ABSTRACT

The current research is a virtual ethnography among the Muslim community of Mysore. Virtual ethnography aims to adapt traditional principles of ethnography in the new hybrid social space which is emerged by the advent and proliferation of the Internet. The main effort in this study was to collect a combination of online and offline data that together portrait the digital context among Muslims of Mysore, how they conceptualize the Internet, how they use the Internet and how online activities of Muslims are embedded on the context of their daily lives.

These objectives imposed several methodological challenges like how to integrate online and offline research strategies, how to clarify the boundaries of “the field” in a “multi-sited” research and how to study the Internet, when the Internet at the same time was the topic of study, the social space where the research was conducted and as the data collection tool.

Such as any other ethnographic study, by the nature, this study was a qualitative research, with descriptive approach. The fieldwork was conducted in during three years from 2011 to 2014 on both, “virtual space” as well as “real world”. The real world fieldwork was conducted on Mysore city and more precisely, on several areas on Mysore city where Muslims live.

In this study, the online context among Muslims of Mysore have been described through investigating Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore, the deep digital divide in the community, as well as motivations and barriers of Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore. These discussions are complemented with discussions about patterns of accessing to the Internet among Muslims of Mysore which deals with popularity of different types of Internet connections, devices that they use to have access to the Internet, places of Internet access, and monthly charges of Internet access as well as regularity of Internet usage.

In this study, several online experiences and online habits of Muslims of Mysore are discussed on the framework of four major themes of online activities including online communication, online entertainment, online learning and online shopping.