

Critical Content Analysis on the Opinions shared by users in the Cyber sphere with reference to societal issues

Ashima Jose² and S. Baratwaj²

1. Assistant Professor, Nehru School of Architecture, NGI, Kuniyamuthur, Coimbatore, TN, India.

2. Doctoral Research Scholar, Dept. of Journalism & Mass Communication, Periyar University, Salem, TN, India.

Email - ashimamaria@gmail.com / baratwazamj@gmail.com

Abstract: Social media is being used by users across various age groups in the country in a variety of ways. They share many things by using social media as a medium of communication. The users are accessing social media in their mobile phones most of the time and also through many other devices and means. Despite the presence of National and other mass media, users are attracted to social media as they provide more opportunities for presenting their viewpoints on religion, culture, economy, politics, entertainment, policies, education aspects of the country etc. This study will focus on how opinions are created in the cyber space especially in social media. User Generated Content (UGC) is a really important aspect in the creation of opinions among users in social media and also a vital part in creating public sphere. The differentiation of modern society into various spheres, such as the capitalist economy, the state, civil society, and the sphere of the family and intimacy, has resulted in a division between what is considered the private sphere and the public sphere. The researchers will embark on how opinions are created in the cyber space especially Facebook, the issues that are discussed, the various reactions, angles and viewpoints of the issues shared by the users in social media through quantitative research methods

Key Words: Public sphere, Social media, Opinions, Users.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Internet

A study done by Researchers M. Neelamalar & Ms. P. Chitra, on their previous Research study in, New media and society: A Study on the impact of social networking sites on Indian youth said that The Internet emerged from emergency military communication system operated by the Department of Defence's Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA). The whole operation was referred to as ARPANET. The speed of Internet has changed the way people receive the information. It combines the immediacy of broadcast with the in-depth coverage of newspapers making it perfect sources for news and weather information.

1.2 Social media & Social Networking Apps

Social media and social networking apps are the newest addition that is ruling the internet now. Social media apps are used more by users as they happen to be the main target audience for major companies like WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram etc. Social media apps have made communication with fellow colleagues as well as strangers much easier. Chatting which is one of the more popular activities on the Internet has found its calling in the form of "instant messaging." Introduction of social media apps has facilitated communication to reach the next level. Social media apps facilitates the speed of communication. Communication speed is highly increased as messages are sent to people across the globe in an instant and at a frenetic speed. When Short Messaging Service was introduced, it served the same purpose but not as much as what the social media apps can achieve. Social media apps help people to connect with each other as well as connecting with a large group of people in real time. The social media apps enable users not only in connecting with people across their own country but also easily break international borders. Apps especially like Facebook, Skype

and WhatsApp makes it easier for people to connect with a large group of people who happen to be strangers also. The social media apps creates a new window of opportunity for people to connect with thousands of people across the globe and also getting an acquaintance with them. A social network comprises of a set of individuals who are interconnected through certain relationships such as friendship, co-working or information exchange (Garton, Haythornthwaite & Wellman, 1997). In its traditional form, members of a social network communicate through face-to-face conversations, telephone calls and letters. However, as information technology advanced, so did online social networks (Chou & Chou, 2009). Indeed, online social-networking services have been a feature of the Internet, in one form or another, since the inception of the World Wide Web. For example, electronic-mail (e-mail) messages were used by early Internet adopters to establish various patterns of online communication where users could interact with one another by sharing photos or discussing about several issues (Mislove et al., 2007; Treese, 2008). However, a new generation of social technology has recently emerged with the potential of delivering more effective support to users' social lives. As a result of these technological advances in Web technology and the development of Web 2.0, the nature of online communication, socialization, and privacy has changed (Williams & Merten, 2008).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

2.1 Social Media:

Definition:

Antony Mayfield from iCrossing, on his eBook "*What is Social Media?*" defines that; Social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics:

Participation: Social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. It blurs the line between media and audience.

Openness: Most social media services are open to feedback and participation. They encourage voting, comments and the sharing of information. There are rarely any barriers to accessing and making use of content – password-protected content is frowned on.

Conversation: Whereas traditional media is about "broadcast" (content transmitted or distributed to an audience) social media is better seen as a two-way conversation.

Community: social media allows communities to form quickly and communicate effectively. Communities share common interests, such as a love of photography, a political issue or a favourite TV show.

