CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the summary of the findings of the research study conducted at four districts of Karnataka namely Bangalore, Mysore, Hubli-Dharwad and Mangalore. This chapter, therefore, intends to present the summary and consolidate the major findings of the study.

New media have emerged as a powerful media of communication. The drastic, progressive changes in the modern media have resulted in the obvious exponential growth of technology and communication structures worldwide. With the rapid growth in the emergent media technology including the Internet, interactive television networks, and multimedia information services, many proponents of new media stress on enhancing their potential to increase interactive mass media, entertainment, commerce, and education.

On the one hand, tech-savvy netizens and new media enthusiasts harp about the right to free speech and privacy and on the other hand the moral police and policy makers seem to be hell-bent on putting systems in place to preserve the democratic institutions and culture from the apparent new media overkill. This is seemingly because of access to and use of digital media technologies such as Personal Computers (PCs), the Internet, computer games, mobile telephones, etc., have become part and parcel of everyday life in the world community. The major findings and recommendations of the study are the following.
5.1. Major Findings

5.1.1. Part- A- Demographic Features

Demographic features deal with the questionnaire containing questions pertaining to the profile of the sample. It explains in detail the respondents’ age, gender, education, occupation, religion and family income. The results of the study are summarized as following:

1. The sample consists of 56.1% of males and 43.9% of females who have access to Internet and mobile phones.

2. The study found that majority of the respondents (69.8%) are in the age groups of 18-24 years of age, 18.2% are 45-54 years age group and 1.7% of respondents are 55 years and above.

3. It is evident that comparatively the younger generation is more exposed to Internet and mobile phones than the adults. The reasons could be as these two new media set firm foot in India only after 1990s, the adults had limited exposure to these new media. The tariff of Internet and mobile become cheaper since five years making the younger generation to opt for it easily. Further 25% of the Indian population is below 25 years who are tech-savvy and therefore are familiar with net surfing, mobile phones and other such devices.

4. The study found that a vast majority of the respondents (89.9%) are graduates and post-graduates. Comparatively these graduates and post-graduates use Internet and own mobile phones more than those with less education owing to age, economic factors and easy access to Internet.

5. The study indicates that the sample consists of 66.9% of Hindus, 22.1% of the respondents Christians, 9% of Muslims and 2% belonging to other religion.

6. Among respondents, graduate and post-graduates are more in number in all the religious categories. The exposure to new media is high among the graduates and post-graduates irrespective of the religion.

7. The study found that the respondents represent higher as well as middle income families. Around 28% of the sample belongs to lower middle class and 23.7% belongs to upper middle class categories denoting an adequate representation of all income categories.
8. The youth within the age group of 18 and 24 constitute the largest number irrespective of the income group to which they belong.

9. The study illustrated that most of the respondents belong to the younger age group of 18-24 which constitutes more than 69.8% of the total, where both male and female respondents are almost equal in number. However, the male respondents in older age groups are more in number compared to female respondents.

10. The study found that graduates and post graduates under the age group of 18-24 constitute the maximum number among the respondents. Among the 801 who responded to the survey, 559 are youth belonging to the age group of 18-24. It clearly illustrates that the younger the age and higher the qualification, the higher is their exposure to new media. It clearly indicates that the student community is more exposed to Internet and mobile phone compared to the other classes. The youth surf Net quite often either for academic purpose or for personal communication.

11. The study illustrates that education wise both the genders were equally represented with a minimal margin. This is a healthy development that the respondents of both genders who are graduates and post-graduates are almost equally exposed to Internet and mobile phone.

12. The study revealed that the lesser the age the higher the occupation, the higher the age the lesser the occupation. It is interesting to note that even the maximum number of employed respondents belong to the age group of 18-24.

13. The students and employed people are more exposed to Internet and mobile phone than other the classes.
5.1.2. Part- B- Media Exposure of the Sample

Section –B of the questionnaire contains questions pertaining to media habits (newspaper, magazine, radio, TV, computer/internet and mobile phone) and the extent to which the respondents are exposed to these media. An analysis of the data under this section has revealed the following results:

1. There is no significant relation between age and newspaper reading which means irrespective of age everybody reads newspaper with few exceptions. Therefore, the age of the reader need not necessarily come in the way of newspaper and magazine reading.

