

**Social Media: Online Community Learning on Media Education in Tamilnadu**

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***Abstract***

Media students can create and maintain an online community and make it a forum where they can present what they learn in classroom and conduct a debate on problems, challenges and opportunities that their field is faced with. The online community will trigger a knowledge explosion that will take them to a further greater plane. Teachers and students can collaborate and participate in the EduBlog and that will be an inspiring interface and stimulating interaction. The researcher studies the impact of social media in online community learning among media students in Tamilnadu.

***Keywords: Online Media Education, Community learning, E-learning***

**1. Introduction**

The emergence of Internet, Web.2.0 and cloud computing technology are in the twilight of 20th century and their astounding and amazing growth at the dawn of the 21st century, a major media was born and started spreading its tentacles over the globe, converting people who are divided by race, religion, geography, language, culture et al, into Oliver Goldsmith's 'citizens of the world' or to put it in modern parlance, 'citizens of the world'.

The man in pre-historic times, that is, about 50,000 years ago, was in the cave, recording his social interactive urges in various kinds of drawings and paintings on the walls, thinking that his fellow human beings in his times or posterity would happen on them and try to decode them. That was probably the first seed sown of social media to catch on down the line. The man in the ancient cave is now the man on the web.

“The desire to connect and communicate is woven into our very genetic code as human beings. We don't want to be heard. We need to be heard. That is what is powering this supernova explosion of social media...‘User-generated content’ has been around for millennia. The first evidence of ‘social media’ was the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc cave paintings in the Ardeche department of southern France. They date back to 30,000 BC. We're talking

Upper Paleolithic era here. Those paintings were people connecting and communicating with other people. Twitter on a sandy wall.....That is all social media is. The medium has merely changed: from pre-historic paint to postmodern posts.” (Eric Harr, 2011)

### **1.1 Blogging, online community and media education**

Of late, researches are being conducted on the role of blogging in education, particularly media students. Media having turned digital; students of media studies cannot afford to ignore the role of blogging in enhancing the critical thinking and analytical power of students.

A deep study of blogs on various subjects by various ‘writers will reveal social, psychological, economic, geographical, racial and linguistic dimensions of the times. Moreover, in the context of education, the very word, ‘blog’, which was proclaimed as Word of the Year (2004) by Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, has taken on the form ‘Edu Blog’ and is catching up among academic circles. Blogging is also a sort of classroom where teachers and students interact, coordinate and exchange data, academic and mundane, with each other.

“Blogs can potentially enhance analytic and critical thinking skills because the critical skill of writing is central to the act of blogging. The participatory and decentralized nature of blogging discourages the traditional “sage on the stage” approach to teaching and enhances the knowledge sharing between students as well as between the instructor and the students.” Edu Blogs can be described syllabus beyond syllabus which widens the horizon of students’ thinking and academic knowledge. Nowadays, it has almost become usual and normal to quote from, discuss and critically review meritorious blogs in the classroom. Particularly for media students, this is the platform to showcase, analyse and dissect their scholarly knowledge of media, its impact on society and evolution of media and future scope of media.

“The ability to express on blogs also enhances the development of digital literacy. Additionally, incorporating blogs into curricula also has the potential to shift learning from a time- and space-bound activity that occurs only in the classroom to an activity that is ubiquitous and embedded in real world issues and events.” (Wang Hong, 2008)

“By requiring your students to maintain a study-related blog, you are encouraging them to think critically about the information they are consuming within the classroom, and encouraging them to place that information into a wider context. It has the potential to

strengthen their analysis of the subject at hand. Blogging can be used as a platform to write homework, critically dissect information, and share ideas, theories, explanations, and more. The ability to 'comment' on a blog means students within that classroom can explore each other's blogs and leave feedback or ask questions..."

It is Edu Blog that media students can make the most of in order to enhance their creative capabilities and formulate their own outlooks and perspectives about development of digital media and its valuable contribution to the progress of mankind in general, and advancement of knowledge society, in particular.

## **2. Literature Review**

Social media are quite popular among youngsters, particularly students of universities and colleges. So, the question of how to use social media for enhancing academic performance and enriching learning becomes relevant (**Silvia Parusheva , Yanka Aleksandrova , Antonio Hadzhikolev, 2018**). This research lists educational benefits of social media as follows: 1. The communication between lecturers and students gets deeper 2. There are more and more opportunities for teamwork and networking becomes more intense among students 3. Academic resources are shared very fast. 4. Students have better access to study material 5. Alternative and viable platform is provided in the place of the formal learning systems 6. Students are equipped with technologies which can help them attain success in job search.

