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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Keeping up with the rapid changes in the media can be a daunting task. It is not only about keeping pace with technological changes, but also social, cultural, economic, legal and the biggest change of all time- advent of social media. As I sit down to write this editorial, a thought, which crosses my mind, is that do we have the ability to use social media in research, especially in social science research, Researchers have a huge amount to gain from engaging with social media in various aspects of their work.

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But the people producing the data used in projects like these may not think about the fact that the information they post is valuable for research and might not even know if it is already being used. It's an ethical problem that is yet to be resolved. So friends think twice before using the social media as the source of information needed for your research and think many times about it's authenticity. Traditional methods of data collection still are the best and let skepticism get the better of your reliance on the social media while researching.

Dr. Durgesh Tripathi
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THEATRE: A MODE OF COMMUNICATION IN KASHMIR
A CASE STUDY OF TWO THEATRE GROUPS OF KASHMIR – FUNTOOSH AND EKTA

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Abstract

Theatre has been an integral part of Kashmiri culture since ancient times. Its genesis in Kashmir can be traced back to 12th century when texts like Nilmata Purana and Kalhana's Rajtarangini were written, which revealed the glory of genre of drama at that time. With the passage of time, this genre of Kashmiri culture saw many ups and downs, but managed to survive and later on thrived. Today, there are many theatre groups flourishing in the valley which make their presence felt significantly with their work in Kashmir. This paper tries to investigate how theatre started and developed in Kashmir and how well it has been successful in communicating to the common people, by taking the case study of two prominent theatre groups of Kashmir – Funtoosh and EKTA.

Keywords
Theatre, Funtoosh, EKTA, Nilmata Purana, Kalhana, Rajtarangin

Introduction
Drama and theatre were intermingled with the Kashmiri way of life since centuries. Kashmiri folk theatre in spite of its present impasse has been an energetic medium since its inception, the need is to recognize it and put it on a new platform, where people can reach it. Historical records like the Nilmata Purana and Kalhana's Rajatarangini (twelfth century) reveal that Kashmiri theatre had attained its glory during that time, which is further supported by theorists & aesthetician Abhinavgupta (tenth century). The golden age of drama in Kashmir lasted 1500 years- from the beginning of Christian era to the fifteenth century (Kaul, 1970 in Lal, 2009).

The history of Kashmiri drama viz-a-viz the theatre falls into three periods (1) Buddhist and Hindu period which lasted till early fourteenth century (2) The Muslim (Sultanate and Mughal) period which lasted for another five hundred years and (3) the contemporary period of the twentieth century. In Kashmir, according to Nilmata Purana, there were four most important occasions in a year when mostly these music, dance and drama activities were taking place i.e. (1) on religious festivals (2) on social occasions, (3) on agricultural festivals and (4) in winter on first snow fall occasion – so have the music, dance and drama of Kashmir taken the shape and form (Yasir, 2009). There existed a performatory tradition in the vernacular (old Kashmiri) which, unlike the elite drama, was based on the spontaneous folk imitation of elemental life-birth, calamities, death, rebirth- in connection with celebrations and festivals of sowing, reaping and threshing. Thus in the earliest form of Kashmiri theatre, the unschooled and naive Lagun ('imitation'), any person could mimic for mere entertainment a king, a sadhu, a soldier, a bridegroom, or other respectable social figure. The function of this primitive burlesque was only to provoke mirth. Although as a natural

mimetic activity, Lagun did not require professional training, certain people called *kelak* ('buffoons') attained special prowess in it and adopted it as their profession (Kaul, 1970 in Lal, 2009).

Kashmir has seen many a turbulent times after 12th century –viz- the invasions, attacks, floods, famines, raids, fires and epidemics from time to time and this has resulted in the loss of books, manuscripts and play-scripts. With the advent of foreign rule and invasions, decline in all forms of Kashmiri art and literature was quite an expected misfortune, consequently the folk taste survived in all its manifestations through Bhands of Kashmir in the shape of Bhand-Pather. Though the Kashmiri drama was banished from the royal court but back in the villages the class of artistes – folk-performers, continued to entertain the public in the popular folk-theatre-festivals knows as Bhand-Jashan. And thus the theatre of Kashmir survived through the most powerful theatrical form, known as Bhand-Pather. Even during the Muslim rule, Bhands were the popular entertainers and used to cross Pir Panchal range and perform in Jammu, Himachal, Punjab and other areas entertaining people through their humorous plays (Yasir, 2009).

Parallel to the Bhand Pather, there flourished a tradition of devotional theatre that primarily aimed at conveying the message of truth and revealing the pleasure of leading a pious life. A repertoire of Hindu plays was always available to the performers and temple premises were the centers of these activities. However, no early manuscript of such drama is extant; among the preserved ones, *Satich kahvet* ('Touchstone of Truth') is the oldest accessible to readers. The author, Nandalal Kaul Nana (1877-1940), composed it on the life of Raja Harishchander, in rhymed dialogue with lyrical interludes. It was first performed in 1932 at Raghunath Mandir, Srinagar (Kaul, 1970 in Lal, 2009).

Yasir Bhawani (2009) expresses that "With the splay of modern sensibility, education and political awareness in the early twentieth century, many socio-religious institutions came into being which started staging plays on special occasions, festival, ceremonies and celebrations but it was just a couple of times in a year".

With the establishment after India's independence of a body of writers named the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Front (later Congress), theatre received serious attention. Several plays were composed and staged to strengthen the Front's political viewpoint. In 1950, a new repertory, Kala Kendra, emerged but after presenting two plays on the socialistic pattern, it returned to the old religious and romantic drama. The Sri Pratap College Dramatic Club appealed to a wide audience with its thoughtful productions, which also deviated from the revolutionary theme. The founding of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) in 1958 initiated a new wave of enthusiasm for non- propagandist theatre, and several amateur clubs emerged in the capital, Srinagar and other towns. Nav Rang Dramatic Club (1964), Rangmanch (1967), Royal Theatre (1967) were few of the popular theatre clubs of that time. In 1974, eighteen repertories working in the valley set up an association called the Kashmir Theatre Federation under the able guidance of Ali Mohammad Lone, Pran Kishore, Som Nath Zutshi, Bansi Mattoo, M. L. Kharoo, Moti Lal Kemmu and Makhanlal Saraf. This led to glorious period in Kashmiri theatre. In the years that followed many people and groups joined the federation and participated in various theatre festivals. Drama Clubs of Nawakadal Girls' College, S. P. College and M. A. Road Girls' College also produced several plays, under Shamla Mufti (1928-) which aroused interest in theatre among college going students, The governments Song and Drama Division organized a dance drama with exaggerated costumes and effects *Esyi esy ti esyi asav* ('We were and Shall Be') in open purlieus of Parbat Hill, which was admired by audience. In 1980's, theatre received fresh impetus as the JKAACL strived to reinvigorate the cultural movement by coordinating the activities of all rural and urban troupes (Kaul, 1970 in Lal, 2009).

Kashmiri theatre started to get impact badly with start of militancy in the state by mid 80's and theatre came to a halt in the state completely. In between, many attempts to infuse new energy to the theatre were done which were largely unsuccessful. The famous theatre platform, Tagore Hall was also burnt down in 90's which acted as a major blow to the theatre activity of the state. Also due to prevailing militancy many actors and writers fled the state which again weakened the theatre activities further.

After ten years' complete lull, an initiative was undertaken by the National School of Drama (NSD) in 2001 under the supervision of M. K. Raina, a Kashmiri who had made it big on the national stage. A series of workshops that followed resulted in the re-emergence of groups, especially in rural areas. *Su yi* ('He Will Come',2005), adapted from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* by Arshid Mushtaq with two Bandi Pethir clowns in the lead, attracted remarkable attention and was widely admired. The efforts of talented director Yasir Bashir Bhawani adequately enthused school and college students. In 2006, Sangeet Natak Academi and the JKAACL organized a folk festival in Srinagar, where old repertories of folk drama resurfaced with vigour (Kaul, 1970 in Lal, 2009).

Literature Review:
Kashmiri theatre has a glorious history of five thousand years (Yasir, 2009). Kashmiri theatre was very popular and well recognized in the society since its inception. It can be gauged by the fact that every house patronized the performing arts – music, dance and drama and young girls and boys were trained by their mothers.

Farooq Fayaz (2008) gives the credit for such inherent culture of music, dance and drama to the exemplary natural beauty and soothing climate of Kashmir. In his words:
Kashmir's distinct Geo-cultural clime has endowed it with matchless artistic merit and skill. The countless treasures of its natural beauty in the form of lofty mountains, lakes, waterfalls and charming flowers and its unique religious plurality offered enough chances for its people to demonstrate their talents in the forms of fables, fairy tales, epics, dramas and poetry.

Receiving ignition and inspiration from natural beauty and its religious colourfulness, theatre activity in Kashmir reached to its height during the ancient period of Kashmir history. There is a definite evidence to prove that in the days of Kshemendra, Kashmir had theatre of its own. A magnificent stage was erected for the royal court where famous dancers, musicians and actors used to perform, which were highly applauded by the King and the people (Yasir,….). In the words of Yasir (2009);

Historically the golden era of our music, dance and drama art forms – the richest performing art forms of Kashmir, was the 4th to 7th century AD, when our music, dance and drama had reached to the zenith of its glory and every village had a stage of its own, where music, dance and drama performances were held.
J. L. Kaul (1970) also supports this in the words, "Though very little of the dramatic literature has descended to us, and that too only in Sanskrit, yet we know that theatre was inseparably associated with royal glamour." He gives the proof of one verse by Lal Ded in the 14th century about "tsamari chhetri rath simhasan/ ahlad netyras tuli-pryenkh" (feathery canopies, chariots, throne/ pleasurable theatre and cushioned swings).

However, this trend did not last long. In 14th century only the glory of Kashmiri theatre started losing its sheen. As Bhawani Bashir Yasir (2009) explains it:

With the advent of Muslim rule (14th century) in Kashmir, the Kashmiri theatre received comparatively a great setback in urban community due to lack of state patronage and public support for obvious reasons. However, it did not disappear completely in Kashmir as the folk theatre form continued to receive applause in the remote and rural areas when they were performing in the folk-theatre-festival called Bhand-Jashan on one hand and entertaining the public on another.

But Farooq Fayaz (2008) considers it as a transfer of tradition from one hand to another hand. He says, "Before the establishment of the Muslim Sultanat in Kashmir, theatre activity in Kashmir was largely associated with socio-religious ceremonies. Both archeological and literary evidences suggest that the theatre performances used to be organised on the eve of festivals and on the birthdays of Lord Buddha, Lord Krishna and other deities. In the backdrop of pre Muslim religious personality of Kashmir, fine arts like singing, sculpture, music, dancing and theatre performances became part of the devotional exercise." He further says:

With the establishment of Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir, the theatre in tune with earliest Hindu traditions, continued to attain legitimacy from the saintly centres. The only difference was that the place of Maths, Monasteries and Temples was taken by Shrines, Khanqahas and Rishi abodes.

