



SOCIALLY EXCLUSIVE DALITS AND TELEVISION: UTILIZATION PATTERNS AND ACCESS- A CASE STUDY OF SHIVAMOGGA TALUK

***Dr. Mahadevaswamy KN**

Abstract

At present the media encompasses with the digital, computerized or networked information communication technologies (ICT). It focus exclusively upon computer technologies and telecommunication or satellite technologies which stress the cultural forms and contents in which technologies are used. The term new media suggests that at the core of its meaning it is the 'newness' that interests and excites. New also indicated the set of more radical and fundamental shifts. The new media have opened up avenues for the users to reach out to new people, access ideas, plan or organized campaigns. This media has also helped users in airing their difficulties and to sympathize and even share and offer solutions for problems.

Key Words: dalits, exclusive, new media, reach and access

Introduction

New technologies changed the way people communicated. In olden days, humans could communicate by shouting and blowing horn or beating drum or browsing a mobile at present.

From the 1990s introduction of the new media technologies has widened the scope of information dissemination. The changing media technologies affected the culture, policies, and ideologies of people. The advent of photo-mechanical reproduction shattered the traditional art, and brought art, business and politics closer and results a mass society with new culture (Benjamin, 1937). Media has also helped users in airing their difficulties and to sympathize and even share and offer solutions for problems.

From the threshold of third millennium, networking groups like the Facebook, Orkut, My Space, Instagram, Telegram, Blog, Vlog and Twitter have created what is commonly called as the 'New public Sphere'(Boyd, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

The study addressed the question, “At what levels do new media reach *dalit* communities in Shivamogga and how do they access and utilize them?”

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to find out the levels of new media reach and how *dalit* communities access them and utilize them with what perceived impact.

Specifically;

To assess the reach and access of new media devices and services like DTH / Cable TV, mobile, computers, internet and OTT.

To find out the level of new media utilization among dalit communities in shivamogga and

To gather perceptions of dalit respondents regard the impact of new media on their life.

Significance of the study

The media transformed the society with the development of new technologies, they have affected the culture, attitudes and behavior of people to how they communicated and interacted in the society. Dalits to live socio- culturally and economically poor conditions need to be studied as to where do they stand with the shaping changes in media technology. This research provided how a *dalit* community accesses the new media and their utilization patterns.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in Shivamogga, one of the districts in Karnataka, the agricultural belt of the state, and most of the respondents are employed in farm-related activities for the livelihood. A study if had been spread to the entire state would have given a better picture of the dalit-media reality.

Review of Literature

Lister *et al.* (2003) pointed out that the effects of media were determined by the technology themselves, rather than the complex social networks.

Rheingold (2000) observes: “People in virtual communities use words on screens to exchange pleasantries and argue, engage in intellectual discourses, conduct commerce, make plans, brainstorm, and gossip, and feud, fall in love, create a little high art and a lot of idle talk”. The new media offer multi-services and connect like-minded persons worldwide.

The former Justice Markandey Katju (2013) rightly pointed out that: “India is presently in transition from feudal agricultural society to modern industrial society. Neuman (1991) suggests that whilst the ‘new media’ have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction.

Media in india

There are 144 520 registered newspapers and periodicals (RNI, 2021). The radio with 262 AIR stations and it has 384 operational private FM radio stations and 290 community radio stations as on 2020. Doordarshan, the public broadcasting service operates 21 TV channels; Indians also receive more than 900 channels from DTH/Satellite services.

The total number of internet users is 825.30 millions in 2021, India had 1.2 billion mobile subscribers in 2021 of which about 250 million were smart phones users (TRAI, 2021). There are nearly 239.65 million Facebook users in India in 2022.

The digital divide refers to the gap between demographics and region that have access to media. It is based on three factors such as the economic divide, usability divide, an empowerment divide. As per ITUs worlds telecommunication/ICT indicates database, only 43 per cent of the population in uses internet among there are 58% male internet and 42% female internet users in India (IAMAI, 2022).

Rationale

Communication researchers have found that people can be empowered and changed when media reaches them; they access and utilize it. Utilization of media depends on the socio-economic and cultural factors, it is important to study the nature of 'media haves and media have not's in a caste ridden Indian socio-cultural context.

Dalits in Indian system

In India there is a hierarchy of social status that is attached to various castes which ranged from worship to untouchability. Dalits are the former untouchables- popularly known as lower caste/ impure people/down-trodden. In the varnashrama system, dalits were neglected and kept away from political participation.

