Chapter 3
Spatial Mapping of Social Mediasphere in India

Abstract Communication is the best way to convey your thoughts and meaningful interactions. The hybrid nature of communication makes the space compressed. Places do matter to communicate and to establish a relation between geographies and spaces. Media as mediators flourished differently in order to connect, accumulate and constitute spatiality. Sometimes it is difficult to recognize space and communication together in the hybrid structure because boundaries get blurred and ambivalent. This chapter constitutes various aspects of spatiality of social media.

Keywords Social media · Spatial · Demography · Networks · Hybrid nature

3.1 Introduction

Social media plays a prominent role to connect people across the world. Not even only Facebook, there are so many different social networking sites which characterized as the space-based communication—in sense of virtual spaces—connected through gadgets. The initial period of communication was based on oral tradition and considered as the ‘oral mode of communication’ (Dahle and Dowling 1956). The expansion of new media technology has created a business monopoly over period of time, despite the fact that social media became an important aspect of people’s life which influences at now and then challenges in their life. The tradition of communication has changed and a new kind of society emerged which we called ‘Network Society’ (Castells and Gustavo 2005). Social media is a collection of online communication channels which are dedicated to society-based interaction, knowledge sharing and collaboration. This chapter is about how and at what extent social media brought changes in the mode of communication including volume and density of number of social media users along with different ideas and thoughts that propagate through it. Indeed, there are end numbers of issues discussed on social media or in other words, everyone is looking platforms as opportunities to introduce their products irrespective of nature and characteristics. And each product has own specific communication model through which it attracts the platform users and depends upon how effectively the communication tools are used.
3.2 Cartographies of Communication

Communication is everywhere. Communication is unlike a social and cultural process that demarcates the boundaries that differentiate the two distinct landscapes; communication is necessary to pass the knowledge/information in myriad representations and interpretations. In the past, people used rocks and caves or else stone wall to inscribe the locational documentations in pictorial formations. The history of communication was developed over a period of time and available nowadays in the shape of social media. Harold A. Innis (1951) provides an overview of media history along with the profound role of communication technologies in his ‘The Bias of Communication’. He described the changing relationship between economic activity and geography with the new ways of characterizing industrial societies. The paradigm of communication has been changed due to the change in societal conditions. The interdependency of communication and society can cause us to reflect upon the role played by the media. A Bias elaborates a framework of epochal divisions that are connected to dominant modes of communication. From the oral tradition of preliterate cultures, through different types of writing and print, to the electronic media of our own time, communications have been integral to the functioning of all social institutions. A fundamental notion that runs throughout Innis’s vision of communications history is the importance of understanding the oral tradition. The contrast between orality and literacy was mapped in communication studies by Walter J. Ong (2002). Innis addressed the way time or space is accentuated through communications is a crucial factor in the rise of civilization and its eventual collapse (Innis 1950). We have to understand how communication is changed through the changing nature of society. Furthermore, Innis elaborates that time-biased or time-binding societies tend to be those dependent on durable media that are difficult to transport; here durable media led those which are the ancient empires reliant on stone or clay and medieval Europe employed parchment. Media bonds with some sort of culture which accumulates different traditions for a particular society. Innis addressed the concept of social history in communication media; he described that the effectiveness of cultures is contingent on the balance and proportion of their media. He suggests that to begin our query into this area, we ask three basic questions:

i. How do specific communication technologies operate?
ii. What assumptions do they take from and contribute to society?
iii. What forms of power do they encourage?

For Innis, social change marked in the development of communication media. He identifies Bias in account of the organization and monopoly in the information. Innis elaborates the concept of time-biased media like stone and clay that are long-lasting and heavy. He claims that each medium of communication has bias because it is controlled by empire. Innis related this kind of media with the customary, sacred and moral. In contrast, the space-biased media is something which is light and portable in nature, because it can be moved around. It has territorial expansion; this medium can be passing on to many people so fast. But it has a short lifespan compared to
3.2 Cartographies of Communication

Innis concluded that to achieve a stable society, they have to have a balance between time- and space-biased media.

In addition, Innis (1951/1952) talk about the Monopolies of Knowledge in which he extended the economic concepts of monopoly to include culture and politics. Traditionally, the universities have strived to monopolize certain kinds of information, as have professional associations such as doctors or engineers or lawyers, as have governments. Innis demonstrated that those who monopolize knowledge are also in a position to define what is legitimate knowledge. Innis described several sources through which monopolies of knowledge derive their power: (i) Mastery of complexity—creates a hierarchy of professionals and amateurs. (ii) Control of Raw Materials for Media—who has controlled the media in depth. (iii) Performativity—just as Egyptian priests were able to accurately predict the regular flooding of the Nile because knowledge of writing allowed them to make calculations, so does access to public opinion allow psephologists to predict elections quantitatively. (iv) Speed—advantages accrue to those who know first. Business done in back rooms or the corridors of power is often never reported in the media. (v) Ability to afford high costs—the cult of production value in design, recording, and television and Hollywood movies makes it difficult for lower budget artefacts to compete for attention.

Monopolies of knowledge enhance to polarize societies into a mass of the ignorant and knowledge elite. Monopolies of knowledge encourage centralization of power. Those who control knowledge have the power to define reality. On the other way, Innis perspective is based on an examination of how new media arise in the first place. To understand any medium, we must attend not only to its physical characteristics but also to how it is employed and institutionalized. Innis sees a dialectical relationship between society and technology. According to this view, certain social forms and situations encourage the development of new media, these media operating within existing situations, and react back on society to produce a new cycle of change.