J. L. Kaul (1970), also gives an example of a couplet written by the poet Nur-ud-Din (c. 1400), which says '*Kyiliky gari gari resh lagan, / yithi pethir lagan manz rangan*' (the ascetics of today, like actors, go from door to door, / and perform as if they are on the stage floor). In his words, "Equipped with simple musical instruments like a drum, *dahri* (a rod with iron rings), or *sunray* (*swarnai*, a pipe), such folk performers wandered from house to house, exhibited their skill and got their aliment from those whom they entertained."

An improved form of Kashmiri folk theatre was the Pethir, a satirical comedy in which several actors exaggeratedly represented individuals, classes or supernatural beings with the purpose of ridiculing human follies, frailties and cruelties. Pethirs on social themes, with musical interludes are still known as Bandi Pethir – a genre preserved through the efforts of Mohammad subhan Bhagat (1927-93), himself born into a family of these performers ((Kaul, 1970 in Lal, 2009). So deep was people's attachment to these actors of Bhande Pather that during the days of acute crises, prompted by natural calamities like floods, famines, epidemics, fires and recurring earthquake, common masses sought their help by arranging special prayer performances at the Shrines of Sufi and Reshi saints (Fayaz, 2008). In the words of Bhawani Bashir Yasir:

Bhand Pather is the oldest and richest art form of our folk theatre, which has preserved our theatre art form in all its manifestations. It has survived in all times only for its popular idiom, versatile metaphor and unique style in content, presentation and performance. These folk and wandering performs are spread all-over Kashmir and have peculiar dress, improvising wit and humour in their acting, dancing and music.

Various Forms of Kashmiri folk theatre
BHAND PATHER
The oldest and popular form of Kashmiri folk theatre is Bhand Pather. The word *Bhand* with its origin in the Sanskrit word "Band" meaning comical behavior. The word Bhand Pather is the combination of two Sanskrit words- Bhand stands for jester and Pather means dramatic personnel. But in Kashmiri parlance, Bhand refers to folk actor and Pather points to dramatic performance with a greater tinge of imitation and exaggeration. (Fayaz, 2008)

Bhand Pather is a distinct Kashmiri performing art combining mimicry, buffoonery, music and dance, which emerged some 2000 years ago and reached its culmination in the tenth century. Certain features have been present in every Bhand Pather over the centuries. Typically it starts with a musical performance which, besides attracting spectators, creates an emotional mood that accord with the intended drama. The three essential components of Bhand music are the oboe- like *swarnai*, a small one sided stick- drum (*nagari*), and a big dhol. At the end of the musical prelude, called *catusak,* the performers sing hymns and pray for the well being of the audience. This is followed by a prologue to the Pather, in the form *of* a brief conversation among the three main actors who intimate the theme and plot. The principal actors are the *magun* (the leader), *sutardhar* (the commentator), *vidushak* or *maskhari* (the jester), and *pariparsok* or *kurivol* (the lasher). The *magun* produces the play and prays for the people, the *sutardhar* comments on the action, the *maskhari* delights the spectators with his silly tricks and taunts, and the *kurivol* lashes the jester whenever he goes beyond control (Lal, 2009).

Bhands of Kashmir existed in various types and forms which changed with the tide of time and reemerged later in a more acceptable and contemporary forms. Among the present living forms, Wattal Pather is considered the oldest and the Angrez Pather as the latest. The essence of all Pathers is not their antiquity or modernity but flexibility (Fayaz, 2008). The acts performed by the Bhands are not the old stories only but today they incorporate new contemporary themes like social, environment, gender etc which they have accommodated in their acts. Some of the living day Pathers are:

1. Dard Pather: The play portrays the picture of Kashmir under the Dards a symbol for Afghan governing elite.
2. Gosaine Pather: The Pather focuses on the historical reality that Kashmir has been abode of saints, sadhus, peers and sufis; purity of faith, search for the ultimate reality and universal brotherhood has been the dominant scene over the centuries.
3. Buhir/ Bata Pathar: Buhir Pathar and Bata Pathar are the two versions of the same theme. These plays portray the characteristics of the most prominent Pandit community as it lived centuries back.
4. Shikargah Pathar: This dance drama Pathar is named after the great sanctuary- Shikargah laid out by the Mughals when they ruled Kashmir. It is the only Pathar in which dummy masks are used to represent various animals.
5. Raaze Pathar: The Pathar refreshes the bad memories of the Afghan rule in Kashmir, by depicting the lavish styles of the kings and their courtiers, downtrodden oppressed state of masses, rampant corruption and the high handedness of the officials.
6. Aarmen Pathar: This Pathar depicts the lifestyle of aarem (vegetable farmers) section of the society.
7. Waatal Pathar: It is one of the oldest Pathars performed today, depicting lifestyle of the Waatal tribe.
8. Bakarwal Pathar: This Pathar depicts the life of a backward class called Bakarwals, a shepherd tribe from hilly areas of the state.
9. Angrez Pathar: This Pathar depicts the English oppression of the Kashmiris. (Fayaz, 2008)
   Bandi Pather today has deviated from many of the norms of the classical Pathar, but in spite of the Vicissitudes of the centuries, its rudiments remained intact. It continues as a full blown dramatic form in which several arts like masks, mime, music and dance converge (Lal, 2009).

CHAKRI

It is one of the most popular forms of the traditional music of Kashmir. Depicting the melodic tradition of folk music that evolved in the valley of Kashmir many decades back, Chakri truly upholds the heritage of

culture and arts in the place. The people of Kashmir are quite popular for owing a multi-cultural past. Chakri is an excellent outcome of that very musical history of the valley. The rhythmic accompaniments that are used while singing the folk song of Chakri include Rabab, Garaha and Sarangi. Performed by the folk population of Kashmir, Chakri is considered incomplete without the apt support of the musical instruments. Although a form of ancient folk category, Chakri has today went through some minor variations. For one, the advent of harmonium apart from the usual instruments is quite new. However the basic theme and flavor of Chakri is still intact which shows the passion of Jammu & Kashmir culture enthusiasts. (http://www.kashmironline.net, accessed on 2nd October, 2013).

Same instruments are also used to recite Kashmiri and Persian fairy tales and stories viz Yousuf-Zulaikha, Laila-Majnun , Hemal Nagray, Zeeny Mazoor,Hazrati Suleman Bilquis etc. Chakri is followed by the musical rouf. Chakri has been divided into three patterns as per the geographical location. In northern Kashmir the style is more influenced by Poshtu and Afghan style of music whereas the style is quite different in the southern Kashmir where the lead singer generally sings in the higher octave (http://kashmirimusic.weebly.com, accessed on 2nd October, 2013).

 'Chhakar' has an important place in the Kashmiri folk music tradition. It entertains old and young ladies and gents. The credit of making 'Chhakar' famous in Kashmir goes to the professional artists who, along with their full team, sing and create a musical environment, which is full of fun and entertainment. 'Chhakar' traditionally was confined to villages, though songs, set to 'Chhakri' music, were sung on wedding occasions in the urban areas. The credit of popularizing it goes to Radio Kashmir. We often watch 'Chhakar' programmes on T.V or hear it on All India Radio, in the valley. Chhakar' gayaki is not new. This type of folk song has been in practice for a long time. According to Raj Tarangini, king Bhashmakar had made a type of folk song popular in which, utensils of clay or brass was used. Even today, we find gaagar, chimta, matka, ghada, etc. being used as the instruments with 'Chhakar' gayaki. 'Chhakar' is sung collectively in a group. 'Chhakar which is sung by professionals has only men in it. A very important feature of 'Chhakar' gayaki is that the singers themselves play the instruments. The style of singing such that the first line of the song is sung by the leading singer. The same line is repeated by other members of the group. The speed of the song gets very fast and the work gets difficult to understand. When 'Chhakar' is in its full swing, people from around get up and start dancing. (Dhar, 2003)

ROUF
'Rouf' is a very interesting and emotional type of folk dance. It is called 'Row', in the capital and
'Rouf' in villages. It is directly related with spring. On the basis of the climatic conditions, there are four seasons in Kashmir. Every season lasts for three months. At the outset of spring,

Kashmiris entertain themselves by dancing and singing. This practice was prevalent even in the ancient times, which is mentioned in Nilmatapurana. It has been proved that 'Rouf' has been inspired by the bee and is the imitation of the lovemaking of the black bee. 'Rouf' might have been originated from 'dwarf dance', of vedic language. In Vedic language, it means a bee, which further developed as Rouf. In 'Rouf' beautiful ladies form two or four groups, consisting of three or four girls. They face each other. Each girl puts her arms on the arms of the other girl. All the girls jointly bring their feet forward and then backward. This is how the dance proceeds. The songs are in question answer form. In Kashmir, in far-flung villages, usually two groups are formed. One group questions and the other answers, musically, while dancing 'Rouf' (Dhar, 2003)

Naind Gyavun

Naind Gyavun is related to farmers folk songs. Naind is the changed form of the word 'Ninad of Sanskrit'. The word 'gyavun' also has originated from gayan of Sanskrit. The tradition of agricultural songs is prevalent in every state and region. The nature of agricultural songs is joyful, exciting and merry making. Songs make difficult tasks of the farmers easy and enhances their zeal. India is an agricultural country. The tradition of agricultural songs is prevalent in every state and region. The nature of agricultural songs is joyful exciting and merrymaking. The people in Kashmir are rice eaters. To prepare the paddy fields is not an easy task. It requires hard labour with proper planning. Singing makes difficult tasks of the farmers easy and enhances their zeal.

When the plants start dancing in the breeze, the farmers come back for cultivation of the soil and weed. Making the fields suitable for agriculture is called 'Naindai'. In harvest season which comes in Kashmir in October and November farmers have to be quick and vigilant in harvesting and carrying grains for storing. They are scared of the uncertainty of rains and snow. They find no breathing time in between, but sometimes give pause to their work. They sit beneath a tree and entertain themselves with singing. It is accompanied by 'Manjira' etc. Since these songs sung in chorus pertain to farming, they are called 'Naindan Chhakar' (Dhar, 2003).

LADISHAH

Ladishah is one of the most important parts of Kashmiri music tradition. Ladishah is a sarcastical form of singing. The songs are sung resonating the present social and political conditions and are utterly humorous. The singer generally called ladishah move from village to village performing generally during the harvesting period. The songs are on issues be it cultural, social or political. The songs reflect the truth and that sometimes makes the song a bit hard to digest, but they are totally entertaining (http://kashmirimusic.weebly.com, accessed on 2nd October, 2013).

'Ladishah' is originated from ladi and Shah. 'Ladi' means a row or line-'Shah' has been added with the passage of time with the coming of Muslim rulers. 'Ladishah' is a satirical song, which reflects the society's condition. It is a type of song, which makes people laugh, but at the same time, it is a satire on the existing government. The singers of 'ladishah' remain in groups and carry an instrument with them, which is called 'dhukar' or 'dhukru'. 'Dhukar' is made of iron (1 -1.5 mtrs. long), with metal rings hanging around it. The singers wander from village to village. They generally go to other villages at the time of harvest to earn their livelihood. They are satirists, who compose their songs on the spot, on the issues pertaining to social, small and big evils. Their manner is very humorous and entertaining, but bitter at the same time. (Dhar, 2003)

Purpose of the present study

In the backdrop of above mentioned historical, social and cultural facts about the theatre in Kashmir, our study examines the following questions:

  i. What are the changes in the forms of theatre and communication in Kashmir since its inception to the present era?
 ii. How much the present generation is interested in the age old tradition of theatre in Kashmir?
iii. What are the challenges before the theatre groups trying to regain the glory of Kashmiri theatre?

