

New Media and Culture : Exploration of a state of Hybridity

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Abstract

With the burgeoning of technology enabled communication, interactional transactions have become heavily dependent and concentric upon webbed web. New communication networks empowered with digital technologies and internet are foremost tools which have enabled the enterprise of completely new representation of information production and dissemination, cultural production, management and control. In this era of globalization transformation in cultures is often equated as the hybridization. It has been essentially a post colonial term with rare occasions of broad discussion. The notions globalization and hybridity are always inextricably connected, in terms of ambiguity, literally and metaphorically, explanatory and descriptive. The transformations in Indian culture and society have been fueled by both endogenous as well as exogenous processes. The present paper is an attempt to trace hybridity of culture through prisms of New Media.

KEYWORDS : NEW MEDIA, CULTURE, HYBRIDITY, HYBRIDISATION OF CULTURE, CULTURAL HYBRIDISATION,

1. Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between virtual and real these days. With the burgeoning of technology enabled communication, interactional transactions have become heavily dependent and concentric upon webbed web. Be it social, political or cultural- every aspect of contemporary human sustenance has gone for a toss and a state of interweavements has been attained. In the present day gamut of digital communication, online tools, applications and technologies have become part and parcel of everyday affairs and even more so in the realms of communication.

It is quite obvious that new communication networks empowered with digital technologies and internet are foremost tools which have enabled the enterprise of completely new representation of information production and dissemination, cultural production, management and control. Lindgren (2013)

India being a country, rich in ideals and ideologies, values and culture, with the explosion of internet driven New Media in the century, the Indian society has witnessed a deep cultural penetration or 'invasion' of culture of other societies. The impact of this virtual medium has become so deep rooted in peoples' lives that in attendance, it is very much possible that it might have a profound effect on traditional culture and there is ample scope left for more. How peoples' insight of looking at their lives have changed after the emergence of this new medium in the country is quite interesting to be eligible for research. In this river valley also there is a considerable population which is exposed to an unprecedented infiltration of New Media technology or applications, and the people prefer accessing them regularly. The study is conducted with a view to see if the invasion of New Media has imbibed users to the things that are propagated through its contents in their own lives or youth just use New Media as a leisure activity.

Culture has a deep and wide role to play in one's life. The custom and cultural models of India revived back in India due to their portrayal in the traditional and old genres of media. Even the invasion of internet driven New Media in our day-to-day lives has resulted into to an imbalance between reality and traditional customs. Dramatised cultural implications as propagated by New Media might have a silent or public influence on peoples' culture, that too in a dramatic way.

Culture is, according to some popular schools of thought, 'arts' and something relating to the domain of fashion while some other schools of thought define culture as life itself. James Carey (2003), a renowned communication scholar, tried to capture the expansive dimensions of culture in his book "A Cultural Approach to Communication".

Carey deliberated as:

"We create, express, and convey our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality through the construction of a variety of symbol systems: art, science, journalism, religion, common sense, mythology. How do we do this? What are the differences between these forms? What are the historical and comparative variations in them? How do changes in communication technology influence what we can concretely create and apprehend? How do groups in society struggle over the definition of what is real?" (Carey, J. 2002)

Another prominent scholar in the realms of culture who also happened to be an Anthropologist, Clifford Geertz's definition of culture is: "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (Asad,1983). To explain this idea- knowledge which is transmitted across the timeline is nothing but culture. Culture is nothing but various approaches towards leading life which are articulated through a varied array of symbols. Velkley (2002) explained the concept of "culture" akin to the development of the soul or mind. Culture acquired its modern, contemporary and recent meaning through writings of German scholars in the Eighteenth Century.

Although not explicitly expressed, the most of such writings indicated a see-saw relationship between "culture" and "civilization". Two major connotation of culture that emerged from this period in time were: culture as the deep rooted folk entity possessing a distinctive self, and culture as development of defiance or liberated individualism. The first import here leads in contemporary usage of the term "culture," even though the second meaning offers a significant context in assessing what people expect culture to achieve, for example liberated "expression" of the distinctive or "true" self.