Connectedness: Most kinds of social media thrive on their connectedness, making use of links to other sites, resources and people.

The words "social media" first started to be used in 2005 and reflected an interest in the growth of relatively more recent interrelation parts of the internet, sometimes called Web2.0 (Ito et al., 2010). Yet prior to these more recent applications, social and communicative elements of the internet predating Web 2.0 had been used by youth – for example, instant messaging (IM), email, and chat rooms. In addition, youth had developed the forerunners of some current social and communicative practices via other, older media, including texting, as well as the more general uses of mobile phones. Given the emphasis in current social media discussions on the creation and sharing of content, it is worth noting that before Web 2.0, mobile phones were being used by young people to exchange audio visual content (e.g., with Bluetooth) as well as to take and post pictures online. Young people learned about creatively fashioning and sharing textual messages – as well as the symbolic meanings of those messages–through their use of texting and IM.

Many of the research issues, concepts, and frameworks (such as understanding the place of information and communications technologies [ICTs] within wider parent–child relations) that we now associate

with the social media websites noted above were discussed initially in relation to these older social media precursors. Exploring a variety of historical antecedents also has the effect of underlining the fact that social media are not such a new development and are not even such a radical break with Web 1.0, for example. This entry will proceed with the broader understanding of the term social media, encompassing all of the above.

2.2 Basic forms of social media:

Researcher, *Antony Mayfield* in his eBook, "*What is Social Media?*" from iCrossing, also explain the basic form of social media as, Social networks these sites allow people to build personal web pages and then connect with friends to share content and communication. The biggest social networks are *MySpace*, *Facebook* and *Bebo*. *Blogs* perhaps the best known form of social media, blogs are online journals, with entries appearing with the most recent first. *Wikis* these websites allow people to add content to or edit the information on them, acting as a communal document or database. The best-known wiki is *Wikipedia*, the online encyclopaedia which has over 2 million English language articles. *Podcasts* audio and video files that are available by subscription, through services like *Apple iTunes*. *Forums* areas for online discussion, often around specific topics and interests. Forums came about before the term "social media" and are a powerful and popular element of online communities. *Content communities*, communities which organise and share particular kinds of content. The most popular content communities tend to form around photos (*Flickr*), bookmarked links (*del.icio.us*) and videos (*YouTube*). *Micro blogging*, social networking combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content ('updates') are distributed online and through the mobile phone network. *Twitter* is the clear leader in this field.

2.3 Internet:

There was a pioneering study of the internet in the United States in the mid-1990s that included young people's experiences online (*Turkle 1995*), and observations about interactions in families with children were made in some general studies of internet use from 1996 to 1998. The first dedicated empirical studies of young people's internet practices, however, were conducted from about 1998 to 2000. This included studies in North America (in the United States and Canada), Europe (in the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Norway), and in Asia (in Singapore and Taiwan), and there was one Israeli study. Apart from descriptions of children's early adoption of online activities, these studies covered themes such as the extent of, and motivations for, identity play (later discussed in relation to young people's self-presentation on social media websites), the consequences of children's use of the internet for sociability, how the offline world influenced behaviour online, and whether internet use displaced time for other activities which were, in turn, responses to some claims and concerns at the time. The first report on youth and online victimization was published in 2000 and lists of parental concerns and strategies for influencing their children's experiences date from 2001.

As regards the particular aspects of the internet that we might conceptualize as social media, the first research on home pages in the United States (predating social networking service [SNS] profiles) was published in 2000, IM (and email) following in 2001, and chat rooms in 2003 – again, the latter two reflected the aspects of the internet that were popular among youth at the time. The first published work on SNSs appeared by 2006, and, of all social media, these sites, especially the more high-profile ones like *Myspace* and *Facebook*, are the ones where the social networking practices of youth have been most researched. As a result, there are gaps in the research base as regards practices on other platforms such as virtual worlds (e.g., *Habbo Hotel*), gaming sites, and audio visual platforms such as *YouTube*, even though these often have communications options and the equivalent of profiles.

Approximately 91% of youth who use SNS report that they utilize the sites to communicate with already known friends (*Lenhart & Madden, 2007*). Qualitative studies also converge with this finding that U.S.

youth mostly use SNS to interact with friends and not to meet strangers (Agosto & Abbas, 2010; Boyd, 2008).

