



## Youth And Access to Media Tools – A Comparison Study Between Rural And Urban Areas in Tamil Nadu Using Census Data

### KEYWORDS

Social Media, Youth, disparity

**Shanmuga Priya S**

PhD Research Scholar, Department of Sociology,  
Queen Mary's College, Chennai

**Dr.Sakthi**

Associate Professor and Head, Department of  
Sociology, Queen Mary's College, Chennai

**ABSTRACT** *The way of communication in the information era by Today's youth is through Media, to communicate to exaggerate survive. The internet, cell phones have become an inseparable feature and routine of their daily chores. Social Media is a unique option which provides teens to create and navigate their social environments cross geographical boundaries without physical effort to communicate with friends around the world. The youth tweet, blog, follow, like, update and upload regularly - for work and personal reasons. This technologically advanced progress has eased life in more ways than one. From being a leisure time activity Media has silently switched over to a Transformation and Empowerment tool.*

*Since the presence of Media is here to stay and multiply in many more ways. This study aims to identify the disparity between Rural and Urban Youth in Tamil Nadu in having access to Media tools using Census data.*

### Introduction

Without Communication an individual could never become a human being, without Mass Communication or Media an individual could never become part of modern society (Keval.J.Kumar,1994). Even a prominent part of the Socialization process of Today's younger generation happens through mass media, which gives access to remote groups and their cultures, models of behaviour and norms of living.

Youngsters rely more on Media advice, models and popular culture rather than the input from parents and elders. Media is considered to be the Magic multipliers (Wilbur Schramm,1964). Media is an agent of social change, almost miraculous in their power to promote change. But the challenge is to make these resources and the power of modern communication skilfully spread beyond geographic, economic, and social differences.

India has tried its level best to put to use the tools of media right from its introduction for various developmental purposes. Radio and Newspapers proved their might a lot during Freedom struggle. The television has been an aid to relay educational programmes direct from satellite to the receivers even at remote areas. Telephone, Mobile phone, Computer and the Internet has revolutionized the way of communication. Convergence of the various technologies has come handy especially for the trend setting youth population of the country.

Even this resource has brought in differences and a yawning gap between the information rich and the information poor. Its affordability has been determining this gap. Bridging of this gap would ensure better opportunities to the youth and help overcome many challenges.

### Materials and Methods

This study aims to bring out a comparison study between the Rural and Urban Youth in Tamil Nadu in having access to such Media tools using Census Data.

The study is descriptive one by the method of Content Analysis using the source of data from secondary source

predominantly the Census of India Statistics. The sampling frame consists of youngsters who are mentioned in the census under two categories of adolescent and youth (10-24years). The area of study is in reference to the data of the State of Tamil Nadu (Rural and Urban areas).The study highlights the access to Communication assets in the households of Tamil Nadu. Being the home state prominence is given to this particular state.

### Results and Discussion

With the help of the data made available in the Census of India, 2011 the following observations and inferences can be made. This study discusses all the aspects of study based on the Rural – Urban divide.

### Youth Population

India is a young nation keeping in mind its demographic composition. Table 1, The Population Census 2001-2011 Data reveals that youth constitute a larger part of the nation's total Population.

**Table 1**  
Distribution of Adolescent and Youth Population

	Male		Female		Total	
	India	Tamil Nadu	India	Tamil Nadu	India	Tamil Nadu
Adolescent and Youth Population						
Adolescent (10-19yrs)	133401231	6418828	119834430	6012511	253235661	12431339
Youth (15-24yrs)	121567089	6384642	110383582	6280693	231950671	12665335

Source - Special Tabulation on Adolescent and youth pop-

ulation classified by various parameters for India, States and Union Territories - Census of India 2011

These facts are also similarly represented that every third person in India today is a youth. In about seven years, the median individual in India will be 29 years, very likely a city-dweller, making it the youngest country in the world. India is set to experience a dynamic transformation as the population burden of the past turns into a demographic dividend, but the benefits will be tempered with social and spatial inequalities. (Report published by IRIS Knowledge Foundation in collaboration with UN-HABITAT, 2012)

The population in the age-group of 15-34 increased from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. Current predictions suggest a steady increase in the youth population to 464 million by 2021. By 2020, India is set to become the world's youngest country with 64 per cent of its population in the working age group. With the West, Japan and even China aging, this demographic potential offers India and its growing economy an unprecedented edge that economists believe could add a significant 2 per cent to the GDP growth rate.