3.3 Social Mediasphere: Why Called as ‘Rational Technology’?

Social media emerged as an inevitable communication technology that works in mundane dimensions as all in one gadget where the screen of a smartphone is like a magical surface that accesses all in a click. During COVID-19 global pandemic social media-related companies are only that fetch multiple businesses in terms of online classes, work from home, etc. Christian Fuchs (2016) argued Marcuse’s theoretical thoughts on social media. Marcuse illustrates that social media are Internet-based platforms such as blogs (e.g. BlogSpot, WordPress, Tumbler), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Renren), user-generated content sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Youku), Microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Weibo) and Wikipedia. In a survey 2017–2018, study revealed that around 22.27% used Facebook, around
53.71% used WhatsApp, around 13.54% used Twitter, and around 10.48% used others platforms to share something on social media (Graph 3.1). It is proven that all media are to a certain extent social because they reflect and transmogrify society in complex ways. The actual change that communication systems such as Facebook reflect is that the Internet has, since 2005, become more of a system of cooperative work and community formation than it was before. These media are social because they enable and are means of sharing, communication, community and collaboration. At the same time, they are deeply embedded in capitalism’s commodity logic and therefore reflect individual private property, individualism and structures of exploitation and domination. Capitalist class relations that individualize these social media’s sociality limit the sociality of social media as means of informational production (Fuchs 2016).

Marcuse accounts the technological diversification in recent times and their reflection on social media. Furthermore, Herbert Marcuse claims that technological tools such as computers became the tool of control, domination and exploitation. Marcuse on the one side stressed the role of the computer as a tool of control, domination and exploitation:

> The formal rationality of capitalism celebrates its triumph in electronic computers, which calculate everything, no matter what the purpose, and which are put to use as mighty instruments of political manipulation, reliably calculating the chances of profit and loss, including the chance of the annihilation of the whole, with the consent of the likewise calculated and obedient population. (Marcuse 1965: 224–225)

On the other side, Marcuse recognizes liberating potentials of the computer writing that Marx:

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Graph 3.1 Which social media platforms do you preferred (Prepared after survey, 2017–2018)
Saw the possibility of reducing alienated labour already in capitalism, namely as a consequence of technical progress or as we would say today, increasing automation, mechanization, computerization, whatever you want to call it. That, however, is only the anticipation, or the first traces, of the liberation of the human being from full-time alienated labour. (Marcuse 1978: 220)

On this account, Marcuse looks out that dialectic of modern technology also plays in computer technology:

An electronic computer can serve equally a capitalist or socialist administration.[…] in Marxian theory itself […] the social mode of production, not technics is the basic historical factor. However, when technics becomes the universal form of material production, it circumscribes an entire culture; it projects a historical totality- a ‘world’. (Marcuse 1964: 157–158)

In this context, Marx views modern technology such as the computer; he accounts that modern technology emerged as a form to socialize the means of production and communication and is, therefore, a substructure of a better society. Besides, he provides that modern technology became a tool for warfare, control, surveillance, advertising’s manipulation of needs, the creation of unemployment and new forms of precarious labour. In contrast to Marx, Marcuse sees differently, he did not think that one must simply vanish capitalism and then use the same technologies in a socialist society. However, he believes that a qualitative change in society would have to come along with a qualitative change of technology:

The technological transformation is at the same time political transformation but the political change would turn into a qualitative social change only to the degree to which it would alter the direction of technical progress, that is, develop new technology. For the established technology has become an instrument of destructive politics. (Marcuse 1964: 232)

Social media is a vast platform to exchange knowledge and share our views but we cannot deny that social media manipulated our information as we can see nowadays. The power of domination emerged in the form of a hidden agenda which calmly changed the views of peoples. The technological advancement created the changes in the arena of communication; it is easy to connect people instantly because we are globally connected. Nevertheless, there are so many aspects of social media; it believes people connect socially through a particular medium which is media. Social media belongs to the people of urban and rural; everything is transformed into a new structure which is more technical, mechanical and controlled to some extent. The relationship of people also shaped a new form which is more virtual and less trustworthy. The power of technology can enhance day by day; everything is controlled and captured by technology.
The technology which the industrial societies have inherited and developed and which rules our lives in its very roots a technology of domination. Consummation of technical progress, therefore, implies the determinate negation of this technology. [...] The idea of qualitatively different forms of technological rationality belongs to a new historical project. (Marcuse 1962: 57)

Subsequently, Marcuse argued that modern technology has liberated, democratic but at the same time eliminated, preserved and lifted to a new qualitative level of actuality. Marcuse provides the dialectical sublation of technology; he suggests that a truly free society has to abolish repressive uses of the technology. He claims that social media technologies such as Facebook and Twitter are dependent on complex terms of use that enable the commodification of personal data and the exploitation of user’s digital labour. Furthermore, he suggests that we do not need to abolish social networking but we have to redesign social media in such a way they are privacy-enhancing, advertising-free, user-controlled, not-for-profit and allow the users a say in formulating the terms of use. It increases their liberating potentials and simultaneously vanishes their domiantive character.

Furthermore, Fuchs (2016) described the concept of a society of self-control in which Gilles Deleuze has pointed out that contemporary capitalism and disciplines are converted in such a way that humans increasingly discipline themselves without direct external violence. He terms this situation the ‘society of (self-) control’. Social networking sites tend to control the mind of the people which causes damage to the human mind. Its accessibility explores the domination of networks which indirectly surveillance the people and creates a disciplined society. Subsequently, Herbert Marcuse used the term ‘technological rationality’ for exploring the phenomenon of instrumental reason. Through which he described that ideology and manipulation try to make human consciousness and human behaviour function like an automatic machine that has only a limited set of available response behaviours. Technological rationality contains ‘elements of thought which adjust the rules of thought to the rules of control and domination’ (Marcuse 1964: 138). Social media emerged as an independent view or in other words we say that hashtag politics is an extension of such digital ideas that persist upon others’ voices for other reasons.