Media and dalit studies

Dalit studies is a new field of research in India, which looks at the problems of marginalized groups namely dalits, tribal's, religious minorities, excluded groups, de - notified tribal's, physically challenged and similar groups in economic, social and political spheres.

Unniyal (1996) analyzed the status of dalit journalists in Indian printmedia. Rajapurohit (2014) assessed the attitudes of Indian media towards dalits. Jeffery (2001) explored the presence of dalit issues in Indian newspapers. Varadarajan (2006) evaluated the relationship between caste system and media management in India. Brewer (2007) studied on the challenges of technology for developing skills, Gajjala and Gajjala (2008) analyzed the cyber culture in south asia. Leung (2008) assessed the voyage from "victims of the digital divide" to "techno elites".

Theoretical framework of the study

The following theories helped the researcher to conduct research at its various stages such as- Media Hegemony, Audience Segmentation, Media Gap theories.

Methodology

This study sought to find out the level of Socially Exclusive Dalits and Television: Utilization Patterns and Access - A Case Study of Shivamogga Taluk and to gather opinion of dalit respondents regarding the impact and significance of new media in/on their life.

Specifically, the study sought to assess the reach and access of DTH/ Cable TV, OTT, IPTV, Mobile, Computers and Internet among dalit respondents, how they utilize these new media, and gathering opinion of dalit respondents regarding the impact of new media on their life.

As media reach, patterns of access and utilization are quantifiable; this study is designed mainly as a quantitative research.

Research Design

To gather data to have an in-depth understanding of the questions under this study, the following research design was formulated.

Locale of the Study

Shivamogga is a district spread over 8477 sq kms with 2.27 lakh hectare forest. It is 274 kms away from Bangalore, the capital of the state. It consists of seven taluks with forty hobblis, and 1448 inhabited villages and 87 unrecognized villages with an area of 8465 sq kms. The study is conducted in the shivamogga taluk (administrative unit) in the district.

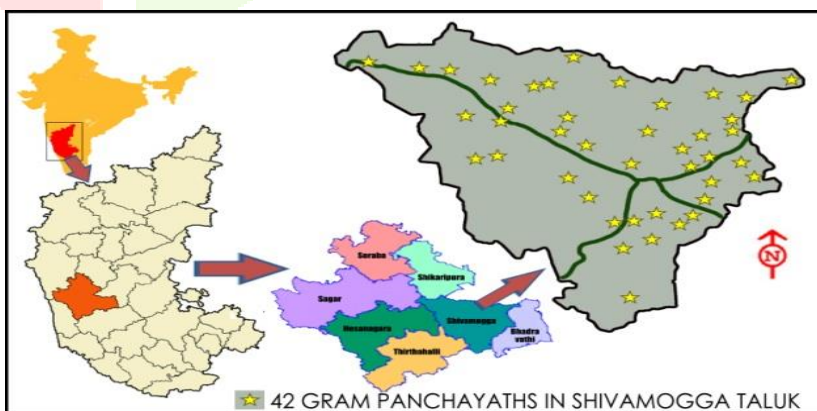


Fig. 1. Map of the Research Location showing 42 panchayats

Selection of the Respondents

The population of Shivamogga district is 1945556, out of which 623727 are in urban area and 1129026 are in rural area. The population of the taluk scheduled caste is **51333** among them 25821 are male and 25512 are female, this study is considered as people belonging to scheduled castes only.

Here the researcher followed Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table of sample size, considering the dalit population in Shivamogga taluk based on 2022 (District Statistical Information) was **51333** keeping the confidence level at 95 per cent and confidence interval at 5.00 and a sample size of 382 is reached, this is rounded to 400.

Selection of the respondents was based on *Snow Ball Sampling* method as there were no dalit household's details available the research has used leaders of the villages to identify the households moving from one house to another. The researcher made sure that respondents varied by age, gender and caste sub-groups.

Shivamogga taluk has 42 gram panchayats (local administrative divisions), the study was conducted in 61 villages belonging to the 42 gram panchayats, as shown in the figure – 1.

Further, 15 dalit leaders were selected for in depth interview and discussion about the topic under research with a total respondents is 415.

Research methods

The study was quantitative in nature. To study the reach, and patterns of access and utilization of the media among the dalits, a survey research was found to be most appropriate.

Survey - The researcher conducted a survey that covered all the 400 respondents spread over various areas of the Shivamogga taluk using *Questionnaire*; it had both both close ended and open ended questions. Perspectives were filled based on Lickert scale. In this research the researcher conducted *interviews* with fifteen dalit leaders from the locale of the study in *Dalit Sangarsha Samiti* (DSS) and *Dalit Noukarara Okkoota* (DNO).