Methodology

This study uses hybrid of methodologies, but the most prominent one is Case Study. Out of all functional theatre groups of Kashmir valley, two groups – Funtoosh and Ekta were selected to study deeply. This selection was done on the basis of popularity of the groups and their experiences. Where Ekta started much earlier in 1988, Funtoosh recently came into limelight with its hit events since 2012. This way, we got two samples from two different eras, which has enabled us to compare the challenges and opportunities before both these groups.

Both the groups we have selected are peculiar in themselves. Where EKTA is not only a theatre performance group, but also it trains the Kashmiri people by organising workshops, Funtoosh is presenting the old traditional culture in a new modern flavour.

Information's were collected by meeting and discussing thoroughly with the members of the theatre groups which allowed us not only to gather informations but also to observe their work minutely. Apart from this, personal communications on phones and by e mails were also used. The informations have also been gathered from their official websites. All this helped us in understanding the two selected theatre groups and their communication patterns, their innovations and achievements.

Case Study I: Funtoosh

Funtoosh is a brainchild of four youngsters - Sibath Qureshi (25) Rayes Mohi ud din (28), Abrar Ali (25), Shehla Arif (27) [all film making and mass communication professionals]. It started in 2012, so young, but so vibrant. The idea behind Funtoosh was to provide the Kashmiri people a taste of their own culture in a new style, in a new package with more entertainment, so that the culture they are proud of would not die silently. Funtoosh tried to present the events in a style that appealed the young modern generation so that instead of discarding their own traditional forms of entertainment, they would appreciate them and accept them as a part of their culture. They plan their events at a time, when Kashmiris are reluctant and prefer to stay at home like at the time of 'Chillaikalan' ('Chilai Kalan' is the coldest period of the winter starts from December 21 each year) or at 'Ramzan'. They want to give Kashmiris a message that 'Chillaikalan' is time to celebrate, time to enjoy snow rather than sitting at home.

Though it was risky to organise an event at a time when most of the people are unwilling to come out of their homes and that too for entertainment by spending money to buy a ticket, Funtoosh did it. Here, in Kashmir the culture was to watch such programmes for free, but Funtoosh introduced a culture of buying tickets among Kashmiris to enjoy such theatrical programmes and they are successful in attracting at least 3000 people per day to watch their shows.

The story of Funtoosh is not a fairy tale to come true, rather they had to struggle a lot and still they are struggling. First even their own families did not support them. In Kashmir, if anybody wants to join theatre, he is considered 'useless' and the family becomes weary that how would he survive on such hobbies. This is particularly disturbing and culturally banned for girls. In Kashmiri society, girls cannot perform on stage, otherwise people would react badly, but Funtoosh did it in a very respectable way. They presented girls on stage in traditional attires and made them perform on sensitive issues, which the audience accepted. They proudly claim that they did not face any controversy since they have started. But they complain that people react badly when they come to know what Funtoosh is doing.

They majorly communicate social messages through their dramas. They first take auditions for each event and then themselves train the selected person for the event. They showed me a mime act (silent drama) where boys show by acting how smoking is so harmful for life. Their mime group also got selected in Color television's programme 'India Got Talent'. This was a big breakthrough for Funtoosh and people started recognizing its ability. The confidence level of the participating students also boosted after performing on national television.

Usually, if any event is organised in the valley by Cultural Academy or by National School of Drama, they hire professionals for that, but Funtoosh believes in hidden talent. They do their own audition for each event. Select the potential performers and Shehla Arif train them according to the event. Even for Bhand-Pather, they selected the students and trained them instead of using the professional Bhands, unlike their contemporary groups. This way, not only they introduced innovation and freshness in the performances, but also attached the students' group to the traditional art form of Kashmir. Their performances include from Bhand-Pather to the fusion of Kashmiri musical instruments with bollywood songs, from mime to portraying the traditional arts of Kashmir which are dying now.

The main attraction of Funtoosh is its inauguration which they do with an unique blend of traditional and modern culture. For example, they introduced their first event 'Chillaikalan 2012' with the entry of a robot who said that with the advancement of technology, even 'Chillaikalan' has been modernized and it came in the form of a robot. For promotion of the event they created a mascot of a tall joker, who used to roam around and invite people to the event. It got a very encouraging response from the people as well. In one of the event they inaugurated it by welcoming emperor Akbar.

The excerpts of an interview with one of the founder member of Funtoosh, Mr. Abrar Ali is given below:
1. In your words 'What is Funtoosh'. How would you like to define it?
"Funtoosh" is a house of entertainment where music, theatre, Dance and various other art forms are blended and delivered in a unique and creative way and later exhibited. To us, Funtoosh is more than an event management company now, as we do not only deliver and supply imaginative and reliable entertainment but also design the young and aspiring artists to identify their hidden talents within them. Funtoosh is a family where organizers, artists, clients, and our valued audiences trust each other and work hard sincerely to actually preserve Kashmir's prosperous cultural heritage and language. The impression of our events has been strong enough to make people adapt "Funtoosh" as an only entertainment brand of the valley. Funtoosh is an institution, a mirror of society and its creative components.

2. How Funtoosh started?
Factually saying the real Funtoosh is yet to start. What has stated by now is only the lights and sounds of the action to be seen in future. Funtoosh, 2 years back was only a serious discussion between four crew members almost unknown to each other on the sets of a film being shot in Kashmir. The topic of the discussion was "nobody cares about the culture of Kashmir?" The discussion would have continued and faded out later if all four of us would have not united on the line, 'Let us care". A month later, we hosted FUNTOOSH Jashne Chillai Kalaan". The event was *mashallah* rated as a best ever cultural festival of the valley. Even the international news agencies carried the news.

3. A brief about the events organized by Funtoosh.

- **"Funtoosh jashne Chillai Kalaan 2012"**

The brand new concept was aimed to bring about a cheerful rendezvous to people in the chilling winter with a blend of culture-entertainment and art. Our intentions were purely to facilitate the young talents in the field of performing arts. The event was witnessed with a huge number of audiences who sat on the edge of their sets during the whole show.

- **"Funtoosh Jashne Bahaar 2012"**

The 'Jashn-e Bahaar' put forth the real picture of beautiful Kashmir through live and exclusive illustration of Kashmir's famous social and cultural history. The set of the show was created as to reflect the real ambiance of the heaven on earth Kashmir. Jashne Bahaar facilitated Kashmir's valued arts and crafts and appreciated those golden hands of Kashmiri artisans who still love to grip themselves towards such arts and keep the same alive in the society.

Such arts included Paper mashie, willow work, wood carving, carpet weaving, and other hand crafted products. The item turned out to be the most liked by the audiences. Kashmiri folk theatre like 'Bhand Pather' and 'kashmir Charki' in music genre were the other attractions on the event. . It was on the sets of Jashne Bahaar that Kashmir's first 'Mime Group' was launched**.**

- **"Funtoosh jashne Chillai Kalaan 2013"**

Audiences wish to digest a variety of things; different and new. So was the time to think out of box on this event. The concept of LIVING STATUES, first time in Kashmir was brought on the stage of Jashne Chillal Kalaan 2013. Audiences highly appreciated the exhibition of living statues blended with a prayer performance by kids on of the famous Poems of Alama Iqbal (r.a) that is "lab be aati hai dua ban kay tamanna   meri"

It is imperative to mention here that "Funtoosh group" was already been selected for the India's Largest TV Reality Show "India's Got Talent" where the "Funtoosh Mime group" (students with the hobbies of dance and acting) qualified up to semi finals round and returned proud with a flag of inspiration to the other aspiring artists of the valley.

- **"Funtoosh Jashne Reat Koal 2013"**

Celebrating all seasons of Kashmir didn't leave the 'Summers of Kashmir as any exception. A different set of artists emerged and expressed their will to exhibit their efforts towards art. A session of training and rehearsals under the guidance of 4 core organizers helped the artists to deliver the performances on time and effectively. Theatre artists, Mime group, dance group, and a twin sister duo performed so beautifully and dynamically on stage that audiences wanted the organizers to repeat all the items once again for them.

- **Funtoosh RAMAZAN ART EXRESSION**

First of its kind, This 2 day Art Exhibition and Competition was organized on the eve of Holy month of Ramazan and was based on a theme 'Islam and Ramazan'.

The initiative was to bring the local youth ESPECIALLY KIDS interested in art of painting together and explore their expression of art towards the month of 'Ramazan'. The competition witnessed a huge response from students, kids and other young art lovers and their parents.

The competition was judged by the renowned artists of valley. The best among the art entries were awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes in senior and junior category.

The first day of the event was witnessed by the participants exploring their talent of painting on the canvas followed by the exhibition and awards on the next day. More than 350 students participated in the event.

Events in Pipeline:
A short film festival, Funtoosh Jashne Harud 2103 and Funtoosh Jashne real koal 2014.

4. What do you communicate through Funtoosh?
FUNTOOSH communicates Society of Artists with the Society of art lovers. Funtoosh communicates love and care of those who have unintentionally been neglected with those who wish to deliver an amount of appreciation to the deserving. So far, Funtoosh has been successful in doing so. With fantastic audience feedback and gratitude, we wish to be in the wave of communication with the people. May almighty help us in future too.

5. How innovative your communication style is?
Living statues, Painted faces, technological icons, beautifully dressed fairies and angels have turned out to be the goal achieving innovations of FUNTOOSH. We achieve this by approaching each brief on a personal level, listening to and understanding the needs of our artists, audiences, sponsors, therefore providing a creative, realistic and aesthetically correct content of Funtoosh Event has become a permanent trend by the organizers.

6. How is Funtoosh different from other such groups?
We ourselves do not strictly believe that we are different. Yes, our audiences make us feel so. We believe other people too can step forward and contribute towards the social beliefs, morals, culture and valued tradition. Our modes of promotion are diverse like generally a "Mascot" is made to promote Funtoosh events in public places like parks, markets, shopping malls. The content of our events has been so interestingly consistent and so distinctive that our fans eagerly keep waiting for our next events. Thank you.

Our team comprising of four core members namely Sibath Qureshi (25) Rayes Mohi ud din (28), Abrar Ali (25), Shehla Arif (27) [all film making and mass communication professionals] look forward to continue such events and production works in future in more powerful and innovative ways. Those which shall not only provide the new stage for the young talents via theatre and new art forms but shall also contribute towards the society in a positive manner by exhibiting the social messages and various awareness programs.