2.4 Social media & Users:

In examining social media and youth, it is also important to distinguish what is meant by youth. This term can cover different ages in different countries; in some societies youth extends into the late twenties, whereas in others such an age would be considered young adulthood. Meanwhile, the legal definitions of adulthood, the age at which young people are legally allowed to do different things (e.g., have sex, drive, buy alcohol), vary culturally. But the choice of words is an issue not just because of definition sand cut-off points, but also because of their connotations. Not only do writings about youth and “young people,” or teenagers, refer to older children, but, arguably, they often take a perspective stressing how their social world and practices are closer to, and moving toward, adulthood. To refer to some of those same people as (still) “children” can sometimes stress the link to the world of young children, as well as their vulnerabilities, dependencies, and need for adult guidance. The new sociology of childhood understands childhood and youth as social constructions that vary culturally and can change over time (James & Prout, 1997).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study how are opinions created in Facebook.
- To analyse the various issues, angles and viewpoints shared by users.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The research study adopts Quantitative Content Analysis method to understand how young people are nowadays utilizing social media apps for various purpose in day to day life and the impact of these application on today's generation.

The sample size is 150. Samples were selected from Colleges and University around Salem, by targeting users who are perceived to be active members of social networking apps.

Table 1: Age Group

Category	No. of persons	Percentage %
16 – 20	6	4
20 – 25	90	60
25 – 30	42	28
Above 30	12	8
Total	150	100