Data gathering - The researcher gathered the data with the support of research assistants and personally visiting some of the villages of the respondents in their house, filling the questionnaire based on the answers given by them, especially if the respondents were illiterate.

Data analyses - The answers given to the questions were entered to spread sheets and researcher used mainly measures of central tendency to seek answers to the research objectives. The results were tabulated, and presented through tables.

Operational definitions - The following variables are operationally defined as to how they are dealt with in the research.

Media reach - In this research media reach refers to whether the signal or media services are reaching the geographical area under study.

Media access - Access is operationally defined as the social, economical capacity of individual to own various media gadgets and avail related services.

Media utilization pattern - utilization pattern operationally refers to in what frequency and for what purpose, where, when and how the new media is used.

Dalits – Ambedkar defines dalits as those ill treated, humiliated, even discarded, denied common civil rights, people mainly belonging to lowest ring of Hindu caste system.

Income of the family – United Nation defines poverty based on the level on annual income. The threshold of poverty line is approximately Rs. 1060/- per month in rural areas and Rs. 1080/- in urban areas in India.

Results and Discussions

This study socially exclusive dalits and television: utilization patterns and access- a case study of shivamogga taluk focused on the finding out access and impact of new media among dalits. The primary data was collected through the questionnaires administered with 400 dalit respondents of shivamogga taluk, and interview conducted with 15 DSS representatives. The gathered data have been analyzed, discussed and presented below.

RQ-1 Utilization patterns and Access of New Media by the Respondents

This objective sought to find out the utilization patterns and access of new media gadgets among the respondents. As new media technologies are incorporated into broadcasting technologies, digital television access and reach was studied.

PART A

This objective sought to find out the Socially Exclusive Dalits and Television: Utilization Patterns and Access- a Case Study of Shivamogga Taluk among the respondents. As new media technologies are incorporated the mobile phone and internet media were too important and analyzed.

Age and gender of the respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic features of the respondents. The respondents belonged to various age groups. The age group of the respondents 13-24 years was 30.5 percent. Among them males were 18.75 percent and 11.75 were females. In the age group of respondents above 55 years, 4.75 percent were males

and 2.00 percent females. Among the respondents 240 (60%) were male and 160 (40%) were female. The majority belonged to 13-24 age groups.

Table 1. Age and gender of the respondents

Age group	No. of Respondents					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
13-24	75	18.75	47	11.75	122	30.5
25-34	74	18.50	45	11.25	119	29.75
35-44	41	10.25	34	8.50	75	18.75
45-54	31	7.75	26	6.50	57	14.00
55 and above	19	4.75	8	2.00	28	7.00
Total	240	60	160	40	400	100.00

Table 2. Occupation of the respondents

Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Coolie labourers	111	27.75
Employee	99	24.75
Students	61	15.25
House wives	54	13.5
Drivers / Painters etc.	37	9.25
Business	19	4.75
Farmers	16	4.00
Unanswered	3	0.75
Total	400	100.00

Table 2 shows the occupation of the respondents. Among 400 respondents, the majority were coolie laborers 111 (27.75%), followed by 99 employees (both government and private 24.75%) Students comprised 15.25 percent and home making women were 13.5% business.

PART B

Television and the dalits

Table 3. TV Ownership of the respondents

Type of TV	Nos.	Percentage
Ordinary (SD)	192	48.00
LCD/LED (HD)	185	46.25
No TV	23	5.75
Total	400	100.00

Table 3 depict the TV ownership pattern. Among 400 respondents, 377 (94.25%) of them had television in their home, and 23 (5.75%) of them did not own a television. Among those who owned a television, 192 (48%) of them had a Standard Definition (SD) television and 185 (46.25%) had HD television.

Table 4. Types of TV Ownership and Various Dalit Groups

Dalit Sub-group	Television Ownership			Total
	Ordinary (SD)	LCD/LED (HD)	No TV	
Adi Karnataka	122	135	17	274
Adi Dravida	31	25	06	56
Koracha / Korama	6	7	-	13
Lambani / Banjara	33	15	-	48
Marathi SC	2	-	-	2
Bhovi	1	-	-	1
Total	192	185	23	400

The above table shows the type of television owned by various dalit groups. Out of 400 respondents 192 respondents had ordinary (SD) television; Among them 122 owned by Adi Karnataka respondents and followed by 31 Adi Dravida; 6 Koracha / Korama; 33Lambani; Marathi SC 2 and Bhovi 1. Out of 400 respondents185 owned HD television. Among them 135 were Adi Karnataka respondents followed by Adi Dravida 25; Koracha / Korama 7 and Lambani 15.