This shows the worldwide technological advancement of visibility and accessibility of social media but in the context of India, these things may be seen differently. The Indian society has a multi-dimensional culture with different tribes, and technology plays a crucial role to develop the rural areas. The integration of technology can create the path of rural people so that they can achieve their goal. Likewise, mobile technology plays a substantial role in connecting people even though it may not seem wrong to say that the introduction of mobile technology has a lion’s share in bringing the nation to an outstanding level of progress. ICT has emerged as a major source for development in India (see Chapter 1). The Economic Times (Delhi edition, 10 Feb 2012) covered the news of farmers of Sangli district, Maharashtra,
that how Facebook saved many farmers from perishing. Facebook as a digital platform provided a space where farmers discussed their issues and asked fellow farmers for dissemination of farmers’ issues.

At the same time when these platform technologies are providing timely information to multiply their savings and business but in contrarily they are in entrap of capitalists too who monitored them algorithmically what common users are not aware about it or if they knew the same but they are unable to change the pattern set by social media as trending or further, in shape of hashtag politics. So, sometimes such news got domain place due to technology or vested interests are behind to change the discourse under the purview of technology, which is rational.

### 3.4 The Digital Generation

An infant is exposed to the smartphone’s camera first when he/she was born in the maternity ward when parents want to take a snap to share in their family groups and social networking sites. Since then, the infant’s journey starts with smartphones and grown along with screen’s light and digital rhyme when parents want to divert their attentions for mundane reasons. And, gradually he/she learnt to scroll over screen to search rhyme, and after some years, they become well to do on digital platform. Edward Kessler (2013) argued the three different phases of communication technology development; in addition, he defines ‘the term social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue’ (Kessler 2013: 26). This definition provided a well-known example of modern technology. He talks about the generation shift which occurred due to technological shift. To prove his point, he described how we understand these shifts through the different phrases of technology. He explains three phases as (Kessler 2013: 27) follows:

1. **1980s—One-to-One** connections: for instance, e-mail (in 2010, 107 trillion emails were sent, an average of 294 billion per day; 89% spam).
2. **1990s—One-to-Many** connections: for instance, web pages (such as Wikipedia and Google available to countries ‘web surfers’ at the same time).

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1The reason was, to oversupply of turmeric, prices crashed exceeding in the local market. One of the local farmers used Facebook to connect to other farmers all over the country and consider the situation and discussed the prices with them. Because of the power of social media, the news spread like a forest fire and 25000 turmeric farmers of Sangli heard of the boycott. The boycott served its purpose as the prices doubled. Other social networking sites also expend this news all over. There are different social networking sites which promote the opportunities to the farmers and accelerate the rural growth. There are different programmes and schemes which started to enhance the productivity of the rural people and connect to them with globally. For details, [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/farmers-using-facebook-to-discuss-prices-and-plan-strategy/articleshow/11829710.cms](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/farmers-using-facebook-to-discuss-prices-and-plan-strategy/articleshow/11829710.cms). Accessed 25 June 2020.
3. **Many-to-Many** connections, which is social media, e.g. Facebook (established 2004), YouTube (established in 2005) and Twitter (established in 2006).

Kessler (2013) discussed the third phase in which he talked about different achievements of social media. Social media has generated global attention that upheavals the society; there are such movements that reach the people because of social media, such as Arab Spring. In a survey 2017–2018, around 70.74% agreed that social media have an impact on their lives while 29.26% nevertheless found any merits in platforms (Graph 3.2). In the recent year, social networking sites have grown rapidly from website owners to website users. The massive growth of social networking sites is not only on a national or international level but even on a regional level as well.

According to a report from the Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs (2011) at Georgetown University claim that the proliferation of information also shapes religious identity. For example, Peter Mandaville, of the centre for global studies at George Mason University, has observed that many young Muslims find information from a multitude of sources with varying perspectives on their faith. Indeed, religious activists and intellectuals from all faiths are establishing their own interpretation of their faith (and ideology). (Kessler 2013: 28)

In this context, social media somehow demonstrates the information and enhances user-generated content that also makes it easier for misinformation and negative content to circulate online. The new technologies have prompted an interconnected world to connect people in a greater diversity in the number of people, places and perspectives.
Social media not only shapes the perspectives rather provides freedom to raise their voice and is accessible to other people as well. ‘Slacktivism’ and ‘clicktivism’ are two processes which often employ digital protest while slacktivism is a half-hearted activism promoted on social media (Dennis 2019). There is very less chance to turn digital protest into movement, unless the issue touches many more. In late 2019 and early 2020, whole India was under the grip of protest against anti-citizenship amendment act (CAA) 2019. The protest was against the amendment brought by the Government of India in the citizenship act to give citizenships to the members of minority communities except Muslims from South Asian countries. Therefore, Muslims in India stood against such biased amendments. The protest went like forest fire and many places witnessed the bizarre strike, protest and sloganeering against the anti-CAA amendment. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 global pandemic, the protest was withheld temporarily but later it was decided to resume online.

The protest gradually fed the information beyond the conventional medium and used digital gadgets, and as a result, people started to join in the protest in order to show solidarity. In short, we can map that digital gadgets played an important role in the expansion of people participation and subsequently in the change of perception that somehow noted in the spatiality or nothing wrong to say that the present generation as digital generation who are mostly dependent on digital gadgets from online classes to communication.

3.5 People’s Perception and Social Media: A Spatial Understanding

How and at what extent social media shaped individual’s lives in daily routine when he/she encountered the same purposefully. Here, a case study was discussed in order to understand how social media changed the social understanding. Shriram Venkatraman (2017) analyses how the IT sector developed in Panchagrami, the nearby city of Chennai. Furthermore, he illustrates the prior condition of Panchagrami in terms of communication infrastructure. He discussed traditional media-radio, television and newspapers and social media as well. Since the availability of smartphones, people have gradually moved towards catching up information as much as possible. Social media provided them a chance to connect with the rest of the world. In a survey, the author found that the lives in the locality have changed since modern

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2In social media, both are the ways to join in the digital protests. When people pursue to participate in the digital protest in varied capacities wherein sharing, forwarding, liking shows desperate concern on the issue, all such affection noted on social media but not confirmed from ground zero. For details, clicktivismSlacktivismOrRealActivismCulturalCodesOfA.pdf, https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/file_sets/df65v8288. Accessed 24 June 2020.

