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## **DIGITAL MEDIA: PHYSICAL & SOCIO-CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS**

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***Digital Media-Emerging Issues: Edited by Dr. Saswati Gangopadhyay; Suhrid Book Stall, Publisher & Book Seller, College Square (West), Stall No. 19, Kolkata-700073, 2014 pp 146 price Rs.300 ISBN 978-93-83463-99-2***

Digital Media have invoked a lot of interest among modern day academicians, journalists and researchers. The power of digital media is all about digitized text, graphics, audio and video which are transmitted over internet or computer networks. Information in the form of text, graphics, audio and video can be coded in binary digits which becomes easy for the computers to process and present to the users in an understandable form. The interest regarding digital media has been fuelled by its ability to code and restore a large amount of data, convergence, interactivity, hypertextuality, widening of choices on the part of the user and less gate keeping while managing or uploading content. There is multifaceted usage of the digital medium ranging from people to people communication through emails to business process outsourcing (BPO) and knowledge process outsourcing (KPO). It has been successful in building up a global workplace where boundaries (geographical or otherwise) have mattered little.

The book *Digital Media: Emerging Issues* edited by Dr. Saswati Gangopadhyay is an attempt to understand the effect of digital media on society, industry and individuals. In this book esteemed academicians and researchers have tried to address issues which have been a part of public discourse regarding digital media. In order to make the study exhaustive global perspective has also been incorporated.

In the initial chapters of the book there has been an attempt to explore digital media and its impact on modern day culture, history of digital newspapers and the changes brought about in the news medium due to digital media. Chapter 2 of the book deals with the issue of digital media and culture. Thought provoking, this chapter written by Prof. K.V. Nagaraj and Mr. Vedabhyas Kundu, tries to explore new possibilities of digital media and how they are having significant impact on the lives of people. There has been in depth analysis of the interactive potential of the medium which goes beyond geographical boundaries, space and time. In this study the emerging research orientations in the field as well as the potentiality of digital media to facilitate intercultural dialogue has been well documented. The writers have vouchsafed the promotion of digital media literacy for a better understanding of the medium and for promoting peace and non violence. Chapter 3 of the book provides a historical perspective of digital newspapers. Prof. Tapati Basu and Dr. Sudeepa Banerjee have observed the historical evolution of online

newspapers till 2003. They have limited their study till this time because after 2003 e-newspapers have become common. They have dealt with the growth of global and local digital newspapers over a time period which has provided a comprehensive database for further research. Chapter 4 talks about change, a change ushered in by a vibrant medium. Changing trends of news vis-à-vis digital media written by Dr. Saswati Gangopadhyay closely observes the changes occurring in the way we experience news in a digital environment. News online is updated fast, the formats are more user friendly and there are various ways to access news through internet. Journalists operating in this new environment are encountering an informed audience who are taking an active part in all kind of social, cultural and political discourse. New situations are demanding new set of professional expertise from journalists.

In a bid to realize the wide impact of digital media, a set of chapters have been devoted to citizen journalism and digital media, rethinking legal and ethical issues, the role of digital media in development and the changing business scenario in India at the age of digital media. In chapter 5 the role of digital media in facilitating citizen journalism has been analyzed at length by Dr. Mausumi Bhattacharyya and Ms. Reshmi Naskar. They have an interesting take on the modern breed of amateur citizen journalists who can perform effectively with the help of computer connectivity, transfer cable and camera. Breaking the barrier of gatekeeping which is synonymous with traditional media, citizens now can report news quickly. However, the study has put forward all possibilities stemming from this scenario taking in its ambit the skepticism regarding amateurish treatment of news and the issue of credibility. In chapter 6, Prof. Kiran Prasad has delved into legal and ethical issues in the digital era. The experience with media technologies have changed significantly in a time when borders are fast vanishing, state sovereignty has taken a back seat, invasion of privacy looms large, there is problem of online pornography, libel, erosion in the media gate keeping role and the predominance of profitable news among many other issues. She discusses each of them keeping the legal and ethical questions in the center stage. In chapter 7 Mr. Mugdha Sengupta deals with a topic which has been the source of many brainstorming discussions. He investigates the impact of digital media upon development. He opines that digital media is not an instrument of development communication, rather its expansion and usage is an indicator of development in itself. According to him this development is a multidimensional process which encompasses social structure, political environment, popular practices, existing beliefs and attitudes, various national institutions and the economic prosperity of the nation. Dr. Tanuja Basu Ray takes up the important area of business and observes the changing business scenario in the country with the advent of digital media. In chapter 8 she explores several e-commerce options available to the shoppers in a digital marketplace. The range of products on offer include books, flowers, ornaments, cloths, shoes, fashion accessories etc and the beneficiaries of such service are not a select few but many who have access to internet. Four most popular online shopping portals have been selected for this research-Flipkart.com, Homeshop18.com, Myntra.com and Jabong.com. The factors behind the popularity of these web portals and the growing usage of digital media for commercial transactions have been thoroughly studied.