Table 5. Type of TV ownership of the respondents

TV ownership type	Nos.	Percentage
Purchased	371	98.45
Gifted	06	1.55
Total	377	100.00

The researcher found that most of the respondents were financially capable of purchasing the television set. Among those who owned television, 371 (98.45%) of them had purchased it and only 6 (1.55%) were gifted with a TV by their relatives.

Table 6. No. of TV channels received by the respondents

No. of channels received	Nos.	Percentage
001-150	266	70.56
151-200	20	5.31
201-250	35	9.28
251-300	17	4.51
Above 300	32	8.49
Unanswered	7	1.86
Total	377	100.00

The above table shows the number of television channels received by the respondents. Among the 377 respondents, 266 (70.56%) of them have received 1-150 channels, 20 (5.31%) of them receive 151-200 channels, 35 (9.28%) received 201-250 channels, 17 (4.51%) have received TV channels between 251-300 and the remaining 32 (8.49%) of the respondents received above 300 TV channels. Seven respondents did not answer. Thus, majority of the respondents were receiving 1-150 TV channels.

Table 7. Type of TV connection by the respondents

Type of connection	Nos.	Percentage
DTH	184	48.81
Cable	146	38.73
IPTV through Telecom	47	12.47
Terrestrial	0	0.00
Total	377	100.00

Table 7 shows the nature of television connection to the respondents' household. Among the 377 respondents 146 (38.73%) of the respondents' television were connected to cable; 184 (48.81%) to DTH and 47(12.47%) to IPTV through telecom. The table shows that majority of the respondents were DTH subscribers. No respondents had been connected to terrestrial television broadcasting.

Table 8. Types of TV connection by various dalit groups

SC Sub-group	TV Connection			Total
	DTH	Cable	IPTV	
Adi Karnataka	134	83	40	257
Adi Dravida	33	19	4	56
Koracha / Korama	0	13	1	14
Lambani / Banjara	15	30	2	47
Marathi SC	2	-	-	2
Bhovi	0	01	-	1
Total	184	146	47	377

Table 8 shows accessing the cable and DTH connection by dalit groups. Among 184 respondents 134 Adi karnataka had DTH connection and followed by 33 Adi Dravida; 15 Lambani; and two Marathi SC accessed it.

Out of the 146 cable subscribers, 83 Adi Karnataka respondents stated they had cable connection to their television and followed by 19 Adi Dravida; 13 Koracha / Korama; 30 Lambani; and one Bhovi respondent had connected with cable.

Among the 47 IPTV subscribers, 40 Adi Karnataka claimed they had IPTV connections and followed by 4 Adi Dravida; one Koracha / Korama and two Lambani respondents connected with it.

Table 9. DTH Service Provider

DTH provider	Nos.	Percentage
Sun Direct	62	33.70
Dish TV	44	23.90
Airtel	39	21.20
D2H	15	8.15
Others	24	13.05
Total	184	100.00

Table 9 shows the company providing DTH services to the respondents. Out of 184 DTH subscribers, majority was getting the service from Sun Direct 62 (33.70%); Dish TV was preferred by 44 (23.90%); Airtel had 39 (21.20%) subscribers and D2H had 15 (8.15%). There were also 24 respondents who were getting the services from BiG TV, Tata Sky, and Reliance etc.

Conclusions

This study entitled, 'Socially Exclusive Dalits and Television: Utilization Patterns and Access – a case study in Shivamogga taluk', focused on finding out access and impact of new media among dalits. The primary data was collected through the questionnaires administered to 400 dalit respondents of Shivamogga taluk, and interviews conducted with 15 dalit leaders.

The respondents belonged to 13–75 age group, various caste denominations, occupations, education and economic status based on annual income. They belonged to 61 villages from the 42 Gram Panchayats in the taluk. The data was gathered from these respondents have been analyzed and the conclusions and recommendations are given below.

Reach and access of new media among dalits

To find out the reach and access of new media gadgets and services among the dalits, as new media technologies are incorporated into broadcasting technologies, digital television access and reach was studied.

Access and utilization patterns of television

In India terrestrial television reaches nationwide and abroad. But, this has been made almost meaningless with the arrival of DTH / HITS and IPTV and ITV. All the cable networks and all channels are available in India in digital mode.

