

## Social Media Use in Religious Communication: The Christian Migrants of Kerala, India

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The world of digital communication, with its almost limitless expressive capacity, makes us appreciate all the more St. Paul's exclamation: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel."

1 Corinthians 9:16

Pope Benedict XVI

2010 World Communication Day message

The advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed various developments in the digital media technology. Satellite television has become a household name in Asia and India. The web of the Internet has tapped everyone who could afford to own and use it. Cyberspace communication has been growing steadily during the past decade with new technology and features added everyday. WE are in the middle of unprecedented communication revolutions since the advent of the printing press. Today, Facebook has over 750 million used while three billion YouTube videos are watched everyday across the globe.<sup>1</sup> Digital media have turned out to be the fourth estate of communication. Information is available at a lightning speed. Today, religious communication has moved from Church to television to social media.

The Church has taken various steps in the recent years to tap the social media which is hardly known for the speed with which it adopts modern technology; the Church is surely, but slowly, joining the masses on social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. There are now more social network accounts than there are human beings on the earth and

<sup>1</sup> Church and New Media. <http://www.churchandnewmedia.com/#sthash.Cf3bYnkN.dpuf>

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thousands belong to Catholic clergy, sisters, parishes, schools, publications and other organizations.<sup>2</sup> Within the current digital media scenario the attempt is to analyze social media use by migrant Christians of Kerala, India.

### Dawn of Christianity in Kerala

The oldest Christians in India live in Kerala. They accepted Christianity in 52AD after (the local Brahmins had) deliberations with St Thomas the Apostle who came to Kerala to propagate the Good News. The Mar Thomas Church claims to owe its origin to the Apostle (Tatford, 1987; pp. 221). Migrations among Kerala Christians are known for over several millennia. The recent economic boom in the Middle East has attracted Kerala Christians to migrate to the Muslim countries in the Middle East for employment apart from several Christian countries in the West. Of the total Indian population of 1,028,610,328 according to the Census of India, Christians constitute 2.3 percent of the total population. Within the Indian subcontinent, three northeastern states—Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya are largely Christian. Among other states/union territories (UT) like Manipur, Goa, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Kerala, and Arunachal Pradesh have considerable presence of Christian population to the total population of the state/UT.<sup>3</sup>



Population of Christians in India by State  
(Image from Wikimedia Commons)

### Aim

The paper focuses on the social media use in religious communication by Kerala Christians who largely migrated after India's independence to Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. Further, the paper attempts to analyze the way digital and social media are accessed and utilized by the migrant Kerala Christians in Ahmedabad for religious as well as non-religious purposes.

### Study

The paper is based on a survey of social media initiated by TALEEM Research Foundation and a pilot study was carried out by interns of a business school in Ahmedabad which was followed by a large survey of three religious groups namely Hindu, Muslim and Christian during February-April 2015.<sup>4</sup> The present paper is based on a survey of 211 Christian respondents in the total sample of 711. For the purpose of data collection, an English questionnaire was prepared which was modified after initial pre-testing and few more questions were added in the Christian questionnaire. For the purpose of sampling snow ball technique was used. The respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire. Continuous efforts were made to visit the houses of the individual families and individuals with a request to complete the questionnaire and return it. Response rate was high since the author knew most of the individuals who were also part of the Church congregation of the author. The whole process of data collection took about a month between March and April 2015 and the data entry and analysis was carried out in the following month.

The sample consisted of 54 percent male and 46 percent female in the age group of 18-25 years, 26-40 years and 41 years and above. The average age of the respondents was 35.1 percent. In the present study, 43.1 percent of the respondents are graduates, followed by 27.5 percent who have completed high school, while 19.9 percent are master's degree holders and 3.8 percent had professional degrees. Only 4.7 percent of the respondents are below 10<sup>th</sup> pass. Almost one-third or 33.2 percent migrated to Ahmedabad between the

<sup>4</sup> Three second trimester students—Hardik M. Shingala, Mohammadsuzan A. Shaik, and Vivek R. Kurup of Shanti Business School, Ahmedabad worked as interns from February 23-April 11, 2015. The students were guided by Dr. Binod C. Agrawal and Dr. M. I. Khan who carried out the pilot study of the present survey. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>2</sup> <http://ncronline.org/news/people/church-takes-steps-social-media>

<sup>3</sup> [http://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_And\\_You/religion.aspx](http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/religion.aspx).

years 1981-1990 while 29.8 percent of the respondents came to Ahmedabad in 2001-2010 (Table 1).