OTHER PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES DONE
- A documentary film for Department of Animal husbandry J&K in 2011.
- Health and IT segments for Doordarshan Srinagar Kashmir in 2011.
- Documentary film 'Glaciers' for DD Srinagar in 2012.
- Cinematography for the Urdu serial 'Kashish Rishton Ki' for DD Srinagar in 2012
- Sound designing for the Kashmir first 35mm feature film 'PARTAV' in 2012
- Radio programs for NRHM in 2013
- 'Kashmiri handicrafts show' for J & K Bank in 2012.
- Radio programs for Rural Development department J&K in 2013.
- Organized a 3 days Poetry festival for 'Indian council for Cultural Relations' at Radio Kashmir Srinagar.
- Theatre play *"bijli choor"* for Power development department J&K.
- 'Quit smoking' mime performed for J&K Bank 2013.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS
- Semi finals of the reality TV show India's Got Talent for Colors TV in 2011.

- 3 years consecutive award winner of the state photography exhibition and competition for years 2010, 2011, 2012.
- Pre semi finalists of the reality TV show India's Got Talent for Colors TV in 2012.
- National award as "Best documentary film for the film Glaciers'
- Rated as state's Best Entertainment Brand by Hindustan Times for the year 2012.

Case Study II: EKTA – Ensemble Kashmir Theatre Academi

The Ensemble Kashmir Theatre Akademi or EKTA was founded by Bhawani Bashir Yasir in 1988, but it could not sustain due to militant insurgency in 1990. It again came into existence in 2004 and gave a new birth to the declining theatre movement in Kashmir. In the words of founder of EKTA, Bhawani Bashir Yasir, "The theatre of Kashmir has suffered the greatest debacle during the last twenty years of political turmoil. No serious and sensible theatre activity was possible to be organised even by the leading institutions of theatre movement anywhere in rural or urban areas of the Valley. The situation has deteriorated to the worst when there has been no serious effort from the government bodies to save the theatre from such a debacle. So much so I believe that a nation without theatre is a dead nation."

Describing his vision about the theatre in Kashmir, he further says, "Being a torch-bearer of theatre movement in Kashmir, having been professionally involved and active in theatre for the last 40 years and the only alumni of National School of Drama, New Delhi permanently based in the valley, I feel it my moral duty rather national obligation to take all possible and practical measures to revive, rejuvenate and boost-up a concerted national theatre movement in Kashmir, which alone would help it to earn legitimacy and popular support."

Highlighting the political unrest in the valley and its repercussions on Kashmiri theare, he says, "Having been directly and deeply observing and witnessing the ongoing political happenings, State's apathy towards our theatre and its effect and impact on our cultural ethos, I am motivated rather moved by the circumstances to bridge the gulf between the people and the society and to work for rebuilding our rich socio-cultural ethos vis-à-vis theatre of Kashmir."

Further emphasizing on the need of such an institution in Kashmir, he says, "This is primary need of the hour to explore, innovate and re-generate a new national theatre movement in Kashmir. And to make concerted effort in that direction, there is a great need of an independent Theatre Academy in Kashmir. Hence – the EKTA."

Achievements

- EKTA conducted month long theatre workshops conducted with student participation from all the districts of Srinagar.
- State level seminars held on various prospects of theatre in Kashmir like; Prospects for Institutionalization of Professional Theatre of Kashmir, 2011, Challenges to contemporary theatre of Kashmir, 2009.
- State level mega theatre festivals held like; Megha Budshah Theatre Festival – 2011 held at Abhinav Theatre, Jammu.
- Budshah Theatre Award -2011, EKTA launched five awards in Theatre in the category of Playwright, Direction, Acting, Stage-Craft and Life Time Achievement in the field of theatre.
- Many theatre plays like Aka Nandun, Aes Chha Baeqil, Jamhoriyet Zindabad, Turnove produced over the years at EKTA.

- Many English plays translated and performed at EKTA.

Limitations

- The informations about EKTA were gathered mostly from their website and their annual report, because most of the members of EKTA are Kashmiri Pandits and they could not be accessed as they do not stay in valley.
- We did not get any chance to view any of the theatrical performances live by both the groups as they conduct such performances at a certain time and in case of EKTA, archives were also not available.
- Since very little literature is available on the theatre of Kashmir, we had to rely on the informations provided on websites, blogs and few books.

Conclusion

In spite of the rich tradition of theatre in Kashmir, now a days it is not being encouraged by the society. Especially for girls, it is considered as a prohibited area. The experiences of Funtoosh have shown that young generation is interested in theatre and many of them want to make it their profession, but their families do not support them. Also there is no financial backing for such hobbies. Though EKTA provides training to the youngsters through workshops, still they could not attract large number of participants. Funtoosh tries to attract youngsters by presenting the old traditional theatrical forms in new modernized flavour, so that it can keep pace with the changing time and interests of the people. Its innovative communication style attracts a large number of people. But still theatre has to go a long way in Kashmir in order to revive its age old glory.

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NEW MEDIA: PROBLEMS & PROSPECTS

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Abstract

In the present era new media or what we call www is a set of new technologies that become increasingly embedded in everyday use and is spreading very fast around the globe. Since its inception it is making tremendous efforts to educate, inform and persuade the masses globally. The new media is a form of mass media that includes Internet, podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, apps, virtual worlds and more.

The term new media is a broad term in media studies that emerged in the 80's, with its emergence it slowly broken the geographical barriers for its users and turned the whole world into a global village by breaking the boundaries and frontiers, reaching every part of the world. The new media have consequences upon the social, political and economic values of people. With the growing dominance of the Internet, blog, chat, Social sites etc, the use of New Media has already begun and consequently, communication is rapidly changing and becoming mobile, interactive, personalized and multi-channel. Internet has served as a vehicle or as a channel to convey information in a useful and easy to understand manner. This extraordinary revolution is affecting the basic structure of societies we live in. New Media is considered as an important source in helping the society in different spheres of life.

New media hold out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as, interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. It is more technology driven on one hand and offer more control in the hands of user on the other hand. Although it has more positive qualities but at the same time it is also considered harmful for the users to some context. What distinguishes new media from traditional media is not the digitizing of media content into bits, but the dynamic life of the new media content and its interactive relationship with the media consumer.

This paper has discussed different positive and negative notions attached to the use of new media. The different forms of new media especially the Internet has become very important tool in India and the world over among its users. Thus, the study aims at finding out the relevance of the new media and the problems/ prospects related to it. In this paper has discussed the effectiveness of New Media in day to day life. New Media here refers to the Internet in its newest version, Web 2.0 and mobile platforms.

Keywords: New Media, Mass Media, Internet, Social Networking sites, Problems, Prospects

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the impact of new media has been witnessed in recent years, with online platforms becoming increasingly powerful mechanisms for mobilizing popular support. India is no exception and people from all classes use the power of modern media to make their voices heard. One of the important promises of the new media is the democratization of the creation, publishing, distribution and consumption of media content (Wikipedia, 2011). New Media is a legitimate tool of persuasion and the beauty of new

media lies in the fact that we also get the counter argument to what we are saying at one place. New Media which broadly includes the web world i.e www. or the internet, mobile world and other technologies is used by the people from different walks of like especially the youths and teenagers as a medium of communication and its use has become a routine for social interactions and a method of content creations for youngsters.

What we call New Media is a global network which connects millions of computers with a number of agreed format protocol, enabling users to transfer data from one to the other. Even though the internet evolved more than three decades ago, the web was introduced only in 1991. Deuze (2003, p206) considered the internet as a hybrid medium, and online news as the fourth kind of journalism. The World Wide Web allows users to locate and view the multimedia based documents on almost any subject.

Today there are millions of users across the globe that are using internet with many more joining online every day. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) pegged the number of Internet subscribers at 164.81 million as of March 31, 2013 in India, with seven out of eight accessing the Internet from their mobile phones. India has bypassed Japan to become the world's third largest Internet user after China and the United States, and its users are significantly younger than those of other emerging economies, global digital measurement and analytics firm COM Score has said in a report. "Mobile phone based Internet usage is a key component of Indian Internet usage, In addition, many Netizens are using dongles to access the Internet. By October, the nation had crossed the 200 million mark, says a report released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI) and IMRB. The report estimates 243 million internet users in the country by June 2014, overtaking the US as the world's second largest internet base after China. The US currently has an estimated 207 million internet users, while China has 300 million.

Table 1: Internet World Users by Language
- English : 29.4 %
- Chinese : 18.9 %
- Spanish : 8.5 %
- Japanese : 6.4 %
- French : 4.7 %
- German : 4.2 %
- Arabic : 4.1 %
- Portuguese : 4.0 %
- Korean : 2.4 %
- Italian : 2.4 %
- Top 10 Languages : 84.9 %
- Rest of the languages : 15.1 %
- Total : 100 %

Source: www.internetworldstat.com

Table 2: Top 10 Internet Using Countries - 2012 Q2 – With highest no. of users in millions
- China : 538.0
- United States : 245.2
- India : 137.0
- Japan: 101.2
- Brazil : 88.5
- Russia : 68.0

- Germany : 67.5
- Indonesia : 55.0
- United Kingdom : 52.7
- France : 52.2

Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstat.com

New media differs from traditional 'old' media in its structures of ownership and participation and directly challenge the monopoly on mass communication possessed by traditional media producers: 'The internet has fragmented and decentralised the context in which communication occurs' (ibid, 2009). New Media help people to connect , it easily collaborate with other people and create new content ,services ,communities and channels of communication that help people to deliver information and services. Geniets (2010) also finds that new media provides a potential break with old social hierarchies: 'new technologies give individual producers of media content more freedom, and empower them to expose, interact with and reveal backstage behaviour related information about themselves as well as others to a mass media audience'. However, while new media, overall, is identified as an agent for (generally positive) social change, its effects are not gender neutral.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "**New media**" is defined as an interactive forms of communication that use the Internet, including podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and more. Basic definition of 'new media' provided by Google web definitions and Wikipedia which defines it as 'on-demand access to content any time, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation. Another aspect of new media is the real-time generation of new, unregulated content' (Google web definitions, Wikipedia). Most technologies described "new media" as digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible and interactive. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS and DVDs. It does not include television programmes, feature films, magazines, books or paper- based publications, unless they contain technologies that enable digital interactivity (Wikipedia, 2011).

The rise of new media has increased communication between people all over the world. It has allowed people to express themselves through blogs, websites, pictures and other user friendly media. People of all ages and backgrounds are online and using new media tools for a variety of reasons such as searching of information and connecting with others. Globalization is taking place at a very fast speed as a result of the evolution of new media technologies. New media makes it possible for *anyone* to create, modify, and share content with others, using relatively simple tools that are often free or inexpensive and it radically breaks the connection between physical place and social place, making physical location much less significant for our social relationships.

According to Carry (2010), the media today are more diffused and chaotic than ever. According to Mia Consalvo the term new media is ambiguous and relative—what was new in the early 1990s (World Wide Web pages, for example) became mundane and accepted within a decade and was quickly replaced by newer new media such as digital video recorders and Weblogs. Moreover, many new technologies (or media) fail to take the path predicted for them in their use or future development (Marvin, 1988).

New media requires a computer or mobile device with Internet access and the product is called website. Every website has an address. To see a website one needs a computer. On every computer there is an icon, called internet explorer. After clicking on it, a screen opens up, after typing the address of the website, it opens up. Then one can see and read whatever is posted on website.