2. Television is watched by everyone irrespective of age unlike radio which is being listened to more by youngsters than adults. And there is no age bar when it comes to the usage of mobile phones.

3. There is a correlation between age and listening to the radio, age and using computer, and age and surfing Internet both at home and office.

4. There is a significant relation between education and the use of personal mobile phone, surfing Internet at the office, Internet at home, using computer, reading magazines and newspapers by the respondents.

5. There is a no significant relation between education and watching TV. Both literates and illiterates watch TV.

6. The study illustrates that there is significant relation between family income and newspaper reading. The respondents in the income group between Rs. 5001-10,000 and Rs. 30,001 and above have the maximum number of readers. However, the listenership of radio and the viewership of TV are independent of family income, says the study.

7. The availability of different media like newspaper at home has significant relation to media exposure.

8. Availability of different media at home has no significant relationship to media exposure (Watching TV and listening to the radio).
5.1.3. Part-C - Internet Exposure

1. There is no significant relation between gender and surfing Internet. Though men surf internet slightly more than women, the difference between the two is negligible.

2. The study supports the common notion that educated class is more exposed to Internet than other users. Similarly, people from high income group are more exposed to internet than other users.

3. The study shows that respondents exposed to conventional media are also exposed to internet.

4. The study states that there is a significant relation between Internet exposure and the frequency of surfing Internet.

5. It is interesting to note that Internet is not used primarily for entertainment, but is used for educational purpose but not necessarily as a primary source.

6. The study shows Internet is considered as the primary and reliable source of information but Internet is not used widely for business and trade.

7. The study upholds the fact that Internet is widely used primarily to send e-mail by youth than by older adults.

8. The study substantiates the notion that Internet saves time of the users to a great extent.

9. It can be understood by the study that students use Internet to a great extent than others and majority of the young Internet users indulge in chatting than adult users.
5.1.4. Part-D-Socio-Cultural Impact

1. The research indicates that Internet has not brought any noticeable behavioral changes among the respondents.

2. The research could not gather any apparent evidence to prove that the use of Internet has caused sociological changes among its users and Internet has contributed to the overall development of its users.

3. The study reveals that Social networking has become part and parcel of everyday life, but at the same time Internet users are apprehensive of posting personal/private information on social networking sites.

4. The research study did not come across any victim of “cyber bully” or harassment among the respondents.

5. Though blogging has become quite popular, the present research could not find a high level of interest in Blogging among the respondents.

6. The researcher did not come across any internet addict among the respondents. However, the research found that the youth respondents tend to indulge in surfing the Internet more than the adults.

7. Almost a third of the respondents (31%) confirmed that they would feel ‘completely lost’ and ‘isolated’ if they mislaid their mobile phone.

8. The present study has revealed the following:

   - There is a considerable divide between computer literates and computer illiterates.
   - Internet does influence the language proficiency of its users.
   - Internet does enhance the knowledge of its users.
   - Internet has become an apparent necessity in the modern information era.
5.1.5. Part-E-Mobile Phone Exposure

1. The study found that Mobile phones have become cheaper and affordable.
2. Young people own or use mobile phone more than adults.
3. There is a significant relation between occupation and the use of mobile phones.
4. Mobile phones do not seem to confer social status to its users, reveals the data.
5. The study shows there is significant relation between owning mobile phone and income. The higher the income the greater the number of mobile phone users.
6. The use of mobile phones so far has not caused noticeable sociological changes, attitudinal or behavioral changes among the respondents who are internet users (Netizens). However, the study shows that mobile phone creates a feeling of gratification among its users.
7. Sending messages through mobile phones has not affected the language capability of its users.
8. The study makes interesting revelations that the mobile phones have no apparent impact on the culture of its users.
9. The present study reveals the following:
   • Mobile phones do not seem to help the respondents to combat loneliness.
   • Mobile phones do not seem to create a sense of security.
   • Mobile phones do not seem to create a sense of identity and belongingness.
   • Mobile phones do not seem to help the respondents in developing intimacy with complementary.
   • The use of mobile phones does not seem to add to the efficiency of the respondents in professional performance.
5.2. Inferences and Implications of the Study

Media impacts many facets of our daily life. It affects our thoughts, feelings and emotions, sometimes it affects our total behavior. The goal of most communication researches is oriented to explain the impact of mass communication. Media consumption pattern attitude towards media content or effect of media has on individual and society has been the primary focus of such research.

