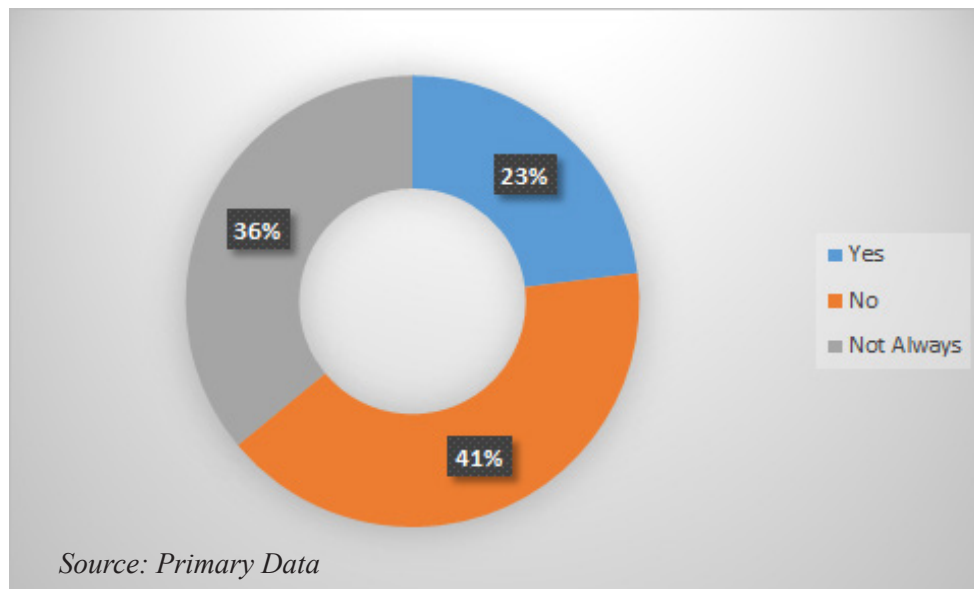
Chart 2: Respondents who believes that, they are affected by Information Overload



Information overload causes anxiety and stress. It leads to lack of focus and confidence. All of the respondents agrees that they felt any one of the symptoms or more than one symptoms when handling with information.

Chart 3 shows that 77% percentage of the respondents are not agrees that the news shared through social media are credible. 23% of them are explains that internet itself helps them to confirm whether the news is fake or not. Therefore if there is any doubt, options are there to double or triple check the fact.

When analysing these facts, it is obvious that information overload is affecting academic activities too. Online data mining is

Chart 3: Respondents who trust on news in social media

not at all easy to the scholars. 75% of the scholars are unaware of the content filtering tools and they are unable to check the validity of the information found from the internet.

New Aspects

The modern society termed 'information overload' as a negative aspect. But it is the case of perspective. The lack of information is the actual problem. But we have information, and it is everywhere, and it is positive. Only problem is that, relevant information is hidden and not accessible easily. Therefore we need some techniques to find out the information we need.

When redefining the meaning of information, 'Information overload became a problem when a user become unable to find out relevant information using his own knowledge and acquired techniques.'

We are reluctant to learn new techniques, that's the real problem. Technology itself has solutions. For instance, when searching in Google, we can use operands like AND, OR, NOT etc to get more relevant results. Putting a double quote (") between the most relevant word in the search keywords will give more precise search results.

Eg: Smartphones NOT tablets > it will exclude 'tablet phones' from search result

How to Alleviate Information Overload?

If technology is the primary cause of information abundance, technology too has solutions. Intelligent use of technology will eliminate the actual problem for sure.

Information overload grown as a wide problem in the society. Elimination of information overload is not at all impossible. Well organised information is easy to handle. Our information media is not organised and diffusing vague ideas to the society. New information channels like social media causes to duplicate and manipulate news contents.

Researchers can easily collect relevant data and can complete their works in lesser time. Internet traffic will reduce and thus the bandwidth can use more productively for the growth of business, academic and other purposes supporting national growth. Quick access of relevant data will help us to save time and that will help to concentrate on our real jobs. (Productivity Increases). Librarians can organise books and documents in more proper and easily accessible.