3Activists have taken decision to continue online protest against CAA till withdrawn. For details, https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/anti-caa-protests-go-online/article31743233.ece. Accessed 25 June 2020.
communication infrastructure was installed. Venkatraman described the impact of gender, class or caste on Facebook. He argued:

The main impact of caste on Facebook is therefore essentially in regard to gender issues. For example, the leadership of a caste-based political group (this caste claims to be higher up the social hierarchy than the scheduled castes) had recently declared that the girls of their caste were being targeted and wooed by young men from the Scheduled castes, and that this had to be stopped as it was leading to inter-caste marriages. These young men from this caste group, who more or less fell into lower middle-class backgrounds, expressed a similar opinion, echoing the thoughts of their leader [……] interviews with young women belonging to this class and caste revealed that in reality most of them had an account on Facebook, since they did not want to be left out of a social network that their peers from the city enjoyed. (Venkatraman 2017: 37–38)

Author defines that at the same time the men in Panchagrami whatever of their socio-economic status is became members of Facebook at a much younger age. It is evident that mostly people misuse the social media for the sake of their own concern. This virtual space turns their life in a different way and especially girls are the primary who are affected by it. We can see at what level these social networking sites socialize the world, there is no such privacy, and everyone has shared their photos on these sites. Facebook is popular among the young girls and young boys irrespective of class, gender, class or social disparities. In a survey 2017–2018, study revealed that around 21.83% watched social media for entertainments, around 30.13% used to know social affairs in the surrounding spatiality or in other words, to know news whether regional, national or international, and remain to be updated whatsoever, around 36.24% used to know information in shape of knowledge, and about 11.79% used platforms for cultural information, which means a cocktail of such information that often found across the platforms (Graph 3.3).

Furthermore, Venkatraman talks about other social networking sites such as Twitter, as the survey declares that Twitter is not as popular as Facebook, the reason behind it is because Twitter was somehow associated with intellectuality of English and it seemed like a medium that needed exertion with respect to get followers. Twitter needs an active participation to collect the one’s audience:

Many skilled IT employees were active to a certain extent on twitter, however, or at least engaged with it on a passive basis. They felt that twitter was an ideal knowledge platform if you followed someone of repute, such as Guy Kawasaki or Robert Scoble, both thought leaders from Silicon Valley. Many also followed Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, on twitter. Although most of these users were sharing news and information through re-tweets, they agreed that they had to put in the initial effort of gaining followers for themselves. (Venkatraman 2017: 51–52)

On this account, in Panchagrami, Twitter was not used as an everyday means of communication and found different from other social networking sites like Facebook.

Comparing the usage of twitter to that of other social networking sites such as Facebook or WhatsApp clearly showed that the kinds of messages exchanged on twitter were different from those exchanged on Facebook. Twitter was perceived to be a platform on which one had to be normative and politically correct. (Venkatraman 2017: 53)
No doubt, social media made it easy to connect with each other and improve communication skills. In a survey 2017–2018, around 52.84% users agreed that social media helped them to improve their identity, while 47.16% nevertheless found any merits in the platforms (Graph 3.4). There are lots of emotional concerns which are attached
to it and such other factors which influence and control social media. We cannot deny that social media is controlled by a dominant group of people who are powerful and have enough resources.

In addition, Venkatraman (2017: 54) argues that social media influence people in dual ways: first, hard restrictions; second, soft controls. Within the lower socio-economic classes and lower middle classes, hard restrictions manifested in four distinct forms:

1. **Complete Restriction**: This is the case of male family members trying to keep a watchful eye on young unmarried women in their families and caste.

2. **Time Restrictions**: This form of control establishes in families who opt themselves as less conservative, since they allowed access to social media. Time limits on access over multiple devices were imposed; however, a specific time limit is strictly maintained.

3. **Space restrictions**: This evolves in families who believe themselves to be less conservative. Space outside the home was perceived as a potentially threatening, masculine arena that could have a detrimental effect on girls and young women.

4. **Intentional surveillance**: Families who allowed younger female members to be on social media, while limiting their friend contacts to their extended family or those whom the family knew offline. A strict surveillance was kept on young women’s profiles, with families monitoring their social media posts.

These issues create some sort of problems, however soft controls, generally unintentional in nature. The author tries to convey the emotional aspect of social media. The above understanding gives us a spatial notion that how technology has changed the people’s perception. The communication infrastructure changed the spatiality of the village over a period of time. The embedded spatiality of castes, gender discrimination and class bifurcation too noticed since social media introduced in the village. Prior to social media, the social crevasse was not widened but over a period of time it widened. People’s perception swung in both directions, sometimes it widened the social crevasse and sometimes it remained under folds. Such swing depends upon networks and how the networks behave.

### 3.6 Networks and Social Mediasphere

Social media density measures through the networks that connect with the nodes, each and every node is essential for the system to function, and nodes are not all equally important. Here, I am going to discuss the theoretical background of social media. Communication pattern depends upon the networks that what types of networks we are engaged in? How does the network work? How network is spatial?

Manuel Castells (2009) argued the power of networks because effective communication depends on the strong power of networks. Manual Castells in his book
further cite the Fritjof Capra as Fritjof Capra\textsuperscript{4} writes, ‘The network is a pattern that is common to all life. Wherever we see life, we see networks’ (Castells 2009: 21).

The network plays a crucial role to build a social circle, and it has created some other world. Manuel Castells wrote about network society which he argues that human society moved from industrial society to informational society; in this transition, capitalism is centred on information and knowledge no other modes of production. The term networked society refers to the social structure of this new age; Castells termed its economic manifestation of the global informational economy. According to Castells (2009), networks now form the new architecture of society and are the dominant mode of organizing social relations. A network for Castells is a decentralized system of nodes, which do not have any centre of particular, through which communication can occur, each and every node is necessary for the system to function through nodes are not all of equal importance. Networks have an open structure and are able to expand and contract as necessary communication that occurs across these networks via nodes. Nodes are multidimensional and multidirectional and not restricted by either time or space.

