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**EXPOSURE OF RURAL STUDENTS THROUGH ONLINE MEDIA IN INDIA: A
REVIEW STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Online media is an enormously popular medium that can result in positive as well as negative effects. The medium which is counted as a gift to mankind is not so common everywhere. The tech-savvy world has reached the stage of 5G connection at some places but on the other side, its proper connectivity is still a concern. Considering the aspect of India where the major chunk of the population lives in villages, the online media has not penetrated deep into every zone. Whereat one point it is counted as a benefit to increase business spread awareness and helps as a medium of study, on the other side it is counted as a means of distraction, a source of addiction and a medium which leads to mental issues. Thus, the present paper is a critical study that provides reviews about the exposure of rural students through online media in India.

Keywords: Online media, mobile phone, social media, rural students, rural India

INTRODUCTION

In the present times, media has been diversified into different sectors such as print, broadcast and online media. The division of media has given the audience access to more content and has even made it an important part of our lives. We, humans, are dependent on media for every little sphere beginning from politics; economics, culture or entertainment, it has become an integral part of our lives. From arousing debates in homes about current issues or making people aware of what is going around the world, media is the provider of every little aspect (Oliver, 1998).

Going back to the history of media, it all began with the coming up of telegraph and post offices which were further followed by the newspapers, magazines, television, internet and the new age media. The new age media comprises palmtops, cell phones, etc which have made working prominently quite easy. In the contemporary time, new age media that is online and mobile media has become a necessity and no individual can survive without it.

Online media has created its place in the world now. It is a platform that uses the internet to exchange information and help people to connect with different beings. It comprises social media and other platforms which allow people to access information and helps in coping up with their day to day needs. As a matter of fact, this form of media has given a new shape to the world's connectivity and has brought people closer to each other. Social media is a hype that has turned into a necessity now and is inseparable from people.



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Like the other parts of the world, the internet has not been a powerful source in India too. Several studies have revealed that the internet has created an impact on the Indian economy. The Internet has been the most preferred source among Indians when it is about searching for information, reading news or getting in touch with their loved ones. Not just this, the growth of social media has brought major changes in the working and now all the brands are focusing to build a great online reputation among their users by enhancing their TRP. With the increasing speed and penetration of the internet, the buying behaviour of consumer is also affected. The prospective buyers now first go through the online reviews and recommendations before making the choice. As per research, 40 per cent of people prefer shopping online rather than going to the markets. The internet usage pattern in India depicts the heavy usage of social networking sites that is 25 per cent of people spend time online on social sites (Tarique, 2014).

Taking into consideration the rural population, they are the people who live in the countryside and most of the people staying their practice agriculture only. When we look at the different occupations available, rural India is counted as a large market because around 750 million people live in 637,000 Indian villages. Mainly, the majority of the rural population's livelihood relies on agriculture (Rai and Sahila, 2013).

In the past years, the use of social media is dominant in rural India as there is 100 per cent growth with 25 million people using the Internet to check Twitter and Facebook. As per the International and Mobile Association of India and Indian Market Research Bureau (IAMAI-IMRB), social media is one of the key reasons for people to use the internet. In fact, for several people who are accessing the internet for the very first time, social media is the only attraction that makes them go for it. Indian accounts for 143 million social media users. The urban area witnessed a growth of 35 per cent as the total users were 118 million in 2015 whereas the number for rural media was 25 million. However, in 2014, rural India has 12 million users which depict a 100 per cent growth in 2015 (Bhargava, 2015).

According to Statistica Report 2019, Rural India has a considerable portion that has no Internet access. Thus, there is a vast area for growth which will lead to an increase in the overall Internet-using population in the coming years. In India, more than 65 per cent of Internet users are in the age group of 12-29 years. A higher proportion of this age group is found in rural areas. Hence, depicting there is potential for growth in this section.



Technology has immensely grown and taken a new shape in the past few years. The media industry has also transformed and no wonder more changes are yet to come. With this development, people have come in touch with online media which combines the element of old innovative ways plus new means which in all makes communication and information receiving easy and quick. With the current media blitzkrieg, Online Media has made its way into the countryside. This medium will not just provide entertainment but during the times of COVID-19, it is a great measure for improving the learning practices of the students. Thus this technology serves as an efficient means for providing information, innovative ideas and education, to rural students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE INDICATES

Dinesha and Agarwal (2011) studied Advanced Technology and Tools for Indian Rural School Education System. In the research the authors revealed the education in Indian rural schools can be made better by improving digital technology Desktop and storage visualization will be an aid for the students to study, get knowledge and have access to study material existing all over the world. It would be a great way to learn different material which is available on the internet. However, in the present system, there is limited study material and the means used for teaching are not that communicative. So adopting new means will make the education system a better one.