Silvia Parusheva, Yanka Aleksandrova , Antonio Hadzhikolev conducted an online survey among 378 students doing graduation and post-graduation in Bulgaria in May-June, 2017. Of the students surveyed, only 0.6 per cent does not have any social media account. The survey findings are that 97.4 per cent of students are comfortably and constantly browsing the Facebook pages, among them the most popular sites are YouTube, Google+ and Instagram.

The research has found that most of the students covered for the study are using Facebook as a major platform for sharing, chatting and citing and disseminating education materials. The finding that students cannot learn, dispensing with social media is not only relevant to Bulgaria to which the researchers belong, but also to all countries across the world.

Xiao Qiang, who has been in exile in the US for over two decades working as an adjunct professor at the School of Information, University of California at Berkeley and who has also founded 'China Digital Times', has rightly presented a textbook case of the Chinese government frowning upon free and liberal use of social media, particularly by the youth. In

his article, 'The Rise of China as a Digital Totalitarian State' (**The Washington Post, Feb. 21, 2018**), he says that China's President Xi Jinping introduced the first cybersecurity law in 2017, which put curbs on internet service providers giving an unlimited and total freedom to digital natives and tried to impose a total government grip over the social media and facilitated the powers-that-be to spy on millions of social media users and zero in on the trouble-making anti-establishment social media user. In short, the Chinese government attempted to gag the diverse and fissiparous digital voices.

The Chinese government in an attempt to shore up its image and rein in free-wheeling netizens set up the '50 Cent Army,' a group of pro-government Internet users whose mandate is to spread online the popularity and power of government policies and schemes and debunk the detractors, frequently using sham identities. The government minions are vultures of sorts, disseminating 'pseudo knowledge' and tearing into the fleshes of independently thinking and intellectually leaning social media users.

Thanks to the government's efforts to put roadblocks to free thinking in social media, a 'digital activism', an online version of an offline resistance to state-sponsored violence and curbs that has been raging in cyberspace all over the globe. Xiao Qiang himself had conducted an in-depth investigation of 1,382 websites including YouTube, Google, Facebook, Instagram which were blocked by the Chinese government. He has described how the Communist regime in China cracked down on unauthorized Net connections. Particularly, it whipped its lash against the VPN (Virtual Private Network) which came in handy for the genuine activist-thinkers to overcome the Chinese 'Great Firewall.'

As several cases in world history show, ultimately a powerful activism armed with strong resistant tactics and communication tools will overtake a repressive regime. That is how Xiao Qiang finishes off his article. "...we are witnessing China rise as a digital totalitarian state. But it may be the case that eventually resistance and critical thinking will become stronger than compliance and acceptance. And if that happens, the government's repressive efforts on social media will be unsustainable."

### **3. Methodology**

The researcher adopted descriptive research method for the research and the primary data collected through online questionnaire method by Google form questionnaire and secondary data were collected through previous research, books and online sources. The online

questionnaire sent to various media course offering colleges. Sample size was 300 for the research. The collected data were analysed by SPSS software.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

##### **4.1 Age**

Age	Frequency	Percent
Valid 16-20	196	65.3
21-25	89	29.7
26-30	14	4.7
36 And Above	1	.3
Total	300	100.0

##### **Interference:**

According to table 4.1, as we can see here 65.3% of the respondents were in the age group of 16 – 20, followed by 29.7% in 21 – 25, 4.7% were in 26 – 30, 0% were in 31 - 35 and only 0.3% were in above 36 ages. Here indicated that 65.3% of respondents were in the age group 16-20.