Internet is just a world passing around notes in the classroom," said American television host and stand-up comedian Jon Stewart about the whole World Wide Web. The Internet is one of the greatest inventions of the 20th Century as it has significantly changed the way modern people communicate. Internet – as a master medium and a revolutionary hybrid of the traditional medium offers an opportunity of two way communication feedback loop. Due to its speed and world wide reach it has created a "global village", in which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door, it has opened up windows of opportunity for many people. Using the Internet, users can easily disseminate information to people across the world. One of the innovations in recent years has been the use of internet as a form of new media., the creation of different websites that focus on different subjects in terms of education , literacy , health , knowledge , lifestyle and many more areas have been proliferated. Today it is possible, to find anything related to anything by typing keyword searches using a reliable internet browser.

Internet help people to connect , it easily collaborate with other people and create new content ,services ,communities and channels of communication that help people to deliver information and services. The Internet power as the platform for the World Wide Web is manifested in Metcalfe's Law, which states that "the power of the Web is enhanced through the network effect produced as resource links by network members" (Esplen & Brody, 2007, p.14). This means as the number of people in a network grows; the connectivity between members also increases (Ibid.). This characteristic enabling network members to connect to one another is said to increase social capital among network users.

Apart from Internet other forms of New Media are:
- **BLOGS:** Blogs are website with regular updates and typical combine text, image (graphics or video), and links to other web pages.
- **MOBILE:** Mobile is a way of receiving, viewing and /or sending information to and from celluar phones and other wireless devices.
- **PHOTO SHARING SITES: Photo** sharing sites allow to literally "share photos", online with friend family and colleagues, like Flickr.
- **SOCIAL BOOKMARKING:** Social bookmarking is a way to store, organise and search your favourite webpages on the Internet.
- **TEXTING:** - Text messaging is a way of sending information to and from cell phones and other personal digital assistants (PDA's) like tablet.
- **WEBCAST /WEBINARS:** A webcast is a way of broadcasting over the internet. A webinar is a specific type of web conference.
- **MASHUPS:** A mashup is a website "that combines data from more than one source into a single integrated tool".
- **PODCASTS:** Pod casts (a blend of the term "I Pod" and "broadcast") are audio or video files that you can listen or watch on your computer or on a variety of media devices like i Pod and cell phones.
- **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:** Social networking sites are online communities that give opportunities to connect with, or provide resources to friends, family, clients and colleagues with common interests.

- **VIDEO SHARING SITES:** Video sharing sites allow to upload and share online videos similar to photo sharing sites. You Tube is the most well known of these types of sites.

SIGNIFICANCE

The term new media is a legitimate tool of persuasion and the beauty of new media lies in the fact that we also get the counter argument to what we are saying at one place because they break boundaries and frontiers, reaching every part of the world New Media which broadly includes the web world i.e www. or the internet , mobile world and other technologies is used by the people from different walks of like especially the youths and teenagers as a medium of communication and its use has become a routine for social interactions and a method of content creations for youngsters. The new media have consequences upon the educational, social, political and economic values of people. New media hold out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as, interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. What distinguishes new media from traditional media is the dynamic life of the new media content and its interactive relationship with the media consumer. New Media cannot reach the people in the rural belt of the country owing to the digital divide. Youths especially women are moving to new media to get information about everything ranging from education, shopping to news and lifestyle products. Use of new media in the recent years has given a tremendous growth by the people from different walks of life. On one side it has shown positive results on the other side it is leading to negative results like the excessive use of internet substitute other activities like book reading , writing , indoor games , physical exercises etc.

This paper has discussed different problems and prospects in a broader way attached to the use of new media and aims at finding out the relevance of the new media along with its characteristics, limitations, uses and the suggestions related to its use.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW MEDIA

New media has certain unique characteristics which distinguish it from other media and make it superior. In fact the new media is the combination of all the earlier known media and thus can be exploited for different aspects be it education, empowerment, health shopping , online learning etc . They are a disparate set of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitization   and being widely available for personal use as a communication device. The new media   are not only or even   mainly concerned with   the   production and distribution of messages, but at least, mainly concerned with processing, exchange and storage. The features that distinguish websites from other Media are: multimedia, speed for updating information, horizontal distribution, decentralization, accessibility, no hierarchy, no censorship and interactivity (Lasica,1996). Interactivity is the primary characteristics of new technologies and it has caused a considerable reassessment of communication research (Rice and Williams, 1984: 35; Heeter, 1989: 221; Morris andOgan, 1996; Pavlik, 1997; Rafeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Ha and James, 1998, 459). According to Ward the Specific characteristics of online journalism are hypertext, interactivity and multimedia (Ward, 2002, p20-22).

Osei-Hwere and Carlson (2008:166) implies that when you have more media invented to take over or complement the old ones, then such media are termed - new media''. According to McQuail, cited by Baghdady in Pecora, Osei-Hwere and Carlson (2008), there are four main features that characterise the new media. These features are as follows:

- **DECENTRALIZATION** of encoded content.
- **A HIGHER CAPACITY** regarding transmission, which overcomes the former restrictions of cost, distance and capacity.
- **INTERACTIVITY** New media is known for its ability to involve the audience. This is known as interactivity. In comparison to other media forms, new media has the most evolved feedback system in place. In case of new media this interactivity is not only fast but also of diverse type.
- **FLEXIBILITY** in deciding on content and usage patterns (McQuail, 1994:21).

The other characteristics of New Media are:
- **CONNECT** people with information and services.
- **COLLABORATE** with other people—including those within your organization or community.
- **CREATE** new content, services, communities, and channels of communication that help you deliver information and services.
- **MULTIMEDIACY** use of multimedia is an important component of online journalism.
- **HYPERLINK** – it means mentioning links of related sites in news, features etc.
- **IMMEDIACY** – it means that any information can be updated immediately. Which keeps the users updated with the most recent information.
- **USER FRIENDLY** - New Media is user friendly and easy for use.

NEW MEDIA: PURPOSE, USE & LIMITATIONS

New media is a legitimate tool of persuasion and the beauty of new media lies in the fact that we also get the counter argument to what we are saying at one place. Youths, teenagers, film stars, politicians especially women are moving to new media to get information about everything ranging from education, shopping to news. According to the report released in June 2013 titled "Women & Web Study", out of the total 150 million Internet users in the country, around 60 million women in India are now online and use the Internet to manage their day-to-day life. With easy access to Internet at homes, cyber cafes, offices and growing adoption of smart phones, the Internet is being used by youngsters for a variety of things ranging from online education , downloads , health , shopping ,watching movies and chatting etc. More than 60 million people in India use social networks – equivalent to the total population of Italy India is home to a staggering 934 million mobile subscriptions – equivalent to more than 13% of the world's entire population Social Networking continues to be the main driver behind much of India's increased online activity, although social media penetration in India remains remarkably low at just 5%.Facebook continues to dominate India's social media landscape with more than 60 million active users, and the world's most popular platform show no signs of slowing either, adding a new Indian user every single second.

Political parties use the new media for carrying out their political activities. "New media helps to build a personal rapport, may be, more effective than door-to- door campaigning. Google hangouts are encouraging real time feedback from the public . Such hangouts for effective reach and reinstate the fact that politicians are available for the masses through advanced tech support. On 16th March Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi used the Google Hangout platform for the first time to interact party worker's from different states.In the information age, Political campaigning on social sites stands to benefit the parties in influencing their potential vote bank, its range and reach is restricted to a small audience. With the intelligent new media use "Aam Aadmi Party scored well. Armed with a group of techies, the party collected maximum donations via this media. AAP leader Yogendra Yadav announced that anyone can fix an appointment online with

him," It is also observed that the political parties are given more attention to the new media nowadays. It can be seen that along with door-to-door and mass-contact canvassing, the battle lines are being drawn in the world of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and apps for the Assembly polls 2014, The big two, the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as well as the others, are not letting go of traditional means to win votes, but none wants to be trailing online. Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is reaching out to smartphone-wielding voters through the 'Shiv Raj' app . The app, which can be downloaded from Google Play, tells people about 25 key welfare schemes the CM launched. In Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is building on its social media presence. The AAP too has downloadable apps for streaming in data (photographs/videos/FB updates/Twitter posts) and a web-based channel. New media offers politicians and political parties a chance to reach a broad and diverse audience. Unlike traditional media, which reach only a small portion of the society. These implications show that political parties in India has recognized the potential of new media to reach the masses. but the extent to which it is recognized is not very large because our country is still a rural country where a majority of the population is still residing in the rural areas. Though the rural area is electrified, there is immense power cut and a lack of proper telephone facility. As a result internet facility is a distant dream for such remote areas of the country.

There are different purpose of the new media like surfing internet , chatting , communicate , downloads , games , watching movies , online shopping etc .Users can share information on products, promotions and special events with one another through email, status updates, instant messaging or text messages. Users can also browse one another's stated interests and link to websites they like or dislike.

One of the advantages of the new media is that it is relatively cheap, when compared to the traditional media and it helps in socializing & it is an instant information provider tool and showcases the truth. On the other hand it has got some negative impact like surfing Internet is becoming substitute and we are getting addicted to it. It is possible that surfing internet may substitute other activities that promote concentration such as reading, games, sports, writing etc. New Media cannot reach the people in the rural belt of the country owing to the digital divide.

There are some disadvantages related to the use of new media for instance we spend a lot of our time on social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter etc. which leads to lack of concentration and hampers other activities. People are starting to interact with each other online instead of doing it face to face. There is no control on what we share on the Internet; a file one share on the Internet can spread so quickly and can be perceived as something different than firstly intended. Sometime fake news /videos are uploaded on the internet, which spreads very fast at an uncontrollable rate and it's hard to get it off. These deliberately misrepresented video are shared online and it leads to violence, a You Tube grab of the fake video circulated during the Muzaffarnagar riots created the tension between two communities. Pirating has become more powerful because of new media as files can be shared more freely and to a bigger audience.

Though the new media has vast applicability in day to day life, it has got certain limitations that are listed below:-

- **Limited to a privileged group** – still internet facility is a distant dream for poors and in villages.
- **Out of reach of rural audience** – people living in rural areas are still deprived of the new media.
- **Language is a problem while communicating**- New media is known for its ability to involve the audience in which language of communication plays an important role

- **Lack of computer education**- The majority of the population in our country is lacking in basic computer education, because of this use of Internet is limited to a sizeable population.
- **Cost of installation /set up is high – Since** the installation /set up charges are high the cost of owning computer, internet connections, etc. is not affordable by a large population.