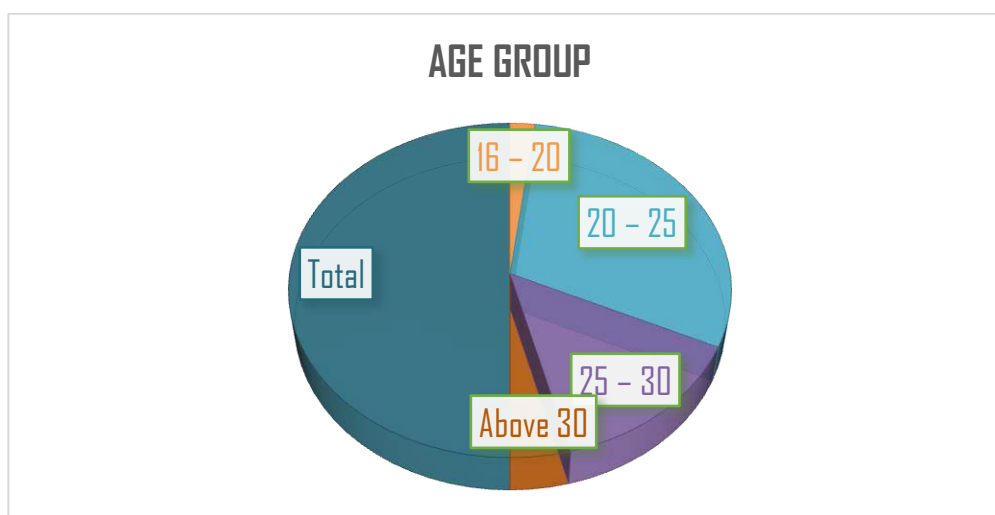


Figure 1

Table 2: Respondents Preference of Social Media apps

Response	Yes	No	Total
Total	93	57	150
Percentage %	62	38	100

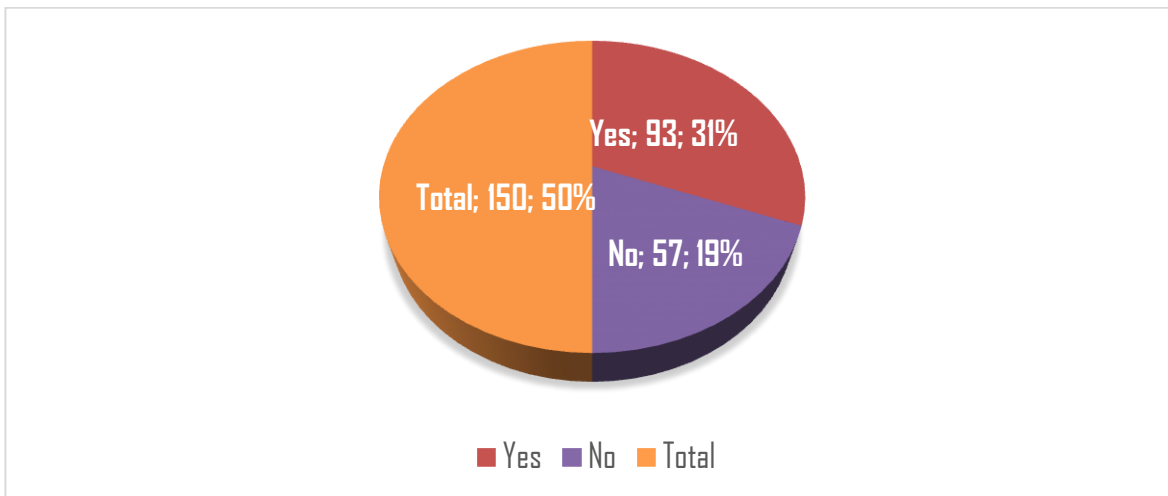


Figure 2

Table 3: Respondents view on types of Content shared in Facebook

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Personal	41	23	25	11
Education	15	20	28	37
News	29	43	13	15
Casual	29	45	10	16
Cinema / Music	35	39	16	10
Business/ Technology	23	31	27	19
Culture / Religion	21	25	31	23
Sports	43	28	8	21
Politics	48	27	10	15
Wishes (General / Festival)	47	27	10	16
Social Awareness & Issues	40	32	17	11
Memes	43	32	10	9

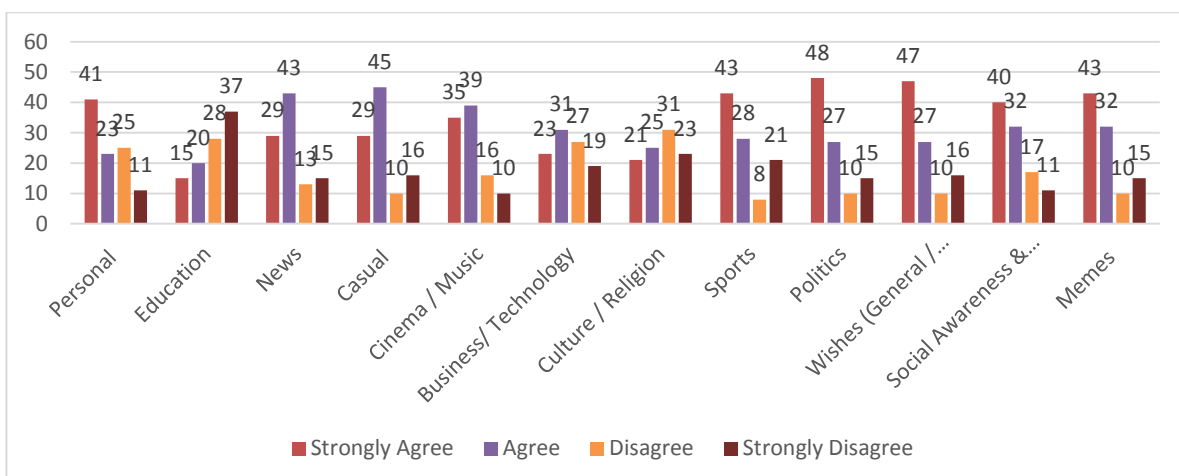


Figure 3

Table 4: Respondents view on type of contents shared in Facebook

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cartoons	40	21	26	13
Jokes	15	22	29	34
Birthday	31	19	28	22
Festival	49	33	10	8
Cinema / Music	42	28	20	10
Business/ Technology	23	31	27	19
Culture / Religion	28	18	31	23
Sports	43	28	8	21
Politics	36	28	21	15
Wishes (General / Festival)	50	27	7	16
Social Awareness & Issues	27	32	17	24
Memes	40	32	10	18