The difference in a network society is the process of managing information within networks. Networks use micro-electronic-based communication technologies such as the Internet or mobile phones. Societies do not have to be attached to a specific geographical space in terms of nation or state. ‘Digital networks are global, as they have the capacity to reconfigure themselves, as directed by their programmers, transcending territorial and institutional boundaries through telecommunicated computer networks’ (Castells 2009: 24). The rise of the networked society has also led to transformations in social dynamics and interpersonal relationships as well as how individuals relate to institutions’ and organizations’ access to networks is no longer dominated by one powerful social group in comparison with prior, while economically disadvantaged groups may find it more difficult to use the new networks particularly amongst the poor. Furthermore, Castells argues that the structural changes in society, place and time are gradually becoming less relevant to social life. They exist side by side with new identities and ways of life that are formed in the space of flows. Castells (2009) explains two emergent social forms of time and space that characterize the network society.

There are the space of flows and timeless time. The space of flows refers to the technological and organizational possibility of practicing simultaneity without contiguity. It also refers to the possibility of asynchronous interaction in chosen time at a distance. Most dominant functions in the network society (financial markets, transnational production networks, media networks, networked forms of global governance, global social movements) are organized around the space of flows. However, the space of flows is not placeless. It is made of nodes and networks; that is, of places connected by electronically powered communication networks through which flows of information that ensure the Time-sharing of practices processed in such a space circulates and interact. (Castells (2009: 34)

\textsuperscript{4}Fritjof Capra is an Austrian-born American physicist, systems theorist and deep ecologist. In 1995, he became a founding director of the Centre for Eco literacy in Berkeley, California.
The networked society provides people with the opportunity to communicate and interact with people from different places instantaneously allowing for the creation of social networks that draw from a myriad of culture and ideological worldviews. In Castells mind, this ultimately leads to a more connected productive accepting and open-minded global society. However, not everyone agrees with Castell’s vision of the networked society. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman\(^5\) believes that Castells is too idealist and utopian in his assessment of the current situation of the world with all of its social, political and economic ailments.

Frank Webster\(^6\) argues that Castells places too much emphasis on the influence of technology on social relations and not enough on how humans correspondingly shape and reshape communications and networks. Despite these criticisms, it’s clear that Castells is overarching theory of the increasing interconnectedness of human society and our reliance on information and communication technologies is an important contribution to our understanding of globalization. Castell’s theory of networked society has been hugely influential in the sociological understanding of the relationship between new technologies and society.

When Castells talked about space of flows where he was not supposed to talk in the sense of organizations rather than spatiality and each connected node has its own spatial identity or functions or features that keep others intact in myriad capacities. Space of flows is not an independent agent, relatively interlinked networks in the shape of spatiality. I would prefer to categorize ‘Network society’ a spatial concept that deals with spatial configurations with the help of Internet and social media.

### 3.7 Social Mediasphere Analysis (SMA): A Spatial Linkages

Social media analysis is the kind of mapping the relationship and flows between people and groups. Every action on social media can be recorded and stored. Through this method, we can analyse and interpret the data and make sensible interpretations. SMA plays a very significant role to map social media today. There are different organizations such as Statistical Analysis System (SAS), International Business Machines (IBM), Adobe and Oracle that deal with social media data analytics; they have different tools to measure such data.

These measures give us depth into the different roles and grouping in a network—in that sense, where are the clusters? Who is in between? Who is in the centre of the network? Who is on the periphery? David Krackhardt (1990) developed the ‘kite network’ which indicates that if they regularly talk to each other or interact in some

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\(^{5}\)Zygmunt Bauman was a polish sociologist and philosopher. He was driven out of Poland by a political purge in 1968 engineered by the communist government of the polish people’s republic and forced to give up his polish citizenship to move to Israel.

\(^{6}\)Frank Webster is a British sociologist. His critical writing on the ‘information society’ has been translated into many languages, widely discussed and criticized.
way, then the two nodes are linked with each other. This kind of network shows the differentiation between three most influential individual centrality measures: degree centrality, betweenness centrality and closeness centrality. Through these centralities, we can identify the effectiveness and the potentiality of the actor in the social world. This will help to map the pattern of spatiality that is an inevitable part of the spatial mapping.

### 3.7.1 Degree Centrality

Degree centrality is the number of connections that an actor has. The degree can be interpreted in terms of the immediate risk of a node for catching whatever is flowing through the network. In the case of a direct network, we majorly define two separate measures of degree centrality, namely in degree and out degree. Consequently, in degree is a count of the number of ties directed to the node and out degree is the number of ties that the nodes direct to others.

### 3.7.2 Betweenness Centrality

Betweenness centrality plays an important role in analysis of social networks. It is a measure of the influence of a vertex over the flow of information between every pair of vertices under the assumption that information primarily flows over the shortest paths between them.

### 3.7.3 Closeness Centrality

Closeness centrality of a node is to measure the centrality in a network, calculated as the reciprocal of the sum of the length of the shortest paths between the node and all other nodes. It is measured in a connected graph.

### 3.7.4 Network Centrality

Centrality is such a measure that defines us how influential or important a node is within the whole network. This concept is significant to map the social networks so that we can identify the social networks and the connection among the actors. This concept depends on different types of networks. So to some extent, centrality at that matter was about the question ‘what characterizes an essential node?’ From this measurement of centrality, we can get some idea of the node’s importance within
the overall network. The degree of a node’s connectivity that mentioned above is probably the simplest and most basic measure of centrality. The centrality often depends on the context, some of the most important parameters for trying to capture the significance of any given node in a network. The significance of a node can be thought in two ways: first, how much of the network’s resources flow through this node, and second, how critical is the node of that flow.

