

SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION AMONG TRIBAL YOUTH OF NORTH COASTAL ZONE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

M. UMA MAHESWARI*, M.S. CHAITANYA KUMARI, DEBORAH MESSIANA and K. LAKSHMI

Department of Extension Education and Communication Management,
College of Community Science, ANGRAU, Guntur-522 034. Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to assess the social media utilization patterns among tribal youth of Parvathipuram Manyam district of Andhra Pradesh. A sample of 120 tribal youth were selected using a purposive sampling technique and data were collected through a structured interview schedule and analysed using appropriate statistical tools. The findings revealed that majority of the tribal youth were in the age group of 22-26 years, belonged to joint families, currently pursuing graduation and majority of them possessed medium to high social participation and information-seeking behaviour. With regard to social media utilization, majority of the tribal youth possessed android smartphones, depended on BSNL network and were mostly using platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram for communication, entertainment and social interaction. Usage of professional networks like LinkedIn and Twitter remained negligible. With regard to the purpose of use of social media, majority expressed entertainment and communication as the need. The study highlights the growing digital engagement among tribal youth while also indicating gaps in educational and professional use of social media. These insights can guide educators and extension professionals in designing targeted digital literacy and inclusion programs for tribal communities.

Keywords: Social Media, Tribal Youth, Utilization Patterns

INTRODUCTION

Social media is undeniably widespread, with billions of users of all ages and backgrounds globally. This platform facilitates community-based communication, teamwork and feedback by enabling users to engage through comments, likes, shares, conversations and images. It is a technological means of sending information, ideas opinions etc. through the communication device to a diverse audience using online platforms that enable users to

create, share and exchange information and content, fostering virtual communities and networks. The platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, TikTok and YouTube, Myspace, Twitter, YouTube and some Gaming sites facilitate communication, collaboration and content sharing in various mediaformats like text, images, videos and more.

The pattern of social media use varies between regions and groups of individuals and

*Corresponding author email id: maheswariuv2122@gmail.com; Part of research work for M.Sc. thesis submitted to Acharya N.G.Ranga Agricultural University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

it is highly influenced by characteristics such as age, education level, gender, technological accessibility and information seeking behaviour.that can impact how individuals utilize social media in multiple communities and situations. Utilization patterns describe how frequently and for what purpose users utilise social media platforms, such as communication, education, entertainment, news consumption and commercial activity. Young individuals are especially likely to use social media because of more mobile availability, peer influence and curiosity-driven behaviour (Kovanen *et al.*, 2019).

In tribal communities, particularly in remote regions like Parvathipuram Manyam district of Andhra Pradesh, the influence of digital technology is gradually expanding. Tribal youth, who were once distanced from mainstream digital exposure, are increasingly becoming active users of social media due to improved mobile connectivity and smartphone penetration. However, the pattern and purpose of their social media usage often differs from their urban counterparts, influenced by socio-cultural, economic and educational backgrounds.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A descriptive research study design was adopted to conduct the study on Social media utilisation patterns among Tribal Youth of Parvathipuram Manyam district. of Andhra Pradesh. The study was carried out with 120 tribal youth respondents covering Kurupam and Gummalaxmipuram tribal dense mandals for the study. These two mandals are also educational centers for tribal youth of manyam district due to proximity to ITDA. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selection of respondents from six villages. The respondents with minimum three years of mobile experience were selected purposively to study the impact and utilization patterns. A

structured interview schedule was prepared to collect data. Frequency, percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, Interquartile range (IQR) and correlation were used for statistical analysis and drawing inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An effort has been made to carefully examine the results derived from the empirical data collected during the course of the study. For the purpose of clarity and brevity, with reference to the objectives, the data collected during the study was coded, analysed, interpreted

Data from Table 1 revealed that majority of the tribal youth fell under the category of 22-26 years (48.33 %) category followed by 18-22 years (27.50%) and 26-30 years (24.17%). The reason might be that during Covid period, Government supported children with digital devices for online education purpose. With regard to education, nearly half of the tribal youth have completed Graduation (49.17%) followed by Intermediate (25.83%) and High school (20.00%). Only five percent of the youth were illiterates. This is might be due to strong policy and institutional support from Government towards development of educational infrastructure and institutions in tribal areas through ITDA.