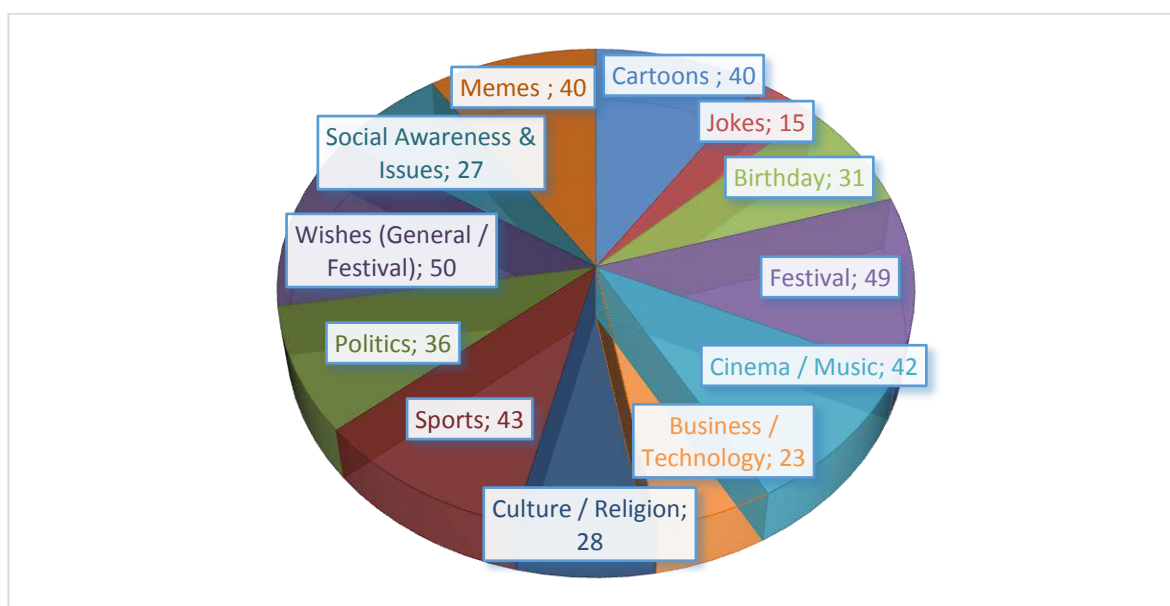


Figure 4

Table 5: Pictures with text, contents shared

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cartoons	25	29	25	21
Politics	15	22	36	27
Birthday	17	25	37	21
Festival	48	34	10	8
Cinema / Music	39	42	9	10
Business / Technology	31	23	27	19
Culture / Religion	28	18	31	23
Social Awareness & Issues	39	32	12	17
Memes	40	39	9	12
Sports	50	27	7	16
Jokes	23	32	24	21
Lifestyle	40	32	10	18