The basis to discuss these centralities helps to identify the consecutiveness of the different nodes to each other. This concept is based on the mathematical phenomenon which is associated with the mapping to social networks—to find the social relationship that ties among people or organization. While mapping the social media, we should know how these relationships measure, in what way we can analyse the whole concept of mapping the social media. In the recent time, two kinds of networks are most popular: user-centric social network which develops from online relationships around a user (e.g. one’s friend in Facebook or followers in Twitter, etc.) and other object-centric social networks which develop from online interaction around a social object (e.g. photo in Flickr, video in YouTube or hashtags in Twitter, etc.). The mapping of such networks often draws the outer boundaries that demarcate the same from the rest of other networks. Similarly, a WhatsApp group of likeminded people who knew each other in most cases or they came to know over a period of time shared messages or else information to keep benefitting all in the group.

3.8 Is Social Mediasphere Bridging the Gap in Rural Areas?

From the digital perspective, India is divided into two very different communities: 70% of rural population vs. 30% of urban population. In a survey 2017–2018, around 13.54% reported that shown contents belong to urban sphere wherein urban issues were predominantly portrayed, nearby 10.04% said that the appeared portrayals belong to rural stories, about 21.40% observed that the appeared contents are metropolitan in nature where stories of big cities were textured in different demands, and around 55.02% unable to decode such contents or it shows mix pattern; however, they enjoyed all whatever appeared on their platform screen (Graph 3.5).

The social media worked in the rural areas to promote the awareness regarding health issues and spread information regarding other information. Many Indian social media networks have committed themselves to provide information to the farmers regarding cultivation as well as animal husbandry especially All India Radio (AIR) which has been committed to rural audiences. Through an online public grievance system, development in these parts take smoothly as the villagers can lodge their complaints on this forum. (Bansal 2015: 203)

Furthermore, information networks can become one of the reasons that allow money to flow into the villages through new kinds of non-discriminatory and clean industries. Information and communication technologies can also compensate for other kinds of infrastructure limitations.
3.8 Is Social Mediasphere Bridging the Gap in Rural Areas?

The Internet has transformed the way most people in the west live. It has become an important part of our economic, political and social lives, changing the way they purchase commodities, the way they bank and the way they share exchanges with one another. First, the Internet reduces traditional blockage to trade and industry, allowing small businesses in developing nations to market their products directly to the United States and other developed countries. Second, the informational capacity of the Internet enabled developing countries to move ahead in improving fundamental services, and it can allow, with its use, people all across information from any part of the world. There are two outcomes of a particular thing, one is negative and the other one is positive. One side, ICT brings a change in the rural areas in terms of development, but on the other hand, it is also the reason for the ‘digital divides’. Digital divide may refer to the gap between demographics and regions that have access to ICT and that do not have access to it or at the most have restricted access due to economic, technical or social reasons.

The digital divides rise due to the lack of access to the informational tools. The reasons behind digital divides are as follows: socio-economic status, income, education, race, caste, gender, geographic (rural-urban) location, age, skills, awareness, political, cultural and psychological attitudes.

According to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) the gaps of digital divides is wider in the country. It shows in terms of number of subscribers where 27.57 persons in 100 persons accessed Internet in rural areas while in urban areas the rate of Internet penetration is almost 100% where 104.25 persons in 100 persons accessed.

Graph 3.5 Nature of contents you often preferred to see (Prepared after survey, 2017–2018)

For instance, if online work, trade or payment were to become available for members of a village community, the poor quality of roads to and from that village becomes less of an obstacle to learning and employment. Finally, and most importantly, if capital were to become more readily available within village communities through such networked systems, it would then be in a better position to finance the basic infrastructure that it needs, including roads, dispensaries, and water and sanitation systems. (Rai and Shahila 2013)
In total, about 52.08 people in 100 people accessed the Internet in the country. In Himachal Pradesh, the number of subscribers is highest in rural areas followed by Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Kerala. In Himachal Pradesh, the number of subscribers is highest in urban areas followed by Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan in the country (Table 3.1). The stark division in digital divides needs to reduce.

3.9 Spatial Mapping of Communication

Communication traverses through spatiality. The topography of spatiality does matter for better communication and spatial distributions. Paul C. Adams (2009) argued four perspectives of communication. Media in space—it can be understood as a communication as infrastructures. Spaces in media—understood as a functional topological space: personal, professional, social, etc. Places in media—when place is a centre of meaning and attention, for example, hey, I love to watch Taj Mahal. Media in place—use of communication tools or mediums in specific places—a ringing in classroom or church can attract attention of others and therefore feel embarrassment. Adams argued various aspects of communication geography en route to response to environmental risk. With the development of location-acquisition techniques, social media become increasingly geographic (Blanford et al. 2011). In social media, geographic positioning systems (GPS) are inbuilt features that detect location automatically. The geo-components of social media have inbuilt features that comprehend in virtual space. Goodchild and Janelle (2010) demonstrate that the spatial-temporal dynamics in social science can refer to two aspects: individual movement and information diffusion.

Marshall McLuhan (1964) argued global villages that described the phenomenon of the world becoming more interconnected as the outcome of the circulation of media technologies across the world. He elaborates that the global villages mean different parts of the world that are linked by the media. There are many communicative forms that allow us to connect with people in different parts of the country; for instance, Skype allows us to communicate and connect others. The new form of digital age has implications to establish new meaningful structures within the context of culture.

Exchange messages, stories, opinions, posts and videos via channels on telecommunication can cause miscommunication—especially through different cultures. McLuhan pointed out that the increased velocity of transactions has promoted international density, making social networks an incentive for social change. All over the global village, people have excelled in their micro- and meso-level contexts. They are involved in a complex community of networks spread across cities, nations and so on. Besides this, increasing communications with friends on social media may also increase the density of interconnections within existing social clusters. Each social media platform acts as a digital home for individuals, permitting people to express themselves through the global village.

