CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the articulation of Dalits in Dalit websites and blogs that are hypothesized as alternative media for marginalised Dalit community. The objectives of the study include:

- To examine the reasons for accessing and participating of Dalits in Dalit websites and blogs.
- To fathom the prominent characteristics of Dalit websites and blogs perceived by Dalit Community.
- To examine the prospects of Dalit websites and blogs.
- To study the perception of Dalits and Dalit activists about the mainstream media.
- To study the motivation of Dalits on the usage and participation in Dalit websites and blogs.
- To study the internet usage habit of Dalits in accessing Dalit websites and blogs.
- To explore the role played by Dalit websites and blogs in serving Dalit Community.
- To exemplify whether Dalit websites and blogs are fulfilling the characteristics of alternative to the mainstream media.
- To examine whether Dalit websites and blogs are part of the civil society.
- To probe the characteristics of rhizomatic media found in Dalit websites and blogs.
- To examine whether Dalit websites and blogs reduces alienation of Dalits from the mainstream society.
• To analyze the array of issues and themes articulated in the Dalit websites and blogs.
• To study the relationship between demographic variables and the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.
• To study the relationship between internet usage and the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

3.2 Hypotheses

Following are the set of null hypotheses chosen for the study to show Dalit websites and blogs as alternative media:

• There is no association between the educational qualification and the number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs.
• There is no association between the age group and number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs.
• There is no association between the gender and the number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs.
• There is no association between the occupation and the number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs.
• There is no association between the frequency of using internet and the number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs.
• There is no association between the number of hours spent in internet and the number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs.
• There is no association between the educational qualification and the number of hours spent in blogging.
• There is no association between the age group and the number of hours per week spent for blogging.

• There is no association between the gender and the number of hours of blogging per week.

• There is no association between the occupation and the number of hours spent on blogging per week.

• There is no association between the frequency of internet usage and the number of hours spent in blogging.

• There is no association between the number of hours spent in internet per day and the number of hours spent for blogging.

• There is no association between the educational qualification and the kind of blogging platform used for blogging.

• There is no association between the occupation and the kind of platform used for blogging.

• There is no association between the age group and the kind of platform used for blogging.

• There is no association between the gender and the kind of blogging platform they use.

• There is no association between the frequency of using internet and the kind of blogging platform used by the respondents.

• There is no association between the number of hours spent in internet per day and the kind of blogging platform used on blogging.
• There is no association between the number of hours spent in internet per day and the e-mail notification from Dalit websites and blogs.

• There is no association between the number of hours spent in internet and Dalit websites and blogs reduces alienation among Dalit community.

• There is no association between the occupation and the frequency of discussion about Dalit websites and blogs with others.

• There is no significant difference between gender with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference between the age group and with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference between educational qualification with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference between the occupation with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference between the use of internet with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference between the number of hours spent in internet per day with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference among the number of hours per week spent for blogging with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.
• There is no significant difference between the number of hours spent in Dalit websites and blogs with respect to the dimension of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalits.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the characteristics of Dalit websites and blogs.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the view on mainstream media.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the view on Dalit websites and blogs.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the view on Dalit websites and blogs as serving the community.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the view on Dalit websites and blogs as alternative media to the mainstream media.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the view on Dalit websites and blogs as part of the civil society.

• There is no significant difference between the mean ranks towards the view on Dalit websites and blogs as rhizomatic media.

In social science, triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or stand points cast light on a topic. The mixing of data both quantitative and qualitative is known as triangulation in the methodology. So, the triangulation methodology was adopted for this study to validate the claim that Dalit websites and blogs serve as an alternative media and to provide a voice to the marginalised segment of the
Indian society – Dalits. The research design comprises (1) Content Analysis, (2) Survey Methodology and (3) In-depth interviews. The whole study was structured in three phases.