Among 400 respondents, 377 (94.25%) of them had television in their home, and only 23 of them did not own a television. And among them 48 percent had owned Standard Definition (SD) television and about 46 percent had access to HD television. Majority of the respondents were receiving 1-150 TV channels. The researcher found that most of the respondents were financially capable of purchasing the television set.

The nature of television connection by the respondents' in their home was connected to cable (38.73%), DTH (48.81%), and IPTV (12.47%) through telecom, majority of the respondents were DTH subscribers and no respondents had been connected to terrestrial television broadcasting.

An analysis showed that accessing the cable and DTH connection varied by dalit groups. Study showed that 134 Adi Karnataka had DTH connection; of the 146 cable subscribers 83 Adi Karnataka respondents had cable connection to their television. Out of the 47 IPTV subscribers 40 Adi Karnataka claimed they had IPTV connections. This group was financially better placed than others had better access to the television.

According to BARC (2021) All India level 66 percent household had owned a television. This shows that television access among the dalits in this study is more than the national average.

The present study was limited to Shivamogga taluk in a Shivamogga district. The research can be replicated to other areas, even regional or national level to understand the reality better. The further studies also

may compare the access and utilization patterns with non-dalit respondents to differentiate the unique realities of the phenomenon.

References

- Ashraf, Muhammed, T. (2012). *Cyber Dalit: Content Analysis of Utharakaalam.com*, Kerala's First Dalit Webportal, Dissertation, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Kannur University, Kerala, India.
- Balasubramaniam, J. (2011) Dalits and a Lack of Diversity in the Newsroom, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 46(11), 73.
- Ball–Rokeach, Sandra J. and Elizabeth Gutierrez Hoyt. (2001). Communication technology and community, *Communication Technology and Community*, 28(4).
- Brewer, E. et al. (2007). The challenges of technology research for developing regions. *IEEE Pervasive Computing*, 5(2).
- Chaturvedi, Saransh. (2016). Empowerment of Marginalized Section (Women, Dalit, Tribal) and Their Participation, *The World Journal on Juristic Polity*, August, pp.1-9.
- Dash, Bidu Bhusan. (2013). Temple Entry in Odisha by the Dalit: An Ethnographic Study of Media Articulation, *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 23(1).
- Dayal, Manoj. (2006). Information Technology-Need of the Hour for Rural Development, *Indian Media Studies Journal*, 1(1).
- Devraj and Chaturvedi. (2003). Internet for Transfer of Agriculture Technology, *Agriculture Extension Review*, 15(2).
- Gajjala R. and V. Gajjala. (Eds.), *South Asian Technospaces*, Digital Formations, 36, Peter Lang Verlag, New York, pp. 7–24.
- Gajjala, R. and Gajjala, V. (Eds.). (2008). *South Asian Technospaces*. Digital Formations, 36, Peter Lang Verlag, New York.
- Jogdand, P.G. (2007). Development of the Dalits: Some Observations, *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, 68(1).
- Jonathan Bignell. (1997). *Media Semiotics: An Introduction*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York.
- Kumar. (2014). Indian Vernacular Blogs and its Usage as an Alternative Media for Dalits - A Critical Discourse Analysis, *European Academic Research*, 2(9).
- Leung, L. (2008). From 'victims of the digital divide' to 'techno-elites': Gender, class, and contested 'Asianness' in online and offline geographies.

- Likhari, Tanvir. (2007). Dalit Feminism: A Perspective on Bama's Sangati. *Guru Nanak University Journal of Sociology*, 28(1 and 2).
- MacBride International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. (1980). *Many Voices, One World*, Report of the UNESCO, Paris.
- Manjunatha, S. (2013). The Usage of Social Networking sites Among the College Students in India, *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(5).
- Rajpurohit, Shivnarayan. (2014). Dalit Students and Journalists-from Classroom to Newsroom, *KAFILA blog*, www.kafila.org
- Satyanarayana, J. (2004). *E-Government: The Science of the Possible*, Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
- Uniyal, B.N. (1996). In Search of a Dalit Journalist, *The Pioneer*, March 09. www.chandrabhanprasad.com
- Vidya Bhushan and Sachdeva. (2010). *An Introduction to Sociology*. Kitab Mahal. Allahabad.
- Vidyachathoth, Bhagyalakshmi Kodavanji, Nayanatara Arun Kumar and Sheila Ramesh Pai. (2014). Correlation between Affect and Internet Addiction in Undergraduate Medical Students in Mangalore, *J. Addict Research*, 5(1).