The study in general reveals that while there is significant relation between age and gender, there is no significant relation between education and gender. Though education is always associated with gender in our country, this gender bias was absent among the respondents chosen for the study. Majority of the respondents were students and belonged to age group of 18 to 24, because it is a known fact that, those who are exposed to new media are youth.

Though internet has grown exponentially in India, surprisingly access to internet among the respondents is very limited. While newspapers and television rule the roost, radio and magazine follow suit. But computers are still a far cry.

There is no significant relation between age and newspaper, magazine reading and television viewing. But there is a significant relation between age and exposure to computers. There is no age bar when it comes to the usage of mobile phones.

New media (Internet and mobile phone) are considered to be the marvels of the twentieth century. Exposure to both media is high among the younger generation. Mobile phone has an edge over internet.

The data revealed that people have embraced Internet as one among mass media and mobile phone as a necessary gadget in their day-to-day life. As the Internet continues to expand globally, the understanding of the micro-level connections between culture and online interaction is vital from a scientific perspective. Thus the implication of the study should be beneficial to both the media and its users. Understanding the implication would mean knowing how audience reacts to the new media on one hand and what new media provides to the audience on the other hand.
The study shows that youth are more exposed to new media especially internet, while mobile phone attract everyone, irrespective of age.

The study has shown the preference given to surf internet is to get information is itself astounding. This preference is followed by sending email and chatting. Internet is not a prioritized medium for entertainment and education.

The research also reveals that though Internet has made life easy by giving access to e-banking, ticket booking, paying bills, searching jobs etc, people have not taken these benefits seriously. Although majority of the respondents feel Internet has brought changes in life, they deny that it has influenced their behavior, appearance, attitude, and language or dressing style. The respondents also said that their daily habits are not affected by Internet. Some of the studies conducted in western countries have proved that Internet has negative impact on cyber buffs, like making them cyber addict, reducing social contacts with friends and relatives, reducing reading habits, reducing radio listening and television viewing, making the users lazy, distracting their professional environment and causing depression. But the research data has proved all these wrong.

When the data is analyzed, for the other effects of Internet on its users, except that Internet has helped them in increasing knowledge and giving a feeling of connected (Globalization) it plays minimal role in improving their economic status, increasing self confidence, improving status in friends’ circle, increasing social contact and helping in personality development. According to the study, Internet has no bearing on its users except that it increases knowledge.

The study has revealed some of the interesting features. Though many of the respondents are members of social networking sites, they are afraid of uploading personal information on these sites. They suspect the confidentiality of these sites and are apprehensive that their personal information could be misused. But majority of them believe the information what is available on the net is reliable.

Writing blogs is not a favored itinerary of the respondents but chatting is one. Still chatting and sending email among these respondents is not as high as in western countries.
Few studies conducted in the west like a new survey released by the Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society. The study was claimed to show that the “Internet causes social isolation and increases workload” has revealed that youth are getting addicted to internet which results in depression, fatigue and isolation. But our study proves these wrong, because majority of the respondents say they are not addicted to internet. Majority of the respondents believe that internet has not made them stranger to their family and friends and they do not feel frustrated or socially paralyzed when they don’t use the same. It is interesting to note that 91% of them are not the victims of cyber harassment or cyber bulling.

The study reveals that Internet has become a necessity in the modern era and one feels connected in the world due to Internet. Many people felt, that there is a wide gap between computer literates and illiterates, and computer illiterates develop a kind of inferiority complex.