Again, to give another layer of detail to this study, the focus of this research is to find out how the online platform such as websites and blogs can enhance the educated Dalit community who are utilizing the internet as an alternative media to speak for themselves and their fellow members. The research also tries to understand the pulse of the online participants by analysing into the various themes emerging out of the websites and blogs.

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to make sense of the web phenomenon. Besides, online survey, the study uses content analysis both as a quantitative and qualitative research method to explore the themes and contents of Dalit websites and blog to track the extent of Dalit blog and websites are used for speaking for them.

To support the findings of the content analysis, in-depth interview was conducted with Dalit activists and academicians who are active in online in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media. Here, the researcher would like to note that content analysis helped to provide a comprehensive understanding on the issues educated Dalits activists are discussing in the Indian context and how the caste issue has transnational significance, while the in-depth interview enabled a ‘deeper’ analysis, aimed at answering the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions that arose from the content analysis.
3.3 Content Analysis

The content analysis method, widely used in communication studies, is a research technique which makes “replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 1980). Content analysis is one of the more common methods for studying the web. As with other media, the researcher who researches the web uses content analysis codes the web content, either written text or images, based on particular criteria and places them within relevant categories or themes; in other words, the researcher codes the content of web than web users. Within web studies, content analysis is primarily has been employed as a comparative tool, allowing the researcher to make meaningful comparison of contents (Masanes, 2006).

Although the content analysis method has been widely used as a research technique to study the contents of print and broadcast media, it also a popular tool for a new media research, such as internet. More specifically the content analysis has been used in studying the websites and blogs. (Wimmer et al, 1987). As the internet grows into an important mass medium, more researches on internet have been published by various communication scholars. The number of publications of WWW-based research increased constantly in communication journals (Tomassello, 2001; Kim & Weaver, 2002).

There are two types of content analysis - quantitative and qualitative- used in this research to find out whether the Dalit websites and blogs form as an alternative media to voice their opinions and grievances. The quantitative method is “concerned with the frequency of occurrence of given content characteristics” (George, 2008). While the qualitative content analysis is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and
identifying themes or patterns”. (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005) Mayring (2000) defined the qualitative method as “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification”.

To give more nuance and context to the research, qualitative and quantitative content analysis of Dalit web Portals and Blogs was conducted to gauge how they provide a platform for alternative media in giving space for raising their voices.

The quantitative portion of the content analysis measured frequencies and other descriptive and inferential statistics of the Dalit websites and blogs as defined by predetermined categories. The qualitative aspect of the content analysis helped to make meaning out of the quantitative portion. It went beyond the numbers and gave concrete examples of how Dalit websites and blogs act an alternative media to the dalits and non-dalits working activity for Dalit cause. The qualitative content analysis helped to identify common themes that emerged from the data.

### 3.4 Coding Scheme Development

Prior to collecting the data, a coding template was developed that would include possible content found in the web portals and blogs of Dalits. Websites were coded first followed by blogs. The coder went through all the content of both Dalit websites and blogs from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012 and then formulated the coding template. The coding schema was based on the Bailey et al., (2008) theoretical approaches to alternative media. This theoretical framework provides an important scientific basis that complements the data the researcher gathers to analyze that the websites and blogs run by Dalits have the
characteristic as alternative media. Bailey et al., (2008) contends that alternative media as having four important functions. The first two approaches are media-centered and discuss alternative media activities from the perspective of the media producers in relation to the community and mainstream media. The latter two approaches come from a society-centered perspective that sees alternative media’s potential for the betterment of society and democracy by being part of a civil society, and balancing the power play against/with the hegemonic institutions. The researcher utilizes Bailey et al., (2008) four approaches to alternative media as the theoretical framework to present holistic view in understanding Indian blogs and web portals as an alternative media to Dalits.