Pandya (2012) studied media and its effectiveness for rural adolescents. The study gives details on the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) programme of the Government of Gujarat. This scheme emphasizes enhancing the survival and development of children from the weaker sections of society. The ICDS has been an important factor in bringing down the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), making the severely malnourished children become better and has increased the admissions in schools. Mass media such as newspapers, television, radio, the internet that is online media, etc. are playing a significant role in the development of rural adolescents as rural students get the maximum benefits from ICD.

Halder and Jaishankar (2013) conducted a study on Use and Misuse of the Internet by Semi-Urban and Rural Youth in India. The results of the study explained that positive use of the internet was less among the youth. The rural youth was unaware of the cybercrime issues, privacy concerns such as plagiarism and copyright issues regarding online material. The study reveals that college students need to be made aware of internet issues which are serious crime at some times. Students are into watching sexual clipping and such



content but as they are scared of their parents so they tend to avoid it. Thus usage of the internet is done for negative things according to this research.

Prabu and Manoov (2013) researched Analyzing the Impact of the Internet in Rural India. The paper focused on the trends of Internet usage in rural and urban areas, however, the main emphasis was laid on rural areas pattern. The study revealed that rural India is a huge market that technology should capture. Rural India contributes to the economy and bringing the web to them could lead to immense growth. The internet presence in rural India could train children for a better future and helps in the creation of good infrastructure over there. The rural people can highly benefit the country by using the internet. The reason for their poor usage is a lack of infrastructure and training. Government should initiate proper moves for the same.

Hiremath (2014) in the article Use of Electronic Media among Rural Students: A Case Study revealed that electronic media is loved by the youth. A total of 165 respondents were taken through random sampling and the results stated that 83.63 per cent of respondents prefer using cell phones to desktop and PC. The usage of cell phones was for texting people. The internet usage by rural students through mobile phone accounted for 33.33 per cent and 12.72 per cent accessed the internet through cyber cafes. Thus with this data, it could be seen that more than half of the rural youth population of Koppa village was not using online media.

Yadav and Tiwari (2016) researched E-Learning in Rural India. During the study, the author came to the result that E-Learning can be a great means for the development of the marginalized section. Launching the Digital India Program is a great step to achieve great results. Digital India will bring videos, wider content and increase interaction among rural students. With proper facilities, coming up of technology and proper infrastructure, E-Learning can be a great way to move towards sustainable growth for the coming generations. However, lessons should be given on its usage to reap the right benefit from the usage.

Biswas and Ghosh (2019) studied the impact of social media on rural college students in Nadia district, West Bengal. The study gives details about the social media usage pattern of rural students, their cycle of usage and the pattern of usage adopted by their parents. The results revealed social media has positive as well as negative effects on students. It depicted that maximum students are using social media daily to connect to their known people. Most of the students said that they are connected to their brothers and sisters on social media but they are not added with their parents. The reason for the same is that maximum parents over there are not using social media and are not comfortable using smartphones even. The students also explained that



YouTube is one site that helps them in their studies and they use it to the maximum.

Devi (2019) in her study Impact of Social Media on Youth in Rural Area: A Sociological Study revealed that youth is fully engrossed in social media which is a vital part of online media. The youth of present times have even forgotten their family members and are busy using social media at all times. Even the interest in education and study has also declined. However, the youth has explained that social media is the best mode to develop interaction. Seventy per cent of the respondents said that it is an amazing means which helps in doing online payments, shopping and other such daily tasks. Fifty-two per cent of youth even said that this form of media helps to develop creative instincts and make them more confident.

Jamir et al. (2019) in the research article Epidemiology of technology addiction among school students in rural India revealed that there is a high prevalence of behaviour addiction among rural student, especially in Punjab and Haryana. It is likely observed that males are more addicted to smartphones and they comparatively use them quite more in comparison to females. As there is over usage of mobile phones, students are moving towards depression and facing serious kind of other mental issues. Even this addiction to online media is a harm to the performance of students as it is observed that low grades re-experienced by those students who are more addicted to social media.

Partil et al. (2019) studied the Profile of adolescent social media users in rural areas. The research was conducted in two villages of Maharashtra where 325 respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire. The study revealed that 88.67 per cent of rural children have access to cell phones whereas 73.42 children had their mobiles. WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook and email were the common sources which students used from their mobile phones. The study also stated that students use social media mostly for entertainment and then for interpersonal communication. However, for education purpose and distance learning, social media was less priority. Even the study depicted that the lifestyle of students has changed and there is an ill effect on their life because of social media.

Prabakaran and Mahalakshmi (2019) researched on Performance of Digital Media in the Rural Education System in India. The study revealed that the rural education system needs to be transformed. The present system of Indian education does not foster confidence and innovation. The students are more into theoretical aspects which are not taking their paths in the right direction. The teachers should be trained to facilitate



practical aspects in rural areas. The students should be embedded with confidence and their role in the decision-making process should be increased. Not just this, rural parents need to open the education door to their children for their better life. This would help them improve their quality of life and reduce poverty.