According to McLuhan, the enhanced electric speed in bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden explosion has heightened human awareness
### Table 3.1 Digital divides in India

| Service areas     | Internet subscribers (in million) | No. of internet subscribers per 100 population |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                   | Rural    | Urban   | Total   | Rural | Urban   | Total   |
| Andhra Pradesh    | 21.54    | 32.26   | 53.80   | 33.02 | 126.70  | 59.33   |
| Assam             | 6.57     | 6.46    | 13.03   | 23.45 | 113.28  | 38.66   |
| Bihar             | 25.37    | 18.52   | 43.88   | 20.60 | 92.99   | 30.68   |
| Delhi             | 0.74     | 37.79   | 38.53   | 98.35 | 165.82  | 163.65  |
| Gujarat           | 12.05    | 30.56   | 42.61   | 31.97 | 107.44  | 64.43   |
| Haryana           | 6.16     | 9.87    | 16.02   | 34.41 | 90.09   | 55.55   |
| Himachal Pradesh  | 3.41     | 2.19    | 5.60    | 53.34 | 245.68  | 76.85   |
| Jammu & Kashmir   | 1.70     | 3.17    | 4.88    | 18.59 | 86.24   | 37.96   |
| Karnataka         | 14.32    | 29.36   | 43.68   | 37.18 | 114.22  | 68.02   |
| Kerala            | 10.27    | 15.70   | 25.97   | 37.69 | 171.21  | 71.30   |
| Madhya Pradesh    | 17.06    | 27.38   | 44.44   | 21.82 | 89.85   | 40.90   |
| Maharashtra       | 22.16    | 35.44   | 57.59   | 36.84 | 99.38   | 68.01   |
| Mumbai            | 1.37     | 27.60   | 28.97   |       |         |         |
| North East        | 2.96     | 4.40    | 7.36    | 27.65 | 117.09  | 50.87   |
| Orissa            | 10.51    | 7.10    | 17.62   | 29.54 | 88.37   | 40.37   |
| Punjab            | 7.38     | 17.31   | 24.69   | 42.46 | 117.73  | 76.96   |
| Rajasthan         | 17.23    | 21.98   | 39.21   | 29.82 | 118.15  | 51.34   |
| Tamil Nadu        | 13.49    | 34.97   | 48.46   | 50.74 | 76.31   | 66.92   |
| UP (East)         | 23.91    | 25.60   | 49.51   | 20.09 | 83.47   | 34.89   |
| UP (West)         | 13.23    | 21.39   | 34.62   |       |         |         |
| Kolkata           | 1.52     | 15.32   | 16.84   | 23.38 | 109.60  | 48.32   |
| West Bengal       | 14.70    | 15.62   | 30.31   |       |         |         |
| Total             | 247.63   | 439.99  | 687.62  | 27.57 | 104.25  | 52.08   |

**Notes**

1. The number of total Internet subscribers per 100 population is derived from the subscriber data provided by the operators and the population projections of the country, published by the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India
2. Data/information for Andhra Pradesh includes Telangana, Madhya Pradesh includes Chhattisgarh, Bihar includes Jharkhand, Maharashtra includes Goa, Uttar Pradesh includes Uttarakhand, West Bengal includes Sikkim and North East includes Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura states

*Source* Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Report (TRAI) 2020. (For details, [https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/PIR_08012020_0.pdf](https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/PIR_08012020_0.pdf). Accessed 25 June 2020)

*Population data/projections are available state-wise only*
of responsibility to an intense degree. The advancement speed of communication and the ability for people to read about and react to global news quickly force us to become more involved with others from various social groups and countries around the world and to be more aware of our global responsibilities. Likely, web-connected computers enable people to link their web sites together.

Furthermore, McLuhan argued that the global village ensures maximal disagreement on all points because it establishes more discontinuity and division and diversity under the increase of the village conditions. The global village is far more diverse and divergent. The diversity gives challenge to the cultural aspects and the world faces enormous challenges in maintaining the cultural diversity. It seems obvious that if there is no technology, there is no connection to share and exchange different thoughts. McLuhan believed that the world was entering a fourth age, he called the electronic age, where people everywhere would be able to find and experience the same information through technological tools. His analysis depended on how human communication was affected, helped him develop his hypothesis about the future and how innovations such as the coming Internet would impact individuals and culture as a whole. McLuhan’s prediction of a global village of connectedness also came with the warning; he suspected this technology would introduce violence into the world and the stress of having access to too much information might cause people to ‘re-tribalize’ into new integrated cultural groups.

Both Adams and McLuhan established the spatial importance of new cultural imperialism in the shape of media that is inevitable in the twenty-first century. Media discerned the spatial differences and connotes them accordingly with different purposes. Globalization helped media to reach the unsolicited spatiality, and thereafter, mediated patterns are disclosed in mundane spatial representations.

### 3.10 Social Mediasphere and Globalization

The globalization is the major phenomenon which causes the advancement of technology. In this section, we will learn about the globalization and its relationship with social media or new media. We all know that the emergence of new technologies (ICTs) has opened the door for exchange of ideas, services and products like never before. Many consider technological advancement all over the world as a force that has played a crucial role to bring out these changes. Ohmae (in 1995)\(^7\) says, ‘New Media are associated with far more cataclysmic changes in actually enabling the development of a truly global system, or society-culture thereby leading to fundamental changes in the world organisations’, and in contrast, Siapera\(^8\) raises a very

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\(^7\) Kenichi Ohmae is a Japanese organizational theorist, management consultant, former professor and dean of UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs.

\(^8\) Eugenia Siapera is professor of information and communication studies and head of the ICS School at UCD.
authentic question in terms of the connection between the new media and globalization. The question is whether new technologies and new media entitle globalization or was it globalization that led to the cause of the rise of the Internet and other new media in global terms.