In the city of Ahmedabad, in the early fifties of the last century, a large wave of Christians along with Hindus and Muslims from Kerala started migrating with their families (58.3 percent) while 32.2 percent as single persons to Gujarat state in search of work. Since then, there has been a continuous migration of Kerala Christians, Muslims and Hindu in Gujarat. The Kerala migrants are considered enterprising. The Christians among them have built churches while they attend services in Malayalam, their mother tongue. Similarly, Hindus have also built a few temples. The focus of this paper is on the Kerala Christians.

### Media and Church

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Church embrace motion pictures, radio and television and with the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Internet and social media were also accepted. The digital world of social media offers great potential for those hoping to spread the Gospel message, but comes with the occasional hazard of opposition. Pope Benedict XVI approves of social media and its vast potential. With the click of a button Christians can reach millions of believers and non-believers alike with the message of the Gospel and the call to follow the Lord. Pope Benedict XVI is considered the first pope to have his own YouTube and Facebook accounts.

The Church documents advocate for the use of social media to communicate the Gospel message to a younger audience and those that are increasingly tech-savvy. This medium is a strong tool for the clergy as well. “Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audio-visual resources (images, videos, animated features, blogs, websites) which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization and catechesis”<sup>5</sup>

As Pope Benedict XVI noted in his message for the 44<sup>th</sup> World Day of Communication, this new form of media “can offer priests and all pastoral workers a wealth of information and content that was difficult to access before, and facilitate forms of collaboration and greater communion in ways that were unthinkable in the past.”

The Church can use social media to encourage respect, dialogue, and honest relationships—in other words, “true friendship” (43<sup>rd</sup> World Communications Day Message). To do so requires us to approach social media as a powerful means of evangelization and to consider the Church’s role in providing a Christian perspective to digital literacy.

### Digital Media Ownership and Religious Use

Today there are more than a dozen non-stop dedicated satellite Christian television channels for Christian viewers across India in various Indian languages apart from English. Almost all Kerala Christian participants in the sample own television (94.3 percent) of which 90.4 percent have direct-to-home (DTH) connections and 9.6 percent have cable connections (Table 2).

The digital media is used by 82.5 percent of respondents mostly for entertainment. It is followed by 59.7 percent who use it for gaining knowledge in their professional fields. Only 46.5 percent of respondents (56.7 percent women and 38.6 percent men) use digital media to receive religious messages (Table 3).

Only 17.5 percent of the respondents have religious apps in their smartphones and only 15.2 percent of them have read any religious e-books. These are mostly young adults in the age group of 26-40 years who have religious apps in their phones and have read religious e-books. It should be mentioned that as much as 93.8 percent prefer and have read the Bible in printed form. At the same time, gospel music is heard by 75.8 percent of respondents. The largest number of gospel music listeners are in Malayalam (58.3 percent), followed by English (34.6 percent) and Hindi (7.1 percent) (Table 3).

Two out of five (39.9 percent) view religious channels on regular basis while 23.3 percent watch it only during festival period. More women (54.3 percent) than men (27.4 percent) watch religious channels regularly. The large majority of regular viewers are 41 years old and above age group (82.4 percent), who are mostly housewives, since they have more time to spare for watching religious television. The most popular religious channel is Shalom TV watched by 95.3 percent of viewers (Table 4).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=36943>

### Impact of Religious Television

Almost five out of ten respondents (46.1 percent) spend 16-30 minutes per day on an average to watch religious programs, while 21.1 percent of respondents spend 31-60 minutes. 6.3 percent of respondents watch religious programs for more than one hour (Table 4).

Of the various religious telecasts, 61.7 percent of respondents prefer listening to and watching preachings followed by night vigils (45.3 percent), celebration of mass (35.9 percent), listening to gospel music (33.6 percent), and live worship programs (29.7 percent) while documentaries and short films is preferred by 11.7 percent of respondents. Though 63.1 percent of respondents watch religious channel regularly or during festivals only 6.3 percent of respondents ever called on a live TV program for religious query. Religious channels can bring about a positive change in the attitude of the viewers. 53.1 percent of the respondents feel that they were able to differentiate between right and wrong by watching religious programs. Further, it should be mentioned that 41.4 percent of respondents feel that their viewing of religious programs have increased in one year (Table 4).

The Malayalam-speaking Christian community has become multilingual and negotiated with the dominant language, culture and religion in their daily life. They have made use of the digital media and social media to meet the Christian religious quest and maintain their social and religious identity in the midst of Hindu, Muslim and Jain employers, business associates and co-workers who speak Gujarati or Hindi apart from English.