### Rural Urban Divide

The unequal access to opportunities and the lack of facilities remains a persistent problem. A person in an urban area has a 93 per cent greater chance of acquiring training for various needs than someone in a rural area. This difference also extends to the many aspects including access to technological advancements.

About 80 per cent of the Indian population live in villages. When travelling through the length and breadth of the subcontinent, one can really visualise the difference between rural and urban India. There is a big difference between urban and rural India. One of the major differences that can be seen between rural India and urban India is their standards of living.

People living in urban India have better living conditions than those living in the rural parts of India. There is a wide economic gap between rural and urban India. Rural India is very poor when compared to Urban India.

Another difference that can be seen between urban and rural India, is their education. In rural India, the parents seldom educate their children, and instead, make their children work in the fields. Poverty, and lack of sufficient infrastructure, can be attributed to the lack of education in rural India.

When considering about homes, about three-quarters of the households in urban India live in pucca homes. On the other hand, only a quarter of the people in rural India live in pucca homes. While groundwater is the main source of drinking water in rural India, the urban people rely more on tap-water. Urban India is almost electrified when compared to rural India. One can even come across villages where electric power is not yet available. When comparing the sanitary facilities, it is limited in rural India. About 90 per cent of the households in rural India do not have latrines, but this is not the case in urban India.

Most of the developments have not yet reached the rural parts of India. With regards to health care as well, rural India lacks good hospitals when compared to urban India. Some of the rural areas even lack a dispensary.

Media penetration is limited in rural India whereas in urban India every home is connected through various communication media and is networked to a global village. Table 2 below shows the population difference in the area of study.

**Table 2**  
**Rural and Urban Adolescent and Youth Population in Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu Adolescent and Youth Population		Male	Female	Total
Adolescent (10-19yrs)	Rural	3491399	3206859	6698258
	Urban	2927429	2805652	5733081
Youth (15-24yrs)	Rural	3424003	3264329	6688332
	Urban	2960639	3016364	5977003

Source - Special Tabulation on Adolescent and youth population classified by various parameters for India, States and Union Territories - Census of India 2011

### Media and Access

Media has become one of the basic needs as food and clothing. It has played significant role in strengthening the society. Media is considered as "mirror" of the modern society, in fact it is the media which shapes our lives.

The purpose of the media is to inform people about current and new affairs. It makes the geographically divided people one global family.

Media's significance can be reflected in many areas such as information, education, entertainment, advertising, correlation of parts of society.

Media is also held responsible for formation of public opinion. It helps them to get information about a lot of things and also to form opinions and make judgments regarding various issues. It is the media which keeps the people updated and informed about what is happening around them and the world.

The media also affects people's perspective. Too much intervention of media in everything is a matter of concern. Media can be considered as "watch dog" of political democracy. FM radios, newspapers, information found on net and television are the mass media that serve to reduce the communication gap between the audience, viewers and the media world.

Media has reduced the communication gaps amongst the people living in the far areas. Media can serve as a great force in building the nation. The importance of Media is so powerful in the modern world. Information is now available without much difficulty, media is also called as fourth pillar of democracy.

The different forms of Media are 1) Print media that comprises of newspapers, magazines, weeklies, monthlies, bi-monthlies, quarterlies, half-yearlies, annual numbers etc.,- having specialized professional magazines. 2) Electronic

media. In this new popular way any small event that takes place somewhere in the world is being telecast within minutes and the rest of the world is aware of that event. As a result the world is now soaked in the ocean of information.

The Television helps significantly even by sitting at home we can literally see what's happening at any part of the world. Telephone, Computer and Internet have been a boon to human race as it is lessen many hurdles and complications of existence.