The four approaches of alternative media for the coding categories are as:

- Serving the community
- An alternative to mainstream media
- Part of Civil Society
- Rhizome

This coding template was based on the possible features or themes associated with each of the four categories (serving the community, alternative to mainstream media, part of the civil society and rhizome). The researcher would like to admit that it was difficult to code all the content of the websites and blogs. So, only the themes which come under the purview of the conceptual framework were coded for the study. The coding template was used to record the content of each web site, within the unit of analysis. It is important to note that as new sub-categories were added to the coding book.
3.5 Intercoder Reliability Test

Intercoder reliability refers to the levels of agreement or to the extent to which two or more independent coders or among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument (Cho, 2010). Intercoder reliability is the widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion (Lambard et al., 2004). Intercoder agreement is needed in content analysis because it measures only "the extent to which the different judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to each object" (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000).

Intercoder reliability test is one of the popular methods for “establishing Intercoder reliability involve presenting predetermined text segments to coders.” Using this approach, researchers run the risk of altering meanings by lifting text from its original context, or making interpretations about the length of codable text (Kurasaki, 2000).

The results of coded data can be trusted only when reliability can be demonstrated. Accordingly, a coder other than the researcher is recruited and the coded results are compared to measure the inter-coder reliability. Regarding the sub sample size for the inter-coder reliability test, Wimmer and Dominick (1987) recommend that between 10% and 25% of the data should be investigated to test Intercoder reliability. In this research, 20% of the data i.e. 2 Dalit websites and 2 Dalit blogs were selected for data analysis using the True Random Number Generator (www.random.org). Discussions were held with the reliability coder to further improve the coding categories in the coding schedule and make the coding manual more explicit to prevent an overlapping of categories. The coders analyzed each documents of the websites and blogs to determine whether it contained Bailey’s et al.,
(2008) notion of alternative media - serving the community, alternative to mainstream media, part of the civil society and rhizomatic in nature.

There are a number of measures of Intercoder reliability. Lombard et al. (2004) describe several measures commonly used in social science and communication such as simple percent agreement, Holsti’s method, Scott’s pi (π), Cohen’s kappa (k), and Krippendorff’s alpha (α). For the purpose of current research Krippendorff α adopted by the researcher. Krippendorff α is also a commonly used measure for intercoder reliability. It is considered to be very flexible as it can account for different sample sizes and missing data, and can be applied to any number of observers, any number of categories, and any level of measurements, e.g., nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio, and more (Hayes, 2007; Lombard et al., 2004; Krippendorff, 2004).

Hence, the researcher conducted an Intercoder reliability test using ReCal, an online Intercoder reliability Web service to find out Krippendorff Alpha value. The result of the Intercoder reliability test is given in the following tables.

**Table 3.1**

*Servicing the community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Krippendorff’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion/Debate Conference/seminar Workshop</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating Dalits</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking financial Support</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting for a cause</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access/ Participation/ Feedback</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2

An alternative to mainstream media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Krippendorff's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalit related Common news</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime and atrocity News about Dalits</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research articles/Space for analysis</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalit related Publication</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalit songs/Poems/ radio/TV</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo sharing</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video sharing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3

Part of Civil Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Krippendorff's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing awareness</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalit rights</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal advocacy</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion/write up from social activists</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalit identity formation/Uniting</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting for civil Rights/ General Human Rights issues</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Krippendorff's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with Other civil right groups/</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream media/ Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking with other Dalits/ Dalit related websites</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning the Mainstream media</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluidity and contingency</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Sampling

As Schafer (2002) points out, conducting content analyses of web sites is problematic because it is impossible to determine the true size and nature of the population. The Internet is in constant flux, and there exists no comprehensive directory of web sites. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique must be used. A purposive sampling design is adopted to identify the appropriate respondents. In order to obtain relevant and accurate information from a specific target group of respondents, purposive sampling is employed as the sampling design (Patton, 1990). Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling technique. This sampling method literally selects elements for a specified purpose (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable you to answer your research questions. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, but for researchers pursuing qualitative or mixed methods research designs, this is not considered to be a
weakness. Rather, it is a choice, the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposing sampling technique that is used.