CONCLUSION

The penetration of New Media is taking place at a very high speed, with Internet Penetration and speeds being low compared to develop Nations. The mobile sector has greater penetration in all strata of population and is showing tremendous growth. Apart from this mobile phone based Internet usage is a key component of Indian Internet usage; In addition, many Netizens are using dongles to access the Internet. By October, the nation had crossed the 200 million mark and estimates 243 million internet users in the country by June 2014, overtaking the US as the world's second largest internet base after China. The reach and penetration of the Internet and Mobile is widespread and substantial making the use of new media easy. The new media can be used for getting support for a party or a candidate, during elections, because it is persuasive, informative and educative. Political parties and candidates are using the new media to carry out their political activities because it can be used to reach a very large group of people. New media reaches to a broad and diverse audience at a faster speed as compared to traditional and old media, which reaches only a small portion of a population. New media is relatively cheap, when compared to the traditional media and it helps in socializing & it is an instant information provider tool and showcases the truth. On the other hand it has got some negative impact like surfing Internet is becoming substitute and we are getting addicted to it. However, one of the challenges of the new media is lack of technology and irregular power supply.

To sum up New Media is considered as an important source in helping the society in different spheres of life. Since the emergence it is slowly broken geographical barriers for its users and turned the whole world into a global village reaching every part of the world. With the growing dominance of the Internet, blog, chat, Social sites etc, the use of New Media has already begun and with its use communication is rapidly changing and becoming mobile, interactive, personalized and multi-channel and the penetration of new media is taking place at very high speed.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Internet Facility**- Cybercafe should be set up in the villages with the help of Gram Panchayat /local bodies.
- **Training** – Short training programmes should be organized to give the learner's some useful tips and basics of internet.
- **Softwares in Hindi and other local languages** – should be made easily available.
- **Awareness** – regarding the use of new media should be created in its users.

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PERCEPTION OF TOURISTS ABOUT INCREDIBLE INDIA CAMPAIGN: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during 2012-13 in India increased to 6.58million as compared to 6.31 million in 2011-12. The growth rate of 4.3 percent in 2012 for India was better than the growth rate of 4 percent for the international tourist arrivals in 2012. India has a share of 1.65 percent in the world tourism receipts and occupies the 16th rank and within Asia and the Pacific region, India's rank stands at 7th position. Indian government is putting a lot of efforts to revamp the Indian tourism industry. Incredible India campaign was a landmark in Indian Tourism history. In this study, an attempt is made to understand perception of tourists (both domestic and foreign) about Incredible India Campaign. Chi-square test has been used to check the relationship between tourists' perceptions and their demographic variables.

Introduction

Tourism has gained universal acceptance as a key driver for inclusive socio-economic development. Tourism industry has an association with other economic factors such as infrastructure, hospitality, aviation, transport, health and banking. Tourism in India has gained momentum since the launch of campaigns like "Incredible India Campaign" which was launched in year 2002-03 worldwide (Figure 1). "Atithi Devo Bhava Campaign" was another campaign launched domestically in year 2005 and later on re-launched in 2009 with the motive of sensitizing Indian domestic masses.

Incredible India campaign sought to produce a unique and unified brand that would effectively, ''pervade all forms of communication and stimulate the travel consumer's behavior and decision making process to competitively position India in the global market place''. Incredible India

campaign started with a meager outlay of Rs 15.71 crores in 2002-03. Its impact and delivery led to increased outlays for tourism ministry and by the year 2008-09, the total outlay for overseas marketing had increased to 220crore with 110crore being spent on Incredible India campaign. The campaign included print, electronic communication and the internet, public relations, outdoor hoardings, in-flight television advertising and some special Buddhist campaign in short-haul markets of South-east Asia. (K. Amitabh, 2009).

The campaign resulted in increased in tourists arrivals in India, a figure that rose from 2.6 mllion in 2000 to 12 million in 2012 (Figure 1).

Chart: Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India, 2002-2012

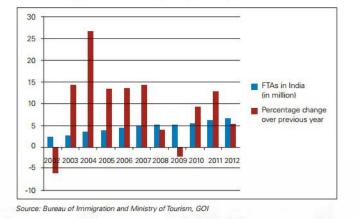Source: Bureau of Immigration and Ministry of Tourism, GOI

Figure1. (Source: India Tourism Statistics 2012-13)

The present study focuses on the perception of tourists about Incredible India campaign advertisements among domestic as well as foreign tourists.

Formulation of Hypothesis

Perception is a complex processes by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world (Berelson & Steiner, 1964). According to Lahlry it is the process by which we interpret sensory data (Lahlry, 1991**).** Mass communicators want audiences to pay attention to their messages, learn the contents of the messages, and make appropriate changes in attitudes or beliefs or make desired behavioral responses. Perceptual theory tells us that the process of interpreting messages is complex and that these communicator goals may be difficult to achieve.

Various studies have been carried out to determine the perception of target groups with respect to various print and electronic media campaigns (e.g. Beerlie and Sanatan, 1999). In our study, different hypothesis have been formulated with respect to campaign characteristics and demographic variables. Hypotheses for the study are:

H_1: Nationality of the tourists is significantly related to their perception about different characteristics of the campaign.

H_2: Gender of the tourists is significantly related to their perception about different characteristics of the campaign.

Objective of the Study

- To know about perception of Indian and foreign tourist about incredible India campaign advertisements.

Research Methodology

- Data collection: Survey was conducted over 100 respondents. A self-administered questionnaire was used for the study. The population considered for the study was tourists (foreign/Indian) at world heritage sites (Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Humanyun's Tomb) in National Capital region.
- Sampling Technique: Purposive/Judgmental sampling technique was used.

- Statistical tools: The key statistical tools used for the study are Cross tabulation and chi square tests.

Empirical Analysis

Data: Questionnaire for survey consisted of five campaign characteristics: entertaining, unique, lively, informative and relevant. These questions were asked on dichotomous scale (Yes/No).

Respondents were first categorized on the basis of whether they have seen Incredible India campaign advertisements. Table 1 reports the frequencies of those who have Incredible India campaign advertisements on the basis of nationality of the respondents.

Table 1: Frequency table for Nationality and Incredible India Campaign Advertisements Viewership

		Have seen ads of Incredible India		Total
		Yes	No	
Nationality	Indian	29	1	30
	Foreigner	33	37	70
Total		62	38	100

As evident from the Table1, 62 out of 100 respondents were aware about the campaign advertisements. Except one respondent, all other Indian tourists were aware about the campaign.

Further analysis of the data is based on the respondents who have seen the incredible India campaign advertisements. Different hypotheses framed for the study and their results are reported below along with their frequency tables.

Hypothesis H_{11}: There is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be entertaining.

Table 2: Frequency table for Nationality vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Entertaining)

		Nationals		Total
		Indians	Foreigners	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	7	11	18
are Entertaining	No	22	22	44
Total		29	33	100

Out of 29 Indians, 7 Indian tourists (24.1 percent) found the campaign to be entertaining, while 33.3 percent of foreign tourists found the campaign to be entertaining. To check whether there is any significant difference in tourists' (Indian/Foreign) opinion about campaign characteristics; chi square test is used.

Table 3: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{11}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	.633[*]	1	.426	-.101*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value for chi square test is greater than .05, so null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be entertaining. Phi value, which tells about strength of association among variables under study, is also insignificant.

Hypothesis H_{12}: There is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Unique.

Table 4: Frequency table of Nationality vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Unique)

		Nationals		Total
		Indians	Foreigners	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	14	3	17
are Unique	No	15	30	45
Total		29	33	62

Table 4 reports that only 3 foreign tourists found the campaign to be unique. Since the cell value in one cell is <5, so we will use p value associated with Fisher's Exact test instead of Pearson chi square value.

Table 5: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{12}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	11.909*	1	.001	0.438*
Fisher's Exact Test			.001	

*significant as p<0.05

From table 5, the null hypothesis is rejected (p<0.05). So, there is significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Unique. Also there is significant moderate relationship (phi value- 0.438) between Nationality of the respondents and their perception about the campaign as unique.

Hypothesis H_{13}: There is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Lively.

Table 6: Frequency table of Nationality vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Lively)

		Nationals		Total
		Indians	Foreigners	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	4	11	15
are Lively	No	25	22	47
Total		29	33	62

As seen from table 5, only 16 percent of Indian tourists find the campaign to be lively as compared to 33 percent of foreign tourists.

Table 7: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{13}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	3.213*[a]	1	.073	-0.228*

*not significant as p>0.05

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5.
The minimum expected count is 7.02

As significance value, p>0.05 for chi square test, the null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Lively.

Hypothesis H_{14}: There is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Informative.

Table 8: Frequency table of Nationality vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Informative)

		Nationals		Total
		Indians	Foreigners	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	23	8	31
are Informative	No	6	25	31
Total		29	33	62

From table 8, 80 percent of Indian tourists found that the campaign advertisements are Informative while 75 percent of foreign tourists found that campaign advertisements are not Informative.

Table 9: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{14}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	18.723*	1	.000	0.550*

*significant as p<0.05

As significance value for Chi-Square test is less than .05, so the null hypothesis is rejected. So, there is significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Informative. A significant value of phi (phi value-0.550) indicates there is moderate to strong relationship between nationality and perception of tourists about the campaign to be informative.

Hypothesis H_{15}: There is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Relevant.

Table 10: Frequency table of Nationality vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Relevant)

		Nationals		Total
		Indians	Foreigners	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	9	5	14
are Relevant	No	20	28	48
Total		29	33	62

From table 10, we can see that 45 percent of Indian tourists found the campaign advertisements to be relevant as against 17 percent of foreign tourists.

Table 11: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{15}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	2.227*	1	.136	0.190*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value is greater than .05, so null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be entertaining. So, there is no significant association between nationality of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Relevant.

Hypothesis H_{21}: There is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Entertaining.

Table 12: Frequency table of Gender Vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Entertaining)

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	8	10	18
are Entertaining	No	24	20	44
Total		32	30	62

Table 13: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{21}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	.522*	1	.470	-0.92*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value for Chi-Square test is greater than .05, so the null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Entertaining.

Hypothesis H_{22}: There is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Unique.

Table 14: Frequency table of Gender Vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Unique)

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	9	8	17
are Unique	No	23	22	45
Total		32	30	62

Table 15: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H_{22}

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	.017*	1	.898	0.016*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value for Chi-Square test is greater than .05, the null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Unique.

Hypothesis H$_{23}$: There is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Lively.

Table 16: Frequency table of Gender Vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Lively)

		Male	Female	Total
		Gender		**Total**
Campaign advertisements	Yes	11	4	15
are Lively	No	21	26	47
Total		32	30	62

Table 17: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H$_{23}$

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	3.378*	1	.898	0.246*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value for Chi-square test is greater than .05, the null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Lively.

Hypothesis H$_{24}$: There is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Informative.

Table 18: Frequency table of Gender Vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Informative)

		Male	Female	Total
		Gender		**Total**
Campaign advertisements	Yes	17	14	31
are Informative	No	15	16	31
Total		32	30	62

Table 19: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H$_{24}$

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	.258*	1	.611	0.065*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value for Chi-Square test is greater than .05, the null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Informative.

Hypothesis H$_{25}$: There is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Relevant.

Table 20: Frequency table of Gender Vs. Perception about campaign characteristic (Relevant)

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Campaign advertisements	Yes	6	8	14
are Relevant	No	26	22	48
Total		32	30	62

Table 21: Chi square test results for Hypothesis H$_{25}$

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Phi value
Pearson Chi-Square	.555*	1	.456	-0.095*

*not significant as p>0.05

As significance value for Chi-Square test is greater than .05, the null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant association between gender of respondents and their perception about campaign to be Relevant.