### Social Media Ownership and Use

**Facebook.** In the sample of 211, only 61.6 percent of respondents have Facebook account which is accessed through smartphones by 80.0 percent of 61.6 percent similarly out of 211 only 24.6 percent access it through their laptops. Most respondents prefer to like a religious post (75.4 percent) while only 56.9 percent share it on their wall and only 36.2 percent commented on the posts among them (Table 5).

A Facebook post is shared by 84.2 percent of friends and co-workers while 63.2 percent shared with relatives and family members. 50 percent of respondents who are mostly students shared it with their classmates. While 23.7

percent of respondents shared it with non-Christian friends. Festival greetings (71.6 percent) are the most liked, shared or commented by the respondents on Facebook followed by gospel messages (63.7 percent) and prayer requests (22.5 percent). Religious pages are liked by 66.0 percent (Table 5).

**WhatsApp.** In the sample of 211 respondents, only 123 or 58.3 percent of the respondents have access to WhatsApp and use it for religious purposes. Relatively, more males (65.8 percent) compared to females (49.5 percent) use this medium. Young respondents between the age group of 18-25 years (86.0 percent) and 26-40 years (86.8 percent) use WhatsApp the most. 78.9 percent of respondents shared religious messages through WhatsApp while almost 91.9 percent received religious messages through it. Gospel messages (80.0 percent) followed by bible verses (69.9 percent) and religious videos (50.4 percent) are most shared on WhatsApp. Respondents in the age group of 41 years and above use it more for sharing gospel messages (84.6 percent) compared to other age groups (Table 6).

**Religious Websites and Twitter.** Very small number of respondents (17 or 8.1 percent) open religious websites and Twitter (5 or 2.4 percent). An interesting point to be highlighted is that in both cases, female respondents use Twitter (3.1 percent) and access religious websites more (9.3 percent) as compared to male and female respondents (1.8 percent and 7 percent respectively). Among the respondents who use websites for religious purposes, 47.1 percent have raised questions related to their faith while 76.5 percent downloaded gospel songs from the website followed by preaching (41.2 percent) and 17.6 percent do not download anything from the website (Table 6). Twitter is mostly accessed through smartphones (60.0) percent, laptop and computer at workplace (40.0 percent). Twitter users don't follow any religious heads or tweeted or re-tweeted anything about religion (Table 7).

**YouTube.** YouTube is least preferred as 42 or 19.9 percent of respondents prefer to use it to watch religious videos. Among them, seven out of ten or 76.2 percent of respondents use YouTube to download religious videos while only 9.5 percent uploaded religious videos. More men (86.4 percent) downloaded religious videos compared to women (65.0 percent) (Table 7). The downloading trend was mostly seen among the young users between the age group of 18-25 years (81.5 percent) and 26-40 years (75.0 percent). Most of the respondents prefer to watch gospel songs (83.3 percent) followed by live worship and preaching (31.0

percent). 11.9 percent of respondents watch Eucharistic celebrations on YouTube (Table 7). The use of social media as indicated in the analysis is marginal while television viewing remains most prevalent. Social media at present has limited access and use by Christians in Kerala in spite of their high literacy and digital media ownership though they tend to encourage their children to use digital media for religious communication.

### Social Media Impact

Further analysis indicates that in spite of digital and social media use for religious purposes the inclination of the respondent towards religion has remained unchanged as indicated by 62.1 percent of respondents at the same time 36.0 percent feel that their religious faith has enhanced. Same is the case for increased religious faith for 35.5 percent of respondents and decreased for 1.9 percent. However, the faith has remained the same level even after exposure to digital and social media for religious purpose while for 62.6 percent it has increased.

Respondents were asked to share their experience with social media. As much as 43.6 percent of respondents feel that it has helped them to understand their religious much better while 36.6 percent feel no change. For 29.9 percent of respondents it has helped them deepen their belief followed by 23.2 percent of respondents who are able to set their goals as per Christian belief. It seems social media still doesn't have human touch. The respondents are still dependent on religious leaders for seeking religious comfort.

### Conclusion

Even after large-scale penetration of digital and social media and high degree of exposure. The most preferred source for seeking religious information is the Church, followed by television. Social media like WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and blogs have limited presence and impact in which least preferred source is blog, Instagram and Pinterest.