There are varied schools of thought defining culture of community or race and the list of definitions never gets all inclusive. But generally, we refer culture as 'the way people of an area lead their life'. More specifically, the entities which define culture and its manifesto are the cultural indicators like languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food, customs and every other thing has a different appearance location wise within boundaries of a nation.

The dawn of New Media led applications and their subsequent boom, off late has influenced most of it appreciably. Be it food, be it apparels or other associated characteristics of culture, New Media have altered age old beliefs, customs, traditions and behaviour.

2. Exploring Hybridity

The concept of hybridity is in debate since Homi Bhabha (1994) authored his influential work *The Location of Culture*. In this era of globalization transformation in cultures is often equated as the hybridization. It has been essentially a post colonial term with rare occasions of broad discussion.

The notion of hybridity has deep roots with its counterpart: the purity. Hybridity can only be traced when purity is acknowledged. Transcending boundaries can only be aspired when existing boundaries are accepted, conforming to the subsistence of which is to be transcended. Every discipline which debates on hybridity has to define what it perceives to be pure at the first place. If there is nothing pure, the notion of hybridity becomes redundant. Ideologically, individuals and groups may perceive something as pure however epistemologically the idea of purity is never a useful term. Epistemologically purity has deep connections with racism and racial intolerance (Collins, 1998). For long, power structures have used the notion of purity as a tool for suppression.

2.1 Hybridity: metaphor and reality

The notions globalization and hybridity are always inextricably connected, in terms of ambiguity, literally and metaphorically, explanatory and descriptive. Both these terms are

popular across disciplines and efforts should be there to keep these seemingly merging concepts distinct for examination. Some serious questions that scholars pose are as: what cannot be called as globalization and when it started? In case hybridity, the question is which culture is san hybridity or whether original culture existed, ever?

The phenomena of cultural borrowing and cultural diversity are not exclusively restricted to the notion of 'modernity'. We should also be mindful of the fact that if we associate Westernisation and modernization with globalization then we are losing on the fact that non-West cultures also have impact on the West. Thus we tend to overestimate the homogenous nature of Western culture(s). Orient cultures have influenced Europe till the 14th century and Western Hegemony is a 19th century phenomenon. Cultural diversity and ethnic diversity has been a global and historic phenomenon, which can even be traced in pre-industrial simple societies.

History is full with examples of plural societies namely the ottoman Empire, the Roman Empire, caste system in India to cite a few. Post colonial instances of cultural pluralism are Germany, Singapore, USA, Canada etc. Cultural exchanges have been a prominent feature in Western History, between Muslim and Jewish during Renaissance, between Protestants and Catholics during the course of Reform and many others.

It is pertinent to mention here the thought-provoking essay on Cultural hybridization by Peter Burke (2009). Despite written from an anthropological angle this essay ably captures the responses and situations of cultural contact which are hybrid in nature.

2.2 Hybridity and Indian Nation

The Indian nation is hybrid state – it deviates from its Western counterparts “in the importance it accords to ‘pre-modern’ political forms . . . because they express different cultural values and traditions that form part of the cultural heritage.” (Mitra 1990b, 6). Indian nation has been a hybrid State since its beginning as the nation never had notions of multilingualism as people here have never been monolingual. The litterateurs here have been writing in various languages (The Hindu, 2015).

Indian society has been a complex one. Modern Indian society has been a result of the interaction between social and cultural elements and also the multifaceted Indian tradition which has now transformed into a global entity now. Mutual sense of integration and co-existence has made this

civilization a unique experience which is unparalleled in the world. Indian nation has been a receiver of external influences and linkages and a notion of globalization has always been active. Migration and immigration has been a crucial agent in molding the population, civilization, culture and society. Instead of enormous diversity in culture there is increasing cultural convergence because of adaptive requirements on the part of people to deal with the emerging equations. In context of India, the dynamics of society and culture is an extremely intricate phenomenon. The transformations in Indian culture and society have been fueled by both endogenous as well as exogenous processes. Under the influences of modern West, Socio-cultural transformation in India started making its presence felt since the Nineteenth Century and this influence of West have had significant impact on county's culture and societal dynamics. Modernization both in terms of technology and culture were inducted into traditional Indian society came from West. In 20th century, Indian nation has also experienced powerful forces globalization too. Foreign groups like the Portuguese, the Arabs and the likes had close ties with Indian with regard to trades, business and other transactions. At a later stage, Euro-Americans and British influence made significant impact on Indian society. The transformation in Indian society can be described as a heterogeneous progression which triggered the present day globalization in this subcontinent. In this context a well versed idea regarding both Western culture and traditional Indian culture is essential to comprehend further discourse.