In the concluding chapters topics have become diverse and there has been free flow of ideas from across the national boundaries. Impact of digital media on youth, an area which always invite critical debate and the power given by an emerging medium to women to come out of the shackles of patriarchy has been discussed. In chapter 9 Mr. Santwan Chattopadhyay and Ms. Debanjali Roy throws light on the increasing trend of dependency on different forms of digital media among the youth. The charm of social networking sites is all pervading but there has been little research to understand this phenomenon keeping various factors in mind. In this chapter observations have been based on an online and offline survey among youth belonging to a certain age group and the theoretical framework has been uses and gratification and dependency theory. The results have been intriguing providing answers to a number of questions. Chapter 10 talks about women empowerment. Dr. Silajit Guha and Ms. Sudipta Paul put forward the interesting case study of women celebrating blogosphere for a comeback. They are of the view that due to the availability of PCs at home women now have the companion to fight the patriarchal order of society. Their idea of cyber feminism is based on the utopian belief that computers can help women to be at par with men or move

up the social order in respect to men. The thought provoking study has liberally drawn from post feminist ideology thereby deviating a bit from second generation feminism which talks about the disparities prevailing in a male dominated society. The study arrives at an interesting conclusion and challenges the dominant view of social networking site as truly liberating medium for women. Chapter 11 travels beyond India and focuses on an east European nation, Ukraine. Prof. Olena Gorosko has a global reputation on gender and internet studies. In this chapter she brings her wealth of experience to understand gendered e-learning 2.0: computer-mediated communication (CMC) in Ukraine. Her main research objectives are to trace the difference in perception between male and female students regarding CMC, define and elucidate the links between the content of study and test the effectiveness of students in an e-learning 2.0 environment. The end result talks about perception among male and female learners regarding CMC and the intensive usage of the medium to narrow gender gaps. Chapter 12 dwells on the issue of identity question of the Chinese community living in India and how they use digital media to stay connected with fellow members who reside in different geographic locations. Dr. Ananda Mohan Kar and Prof. Himadri Lahiri concentrate on Chinese Indian blogs to observe the usage of weblogs on the part of the community to achieve specific ethnic objectives. There has been a refreshing viewpoint on the potentiality of the medium (internet) to construct, maintain and shape the identity of a group. In the final chapter digital media meets the film industry. Mr.Santanu Banerjee revisits the movie making and distribution process and discusses how digital media has revolutionized the whole process. He considers the market dynamics and the easy access to e-tickets. Articulating his ideas on the internet as an alternative platform for professional and amateur film makers, he draws an optimistic picture for the time to come.

The book spread over thirteen chapters strives to answer a number of questions regarding digital media. Apart from being of interest to communication studies this book caters to the interest of other social sciences as well. There is an attempt to understand the versatile nature of a medium which is still evolving. However the theoretical perspective was only touched briefly in the introductory chapter by the editor. It would have been better if an entire chapter was dedicated on the topic. Also a chapter on the impact of digital media on participatory and civil society movements could have been included as this is definitely an important and emerging issue and merits attention. On the whole comprehensive and intellectually stimulating, this book will be of help to students of journalism, academicians and media practitioners.