Data on Family type indicated that majority of the tribal youth were from joint families (60.83%) followed by nuclear family (23.33%) extended families (15.83%). The results clearly indicated the strong societal interactions and structures existed in tribal community. The other reason for the prominence of the joint family structure in the tribal society might be due to combined landholdings and strong bondages. With regard to respondents' occupation the data indicated that majority of the tribal youth of the study were students (36.67%) followed by daily labour (23.33%) and Agriculture

Table 1. Profile characteristics of the respondents

n=120

S.No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age			
1.	18 -22 years	33	27.50
2.	>22 – 26 years	58	48.33
3.	>26 – 30 years	29	24.17
		120	100.00
Education			
1.	Illiterate	06	5.00
2.	High school	24	20.00
3.	Intermediate	31	25.83
4.	Graduation	59	49.17
		120	100.00
Family Type			
1.	Nuclear Family	28	23.33
2.	Joint Family	73	60.83
3.	Extended Family	19	15.83
		120	100.00
Occupation			
1.	Student	44	36.67
2.	Unemployed	18	15.00
3.	Agriculture	26	21.67
4.	Daily Labour	28	23.33
5.	Business	01	0.83
6.	Government job	03	2.50
		120	100.00
Social participation			
1.	Low	16	13.33
2.	Medium	63	52.50
3.	High	41	34.17
		120	100.00
		Mean: 16.33 ; SD:1.06	
Information seeking behaviour			
A	Formal sources		
1.	Low	04	3.33
2.	Medium	74	61.67
3.	High	42	35.00
	Total	120	100.00
		Mean 8.033, SD:1.22	
B	Informal sources		
1.	Low	14	11.67
2.	Medium	72	60.00
3.	High	34	28.33
		120	100.00
		Mean : 12.75 ,SD:1.57	

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of ICT Possession n=120

S.No.	Type of Mobile	Frequency	Percentage
1.	iPhone	02	1.67
2.	Android	88	73.33
3.	Tablet	12	10.00
4.	Non android	18	15.00
		120	100.00

(21.67%) The reason for dependency on agriculture might be due to low or no employment opportunities in public and private sectors as these villages are located in remote areas.

Most of the tribal youth had medium (52.50%) to high (34.17%) social participation because of their involvement in community activities, government youth programmes and active participation in educational institutions and student clubs. Majority had medium to high information seeking behaviour from both formal and Informal sources. This might be due to their curiosity and use of easily accessible sources like government websites, institutions, friends, and relatives.

Social Media utilization patterns by the tribal youth.

Mobile Possession

Results in Table 2 showed the possession of mobile devices and indicated that majority of the tribal youth are using android devices (73.33%) followed by non-android phones (15.00%), Touch screen Tablet (10.00%) and only 1.67 per cent respondents were using

iPhone. The reason for possessing and using ICT devices by all tribal youth might be due to online education imposed during COVID 19 pandemic and digital initiatives taken up by Government of India for e-Governance in all developmental areas. Also, the penetration of android devices even in the remote areas may be accounted to the affordability and accessibility, especially due to the digital explosion in the entertainment industry. This could be a great achievement for technology transfer in reaching the unreached especially the disadvantaged sections of the society. The findings of the present study were similar with the studies of Naresh and Kumari (2019), Ramya and Gopal (2022) and Mohanty *et al.*, 2023.

Type of Network usage

Network is operationally defined as the Telecommunication networks subscribed and used by the respondents.

Presented data in the Table 3 showed that the similar trend was observed in total sample data, forty-three percent of tribal youth preferred BSNL network (55.84 %) followed by Jio

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Network usage n=120

S.No.	Telecommunication networks	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Airtel	01	0.83
2.	Jio	52	43.33
3.	BSNL	67	55.84
	120	100.00	

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of daily mobile data usage n=120

S.No.	Mobile data	Frequency	Percentage
1.	1GB	10	8.33
2.	1.5 GB	78	65.00
3.	2 GB	32	26.67
		120	100/00

Table 5. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Monthly Recharge n=120

S.No.	Monthly Recharge	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below Rs.200	01	0.83
2.	Rs 201 - 400	106	88.33
3.	Rs 401 - 800	05	4.17
4.	Above Rs 800	08	6.67
		120	100.00

(43.33%) and only 0.83 percent respondents were using Airtel network.

The reason for the above results might be the limited availability of private network operators in the tribal and remote areas. Majority of the tribal youth depended on Govt. telecommunication network BSNL due to non-availability of mobile towers and broadband networks.

Mobile data usage

As per the Table 4, tribal youth showed that most of them were using 1.5 GB (65.00%) data daily followed by 2 GB (26.67%) and 1GB (8.33%). The reason might be easy access to the technology with nominal prices from the

network companies and affordability of the customers.

Monthly mobile recharge

An overview of the Table 5 shows that a great majority of the tribal youth were spending Rs.200 - 400 for monthly recharge (88.33%) followed by Rs. 400 – 800 (6.67%), above Rs.800 (4.17 %) and Below Rs.200 (0.83 %). The monthly mobile data recharge for majority of tribal youth is Rs.200-400 which is quite affordable by them.