The cultural ethos in Indian society has been highly traditional compared to Western cultures wherein cultural values are strongly modern with reference to idealism, rationalism and utilitarianism. Western cultures also boasts of elements of universalism and egalitarianism dissimilar to that of Indian culture which values of holism and hierarchy. Western cultures pursue historicity in context of change compared to Indian notion of continuity and change. Western culture values individualistic approach against collective approach of Indian culture. Indian nation has been an example of cultural accommodation and synthesis between distinct culture in lieu of conflicts and contradictions. Traditional cultural institutions in India and more specifically religion have been a crucial agent in bringing about accommodation and adaptation between indigenous local and emerging global forces. Globalization has made significant impact on culture which is often complex to comprehend. The implications of globalization has both been hailed and criticized. The affluent and middle class sections have been the most benefitted

lot out of globalization while periphery communities have become more marginalized due to globalization.

Globalization has not only touched upon people's lives but has also influenced Indian culture and society. Globalization of cultures has some unique characteristics. Global elements of culture have made appreciable impact on Indian people and consequently Indian elements of culture have spread globally. Consumerism, which has never been a part of traditional Indian society, has made inroads in the Indian society after globalization. Consumer goods are in high demand among elite and middle class Indians which together make up one third of the total population. The media also is spreading and popularizing a culture of consumerism.

Indian youth today is highly aware about changing fashion trends and multinationals and big brands are overtly passing on this consciousness via models and fashion shows published through the accepted channels of media. Indian cities, towns and urban centers today house ever increasing numbers of shopping malls and affluent sections of society see them as preferred buying destinations. Also shifts in patterns of entertainment and leisure activities have undergone alteration in recent times. The notion of socializing has undergone multifaceted shifts. Mass culture and popular culture has become dominant images and visuals across varied platforms of media. New age promotions and advertisements, irrespective of the medium through which they are rolled out, have turned out to be very influential in the realm of culture. These new age promotions are influencing masses specially the younger generation. Most of contents in Indian media and entertainment landscape are far away from the real values of Indian society and culture. Promotion of newer elements of culture as perceived by media have influenced Indian notion of culture. The unimaginable growth in computer and IT industry has made internet communication accessible to a sizeable population of Indians for their varied aspirations and need. With the exponential rise in numbers of Smart phones, communication habits and processes of the people have also shifted prior bases.

Also noteworthy transformation in the arena of knowledge and education system has been noticed. This present-day worldwide epoch is also recognized as the age of information and knowledge. However, professionalism and business mentality have eclipsed the entire business of education.

A number of classical and traditional course and subjects have been discarded as out dated unappealing. Specifically the male learners are going for professional degrees eyeing for jobs,

wealth and glamour. Meritorious students are running after management and technical courses. It is pertinent to mention that class and gender discrimination is often noticeable in the sphere of education. It can be seen that female learners are increasingly going for social science and humanities compared to boys pursuing management and technical courses. It can also be observed that the research works are downgraded and are almost of no use to the masses. Applied and action research are prioritized in planning and curriculum of education aimed at catering the needs of commercialization and industrialization. In last few decades privatization of education in the country has increased their by contributing a business platform for education

The arena of sports and games is also affected by the forces of globalization. Local and indigenous games have vanished and are replaced by big money sports like cricket. The ensuing growth of Indian tourism industry can be credited to globalized market economy. Cultural tourism is a talked about approach for propagation and promotion of indigenous local culture but it can also lead to cultural hybridization. People whose habited are in and around tourist destinations can be seen as influences' of global tourist culture.