The survey into the social impact that mobile phones are having on today’s society has identified some extremely interesting trends. Almost a third of respondents (31 per cent) confirmed they would feel ‘completely lost’ and ‘isolated’ if they mislaid their mobile phone, with a further 25 per cent stating it would have a major impact on their social life and would make them feel out of touch or cut off from friends and family.

Exposure to mobile phone is comparatively higher to Internet. The study helps to understand the boom in mobile phone market in India. It is interesting to note that while 88% of the respondents own mobile phone, the number of mobile phones within the family vary from 1-6. A good number of respondents felt owning or maintaining a mobile phone is not expensive these days, on an average they spend nearly Rs 300 per month.

While mobile phones come with multiple features nowadays, yet majority of them use mobile phones mainly for oral communication and to send SMS. On an average, majority of the respondents spend more than 30 minutes per day on mobile phones.

The common belief is that SMS has spoilt the language of its users, especially the youth. But the respondents disagree with this fact. At the same time it is heartening to note respondents do not buy popular mobile phone just to show-off in the society.
The study showed that mobile phone has not brought significant change in the lives of the people. Though 45% of the respondents agree that mobile phone has brought change in their life to some extent, but they disagree that because of mobile phone their position in the society has been elevated. Their personal behavior or their dressing style has not been affected by the usage of mobile phone. But mobile phone has helped in improving their communication skills and has increased friends’ circle.

It can be deciphered from the study that mobile phone has not changed their way of life. Though it has been accepted mobile phone as a necessary communication medium which has made their life smoother and easier but it has not brought changes in culture of the respondents, who are representing the four districts of Karnataka.

New media, both Internet and mobile phone, have become a necessity rather than a luxury or fashion. New media have failed to penetrate deep enough to alter the social or cultural life of a person. New media might have affected the people collectively but to a very limited extent individually. But both Internet and mobile phone are inevitable now as they seem to act as companions.

Internet has shrunk the world into a global village as the respondents have felt they are connected to one another. It is a prime source of information to its users contributing to the enhancement of knowledge. Mobile phone is placed in a very favorable situation- first, as a medium of communication; second, its increased availability and reach; third, a necessary device with multiple features.
5.3. Suggestions and Recommendations

The present research brings to light the significant differences among the respondents with regard to their exposure to new media, perception and attitude and the impact of the new media.

Specifically, the results of the study challenges the popular belief that internet creates cyber addicts, who lead themselves to depression and loneliness. The results of the study make a radical departure from the popular belief that mobile phones draw youth away from their family and their relatives. Based on the findings and the major indicators of the study the following suggestions and recommendations are enumerated.

- Studies in the form of surveys can be conducted taking different groups of audience to develop a socio-psychographic profile of audience.
- Studies on factors affecting new media consumption and gratifications can be taken up to understand how these media are affecting the people of Karnataka.
- Specific audience groups like women, youth, urban and rural population can be studied in depth to understand their perception and attitude towards the new media.
- There is extensive scope to study the growth and development of the new media in Karnataka or India in the existing political scenario where blogging and phone tapping have led to many controversies.
- There is extensive scope to study the growth and development of new media in Karnataka or India in the existing political scenario where there is a huge hue and cry constantly being made to impose censorship on some of the social networking sites after the ‘curious case of Vinay Rai’.
- There is extensive scope to study the economic impact of new media on its users.
- Extensive studies could be taken up separately on various purposes of internet-like study on E-banking, E-Commerce, online news coverage, chatting and emailing, cyber crimes and cyber addiction, social networking and blogging and on mobile phones as an Inter- personal medium of communication.
- Extensive studies can be taken up on Internet and mobile phones separately for a better understanding of the impact on its users.
• Sociologists need to study the Internet more actively and, particularly, to synthesize research findings on individual user behavior with macroscopic analyses of institutional and political-economic factors that constrain that behavior.

• There is extensive scope to study the Psychological, Physiological impact of mobile phone on its users.

• There is extensive scope to study both the positive and negative effects of Internet and Mobile phones individually and separately.

• In the context of the rapid advancement of new age technologies, there is extensive scope to study on the convergence of the new media and their ability to multitask - mobile Internet, mobile social networking, etc.