The compelling image of television has intrinsic power due to assumed persuasive effects. It is attractive and influential to most of the viewers. Television has extremely high access and presence in everyday life and consciousness of its viewers in the home or at the workplace (Hoover, 1988: pp. 224).

The Vatican itself is well connected to social media. And, like the first generation of digital media and social communication such as radio and

television, the official arm of the Church uses the new instruments of social communication while encouraging all members of the Church to become digital disciples, especially in the context of embarking upon the New Evangelization.<sup>6</sup>

The digital doors of the Church are wide open today and everyone is welcome to be a part of this community to share their testimonies and fellowship. However, analysis indicates limited use of social media hence the future use of social media and its acceptance in religious communication is yet to be established and defined.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.catholicspirit.com/catholic-church-promotes-use-of-social-media-but-with-caution/>

2Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	Male	Female	Total
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	100.00	0.0	54.0
Female	0.00	100.0	46.00
<b>Age</b>			
18-25 years	47.4	42.3	45.0
26-40 years	15.8	20.6	18.0
41 years and above	36.8	37.1	37.0
<b>Age Mean</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>35.1</b>
<b>Education</b>			
<b>Below 10<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	5.3	4.1	4.7
10 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	28.9	25.8	27.5
Bachelor's degree	43.9	42.3	43.1
Master's degree	16.7	23.7	19.9
Professional degree	4.4	3.1	3.8
Others	0.9	1.0	0.9
<b>Year of Migration to Ahmedabad</b>			
Born Here-Not specified	4.4	3.2	3.8
Before 1980	31.0	22.1	26.9
1981-1990	30.1	36.8	33.2
1991-2000	28.3	31.6	29.8
After 2001	6.2	6.4	6.2
<b>Reasons for Migration</b>			
For Higher Education	0.9	2.1	1.4
In Search of Work	47.4	14.4	32.2
Family Migration	47.4	71.1	58.3
To join family/relatives	2.6	8.2	5.2
For business/not specified/others	1.8	0.0	2.9
<b>Current Occupation</b>			
Student	32.5	29.9	31.3
Service	61.4	40.2	51.7
Housewife	0.0	27.8	12.8

Retired/Unemployed/Business	6.2	2.0	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>211</b>

Table 2. Media Access

Access	Male	Female	Total
<b>Television</b>			
Yes	93.9	94.8	94.3
No	6.1	5.2	5.7
<b>Type of TV Connection</b>			
DTH Connection	92.5	88.0	90.4
Cable Connection	7.5	12.0	9.6
<b>Smartphone with Internet</b>			
Yes	71.9	49.5	61.6
No	28.1	50.5	38.4
<b>Internet Facility</b>			
Yes	63.2	53.6	58.8
No	36.8	46.4	41.2
<b>Laptop</b>			
Yes	39.5	39.2	39.9
No	60.5	60.8	60.7
<b>Desktop Computer at Home</b>			
Yes	40.4	29.9	35.5
No	59.6	70.1	64.5
<b>Desktop Computer in Office</b>			
Yes	29.8	19.6	25.1
No	70.2	80.4	74.9
<b>Radio</b>			
Yes	51.8	46.4	49.3
No	48.2	53.6	50.7
<b>Other Devices</b>			
Yes	2.6	2.1	2.4
No	97.4	97.9	97.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>211</b>



Table 3. Purposes of Using Digital Media and Time Spent

Purpose	Male	Female	Total
Entertainment	85.1	79.4	82.5
Knowledge	64.0	54.6	59.7
Professional Use	36.0	30.9	33.6
News	51.8	38.1	45.5
Religious Matters	38.6	56.7	46.9
<b>Religious Apps</b>			
Yes	18.4	16.5	17.5
No	75.4	79.4	77.3
Did not specify	6.1	4.1	5.2
<b>Read Religious Book</b>			
Yes	89.5	99.0	93.8
No	10.5	1.0	6.2
<b>Read Religious e-Books</b>			
Yes	13.2	17.5	15.2
No	86.8	82.5	84.8
Listening to Gospel Music			
Yes	72.8	79.4	75.8
No	27.2	20.6	24.2
<b>Language Preference</b>			
Malayalam	57.9	58.8	58.3
English	35.1	34.0	34.6
Hindi	7.0	7.2	7.1
Total	114	97	211
<b>Average Time Spent in Minutes (Per Day)</b>			
Television	88.3	101.9	94.5
Website	17.2	11.2	14.5
WhatsApp	43.0	34.0	38.9
YouTube	6.8	2.9	5.0
Twitter	0.0	0.6	0.3
Facebook	22.4	16.9	19.8
Pinterest	0.0	1.2	0.6