Daily time spent on social media

Results presented in the Table 6 revealed that 61.67 per cent of the respondents were spending 5-6 hours followed by 7-8 Hours

Table 6. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Time spent on social media. n=120

S.No.	Time spend	Frequency	Percentage
1.	2-4 Hours	08	6.67
2.	>4-6 Hours	74	61.67
3.	> 6 – 8 Hours	31	25.83
4.	More than 8 Hours	07	5.85
		120	100.00

Table 7. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Usage of Social Media platforms

n=120

S.No.	Social Media platforms	Yes		No	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Facebook (2004)	41	34.17	79	65.84
2.	Instagram (2010)	103	85.83	17	14.16
3.	YouTube (2005)	120	100.00	0	0.00
4.	WhatsApp (2009)	120	100.00	0	0.00
5.	Snapchat (2011)	62	51.67	58	48.34
6.	Telegram (2013)	21	17.50	99	82.50
7.	Pinterest (2010)	1	0.83	119	99.17

* Multiple responses were recorded on this aspect

(25.83 %), More than 8 Hours (5.85%) and 2-4 Hours daily on social media (6.67%) The findings of the present study were similar with the studies of Pandey and Singhal (2017) and Victory and Priya (2024) indicating a considerable use of social media.

Social Media platforms usage

An overview of the table 7 indicated that YouTube and WhatsApp (100.00%) were used

by cent percent followed by Instagram (85.83%), Snapchat (51.66%), Facebook (34.17%), Telegram (17.50%) and Pinterest (0.83%) were using. The professional social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn are not utilised by tribal youth. The reason might be most of them were students and were more inclined towards entertainment and communication media tools like You Tube and WhatsApp. In both girls and boys, YouTube

Table 8. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Extent of Social Media Utilization

n=120

S.No.	Social Media Platforms	Total				
		Frequency of Usage				
		Daily f (%)	Weekly f (%)	Fortnightly f (%)	Monthly f (%)	Never f (%)
1.	Facebook	24(20.00)	6(5.00)	4(3.33)	4(3.33)	82(68.33)
2.	Instagram	104(86.67)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	16(13.33)
3.	YouTube	107(89.17)	13(10.83)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	00(0.00)
5.	WhatsApp	120(100)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
8.	Snapchat	28(23.33)	31(25.83)	1(0.83)	4(3.33)	56(46.67)
9.	Telegram	7(5.83)	10(8.33)	2(1.67)	1(0.83)	100(83.34)
10.	Pinterest	0(0.00)	01(0.83)	0(0.00)	1(0.83)	118(98.33)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 9. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Purpose of social media utilization

n=120

S.No	Social media utilization	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Carrier guidance	2	1.67
2..	Doom scrolling	9	7.50
3.	Educational Information	13	10.83
4.	Market information	0	0.00
5	Health Information	8	6.67
6.	Connecting With experts	1	0.83
7.	Connecting With Friends	81	67.50
8.	Entertainment	105	87.50

* Multiple responses were recorded on this aspect

and WhatsApp are used by cent percent for interaction and entertainment. The findings of the present study were similar to the studies of Deepak and Ramya (2023).

Extent of Social Media Utilization

It is evident from table 8 that cent percent of tribal youth respondents were using WhatsApp on a daily basis (100.00%) while majority of them were using YouTube (89.17%), Instagram (86.67%), Snapchat (23.33%) and Facebook (20.00) on a daily basis. This implies the extent of social media influence on the daily behavioural pattern of the tribal youth.

Purpose of social media utilization

The similar trend is observed among total tribal youth where majority of the respondents were using social media for entertainment

purpose (87.50%) followed by connecting with friends (67.50%), Educational information (10.83%), Health information (6.67%), Doom scrolling (7.50%) and only few 1.67 per cent are using for career guidance and connecting with experts (0.83%). The results from Table 8 indicated that the girl respondents used various social media platforms for the purpose of Entertainment followed by connecting with friends, educational information, health information, doom scrolling and connecting with experts. The results are in line with the findings of Priya and Latha (2019).