The affluent and middleclass have readily embraced Western styles of gifting and gift exchange, branded items as presents in various ceremonies and events have become common customs. Today youths celebrate birthday, anniversary of marriage and other social ceremonies as per Western way of celebration and these Westernized events have emerged to be most significant and note worth the event of today. University and college goers now-a-days celebrate Valentine's Day wherein exchange of gifts are perceived pivotal. Farther more, observation of father's day, teacher's day, mother's day have become immensely accepted where stress is on material gifts rather than emotional responsibilities and feelings.

Terminology of kinship has undergone continual change specifically among the affluent and educated strata of the Indian society. Western ways of addressing the kin have become most popular and common practice among urban classes.

Since time immemorial, Indian nation has been treasured as a land of rich food diversity. However junk food and fast food items have swept the Indian market. Readymade and ready to eat food items have become preferred choose of the masses specially youth. Carbonated drinks and beverages and other branded food items from reputed chains of food have become a rage among the Gen Y. Food habit centered around junk foods is on a rise and it can be said that

globalization has made significant influence upon the food habits, fashion consciousness, methods of celebrations and life style as a whole.

Social and spatial mobility of Indian society have been enhanced by the globalizations and of course emergence New Media. As a result of this, joint family tradition in India has gone for a note worth a remodeling. Customs related the societal institutions like marriage practices have also become modernized. Despite all these transformation, Indian society, its basic character and societal institutions have not altered their basic essence. Association and kinship still today are the curtail pillars of persisting 'collectivism' of Indian societies despite strong effluences of 'individualism'.

Globalization has also anchorage the spreading of cultural elements of Indian society. Computer mediated communications enable the local communities to showcase their cultural practices and enhance their cultural contact with the globe. A modern day trend is cultural entrepreneurship in Indian nation where in entrepreneurs spared, maintain and market the cultural items and resources to the global market. As a consequence of this Indian version food, artworks, handicrafts and other cultural elements have carved a global niche for them. Today indigenous methods of healing medicines, exercise (yoga), songs dances and music have gained enormous popularity and acceptance among global audience. In this world of conflict and restlessness, Indian idea of 'peace' and 'non-violence' are increasingly getting worldwide recognition. Indian Hindi film industry or more popularly Bollywood become one of the greatest revenue generator are contributor in the global entertainment market. These days Indian film artists and experts from other entertainment fields have an attained international acclaim. Another new trend is global or international collaborations wherein artists from different nations come together to create artistic products of grate aesthetic value.

In addition to triggering influences' on cultural traditions and elements, globalization has also reinvented the notion of society and community in India precisely in urban and industrial setups. The rapid growth of mass society devoid of regional, cast, class and ethnic divisions have been out comes of ensuing globalization.

The rise of mass society has enabled the acceptances of mass culture favoring hybridization and homogenization of cultures. The traditional Indian societies are steadily obtaining the features of global societies. In addition a post global societal configuration is slowly but steadily rising among Indian elites and middleclass due to novel modes of social interaction networks,

automated production, convergent communication and technocracy in societal stratification despite the fact that cultural globalization is fairly noticeable in India, still important elements of Indian society, custom and culture persist to coexist with the novel aspects of globalized culture. Influences of globalization of culture are evident in materiality and less overt in societal and religious elements of culture.

Most prominent instance of globalization can be cited as hybridization or Indianization of Western food items. In terms of societal context there is an increasing tendency of modernization of traditions and liberalization on orthodox practices. Today religious occasions have become more festive oriented in Indian nation. A growing trend of compartmentalization of attitudes and behavioral patterns of citizens for partaking in local and global processes to keep the traditions continues, is on a rise. Due to sturdy social and normative stands most of the traditional and indigenous cultural elements of Indian society have the might to preserve their identity and features. It is a significant observation that most of the cultural elements have undergone creative synthesis to adapt with changing circumstances. In addition to this it is an inimitable adaptive process. Many of the elements of cultural have made profound influences at the world arena due to their significance and value in the cotemporary times. The traditional and indigenous Indian institutions namely religion, marriage, relationship, cast and family and also the folk practices continue to delineate the spirit of receptive cultural lives of different groups and communities across the country. The influence of globalized culture can be felt at the surface level of Indian society. These indigenous and traditional institutions and their values as well as norms have the potential of protecting the basic essence of Indian culture and traditions.