Results and Discussion

The survey showed that most of Indian tourists have seen Incredible India campaign advertisements as compared to 47 percent foreign tourists who have seen the campaign advertisements. Higher number of Indian tourists believes that campaign was informative (79 percent) and unique (48 percent). Only 9.1 percent of foreign tourists believe that the campaign was unique. Higher number of foreign tourists reports that campaign was lively (33.3 percent), entertaining (33.3 percent) and informative (24.2 percent). The above hypotheses have been tested for perception about Incredible India Campaign advertisements to be Entertaining, Unique, Lively, Informative and relevant with reference to Nationality of the tourists and Gender of the tourists. Results suggests that there is no significant difference in the perception of Indian and Foreign tourists for the campaign to be entertaining, lively and relevant, while there is significant difference in the perception of Indian and Foreign tourists for the campaign to be unique and informative.

Most Indian tourists have reported that campaign is informative as well as unique while foreign tourists do not find the campaign very informative and unique. Also, no significant difference has been reported in the perception of Male and Female tourists relating to all the campaign characteristics. Highest number of respondents has found that campaign is informative followed by campaign is entertaining. The study results have important implications for designing the campaign advertisements to attract all kinds of tourists.

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NON –NATIVE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: FACTS AMIDST FUN AND FANTASY

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ABSTRACT

Though the galloping speed of development in the field of science and technology readily signifies the quick accessibility of any mundane stuff through the multiple mechanisms, the context of language learning, for non-native learners in particular, is still fraught with almost incorrigible realities. The situation becomes even more worrying for the learners of hinterlands of a country like India (non-native nation) where English is taught from sixth standard/class onwards, let alone the strangeness of the pedagogic styles adopted and implemented for teaching in English and the complete absence of linguistic infrastructures evolved for a non-native language like English. To make things worse, the disturbing peculiarities of English language, particularly of its spelling and phonetic anomalies, often pose hostile learning situations for the non-native speakers of the language. The paper under discussion titled **Non –native Learners of English Language: Facts Amidst Fun and Fantasy** is an oriented endeavour to explore the issues from the linguistic-phonetic perspective of both L-1 i.e. one's mother tongue and L-2 i.e. English in the present case. The factual references that emerge from the discussion establish the task of impeccabe learning of an L-2(English) as a herculean problem while the persistent emphasis on learning English remains a mere fantasy amidst the funny and hilarious contexts of L1 on the one side and stable oddities of English phonetics. Meticulous attention has been paid to the pertinent illustrations of regional language queer interventions and phonetic discrepancies of English as language both for native and non- native learners and the reception of non-native performances of English users in India pervading across all genres of literature i.e. drama, novel, story, translations etc.

KEY WORDS: Language, Pedagogy, Phonetics, Multi-lingual, Native, Non-Native Learners

I

That learning English as a second or foreign language is an unavoidable necessity, it occasions the illustration of certain core issues like the subtleties of L-1, intricacies of L-2, psycho-behavioural aspects and paralinguistic characters of a language –all of which considerably influence the language learning phenomenon for the non-native speakers. These concerns of language learning become even more profound when placed in a multilingual country like India where English is spoken or rather used as a second language. The plurality of regional languages has an active impact on the individual learners of English resulting in the hilarious situations often observable in both oral and written practices of the learners. Yet at the same time, with all the troubles of dialectal intervention, India perhaps stands to be the largest home of what is now realised and recognised as ''new Englishes" or "World Englishes[1]". The recognition of English variants emanating from the regional languages is the result of concerted creative endeavour of the non-native countries like India, South Africa, Singapore and Latin America, through their literary manifestations, where English is spoken as a second language, against the hegemonic supremacy of the British English. Yet again, when it comes to learning English as a second/foreign language in India, as it is the prime concern of the paper loudly suggested by the title, ground reality of learning an L-2 like English is formed by both the

almost inescapable interventions of the regional language on the one hand and eternally fixed oddities of English phonetics on the other hand. Thus, the paper under discussion intends to explore the tri-dimensional phenomenon of English language learning in India, namely dialectal influence on language learning in oral practices, Indian variants of English as written with commonly followed grammatical constructions and the phonetic oddities of English language making learning a cumbersome experience. As such, the paper extends over four sections including the running one with an endeavour to incorporate the prevailing contexts of learning an L-2 like English in a country a like India which is characterised by multiple regional languages and cultures.

Though the galloping speed of development in the field of science and technology readily signifies the quick accessibility of any mundane stuff through the multiple mechanisms, the context of language learning, for non-native learners in particular, is still fraught with almost incorrigible realities. The situation becomes even more worrying for the learners of hinterlands of a country like India (non-native nation) where English is taught from sixth standard/class onwards, let alone the strangeness of the pedagogic styles adopted and implemented for teaching English and the complete absence of linguistic infrastructures evolved for a non-native language like English. To make things worse, the disturbing peculiarities of English language, particularly of its spelling and phonetic anomalies, often pose hostile learning situations for the non-native speakers of the language. The paper under discussion titled *Non –native Learners of English Language: Facts Amidst Fun and Fantasy* is an oriented endeavour to explore the issues from the linguistic-phonetic perspective of both L-1 i.e. one's mother tongue and L-2 i.e. English in the present case. The factual references that emerge from the discussion establish the task of impeccable learning of an L-2(English) as a herculean problem. Meticulous attention has been paid to the pertinent illustrations of regional language queer interventions and phonetic discrepancies of English as language both for native and non- native learners and the reception of non-native performances of English users in India pervading across all genres of literature i.e. drama, novel, story, translations etc.

 Language with its profound implications entails greater exercises on the lover of communication as a skill than any other medium does since language itself has its own skills instrumental in creating efficacious communicator of the world over. Ironically enough, most of us claim to communicate, but only a few of us are actually able to do so. Most of our time is spent out in our unconscious act of speaking ending up in a fiasco from communication point of view. But, the same is very often mistakenly understood to be our communication. The chief reason to be accounted for such result is that we exercise communication as a singularly informal affair oblivious of its serious do's and don'ts which essentially again calls for the role of language therein. Many a time, as the part of my pedagogical initiative, I have seen students speak for longer duration, on a topic of debate, yet communicating nothing literally. And, yet at other times, I have to deal with students who clamour for more marks than their friends simply because they claim they have written more than their friends. Thus, the magnitude of speech or writing is simply immaterial if one fails to communicate the requisite meaning thereof.

II

The efficacy of English language learning particularly for a non- native learner of the language is subject to his intelligibility of linguistic skills. The skills are popularly known as LSRW, i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. These skills are the essential conditions for one to be proficient in communication skills which employ language in the first place. Beginning with the first skill, that is listening, one of the most perceptible problems of the learners is to understand listening and hearing invariably without any sense of difference between the two. Secondly, particularly the underprivileged students of rural colleges hardly

find impeccable learning ambience for the reason that the teachers are not well trained in effective communication. If the teachers themselves are poor speakers of the language, the same will be received by the students. Thirdly, rural colleges suffer from tremendous lack of infrastructure needed to test the listening ability of the learners. And, fourthly, the physical and organisational barriers to effective communication are yet another problems suffered constantly by the underprivileged students of the rural colleges. To explain the barriers of communication affecting language learning situations, though, is not in the purview of the paper under discussion.

The skill of speaking is usually considered the benchmark of effective verbal communication in any language, let alone English. As a significant skill of language, it determines the competence of learning both L-1 and L-2. It is the index of one's linguistic understanding to a great extent. But when it comes to speaking English as a non-native speakers oral practices reveal the inconveniences and inabilities of the learners felt on account of the L-2's typically unphonetic characters. For example, one of the vendors, bemused by the youth's crowd in front of the UPSC office at Allahabad, a metropolitan city in southern part of U.P. state, asks a candidate eagerly with all his innocence: " Ye bheed koi *jaab* [pronunciation emphasized] ka hai ka?"(Trans. "***Has this crowd of youth flocked for a job?***") Totally puzzled by the pronunciation of the word job as /djab/, the candidate fails to understand the question and asks the vendor what he had asked. The vendor repeats the same pronunciation as many times as he was asked to repeat the question. And, finally, after much mental rigour, the linguistic sense prevailed upon the candidate and inferred the exact meaning of the question with the understanding of the word /djab/ as job, and he answered the vendor with much relief only"yes". The reason for the unintelligibility of the said word on the part of the candidate was his experience of the word with different meaning in his regional language in Bihar. /djab/ in many districts of Bihar is understood as a net of transparent fabric with a loose open weave placed on a calf's or a colt's mouth so as to prevent it from picking harmful garbage.

The illustration of regional interference in language learning doesn't end with the vendor's ignorance of the precision of the English phonetics. It emerges with still more trouble for the same candidate when he failed to figure out thrice one of the questions asked by the expert in the interview. He was actually startled to understand eventually that the expert was pronouncing *Aristotle* as *'I startle'.* The question of such phonetic anomalies prevails in abundance in a country like India with its multiple linguistic features.

Regional language influence not only tampers with the objective of correct communication but also at times results in ludicrous effects with possibility of precarious repercussion. Once the principal was on round in a public school when a teacher from Orrisa came up to one of his Bihari colleagues and cautioned him, ***"Saar is coming"*** His Bihari friend couldn't understand the meaning of "saar" as spoken by him. So he asked him to repeat what he said in order to ensure the correct word because "saar" means brother-in-law(sala) in colloquial conversations in many parts of Bihar. Here what the teacher was trying to say was "sir" through his regionally charged pronunciation, "saar".

Similarly, the phonetic peculiarity of southern states of India could be readily identified as reflected through their typically regional accent. To illustrate the point, a north Indian stepped into a mobile shop in Chennai to buy a mobile. At the time of billing, the shopkeeper asks the customer, ***"Caisha kata?*** The customer was taken aback to understand the meaning as ***"How fiercely have you bitten?"(***trans.) On the other hand, the shopkeeper while waiting for the price to be paid for the mobile was also getting irritated with the idea that the customer was wasting his time by not responding to his question. Ultimately, with the help of another customer, the north Indian customer got through the meaning of the question of the shopkeeper being, "How do you want to pay, through the cash or card?"

III

Writing, though last in the list of linguistic skills, is not at all the least to be taken care of. Most of our linguistic accomplishments are subject to our success in writing skill. Writing as one of the verbal means of communication plays a pivotal role in developing the communication skill of a learner. The proper use of punctuation, grammatical accuracy and correctness of spelling are a select prerequisite for one to communicate effectively through one's writing. Precise use of diction is equally important for good and efficacious writing leading to proficient communication skill of the learner. But interestingly enough, the kind of English we are accustomed to write is sharp departure from the actual English usage prescribed for us to learn. Though, as already stated, Indian English is globally accepted with due regard and recognition, the series of illustrations that follow the discourse are just queer enough to ridicule the notion of learning English as a second or foreign language. In fact, as a result of factual evidence of speakers/users of English in the world including India in the first place therein outnumbering the native people of the language, the wide variety of Indian variants recognised as Indian English parallel with British or American English or Australian English amply travel through natural instance of literary narrative or with a view to signifying a particular cultural characteristics, as a black writer would often do to highlight his/her cultural circumstances. Consequently, the nomenclatures, Hinglish and *I*nglish (Indian+English) born of neologistic practices have emerged for Indian English. An Indian would rather say 'Let us discuss about the problem' instead of 'Let us discuss the problem'. Similarly, 'Why you did not speak the truth?' instead of 'Why didn't you speak the truth?' Both these examples are grammatically incorrect and their likes proliferate in Indian English usage. The following passage amply corroborates the usual Indian practices of English language daubed in Indian colour[2]:

"But it baffles me that you hear so many people saying round circle, study room, thin pointed needle and tall high rise building. Most Indians love to say Manomhan Uncle, Sonia Aunt, and Adwani Sir and not the other way round.