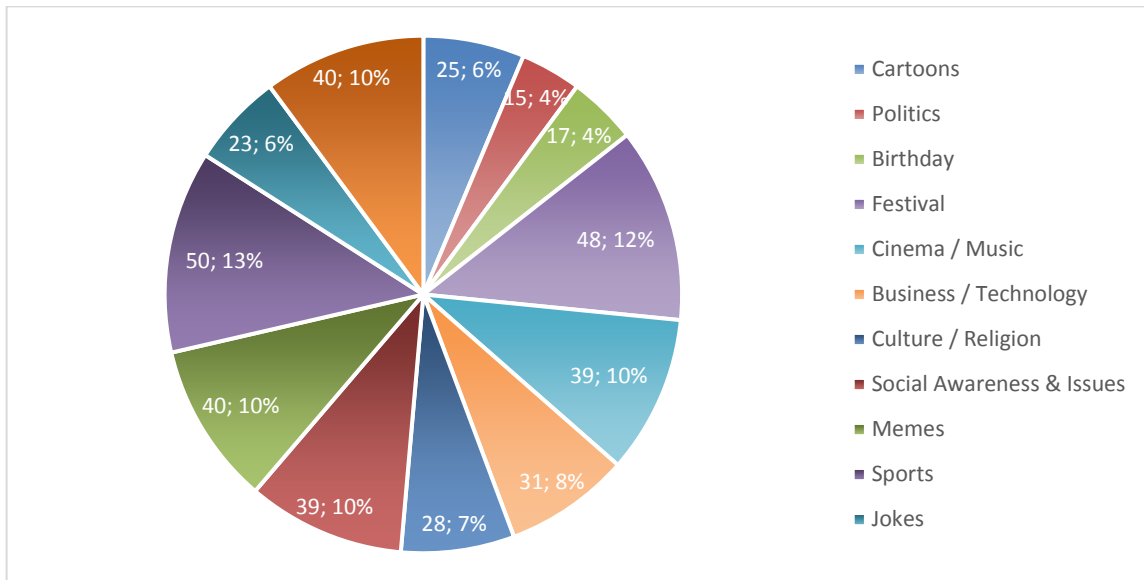


Figure 5

Table 6: Number of Videos & Audio contents shared by users

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cartoons	41	23	25	11
Politics	15	20	28	37
Birthday	29	43	13	15
Festival	29	45	10	16
Cinema / Music	35	39	16	10
Business / Technology	23	31	27	19
Culture / Religion	21	25	31	23
Social Awareness & Issues	43	28	8	21
Memes	48	27	10	15
Sports	47	27	10	16
Jokes	40	32	17	11
Lifestyle	43	32	10	9

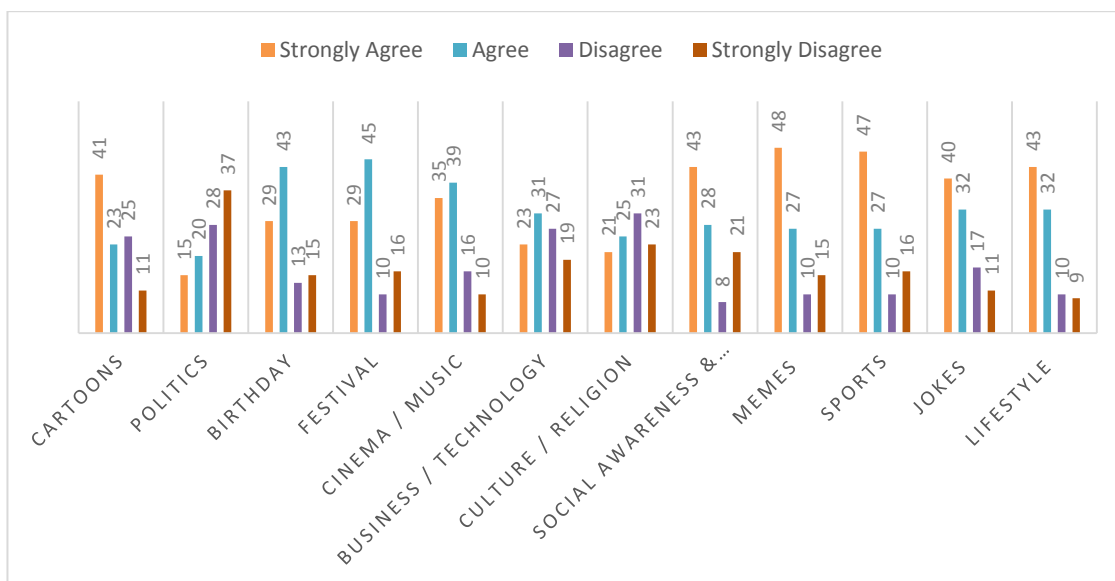


Figure 6

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

- The age of social networking site users were obviously between age (17-20) with about 53%, which clearly states the maximum users were higher school & college students, the next majority users were between age (21- 24) with 47 %. Users when growing up reduces the use of social networking site and at very young age they are using maximum (*Table 1 & Figure 1*).
- In case of gender, female social networking site users seems to be low with 46 % comparatively to male social media site users with about 54 % of users, Among youth, adolescent male uses social media maximum then young women (*Table 2 & Figure 2*).
- Regarding the types of content shared in Facebook, 41% of respondents strongly agree for sharing personal content, 37% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not share Education based content, 43% respondents agreed that they share news based content, 45% respondents agreed that they shared Casual content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Cinema based content and 35% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema based content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business / Technology based content, 25% respondents agreed that they share Culture / Religion based content, 21% strongly agreed that they share Culture / Religion based content, 43% strongly agreed that they share sports based content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Political content, 47% respondents strongly agreed that they share Wishes (General / Festival) based content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share content based on Social Awareness / Issues, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes as content (*Table 3 & Figure 3*).
- Concerning Picture contents shared in Facebook, 40% respondents strongly agree that they share Cartoons, 34% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not share Jokes based pictures, 31% respondents strongly agreed that they share Birthday based pictures, 49% respondent strongly agreed that they share festival pictures, 42% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema / Music based pictures, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business / Technology based pictures, 31% respondents disagreed that they do not share Culture / Religion based pictures, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Sports based pictures, 36% respondents strongly agreed that they share Politics based pictures, 50% respondents strongly agreed that they share Wishes (General / Festival) based pictures, 32% respondents agreed that they share Social Awareness and Issues pictures, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes and 32% agreed that they share Memes in Facebook. (*Table 4 and Figure 4*).
- About Pictures with text and content shared in Facebook, 29% respondents agreed that they share Cartoons with text and content, 36% respondents disagreed that they share Politics pictures with text and content, 37% respondents disagreed that they share Birthday pictures with text and content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Festival pictures with text and content, 42% respondents agreed that they share Cinema / Music pictures with text and content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business/ Technology pictures with text and content, 31% respondents disagreed that that they do not share Culture / Religion pictures with text and content, 39% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Awareness / Issues pictures with text and content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes related pictures with text and content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Memes related pictures with text and content, 50% respondents strongly agreed that they share Sports related pictures with text and content, 32% respondents agreed that they share Jokes related pictures with text and content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they shared Lifestyle with text and content, 32% respondents agreed that they shared Lifestyle pictures with text and content in Facebook. (*Table 5 and Figure 5*).