The central feature of the idea of globalization is that many contemporary problems cannot be adequately studied at the level of nation-states, that is, in terms of each country and its international relations, but instead need to be seen in terms of global processes. (Eugenia 2012)

Simultaneously, Appadurai (1996) argues that the vital role in global culture is devoted to the media and migration as they represent movement of images and the movement of people. Social media also associates with a global culture; the people connect themselves with this relevant culture. The flow of ideas, technologies and finance together make a new landscape. Appadurai (1996) talks about five landscapes which change the whole world, i.e. ethnoscapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes, technoscapes and financescapes. All creates new global orders.

On the other way, Malcolm Gladwell, the scholar of The New Yorker and the Washington Post, believes that social media used as an effective tool in the different kinds of activism but that it cannot be reached as like traditional activism. He directly criticizes the very notion of social media in his own way. Social media is a very effective platform and increasing rapidly to get more new audiences. Social media emerged as a powerful tool in the information age that connects north to south and east to west.

Humans are social beings and social media is the perfect platform to express that social nature all around the world. There is continuous addition to the available technological resources; one of the core features that make social media a global hit is: it is easy to access people who can share and talk across the globe through mobile phones, as people all over the world are connected like never before. Social media has changed the way in businesses because we can interact with them on a global scale. Businesses used social media to advertise and communicate with their customers; this interaction is a major factor in the globalization of social media. Social media is used by corporations all across the globe, and now, anyone can feel like they are at the forefront of innovation along with the companies that they follow on social media.

Nowadays, it is evident that social media tend to enhance their original scope and offer support for additional services, for instance, social networking together with image and video sharing and tagging. There are several impacts of new media over globalization; according to Castells, globalization is not only the increase in interconnectedness in the world but also includes changes in the following areas:

1. Economy and works;
2. Redistribution of power;
3. Reorganization of nation state;
4. Rise of cultural identities.

Thus, technical innovations conceived the idea of social media to the world that is unbiased and non-partial in nature, although with time it exposes the spatiality more
and more. Social media brought all unity in diversity where everyone can join it without restrictions; rather, it created a composite-embedded virtual spatiality.

3.11 The Concept of Diffusion of Innovation

After discussing the different aspects of globalization and how globalization enhances the availability of social media, now, we move on to diffusion of innovation and the elements which are essential in the process of diffusion of innovation. Diffusion of innovations, one of the oldest theories of social science, was developed by E. M. Rogers (1962). This term was used astronomically in the area of communication studies to explain the process of diffusion of an idea or product through a specific population or social system over a period of time. Here, innovation refers to an idea, practice or object or other units of adoption in society.

There are different elements of diffusion of innovation: the innovation, communication channels, time and the social system.

1. **Innovation**: According to Rogers, innovation is an idea, practice or project that is obtained as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. Adoption of an innovation is related to the innovation-decision process which has three steps—knowledge, persuasion and decision. The innovation depends on these three steps that any society perceives. Every transformation has come up with a different agenda of a particular thing.

2. **Communication channels**: The second component of the diffusion of innovations process is communication channels. Rogers defines communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding. Two primary communication channels are mass media and interpersonal communication. Mass media channels reach to masses in a particular time, for instance, television, radio and so on, and on the other side, interpersonal communication contains two-way correspondence between at least two people or more.

3. **Time**: According to Rogers, the time factor is overlooked in most behavioural research. He contends that incorporating the time measurement in diffusion research shows one of its qualities.

4. **Social system**: The social system is the last component of the diffusion process. Rogers defines the social system as an arrangement of interrelated units occupied with joint critical thinking to finish a shared objective.

There are different stages in which diffusion of innovation can be practised and adopted; we are living in a ‘knowledge stage’; in this stage, an individual finds out the presence of innovation and looks for data about the innovation. A person seeks an answer to what innovation is and how and why it works? As outlined by Rogers (1962), the questions shape three sorts of knowledge:
1. **Awareness knowledge**: It indicates the information about the innovation’s existence. This kind of information can stimulate the person to take in more about the innovation.

2. **How to knowledge**: It indicates how to utilize an innovation properly. Rogers believed that to gain knowledge about how should be an essential variable in the innovation-decision process.

3. **Principles knowledge**: The last information sort is principles knowledge. This information incorporates the functioning principles portraying how and why an innovation function.

The diffusion of innovation is essential to understand the theoretical backgrounds of how the information of flow disseminated. There are certain elements which we had discussed on the above through which any stage of society can obtain new innovations. Each stage of innovation and diffusion exchanges some knowledge in shapes of spatiality that binds the other spatial unlike nodes in networks. Therefore, the interconnectedness constructs spatially have their own distinct geographical indication that what we share across the social media where we shared, talked, discussed, represents the spatiality in mundane names and interpretations.

### 3.12 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the communication as networks, nodes, space of flows, communication power, global village and diffusion in innovation. Social media owes two significant ways: first, the amount of content that can be provided by the users themselves far exceeds the content provided by news/opinion makers and second, its huge ability for potential exponential spread of information by word of mouth and interlinking of the various social media platforms. Henceforth, WhatsApp is a popular social media networking site among surveyed people followed by Facebook. Social media has changed daily lives engagement, enhanced public identity among peer groups as well as emerged as a medium to access the knowledge of what a common person felt during a survey.

In comparison with traditional media, social media is more interactive and more dynamic in the sense of spatial turn across the digital gadgets. There are certain values to using the social media: identity, authority, relevance, professionalism, openness, compliance and privacy. The compression of time and space is another way to look for or to understand social media; due to the advent of technologies, the notion of geographic conditions has been completely changed. It takes a virtual turn within spatial turn when both spatial and virtual exists in the same spatiality without privilege one upon the other.

The next section is mapped how social media facilitates as a political tool, political communication, political participation and digital public sphere. The chapter further discussed the social media, political campaigns and elections in the country.
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