It is a fact that traditional Indian culture is not the same as it used to be due to the impact of globalization and modernization. These changes did not totally replace the indigenous structures and traditional institutions, rather this societal and cultural elements have revealed amazing flexibility by undergoing re arrangement in structure so as to adopted changing circumstances.

Continuity and change has been a basic feature of culture and society in India and this holds true even in the current era of cultural globalization. Notions like civilisational and clash and cultural clash are not relatable in Indian context as Indian nation has a tradition of cultural synthesis of both new and old elements of culture. Convergence in divergence and unity and diversity has been basis of age old Indian civilization and tradition. In recent times the country has also seen a trend of protest culture or cultural politics. Globalization of culture has given rise to variations in

cultural practice among Indians. As a consequence of this Indian society today flaunts a three-tier system of culture namely the traditional the elite and the mass. The traditional setup act as conservation and maintenance of traditions, the elite bows for formation of new practices and values and the mass one act as a platform of creolisation, synciretysation and most importantly hybridisation. Today modern Indian society stands as a hybrid of both global and traditional elements of culture. Cultural interaction between the local and global culture is a rising trend and reinforces the notion of glocalisation in Indian nation.

Hybridisation of culture is noticeably visible in every aspect of individual and societal life style. Hybridization of culture can be felt across food fashion celebration entertainment language education attitude and social behavior. A blending between the traditional and Western elements of culture has resulted in glocalisation. The notions of change in the community and community in the change have been rooted in Indian society and cultures which are still very potent in this post modern era of globalization of culture. Age old practices of Indian institutions, values, traditions promote a sensor of integration of culture.

Functional necessities on the part of people have brought in selective changes in Indian society and culture. Today borders of cultures are hazy and merging and Indian nation is no exception. Indian society and culture today neither act as a closed system of incorporated whole nor it is uniform among the participants of a cultural community and group. Today people are practicing many cultures of which some are own and some are foreign. Hence at this critical juncture elements of culture are crumbling in nature in terms with indigenous elements of traditions and customs of Indian nation. Hence the concept of hybridity of culture should be reformulated and redefined.

3. New Media and a Hybrid Culture

The New Media has brought in a sea change in the way people used to perceive their way of life. New Media has brought in a plethora of revolutionary alterations in the domains of communication in such a big way that it has in turn become the most preferred mode of day to day exchange. Be it ordering some food, buying some products, sharing one's emotion, sending videos or pictures instantly over messenger ; New Media has surpassed our wildest imagination in recent history of time. Prior the rise of this instant and interactive medium, people had no option but to reinforce the hegemony of traditional media and their mechanism of information

flow. But with the rise and expansion of this medium which cuts across limitations of time and space, people are now bombarded with an explosion of information, of diverse range and nature, thus being updated round the clock.

Meanwhile, New Media has not acquired this omnipresent or omnipotent status in a single day but has gone about rapid and substantive change over past few decades. History of New Media is itself new chronicling the journey of a stagnant network to becoming the largest repository of data to transforming into information Super Highway and influencing the idea of world and community ever so swiftly.

During the late 80s and 90s, the Internet expanded possibilities to enhance the Information Technology capacities of various higher education institutions (HEI), colleges, research centers and universities and in the later phase extended its services to public, government institutions, and private organizations around the globe. This cost effective medium has experienced exponential growth over last couple of decades and has evolved to be the greatest, grandest and most powerful computer driven network under the sun mutating from its infancy version of being a State owned mission. After the coming up of interactive Web 2.0, the initial years of Twenty First Century was itself an uprising in the brief chronicle of New Media. The following decade saw an unprecedented rise in Social Media and a host of other interactive and community based tools of man-machine interaction.