- As regards number of Videos and audios shared by users in Facebook, 41% respondents strongly agreed that they shared Cartoon video and audio content, 23% respondents agreed that they shared Cartoon video and audio content, 37% respondents strongly disagreed that they share Jokes based video and audio content, 28% respondents agreed that they shared Politics based video and audio content, 43% respondents agreed that they share Birthday based video and audio content, 45% respondents agreed that they share Festival based video and audio content, 35% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema / Music based video and audio content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Cinema / Music based video and audio content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business/ Technology based video and audio content, 31% respondents disagreed that they share Culture / Religion based video and audio content, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Issues / Awareness based video and audio content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes based video and audio content, 47% respondents strongly agreed that they share Sports based video and audio content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Jokes based video and audio content, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Lifestyle based video and audio content in Facebook. (*Table 6 and Figure 6*).

6. FINDINGS:

- The age of social networking site users were obviously between age (17-20) with about 53%, which clearly states the maximum users were higher school & college students, the next majority users were between age (21- 24) with 47 %. Users when growing up reduces the use of social networking site and at very young age they are using maximum.
- In case of gender, female social networking site users seems to be low with 46 % comparatively to male social media site users with about 54 % of users, Among youth, adolescent male uses social media maximum then young women.
- As regards the types of content shared in Facebook, 41% of respondents strongly agree for sharing personal content, 37% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not share Education based content, 43% respondents agreed that they share news based content, 45% respondents agreed that they shared Casual content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Cinema based content and 35% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema based content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business / Technology based content, 25% respondents agreed that they share Culture / Religion based content, 21% strongly agreed that they share Culture / Religion based content, 43% strongly agreed that they share sports based content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Political content, 47% respondents strongly agreed that they share Wishes (General / Festival) based content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share content based on Social Awareness / Issues, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes as content.
- On the topic of Picture contents shared in Facebook, 40% respondents strongly agree that they share Cartoons, 34% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not share Jokes based pictures, 31% respondents strongly agreed that they share Birthday based pictures, 49% respondent strongly agreed that they share festival pictures, 42% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema / Music based pictures, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business / Technology based pictures, 31% respondents disagreed that they do not share Culture / Religion based pictures, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Sports based pictures, 36% respondents strongly agreed that they share Politics based pictures, 50% respondents strongly agreed that they share Wishes (General / Festival) based pictures, 32% respondents agreed that they share Social Awareness and Issues pictures, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes and 32% agreed that they share Memes in Facebook.

- As regards Pictures with text and content shared in Facebook, 29% respondents agreed that they share Cartoons with text and content, 36% respondents disagreed that they share Politics pictures with text and content, 37% respondents disagreed that they share Birthday pictures with text and content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Festival pictures with text and content, 42% respondents agreed that they share Cinema / Music pictures with text and content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business/ Technology pictures with text and content, 31% respondents disagreed that that they do not share Culture / Religion pictures with text and content, 39% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Awareness / Issues pictures with text and content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes related pictures with text and content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Memes related pictures with text and content, 50% respondents strongly agreed that they share Sports related pictures with text and content, 32% respondents agreed that they share Jokes related pictures with text and content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they shared Lifestyle with text and content, 32% respondents agreed that they shared Lifestyle pictures with text and content in Facebook.
- About number of Videos and audios shared by users in Facebook, 41% respondents strongly agreed that they shared Cartoon video and audio content, 23% respondents agreed that they shared Cartoon video and audio content, 37% respondents strongly disagreed that they share Jokes based video and audio based video and audio content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business/ Technology based video and audio content, 31% respondents disagreed that they share Culture / Religion based video and audio content, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Issues / Awareness based video and audio content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes based video and audio content, 47% respondents strongly agreed that they share Sports based video and audio content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Jokes based video and audio content, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Lifestyle based video and audio content in Facebook.