Instead of saying *going shopping,* some will say *going marketing;* an Indian politician once appealed to farmers to plant herbs in their *backsides*(backyards)! I have come across scores of Indians including teachers and journalists who instead of using the word *letterhead* invariably say *letter-pad*. It is always *dickey* and not the *boot of the car*. In Indian legal jargon, meanwhile, *lifer* is the word both for a life sentence and a person serving it. Headlines like *'The Accused Gets Lifer'* aren't uncommon in Indian newspapers.

New-generation Indians reared on a diet of the Internet when seeking agreement are inclined to end their interrogative sentences with *no* instead of a contracted negative. So you would hear *"Aishwarya Rai is stunningly beautiful, no?"* instead of *"Aishwarya Rai is stunningly beautiful isn't she?"*

The winds of change have also affected the Hindi film industry popularly known as Bollywood where producers churn out Hindi-English titles to attract cinema-goers. Movies like *Jab We Met (*When We Met), *Love Aaj Kal (*Love Today Tomorrow), *You Me Aur Hum* (You, I And We) and *Love Sex Aur Dhokha* (Love Sex And Betrayal) immediately come to mind.

Call it Indian English, Indianised English, Hinglish or the Indianisation of English as some people do it, it has its own charm. You may love it, laugh at it or even loathe it but you just cannot ignore the fact that it is here to stay. Ask the millions of Indians living all across the globe.(Harish Pandya, Macmillan Dictionary Blog)"

So, the question of *learning* English itself should be revisited in the light of the above-quoted reference. The fact that English has evolved through its variants world over has put the learners at crossroads where they are in a fix to decide whether they should *learn* language or *acquire* it. The *acquisition* of language gels with the mother tongue while *learning* corresponds to non-native language. The conflict of ambivalent position of English in India may be a recreational item for urban youth exposed to varied changes in language but the same is not true for rural youth who still struggle to 'learn' the language and not 'acquire' it.

IV

Regional intervention in learning an L-2 like English is superseded by the phonetic hurdles of the language itself. The phonetic oddities of the language still more trouble the learners in general and the underprivileged students of rural colleges in particular. India being a multilingual country has already its regional language intervention in learning a foreign language like English which abundantly contains words with their unusual spelling and their peculiarly funny pronunciations. The words such as lieutenant, colonel, bury, extempore, epitome, psychology, enough etc., a few to mention, the likes of which proliferate in English, pose constant obstacle for one eager to develop one's communication skills in the said language. The context evokes a past memory of one of my colleagues, who once shared his angst, though in a lighter vein, about the phonetic absurdity of the language. Referring to a particular example of the word, 'psychology', he expressed his frustration over the unnecessary use of the letter,'p' in the word and accused for this the deliberate wicked intention of the upper classes to create such words to embarrass the underprivileged community of lower classes. George Bernard[3] Shaw too was much critical of the bizarre character of English language with respect to its dialectal variations unintelligible for the international readers. And, Maxmuller[4] went on to the extent of saying; "English spelling is a national misfortune to England and an international misfortune to the rest of the world"(quoted by Narasimha Rao).

 The phonetic troubles could be evident from the fact that English has forty four sounds produced out of only twenty six letters. As many as eighteen sounds are, consequently, ound to create mess for the non-native learners who dream of becoming eloquent speaker of the language. One of the most shared examples of this fateful language is the word, *'ghoti'*[5] often illustrated hypothetically to point out the arbitrarily abstruse character of English phonetics. Any rural learner of the language from his miserable humble experience of the English spelling and its queer pronunciation would innocently figure out the pronunciation of the term being 'fish' with his memory of /f/ as in 'enough', /i/ as in 'women' and /ʃ/ as in 'nation' for the letters, 'gh', 'o' and 'ti' respectively. The phonetic character of the English language rules out to a great extent the possibility of consistent association of spellings and their pronunciations. Different pronunciations of the words like 'father' and 'gather', 'poor' and 'door', 'tour' and 'sour', 'move' and 'love', 'comb' and 'tomb' etc., again a few to mention, are highly preposterous without any phonetic justification. This has largely compelled the critics of phonetics to disclaim English as a phonetic language.

 Given this kind of linguistic-phonetic complexities, the idea of learning English, particularly for developing speaking skills would be more of a fantasy than a fruitful reality. Even the urban so called educated youth with his impeccable grammatical competence and rich diction miserably fails to communicate exuding ludicrous effect in terms of the pronunciation of the typically strange words.

The problem is also considerably perceptible in 'speaking' as a linguistic skill of the learner. Speaking also simultaneously provides platform for the test of paralinguistic features so instrumental in efficacious communication. Paralinguistic features play an equally significant role in communication particularly observable in speaking being one of the important linguistic skills. Accent, pitch, rhythm and intonation are

the grave concerns of a good speaker. Any lapse in these features not only results in loss of communication but also in ludicrous and at times precarious effects. That is why a sincere speaker takes care of all the subtleties to ensure efficacious communication. For instance, a person attending a funeral ceremony of one of his/her close neighbours, utters the word of solace and grief but unfortunately does not care for the tone and pitch requisite for the seriousness of the occasion may land him in trouble creating an embarrassing situation for already aggrieved family. These features once maintained while speaking not only sound fascinating from linguistic perspective but also add to the efficacy and precision of communication intended. Apt use of pitch, intonation and stress results in glorious delivery of speech while the failure in the same not only leads to loss of communication but also at times culminates in ridiculous and precarious communication. If the pitch and intonation is not maintained by a student trying to join late in the class, his request with 'May I come in, sir?' will not only be turned down by the teacher but will also earn him some punishment for his rude and funny style of seeking entry into the classroom, while leaving his classmates engaged in lighter mood.

Learning English as an L2 in India is, thus, a profound experience. The profundity of experience in learning English is heightened even more by the complexities that entail upon it, that is, regional language interference in both oral and written practices of the non-native learners and phonetic anomalies of English language. Unfortunately both the problems would continue to be the grave challenges for learning English. To find a holistic ambience facilitated with latest infrastructures to promote impeccable learning of English in the hinterlands of the nation would be too optimistic. Hence, the fun generated through dialectal intervention will continue to result in bizarre truth of learning English in a non- native set up. To top it all, the eternal phonetic oddities of English as an L2 leave the non-native learners to cherish it as a language of fantasy rather than as a language worthy of precise learning.

Notes and References

1. World Englishes comprises the varieties of English language spoken in different countries of the world. The typicality of such variants of English is determined by the socio-cultural and linguistic conditions of the place where they are spoken. *The most influential model of the spread of English is* Braj Kachru*'s model of World Englishes. In this model the diffusion of English is captured in terms of three Concentric Circles of the language: The Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The* **Inner Circle** *refers to English as it originally took shape and was spread across the world in the first* diaspora*. In this transplantation of English, speakers from England carried the language to Australia, New Zealand and North America. The Inner Circle thus represents the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in regions where it is now used as a primary language: the* United Kingdom*, the* United States*,* Australia*,* New Zealand*,* Ireland*,* anglophone Canada *and* South Africa*, and some of* Caribbean *territories. English is the* native language *or* mother tongue *of most people in these countries. The total number of English speakers in the inner circle is as high as 380 million, of whom some 120 million are outside the United States.*

The **Outer Circle** *of English was produced by the second* diaspora *of English, which spread the language through imperial expansion by* Great Britain *in* Asia *and* Africa*. In these regions, English is not the native tongue, but serves as a useful* lingua franca *between* ethnic *and language groups. Higher education, the* legislature *and* judiciary*, national commerce and so on may all be carried out predominantly in English. This circle includes* India*,* Nigeria*,* Bangladesh*,* Pakistan*,* Malaysia*,* Tanzania*,* Kenya*, non-Anglophone* South Africa*, the*Philippines *(colonized by the US) and others. The total number of English speakers in the outer circle is estimated to range from 150 million to 300 million.*

Finally, the **Expanding Circle** *encompasses countries where English plays no historical or governmental role, but where it is nevertheless widely used as a medium of international communication. This includes much of the rest of the world's population not categorized above:* China*,* Russia*,* Japan*, most of* Europe*,* Korea*,* Egypt*,* Indonesia*, etc. The total in this expanding circle is the most difficult to estimate, especially because English may be employed for specific, limited purposes, usually business English. The estimates of these users range from 100 million to one billion.*

The inner circle (UK, US etc.) is 'norm-providing'; that means that English language norms *are developed in these countries. The outer circle (mainly* New Commonwealth countries*) is 'norm-developing'. The expanding circle (which includes much of the rest of the world) is 'norm-dependent', because it relies on the standards set by* native speakers *in the inner circle.* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Englishes,)

2. Pandya, Haresh. *Indian English, Indianised English, Hinglish or the Indianisation of English*. August 30, 201025.04.2014.(http://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/25.06.2014. at 10.00 p.m.)

3. G.B.Shaw's Pygmalion replete with dialectal language, particularly Cockney(London) is a radical example of linguistic variant causing inconvenience and unintelligibility for readers in general.

4. Rao, J.V.L.Narasimha. *Is English really the greatest language in the World?* Submitted on 28 November, 2009 at 11.56 p.m.(/*http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/25.06.2014 at 11.05p.m.)*

5. **Ghoti** *is a constructed word used to illustrate irregularities in* English *spelling*

An early known published reference is in 1874, citing an 1855 letter that credits ghoti to one William Ollier Jr (born 1824). Ghoti is often cited to support the English spelling reform*, and is often attributed to* George Bernard Shaw*, a supporter of this cause. However, the word does not appear in Shaw's writings, and a biography of Shaw attributes it instead to an anonymous spelling reformer.*[3] *Similar constructed words exist that demonstrate English idiosyncrasies, but ghoti is the most widely recognized. Linguists have pointed out that the location of the letters in the constructed word is inconsistent with how those letters would be pronounced in those placements, and that the expected pronunciation in English would be "goaty". For instance, the letters "gh" cannot be pronounced* /f/ *at the beginning of a syllable, and the letters "ti" cannot be pronounced* /ʃ/ *at the end of a syllable.(* http://en.wikipedia.org/ *25.06.2014 at 11.10 p.m.)*

6. The examples of phonetic incidents from 2 to 5 illustrated in the paper are the individual experiences of the writer of this paper.

7. Translations wherever added for the illustrations from individual experiences are of the writer himself.

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