The first step in developing a methodology of inquiry is to decide the sample size. Therefore, totally 10 Dalit moderated blogs and 10 Dalit activists’ maintained websites were chosen for the analysis. Purposive sampling method was adopted in choosing the Indian Dalit blogs and web portals as there are only limited number of blogs and web portals. Google search engine was used in identifying the Dalit websites and blogs. The criteria for the inclusion of the study required for the web portals and blogs of Dalits are:

1) It should be written in English
2) It should be regularly updated

The duration for the study is two years. Thus the content from the Indian Dalit blogs and web portals were analyzed and studied from January 1 2010 to December 31 2012.

3.7 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the Dalit websites and Blogs. Many researchers use the term ‘unit of analysis’ to refer to the context from which coding units are drawn. The context unit used for this study is the website and blogs of Dalits, which is defined as a “hierarchy of information, connected via hyperlinks to an infinite number of other sites” (Okazaki & Rivas, 2002).

3.8 Data Analysis

After the data were collected, they were entered into an excel sheet. The researcher then imported that information into SPSS, a statistical software program that enabled the researcher to examine the data with different statistical reports.
3.9 Online Survey

Internet technology has revolutionized the way in which surveys are administered – with the advent of the first e-mail surveys in the 1980s and the initial web-based surveys in the 1990s (Schonlau et al., 2001). Internet-based surveys are in vogue – especially those conducted via the Web in particular – primarily because of three assumptions: (a) Web surveys are much cheaper to conduct; (b) Web surveys are faster; and, (c) combined with other survey modes, Web surveys yield a higher response rate than the other survey modes by themselves. That is, the usual naïve generalization about Internet-based surveys is that they can be conducted faster, better, cheaper, and easier than surveys conducted via conventional methods (Schonlau et al., 2002).

In the case of the present research, online survey is chosen as one of the means for conducting an investigation since the selected sample population can be dalits and non-dalits who make use of internet either for sharing dalit issues or for their activism.

The online survey questionnaire was the subject of a pilot study before being revised and administered. The online survey questionnaire aimed to investigate the usage of internet as an alternative media by Dalits and non-Dalits who are interested in socially excluded population in India and to find out the communication pattern in the cyberspace.

This method has been used in a variety of systematic studies (Couper, Blair, & Triplett, 1999) and found to be an acceptable methodology (Solomon, 2001). However, there is a possibility of methodological bias in online surveys. For instance, a majority of people in India have no Internet access or, in countries with high Internet/computer access, there are many people who do not use the Internet. In the case of Dalits in India, we saw in the review of related literature, majority of the Dalits are illiterate and all those who are
educated do not have the access to internet. Thus, we find a very least number of educated Dalits making use of internet and the number of non-dalits who use internet for Dalit activism are also very less in number (Tirumal, 2009). In the pilot study, it was observed that the respondent rate was slow and efforts were made to increase the response rate through various ways.

3.10 Procedure for the Online Survey

An online survey questionnaire was developed with the help of Google Docs, free Google software for creating online survey. Since the respondents were unknown, the task was first to identify the respondents found online. So, a search was made with the help of Google search engine to identify Dalits’ blogs, websites and forums through which the respondents could be reached. The pilot study was of great help in identifying the respondents. The key words used for the search were “Dalits, Scheduled Caste, Adi Dravida, Oppressed people, lower castes, untouchables, Ambedkar, caste system, Parayar and Varna”. A search was again made in the social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter using the same key words aforementioned. The URL link along with an introduction of the researcher and the research was posted in all the Dalit related blogs, websites, forums, face book and twitter. Besides, the URL link to the questionnaire was provided to the participants via email. The list of emails was obtained from the websites of Dalit centers and Ambedkar studies center in and around India.

It has also been found that online surveys have significantly lower response rates (Lamias, 2001). Thus, a variety of approaches have been utilized to increase response rates, including pre-notification with personalized covering letters and follow-up reminders for the Questionnaires (Solomon, 2001). Keeping these points in mind, the online survey was
circulated and kept open for the respondents to answer the survey for the period of four months.