7. CONCLUSION:

Facebook has now become the go to website for people, especially users to gain information also to interact with other people and update themselves on various issues. This has made social media to stand high above all forms of traditional mass media. Facebook has given the users a user-friendly medium of access and a new platform to voice their opinions over various issues like social, cultural, religion, sports, economics, politics, entertainment, business, government policies etc. The users have the freedom and access to provide their feedback, ideas and opinions. According to the research study the maximum users of social networking site were users between 17 yrs and 20 yrs, also social media usage is less when getting older, and moreover male users seems to be typically high then women users comparatively. Users nowadays are very eager in sharing their personal content like picture, text, videos, etc., where the self-marketing parameter among users in Tamil Nadu seems increasing in internet, and study also reveals the users also show interest in sharing wishes (general / festival) and memes which shows the users' socializing factor and entertainment factor in social media. Some data reveals more surprising factor in this aspect, such that users in Tamil Nadu shows very low interest in sharing content related to education. Maximum numbers pictures shared by users in Tamil Nadu were Sports. Users in Tamil Nadu possess interest in sharing more in sports and cinema / music content & few in education, which reveals that users prefer sharing more content on sports and cinema / music indicated the wide preference for entertainment purpose in Facebook.

8. REFERENCES:

1. Agosto, D.E., & Abbas, J. (2010). High school seniors' social network and other ict use preferences and concerns. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 47(1), 1–10.
2. Banaij, S. & Buckingham, D. (2010). Young People, the Internet, and Civic Participation: An Overview of Key Findings from the CivicWeb Project, *International Journal of Learning and media*, 2 (1), pp. 1-24.
3. Boyd, D.M. (2008). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 119–142).
4. Retrieved from : http://nci2tm.sinhgad.edu/NCIT2M2014_P/data/NCI2TM_53.pdf
5. Retrieved from :<http://fuchs.uti.at/wp-content/introduction.pdf>
6. Neelamalar & P. Chitra, (2009) Retrieved from:
<http://www.ec.ubi.pt/ec/06/pdf/neelamalar-new-media.pdf>
7. SebastiánValenzuela , Namsu Park , Kerk F. Kee , 2008. Retrieved from :
<https://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2008/papers/Valenzuela.pdf>
8. (Impact of social networking sites (sns) on the youth) Retrievedfrom :
http://nci2tm.sinhgad.edu/NCIT2M2014_P/data/NCI2TM_53.pdf
9. Ito,M.,Antin,J.,Finn,M.,Law,A.,&Manion,A.(Eds.)
(2010).*Hangingout,messingaround,andgeekingout: Kidslivingandlearningwithnewmedia*.Cambridge, MA:MITPress.
10. James, A., &Prout, A. (Eds.) (1997). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociologicalstudyofchildren*.London,UK:Falmer.
11. Lenhart,A., & Madden, M. (2007). *Teens, privacy, & online social networks: How teens manage their online identities and personal information in the age of mspace*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project.
12. Leslie Haddon,2015.Retrieved from :
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/WhosWho/AcademicStaff/LeslieHaddon/Youtand-social-media.pdf>
13. Retrieved from :<http://www.businessproductivity.com/whats-whatsapp-and-how-can-i-use-it/>
14. Robertson, S.P, Vatrpub, R.K and Medinaa, R. (2010) “Off the wall political discourse: Facebook use in the 2008 U.S. presidential election”, *Information Polity* 15 (2010) 11–31.
15. Turkle,S.(1995).*Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the internet*. NewYork,NY: Simonand Schuster.
16. Turner-Lee, N. (2010) “The Challenge of Increasing Civic Engagement in the Digital Age” *Federal Communications Law Journal*; Dec 2010; 63, pp.19-32.