Media has literally invaded all our households. Media has made us, the general public aware of many rights & responsibilities. Every household comprises youngsters in some numbers. Youth is strongly influenced by media. Teenagers have adapted to this change as in form of a technological wave and are ever attached to their Media devices.

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of Tamil Nadu Households having Communication Assets in 2011**

Tamil Nadu Households having Access to	Rural Household %		Urban Household %	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Radio/Transistor	38.6	18.7	50.5	26.9
Television	24.3	85.3	60.7	88.7
Telephone	5.1	66.3	19.9	84.1
Computer/Laptop	*	4.8	*	16.8
Internet	*	1.0	*	7.6
None	52.8	8.0	27.6	4.5
Total households	82,74,790	95,63,899	58,98,836	89,29,104

\*- This feature was a new addition in 2011 Census only.

Source - Houselisting and Housing Census Data Highlights - 2011 - Tamil Nadu

Table 3 shows the data that has been collected by the official Census data collection. The table has brought to light many new interesting trends to the limelight. The comparison of 2001 and 2011 data shows that a major drift towards technology is very significantly seen. This has been the trend both in Rural and Urban India.

The percentages in the table have all been on a rise except for Radio/Transistor from the year 2001 to 2011.

The willingness to adapt to new technology is also vivid as the popularity and presence of older mediums to newer ones (from Radio/Transistor to Television) is shown. The impact is also doubly efficient as the audio medium has paved way for the newer audio and visual medium.

Television patronage is high as compared to Radio/Transistor use both in rural and urban areas.85.3% households in rural areas and 88.7% households in urban areas have Television as part of their utilities as in comparison to 18.7% rural and 26.9% urban households with Radio/Transistor.

In May 1994, the Government of India announced a new telecommunication policy which threw open the basic telephone service to the private sector. Value added services enabled to connect the entire nation and bring an identity of One India. Landlines, pagers, mobile versions of phone have given each individual another identity and an opportunity to stay connected.

The data indicates that more than 4.9% land lines in rural areas and 6.5% landlines in urban areas households seem to have the attractive mobile phones 57.3% in rural areas and 67.3 in urban areas for use. This may be due to the added features of having mobility, instant messaging facility, reminders, organisers, alarm, video calling and many more added advantage all rolled into one small hand held device. 4.1% in rural areas and 10.3% in urban areas seem to have access to both.

It would have given greater understanding if data had been sought on how many devices and SIM Cards are being used by the households as there are options that some mobile devices can support dual SIM.

Not only Youngsters would be having access to these devices at their homes. It is for sure that they would be also owners of such devices. Relevant data could be got if the ownership along with the availability is recorded during the enquiry.

The Communication Satellite penetration, Cables, optical fibres, wireless technologies and Computers have changed the very nature of media and telecommunications. When Computer appeared on the scene in the 1970s and 1980s, it was a stand-alone desktop technology, interactive but discrete. Computers could not be used to talk to each other, compatibility was a critical stumbling block. The modem (an abbreviation of Modulation and Demodulation) revolutionised the entire stand-alone approach. It has brought together the media, the computer and telecommunication technologies so that computers in different part of the world could start talking to each other using the international telephone networks and supporting satellite and cable hardware.

Cable telephony Digitisation aided by miniaturisation, wireless telephony, digital compression and comparatively low costs and user friendliness has made it a huge success.

The data reveals that Computers with or without Internet is becoming a component in the households for this feature had been additionally included only in 2011 showing the emergence of a new way of communication. The total percentage of households 10.6% having access to Computers or Laptops is above the nation's average of 9.4%. It is the same even for the availability of internet connection 4.2% in Tamil Nadu households in comparison to the 3.1% of the Indian Households.

The Rural Urban difference in the access to Computers/Laptops and Internet in Tamil Nadu shows a very wide extreme of data. 4.8% rural households have access to Computers and a mere 1% rural households have internet connectivity whereas in the urban scenario 16.8% have Computers/Laptops and 7.6% with internet connectivity at home.