The New Media now-a-days is not only a tool for exchange of information but it has become a complex multifaceted arrangement which has the power to initiate, curate and fine tune content and community based communication beyond the narratives of reality. The very ideas of spontaneity encompasses varied spheres of internet based communication including sharing of data, usage of audio-visual and other types of content and share one's life, identity in live mode. Thus there is a world within world which many scholars have lamented as parallel world. Nothing is personal or private, as when it is transacted through this powerful medium, everything becomes 'glocal' and public.

This mediated communication system via New Media has manifold implications in one's life including the aspect of social relationships. The interactive online media transcends the barriers of geographic limitations and puts together communities interested in a particular category of

content. Today society has evolved to be webbed, globalised powered by New Media Technologies. Internet has come up as a means of interaction, at times compromising norms of security and privacy.

IT and its varied applications have ushered in a shift all across the society transforming it from industrial age to current information age (Bell, 1970). This era is characterized by global networks of information which have turned out be global infrastructures. And this mammoth cyber infrastructure has influenced politics, identity, community, business, healthcare and what not. Even the way people live their life, interact with family and friends. New Media has become a driving force in the realm societal evolution and interaction.

The shift in patterns of social interaction are significant enough as traditional means still have their shares left although in lesser quantity and newer technologies are continue to gain importance with each coming day. This has transformed our practices of communications with its expanding scope and applications; particularly among youth users. New Media has ruptured all the barriers of communication. While online, one can overcome traditional hurdles of time and space and unearth a plethora of possibilities in terms of communication. The Social Media has brought in phrases like ‘Technocracy’ and I would like add one ‘Infocracy’ where democratization of information has led to wonders, in every aspect of human life.

In modern day, the expansion of the Internet today is primarily crafted by instantaneous, mobile communications via mobile. The mobile Internet is a recent buzz. All-inclusive connectivity through internet via Smartphones and other high end gadgets like tablets has led to ever expanding world of mobile reality: people now are not restricted to any single particular device, and everything else that matters is in the virtual cloud. Today people do not limit themselves for longer durations staring at a computer screen after study or work rather they are online, round the clock 24X7, through smartphones. People who are lagging behind will potentially loose opportunities.

4. The New Media and Consumer Trends

New Media technologies have significantly accelerated the rate of information dissemination and thus have resulted in a situation called “bespoke” shopping (Meyrowitz, 1986). The New Media

technology offer infinite store purchasable contents, products, news and services through e-commerce. E- Commerce has come up as giant development powered by substantial distribution mechanism. Be it buying cloths, be it booking tickets or simply ordering food and groceries New Media channels have ushered in an era of secure, instant and unsullied mode of commerce. In this regard, consumer is king as traditional distribution and marketing concepts have given way to its online counterpart. Consumer can now access information from multiple and varied platforms and customer review has become one of the forerunners in terms of marketability of a product or service. Instant accesses to rankings of product, reviews posted by customers, comparisons and recommendations have led to new scenes for trades, economy and behavioural characteristics of consumer.

5. The Future of New Media and Social Communications and Its Impact on Culture

An omnipresent online 24 × 7 culture is the road ahead for mobile based social communications. The trend has already taken over and will further accelerate with time. The concept of connectivity in totality is here and will follow us wherever we go. This is going to be a virtual one way through the pathways of digitalization across the globe .Innovation is key to development, progress and growth and New Media subtly revolutionizing traditional world and the civilization itself and this new world order is rapidly moving forward. Innovation is continually transforming and will continue to facelift the road ahead. Mobile internet has unprecedentedly taken over all other forms of media. These shifts are here for some time now and mobile led communications have ushered in a new era.

SNS and social websites are no longer mere means of virtual communication but have become cross roads of cultures. The life has become virtual and our data, contact and everything else we do have become independent of the device being used as it is there in the cloud. Cross platform functioning has led to interplay between online and offline cultures and new transition stages are getting uniformly clearer. The culture is getting more and more technology driven and is reaching or has already hybridized state where technology is the central focus in terms of dynamics of all cultural phenomenon. Innovation has been the key to the unimaginable success of New Media and it must go on to remain relevant with fast changing times. Further Telecommunications and social communications are getting clubbed together and new shifts are on their way. The future awaits us with elements of surprises. Mobile communications will

continue to alter lifestyle and culture more than ever before and convergence and its implications on mobility will decide the further course of change in the realm of New Media. Just a decade and half back there was nothing called Social Media and in next one decade it might very well take a new avatar. The future hold a plethora of possibilities and the future has just begun.