##### **4.2 What is your level of media education?**

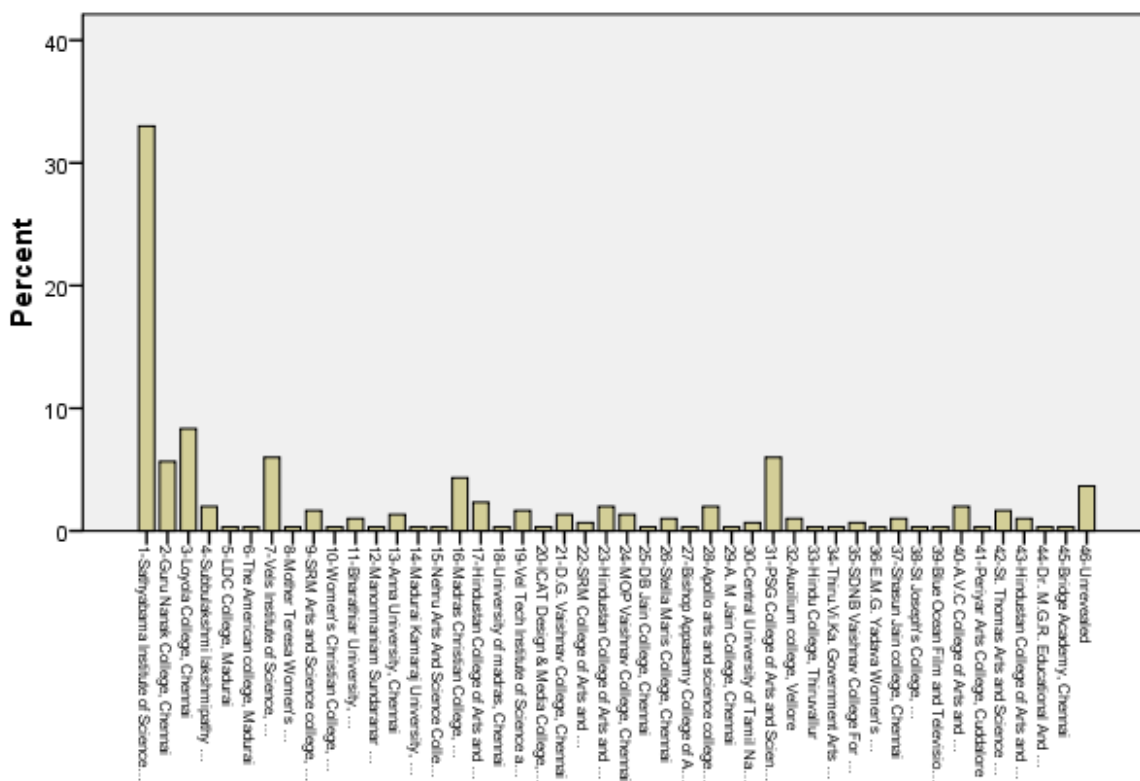
Education	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1-UG	225	75.0
2-PG	65	21.7
3-Research	6	2.0
4-Others	4	1.3
Total	300	100.0

**Interference:**

According to table 4.2, as we can see here 75% of the respondents were in UG, followed by 21.7% in PG, 2% were in research and only 1.3% was in other educational mode like diploma in media education course. Here frequencies were indicated that, 75% of respondents were undergraduate media course.

4.3 Your Media Educational Institution?

**Your media educational institution name and place of the institution**



**Interference:**

According to table 4.3, as we can see here more than 46 media educational institution students like to participate in the research and willing to learn in social media for media learning.

4.4 Can you create media learner communities through social media for media learning?

	Community	Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-Strongly Disagree	12	4.0
	2-Disagree	24	8.0
	3-Neutral	101	33.7
	4-Agree	98	32.7
	5-Strongly Agree	65	21.7
	Total		300

**Interference:**

According to table 4.4, as we can see here 32.7% of the respondents were agreed to build Social media learner communities, 21.7% of the respondents were strongly agreed, 33.7% of the respondents were said neutral, 8% of the respondents were disagreed and only 4% of the respondents were strongly disagreed. Here average weightage is 4. So, respondents were agreed to build media learner communities through social media.

**5. Result Analysis**

As a result of this study follows,

1. A total of 65.3% of the respondents were in the age group of 16 - 20. In simple terms most of the students are youth and youngsters.
2. The 75% percentage of respondents was from undergraduate media course. That means UG media students very active in social media for their media education.
3. More than 46 media institution students actively participated in the research. So, its indicate most of the media students willing to learn from social media.
4. The respondents agreed to create media communities through social media for their media education.
5. So, it's indicated that, Social media strongly influences in the media education.

## **6. Conclusion**

Social media's influences on media education, since media students nowadays are under compulsion to investigate how digital activism too is playing a greater role in changing the media education values and mores of the society. Free thinking of internet and social media in society is always put in danger and threatened by it. This phenomenon, witnessed along with several centuries in the annals of human history, takes on different forms and colours in the digital age where information spreads faster than in the past, at the speed of light years.

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