This is apart from the fact that Urban areas have many Public access to Computers and Wi-fi zones in Common libraries, Educational Institutions, Public Gathering places such as Railway Station, Airports, Shopping Malls and Business Centres. This environment is totally absent in the case of rural areas.

It also has to be noted that recent developments in telecom spectrum in the form of 2G and 3G communication has enabled mobile phones to become mini computers through which pocket internet can be utilized of. This is

very popular among the urban youth. If this is to be included in the enquiry in the fore coming years a numbers would show a high rise.

### Conclusion

There are many factors that aid a community in its ability to work together, create strong bonds, benefit from long-term economic activity and mobilize in times of crisis (Slack/Williams 2000; Theodori 2000; Wilkinson 1986; Warren 1977; Poplin 1972). These networks and media can be understood as assets that can have both positive and negative impacts on outcomes within a particular place or group. Generally speaking, media and communication networks aid in the creation of links within and external to a given community (Servaes/Malikhao 2004; Blumler/Kavanagh 1999). Internally, these networks are likely to contribute to the development and maintenance of bonding social capital; externally their most important contribution will most likely be to bridging and linking types of social capital (Flora 1998).

With the rapid pace of technological advancement and change it has become crucial to closely examine how traditional communication media fit into the bigger, more technologically advanced picture – particularly in rural communities (Chan/Leung 2005 Cooke 2005; Baym/Zhang/Lin 2004). The rapid changes in communications technology have not rendered the need and role of traditional forms of media obsolete. (Baym/Zhang/Lin 2004). As the venue and forms of communication delivery continue to evolve, it is also possible that the scope and nature of audiences will change significantly (Ang, 1996) Given that the demographics and socio-economics of rural India are different to that of urban India, differences in the willingness and/or ability to adopt new media forms is also highly likely.

Rural India faces a severe technology deficit. While there are other serious shortages — power, water, health facilities, roads, etc, — these are known and recognised. However, the role of technology in solving these — and other — problems is but barely acknowledged, and the actual availability of technology in rural areas is, at best, marginal. The so-called digital divide is widely spoken and written about; the technology divide is hardly mentioned. Yet, this disparity is arguably more important, as it has far greater impact.

The situation points to a pressing need and an exciting challenge, representing a unique three dimensional convergence of technological capability, economic opportunity and societal need. The time is now ripe for this convergence: the growth of India's technology base has resulted in far greater capability to meet the needs. At the same time, economic growth — though skewed and iniquitous — has created an economically attractive market in rural India.

There is, however, yet a gap in the third dimension. Understanding societal need from a socio-cultural standpoint is not easy, especially as the necessity for doing so is generally not appreciated.

Many decades ago, India's vibrant programme of applications of space technology had a large team of social scientists, dedicated to understanding the true needs of rural India and acting as a bridge between villagers and technologists. Today, we need an equivalent effort to devise user-friendly technology solutions for the problems of rural India. This will link booming, bits-and-bytes India with suffering, stagnating Bharat, so that the knowledge-driven sector serves as an engine of growth that pulls along the rural economy. This could be the next big thing for techno-entrepreneurs and enterprising corporates. (Kiran Karnik,2008)

The accesses to technology for rural youth will a great step and a determining change that could ensure India a rank and place in the Developed Nations of the World. For after all, it is a small chip that brings the whole world into it and makes life much easier for us all.

### REFERENCE

Books | Kevel J.Kumar, Mass Communication in India, Jaico Publishing House, Mumbai, 1994. | Ramsey Doug, Moss Alison, The Use of Traditional Media in Rural Communities, Canada, 2009 | E-articles | Muzna Shakeel, The role of Media in Today's World, Hamari Web, Karachi, 2014 | Mediaimportanc.blogspot.com Importance of Media in Today's world, 2013. | Kiran Karnik, Technology for Rural India, Opinion. The Economic Times, 2008. | <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-urban-and-rural-india> | Data Source | Digital Library, Census of India, 2010-11 - The Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, New Delhi-110011 |