3.11 Participants of Online Survey

Respondents of the structured questionnaire were identified based on their presence and involvement in internet in talking and responding Dalit related issues. They were selected from Blogs, Dalit internet forums and groups and social networking sites like Facebook. Purposive sampling was adopted to choose the respondents for the study as the researcher’s motivation was only to select the respondents who converse Dalit related issues in the internet. As the researchers’ core problem is to find out whether Indian Dalit blogs and web portals could form an alternative media through which the voice of Dalit can be articulated, structured questionnaire was prepared keeping in mind Bailey’s et al., (2008) four approaches to alternative media and the collected review of literature.

3.12 Pilot Study

The researcher initially conducted a pilot study of a Dalit website and a blog to test the suitability of the population, sample, timeframe, coding schedule and coding manual before commencing with the actual study. Thus, the researcher opted www.roundtableindia.co.in and www.uplifthem.blogspot.in to conduct a pilot study. The researcher chose the website and the blogs based it’s on the regular updation. The sampling and coding were changed as a result of the pilot study. The pilot study, conducted in October 2011, was crucial for the researcher to decide on the sampling size and the duration of the survey and to help draft the coding categories for the coding manual. The pilot study also helped to include certain variables such as link to social networking sites – Facebook and twitter, apart from the variables from the conceptual framework of Bailey’s et al., (2008)
alternative media theory. The necessary amendments were made to the coding schedule and coding manual upon completion of the pilot study and the Intercoder reliability test.

3.13 In-Depth Interview

The qualitative methodology of in-depth interview is most often used to gain deeper insight into issues identified in the focus groups (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). In-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Interviewing is described as “one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow humans” (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

In in-depth interview the participants are able to discuss feelings or belief about the subject of interests and provide a more response (Davis, 2000). Besides, the in-depth interviews are very much useful for exploratory research (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). In-depth interviews provide the opportunity to be comfortable about being candid in their opinions and often the data received through in-depth interviews have depth and comprehensiveness (Hair et al. 2003).

In the current study, one of the research methods opted is the qualitative analysis of in-depth interview. In the in-depth interview with the key informants are the Dalit activists, who utilize internet for their activism. Totally ten Dalit activists were chosen to conduct the in-depth interview. Convenience sampling method was adopted in choosing the Dalit activist who could form the basis for the in-depth interview. Questions that were framed for the Dalit activists involved in a sequence of open-ended questions based on review of literature. The participants were from academics as well as social activist who actively
participate and make use of internet for their activism. The researcher took prior appointment from the interviewee and conducted a face to face interview. The in-depth interview could provide a deeper understanding of Dalit activists’ usage of internet such as websites and blogs as the means of giving them the space to discuss and raise questions to the public and to the government on Dalit issues. The in-depth interview will also provide insight as to Dalit websites and blogs will fall into the purview of Bailey et al., (2008) conceptual framework of alternative media.

3.14 Procedure

As already mentioned in the limitations of the research, the researcher could do interview only with ten participant. So, each of the ten participants were contacted by phone or email inviting their participation in the interview sessions. Participants agreeing to be interviewed were allowed to choose the interview venue and time. The objective of the interview was explained together with a declaration of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were questioned about their first experience with Dalit websites, reasons for accessing the websites and blogs, attitude of the mainstream media and the potentials of Dalit websites and blogs. The researcher’s summary of the recorded transcript was checked for accuracy with each participant as soon as possible after the interview concluded.

3.15 Instruments

Structured open-ended questions were constructed in relation to the online survey findings. The questions were based the Bailey’s et al., conceptual framework of alternative media as it has been employed in online survey and content analysis. (Appendix III)
3.16 Participants of the In-depth Interview

In addition to this, in-depth interviews were conducted with Dalit activists and academicians as a qualitative method to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of Dalit websites and blogs in enhancing democratic practices. The researcher would like to note that the content analysis was an additional method to understand more about the concept of Dalit websites and blogs an alternative media to Dalits. Most of the views which were found in online survey and content analysis were reflected in the in-depth interview. So the in-depth interview formed as an additional supporting data to the proposed conceptual frame work.