How to Get Access to the Relevant Information?

Organising online content intelligently will eliminate unwanted information. These are some techniques useful to retrieve online as well as offline information.

1. Prioritise the information needed
2. Identify the unwanted information
3. Observation continuously
4. Keep a Disciplined and Organised Mind
5. Planning before retrieving information
6. Create a precise idea about what is going to access
7. Use specific terms to search
8. Write down the ideas immediately
9. Learn search strategies
10. Connect with known information
11. Evaluate the retrieved content
12. Use only trusted sources

13. Say No to irrelevant Information
14. Not accept more than five results at a time
15. Use smartphone Apps
16. Use Google alerts, Feed Aggregators etc to get relevant updates
17. Use tools like 'Gmail Tabs' to organise e-mails

In shopping, we often ignore thousands of items and picking the right one in no time. How is it being possible? Either we know the brand of the particular product, or ask our friends for opinion about a product. Then compare with products of other brands and make a choice to buy one you are convinced with. Choosing the right information is similar to it. Source is very important like a brand name. Always depend on credible sources, and re-analyse its credibility occasionally.

We need organised and '*easy to access*' databases. The unimportant, irrelevant information should be destroyed. Internet contains mass amount of duplicate information. Same idea is duplicated thousand times and it should be cut down. Using modern algorithms it is easy to scan and filter duplicated information. This will assure quality and unambiguous information.

News Apps

There are thousands of smartphone *apps* to distribute news content. Prominent news organisations have their own standalone news apps. But, it is not easy to install and use all of them to know daily news. It also leads to 'News Content Overload'.

But there are efficient apps to gather and distribute news from different sources. They are not merely collecting and showing news. There is a smart filtering occurs and choosing only the most relevant pieces of information and assembling in a disciplined manner. The users also have a control over the apps. They can customize the options as per their tastes.

Some popular and useful news apps are shown below,

1. **Yahoo News Digest:** Yahoo News Digest App provides a summary of all the important need-to-know news. A short digest of 9-11 news items will show twice a day (Morning 8 O'clock and Evening 6 O'clock)

2. **Flipboard:** Flipboard is a personal news magazine App. A user can create personal magazines. The animated interface will help the user for easy navigation.
3. **Google News & Weather:** Google News is a computer-generated news App. It aggregates worldwide news headlines from various news sources. For readers' convenience it groups similar stories together and displays them. Users can personalise news items according to their preference and interests.
4. **Feedly:** Feedly helps to read personalised RSS feeds from various websites, blogs, YouTube channels etc.
5. **Dailyhunt (Newshunt):** This app provides news updates as it happens. It supports many Indian regional languages (Including Malayalam). Users can customize their news sources according to their language preferences.
6. **News Republic:** Shows latest news from trusted news sources. This app is also user customisable. Provides news according to the user's preferences. Animated keyword map will help a user to choose news content easily.
7. **Appy Geek:** Appy Geek is a technology news app. It offers most comprehensive news in tech world including mobile, gadgets, wearable gadgets, product info, science, and tech culture.
8. **SmartNews:** News content in short videos.

Conclusion

The accumulation of information and communication of pertinent information is the indication of human growth. Without new and upgraded information human race won't survive. But, it is also essential to communicate or hand over proper or needful information in a proper way in right time. We can't stop the production of new knowledge. So, we need to think differently by changing our attitudes towards the problem. It is imperative to find out novel ways to tackle information overload. As we know, technology primarily causes information overload. The same technology can use to reduce the problem. News is a part of information system. But nowadays the credibility of the news contents is lost. The major reason for this phenomenon is that the digital media handles news and related information as a means to spread hatred.

As discussed in this article, having too much of information is not at all a problem. If technology caused abundance of information and confusion, we have to use the very same technology to eliminate that problem. The future of technological innovations is artificial intelligence (AI). If AI can be used to control and arrange information systems it will avoid duplications, return better search results and keep the database organised.

There should be a filtering mechanism in Media industry too. Media organisations should formulate new policies to avoid insignificant news disbursement. News media should retaliate to reclaim their credibility. It is very essential for a growing society to tackle information overload.

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