Chatterjee et al. (2020) in the research Adoption of mobile application for teaching-learning process in rural girls schools in India an empirical study came out with results that mobile is a necessary means for imparting education in rural areas. It is a way that helps in bringing new development and upgrading the system of education for students. However, the study also stated that education is a human base endeavour work. Full dependence on technology won't yield the right results but supportive use of new means and online media can help in increasing the clarity of concepts. Even the usage of technology will help in the social and healthcare development of students as well as their families.

Kaur G and Kaur P (2020) in their study Effect of Social Media on Rural Women: A Literature Review revealed that Social Media has brought changes to the life of women. The women have become smart and are more confident when it comes to dealing with different matters. It has created social awareness among rural ladies. There were positive and well as negative effects of social media usage on women. However, this growth and positive change were more clearly noticeable in rural girls who were part of their student life.

Patwari (2020) studied on Use of Social Media by rural Youth in India: A boon or Bane. The study revealed that the use of social media has both sides. The trend of using Social Media is common in the age group of 16 to 25. It also showed that over-usage of social media by this age group leads to addiction for the same. Social media has lead to mental as well as physical problems among the youth. Even social media has lead to sending false emails, cyberbullying and other such crimes. However social media has a positive side too. The youth feels this medium spreads awareness on issues such as the anti-corruption movement, health concerns etc. The study concluded that social media has become an integral part of rural youth. Without social media, rural students cannot think about their direction of growth.

Radhakrishnan et al. (2020) studied the Usage of Social Network Tools by Rural Youth in Transfer of Technology- An overview. The research revealed that social media has been a great source for improvement in the agriculture sector. The rural students by using social networking sites make the agriculture industry adopt inventive means. WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok are quite popular among the rural



youth. The usage of social networking sites is mostly done for online games followed by chatting and opting for recreational activities. However social network sites by rural youth were least used for social discussion and accessing profile of other individuals.

Reddy and Ramesh (2020) conducted a study on the Pros and Cons of E-Learning by Children in Rural Areas during Lockdown Situation and Ways to Empower them. The study revealed that rural areas lack the facility of providing online learning to all the students. Only a few students had access and the fee for them was too high which every rural student can't afford. There is no standardized way to online teaching as people are not aware of the exact process. Even the study revealed that internet connectivity was a major issue in rural areas. The system needs to be updated and teachers need to adopt means so that lockdown does not lead to much loss of students.

Quraishi et al. (2020) in the study of Internet addiction among rural adolescents from western India stated that internet usage among rural youth is excessive. The study was conducted in Maharashtra with 251 respondents which were selected randomly. The excessive use of the internet can result in psychological problems among youth about which they are already aware. The excessive use of the internet is a little higher in males in comparison to females. The study also revealed that only science students used internet more for study purpose and result of the rural students used for entertainment.

Yadav et al. (2020) studied the Students perception of Digital Learning during the lockdown period in India: An Empirical Study of Rural and Urban Community. The authors covered 411 respondents from different areas to get a better result. The researchers expected results to show variation in rural and urban areas but the results depicted that students both in rural and urban areas are friendly with technology and have smartphones for usage. The problem of connectivity of the internet still prevails in some rural areas. Thus as a result the rural students prefer conventional teaching as a better means for the learning process.

Maheshwari (2021) in the article Mobile Phone usage pattern among youth in the urban and rural area revealed that both in urban and rural areas youth use phone just after waking up that it's within five minutes and similarly just before going to bed they use the phone. So from this, it could be analyzed that dependence on the mobile phone is there to a greater extent. The reasons for using the phone is solely for entertainment purpose that is using social media. Even 63 per cent of female respondents and 81 per cent of



male respondents of the rural area felt that they use the phone way too much. However urban population did not have the same count and it was quite low. For the purchase of mobile phones, rural people preferred offline mode as a safer means. With this, it could be concluded that rural youth is not that comfortable with online shopping.

Visvambharam et al. (2021) studies about the Perception of online classes during COVID-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study among the students of a rural tertiary care centre and dental college in Kerala, India. In the study, the authors revealed the study of content was quite good by using the technology but the clinical learning was not up to the mark. The majority of the students preferred regular classes as they could learn better about the clinical process by being at the place which was not possible through this online mode. There were connectivity issues on both sides, so that made things a bit complicated.

CONCLUSION

Rural India is a huge market which could give the excellent product in terms of every sector. The students or in precise term the youth is the future of tomorrow and they should be given adequate resource and opportunities to achieve success. Considering the technological factor, online media and social media has become a vital part of every individual life and same ways this has also emerged into the rural sector as well. However, in the rural sector, it has not reached every area due to technical issues which should be resolved. Whereat one point students are benefitted from the online media as it provides them with different modes to achieve education, know about the current happenings and stay connected to people but at the same time, this is becoming a glue which is disturbing the normal lives and students are becoming dependent to it. It has also resulted in anxiety and mental disorders in students. Thus, there is a vital need to maintain the balance of its usage.



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