3.17 Profile of Participants of the In-depth Interview

3.17.1 Hugo Gorringe

Hugo Gorringe is a senior lecturer in Sociology, University of Edinburgh and author of 'Untouchable Citizens: The Dalit Panthers and Democratisation of Tamilnadu' (Sage 2005) and articles on protest policing, violence and identity politics. His research in India focused on the socio-political mobilisation of Dalits (ex-Untouchables) and their struggle to achieve equality and deepen Indian democracy. In his book on Untouchable Citizens which explores the interplay between Dalit movements and Democratisation in South India. I have also written on issues pertaining to collective violence, identity politics and the construction and negotiation of social space. He has been writing about Dalit issues in online since 2000.

3.17.2 Michael Collins

He is a research scholar who is currently pursuing his doctorate from Department of South Asia Studies, University of Pennsylvania, USA. His research is on Dalit Political perspective. His are of interest includes Modern South Asia, Political Anthropology,
Contemporary History and Politics of South India, Anthropology of Space, Dalit and Muslim Social Movements and Political Parties and Popular Politics and Public Culture. His blog http://www.plcflash.wordpress.com provides a forum to read and discuss contemporary Tamil political writings and speeches. He has also translated some of the speeches of Thol. Thirumavalavan, is Dalit activist, Member of Parliament and the current President of the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, a Dalit political party in the state of Tamil Nadu. He also takes the credit for translating his speeches in the same spirit and vigor with which the speech was delivered.

3.17.3 D. Ravikumar

D.Ravikumar, well-known Dalit intellectual, poet, columnist, and former legislator, is founder/editor of Navayana Publishing House. He is widely recognized as being instrumental in retrieving Dalit history in Tamil Nadu. Over the years, he has contributed to Indian Express, Pioneer, Seminar, and The Hindu and is well known as a Columnist in BBC (Tamil).

3.17.4 Stalin Rajangam

Stalin Rajangam is a Dalit intellectual and writer and has authored a number of books. He is currently teaching at the American College, Madurai.

3.17.5 Anbuselvam

Anbuselvam is a Writer and Research Scholar of Dalit History, Dalit Culture and Dalit Religion. After working for 12 years in the faculty of Dalit Resource Centre and Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, he is involved and very closely associated with all Dalit Movements working towards Dalit Integration in Tamilnadu.
3.17.6 V.Mathimaran

V.Mathimaran is a Dalit writer and has authored a number of books. His writings are mostly about Ambedkar and Periyar. He is also an active blogger since 2007 and has contributed a lot in online in his blogs about Dalit issues.

3.17.7 Kuffir Nalgundwar

Kuffir Nalgundawar is a Dalit committed activist and a member of the www.roundtableindia.co.in, an active Dalit website.

3.17.8 Amol Nirmala Waman

Sr. Software Developer by profession he is actively involved in Dalit upliftment. He is also the owner the website www.navayan.com.

3.17.9 Dr.Kaseva Kumar

He is an active blogger since 2006 and he is moderator of the blog named http://untouchablespring.blogspot.in. He is also teaching Philosophy at Pondicherry University. He has authored a couple of books Dalit literature and published a number of research articles on Dalit issues.

3.17.10 Dr. V. Rathna Mala

She is an assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication at Mizoram University. She has done her doctoral thesis on Dalits issues and the Tamil press. She has published many research articles on Dalit issues.

3.18 Summary

This study adopts a critical approach in an attempt to understand the articulation in Dalit websites and blogs as an alternative media for Dalit community. In order to find out this, four approaches of alternative media proposed by Bailey’s et al., (2008) was adopted as
the conceptual framework. A content analysis of the Dalit blogs, online survey and in-depth interview were conducted which ultimately agreed that Dalit websites and blog do form an alternative media for Dalits.