The name itself suggests its worth: *World Wide Web*. The New Media and mobile led communication has ruptured all the traditional and geographical hurdles of communication and also cultures. The globalisation of New Media has led to every nook and corner of human civilization in terms of both time and space. American culture has been a major export all across the globe and even smaller nations are now-a-days exporting propaganda, entertainment and even cultures.

The concept of an actually globalized culture in terms of hybridization—where dissemination and receiving of content reaches equilibrium could only be achieved through New Media. Despite a few socio-political hurdles, the mutual flow of data has become unstoppable, at least from a technological stand. Even in a country like China where there is dearth of creative resources, time lag of foreign transmission and stringent control by the government, New Media has helped overcome all these factors in terms of propagation of cultural and entertainment products. The largest populated country under the sun had issues with New Media since the very beginning but the open resource nature of internet has broken down resistance towards being globalised with the country having 22.5 percent (roughly 300 million people, or the population of the entire United States) of the country going online as of 2008 (Google, 2010).

On the 21st day of the first calendar month in 2010, Hillary Clinton while addressing a gathering at Newseum in Washington, DC, said, “We stand for a single Internet where all of humanity has equal access to knowledge and ideas (Ryan & Halper, 2010).” That very month, Google made a decision not to restrict search results on Google.cn; the Google’s search engine in Chinese language after its China base experienced a gruesome. In addition, Google made it clear that if Chinese government does not materialize a concrete understanding with Google in the matter of search result censorship, Google would wrap up its base from China completely. This was seen as a major reversal in policy as the internet giant has maintained terms and conditions, although reluctantly, with the Chinese administration for its operation. Google’s motto, “Don’t be evil,” had been in odd quarters since long under Chinese regulations and it did hamper their business

strategies. Although the US based internet giant had a quarter of the Chinese market, stringently controlled Chinese search engine Baidu was the market leader.

To ascertain the implications of media convergence one can take up the example of CNN's official Twitter handle and click through the "Following" tab. One will be exposed to numerous and differing options available, including Twitter feeds of journalists and feeds from the handles they follow. The presence of CNN in this micro blogging website restricted to 140 characters sparks a debate itself when we consider CNN's motto, "The most trusted name in network news". So how reliable and in-depth coverage can get in 140 characters?

Not only CNN, almost all the big, traditional media organizations employ Twitter as a platform for aggregating a large pile of information which otherwise would have been missed by its viewers. This is the new trend in information gathering process where users can use their Twitter page to collect information from all the pages they follow. Media giants use Twitter as an integration tool for media outlets. The Twitter feed complements the newsy content, but does not report the content itself.

The shift was visible way back in 2008. The New Media surpassed print media as a prime supply for global as well as national news in the United States. Among youth, New Media is the primary pick when it comes to collecting day's news. As per a survey 40 percent of US population received their news from New Media platforms (Pew Research Center for the People, 2008). Since then, media organizations have been putting up their might in forming an online presence. One of remarkable shift to come up is the emergence of online-only news resources. Although many argue that anonymous and echo chamber character of New Media is itself a hindrance to balanced journalism especially for expensive subjects. The big media houses can put reporters in field and this has been one of the crucial contributions to the world of reporting but with ever competitive and market driven model of journalism, this is the first causality in times of cost crunch. Internet and New Media have apparently provided an answer to this with internet as a prime source of information for increasing number of people and online-only publications and outlets mushrooming the business.

John F. Harris and Jim Vande Hei , the reporter duo from the house the *Washington Post*, left their portfolios to start a website called ' politico' based on politics. What they did new was

running the website just like a news organization on web. By 2010 Politico reached 60 Lakhs monthly visitors and expanded its operation base by adding more than 100 staffs. Now Politico correspondents are a regular envoy in US White house foreign trips (Wolff, 2009). Politico increased its media reach using several New Media applications like Twitter, Blog apart from having a print edition which came much later.