Data on over all social media utilization indicate that majority of the tribal youth fell under medium category in overall social media utilization followed by high utilization and low categories. The reason for medium to high

Table 10. Overall social media utilization pattern of Tribal youth

n=120

S.No	Utilization pattern	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency (CF)
1.	Low Utilization	20	20
2.	Medium Utilization	62	82
3.	High Utilization	38	120
	Total	120	

Mean: 98.667; SD: 9.869

Table 11. Class Intervals and Lower Boundaries for Utilization Pattern of Social Media

Class Category	Class Interval	Lower Boundary (L)
Low Utilization	0–1	0.5
Medium Utilization	1–2	1.5
High Utilization	2–3	2.5

social media utilisation patterns among tribal youth might be due to tribal youth inquisitiveness and curiosity to explore and learn new things from the social media. Further it is also observed and revealed through the study conducted by Kiran and Babu (2020) that the kind of content consumption influence the behaviour of individuals especially youth as they are in intermittent and transformative stage of the life cycle. Hence, proper care need to

be taken to create awareness regarding Do's and Don'ts while using social media to prevent digital addiction and complications.

Interquartile range (IQR)

Q1 = 30

Q3 = 90

Q1 (30th value) lies in the Medium Utilization category (since CF of Low = 20, and CF of Medium = 82, 30 lies in this range).

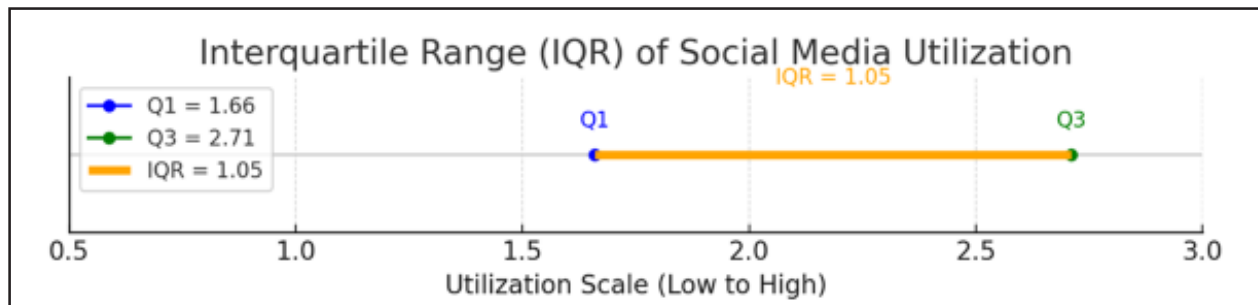


Table 12. Relationship between respondents profile characteristics with Utilization pattern

n=120

S.No	Independent variable	'r' Value
X ₁	Age	0.008**
X ₂	Education	0.019*
X ₃	Family Type	0.091 ^{NS}
X ₄	Occupation	0.352**
X ₅	Social Participation	0.019 ^{NS}
X ₆	Leisure time activity	0.179*
X ₇	Motivation for social media use	0.063 ^{NS}
X ₈	Information Seeking Behaviour	0.209*

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

NS : Non Significant.

Q3 (90th value) lies in the High Utilization category (since CF of Medium = 82, and CF of High = 120, 90 lies in this range).

Interquartile range (IQR)

Q1 = 1.66

Q2 = 2.71

IQR=Q3-Q1= 2.71-1.66=1.05

The Interquartile Range (IQR) for the utilization pattern was calculated to be 1.05, indicating that the middle 50 per cent of the respondents fell under a moderate on the utilization scale. The first quartile (Q1) was found to be 1.66, while the third quartile (Q3) was 2.71, showing a concentration of social media use between medium and high categories.

Relationship between Independent and Dependent variables

In order to study the relationship between the selected profile characteristics of tribal youth with their social media Utilization pattern, coefficients (r) were computed and the values are presented in Table 12.

It could be inferred from Table 12 that the independent variables Age, Occupation and Education were significant at 0.01 level of probability; Leisure time activity and Information Seeking behaviour were significant at 0.05 level of probability. Other independent variables viz., Family Type, Social participation, Motivation for social media use, level of aspiration were found to be non-significant with social media utilisation patterns. Fatima and Hussain(2020) reported similar findings in their study on social media exploration among Muslim youth.

CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that overall social media utilisation pattern was in the moderate range in the tribal youth of the area as indicated by the Interquartile Range (IQR).

YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram were used by regularly by majority of the respondents when compared to other tools. These media tools can be further explored for educational and empowerment interventions in these areas. Half of the tribal youth (52%) fell under medium category in overall social media utilization followed by high utilization and low categories. The reason for medium to high social media utilisation patterns among tribal youth might be due to tribal youth inquisitiveness to explore and learn new things from the social media and also penetration of social media tools into the rural fabric. However, social media was majorly used for entertainment purpose (87.50%) followed by connecting with friends (67.50%) and meagre 10.83 percent for educational information. The findings underscore the need for targeted digital literacy programs utilising these tools that are widely prevalent among the youth of the region, infrastructure improvement and capacity-building interventions that encourage more productive use of social media among tribal youth, there by inclusive growth and social integration in these communities.

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