During its early days New Media was stereotyped as a escape for people who are less social in the real world and was argued that New Media will further increase the gap. But the potential of New Media as a bridge for the cultures across the globe was also not overlooked. It seemed that a force which can bridge the gap can also widen it at the same time. This bafflement was theorized by the American Psychological Association (APA) as the “Internet paradox.”(Kraut et. al., 1998)

APA’s study titled “Internet paradox: A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being (Kraut, et. al., 1998)?” found that teenage users spending more time in internet were prone to self asserted aloneness and other psychosomatic stress. This is due to the fact that teenagers have the skill, curiosity, time and inquisitiveness than their adult counterparts when it comes to usage of internet. This reinforces the idea that young generation is more likely to be influenced by the socio-cultural implications of New Media.

An investigation conducted by the Michigan State University Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media has shown that college-age Facebook users connect with offline friends twice as often as they connect with purely online “friends (Ellison, et. al., 2007). A vast majority almost amounting to 90 percent of the respondents who were included in the investigation said that on their chat priority are friends whom they know personally rather than whom they met virtually in Facebook. This indeed a testimony of the fact New Media is actually making offline and online interplay very subtly, in every aspect of life, ranging from communication to culture and vice versa.

The New Media has transformed the transmission of popular culture a two-way avenue. The new shift has snatched the potency of traditional mass media to sway popular culture anymore. Now netizens with 24X7 accesses to New Media technologies have the power to initiate and propagate

what is now known as the cross-fertilization of pop culture across the globe, a commonplace phenomenon these days.

6. Conclusion :

Throughout the chronicle of human civilization, newer means of communication technologies have always had their fair share when it comes to influencing culture significantly. New Media has been seen as a metaphor where socio-cultural complexities are merged and communicated. Hence majority of views of New Media technologies and its implications on offline cultures are most of the times negative. On the other hand, aficionados of technocracy have glorified New Media and its applications as the most reckoning forces to bring in enlightening and creative change in the human history. The Big Data is here transfiguring the way of life which is synonymous with culture. There is never an ounce of doubt in asserting that SNS and digital media have substantial influence on culture so far.

The New Media and SNS have found to be powerful instruments in changing human attitude and behavior. In recent past, SNS has played a pivotal role in spreading and leading civil movements and dissent. SNS has been a potent instrument which surged occurrences of Occupy protests, the Arab Spring, the mobilization of resistance against the Governments. In a webbed world of web SNS has the capability to make people participate, connect and decentralize their public life.

.Now-a-days, New Media has become an everyday culture or it can be said that today's culture have entwined itself to the digital sphere. The online dating websites and Apps are significant examples of social relationships drawing life from online resources. In West, segmented and individualistic societies have embraced this change as a solution. Specifically, youth today are experiencing a phenomenon called 'digital bedroom' (Werbner, Pnina. 1997)- a childhood which is increasing mediated through SNS, New Media and Smart-phones.

Instant messaging and always mobile communications have roped in significant cultural implications. Language which is a key element of culture have evolved drastically after the coming up of New media. These rapid and serious changes have ushered in a plethora of changes and shifts in society and cultures. Digital symbols and rituals have overtaken the offline ones or offline are going digital with a facelift. Identity and its dynamics have changed and it is profound especially among youth generation.

With the coming up of New Media technologies life has changed many folds and so as our approach towards leading it. Andrew Dewdney and Peter Ride in their 'The New Media Handbook' mentioned that 'New Media are not only simply outcomes of the creative use of new machines but also shapes cultural, institutional and financial conditions of people in the environment it work'(Dewdney and Ride, 2006).

Living in a technology driven world, people are bombarded with ever changing technologies which not only open up new plethora of possibilities to explore but also challenges to change our normative approaches towards existence. New Media technologies, their application in social platforms has ushered in an era where people experience interactivity, spontaneity, instant feedback and much more, which flaunt the power to influence our day to today life, and more specifically what we call, 'culture'.

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