Instagram	0.2	0.0	0.1
Blog	0.1	2.1	1.0

Table 4. Media Use

Digital Media	Male	Female	Total
<b>Watch Religious TV Channels</b>			
Regularly	27.4	54.3	39.9
During festival	28.3	17.4	23.2
No	44.3	28.3	36.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>Religious TV Channel(s) Most Watched</b>			
Shalom TV	98.4	92.5	95.3
Powervision	1.6	1.5	1.6
Athimeeya Yathra	3.3	1.5	2.3
Goodness TV	4.9	0.0	2.3
God TV	8.2	4.5	6.3
Not Specified	1.6	1.5	1.6
<b>Type of Religious Programs Watched</b>			
Night Vigils	37.7	52.2	45.3
Celebration of Mass	31.1	40.3	35.9
Preaching	57.4	65.7	61.7
Live worship	21.3	37.3	29.7
Gospel Music	39.3	28.4	33.6
Short films	16.4	7.5	11.7
Documentaries	14.8	9.0	11.7
Others	0.0	1.5	0.8
Did not specify	0.0	1.5	0.8
<b>Average time in a day spent on TV for religious programs</b>			
15 minutes or less	21.3	10.4	15.6
16-30 minutes	45.9	46.3	46.1
31-60 minutes	18.0	23.9	21.1
61-120 minutes	8.2	4.5	6.3
121+ minutes	1.6	10.4	6.3

Did not specify	4.9	4.5	4.7
Mean	38.9	59.3	49.6
<b>Able to differentiate between right and wrong</b>			
Yes	41.0	64.2	53.1
No	3.3	1.5	2.3
Cannot say	55.7	34.3	44.5
<b>Ever called on a live religious program</b>			
Yes	4.9	7.5	6.3
No	95.1	92.5	93.8
<b>Change in viewing religious program in one year</b>			
Increased	32.8	49.3	41.4
Decreased	3.3	0.0	1.6
Remained the same	31.1	25.4	28.1
Cannot say	32.8	25.4	28.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>128</b>

Table 5. Social Media Account (Facebook)

Facebook	Male	Female	Total
Facebook Account			
Yes	65.8	56.7	61.6
No	34.2	43.3	38.4
<b>Access to Facebook Account</b>			
Smartphone	84.0	74.5	80.0
Desktop computer at home	22.7	25.5	23.8
Laptop	22.7	27.3	24.6
Desktop computer (office/place of work/place of study)	12.0	18.2	14.6
Did not specify	1.3	0.0	0.8
<b>Like religious posts on Facebook</b>			
Yes	77.3	72.7	75.4
No	22.7	27.3	24.6
<b>Share religious posts on Facebook</b>			
Yes	48.0	69.1	56.9
No	52.0	30.9	43.1

<b>Comment on religious posts on Facebook</b>			
Yes	29.3	45.5	36.2
No	70.7	54.5	63.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Sharing of Religious Posts on Facebook</b>			
Classmates	57.9	42.1	50.0
Friends co-worker	84.2	84.2	84.2
Relatives-family member	57.9	68.4	63.2
Teachers	13.2	18.4	15.8
With non-Christian friends	26.3	21.1	23.7
Not specified	2.6	2.6	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Type of religious message you like/share/comment on Facebook</b>			
Gospel messages	61.7	66.7	63.7
Festival greetings	76.7	64.3	71.6
Prayer requests	21.7	23.8	22.5
Others	1.7	2.4	2.0
Not specified	6.7	2.4	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Religious pages liked on Facebook</b>			
Yes	60.0	75.0	66.0
No	35.0	22.5	30.0
Not specified	5.0	2.5	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6. Social Media Account (WhatsApp/Websites)

WhatsApp/Websites	Male	Female	Total
<b>Have WhatsApp Account</b>			
Yes	65.8	49.5	58.3
No	34.2	50.5	41.7
<b>Share religious messages on WhatsApp</b>			
Yes	74.7	85.4	78.9



No	25.3	14.6	21.1
<b>Receive religious messages on WhatsApp</b>			
Yes	90.7	93.8	91.9
No	9.3	6.3	8.1
<b>Type of Information you send/receive on WhatsApp</b>			
Gospel messages	81.4	77.8	80.0
Verses from the religious book	67.1	73.3	69.6
Talk about religious books	8.6	13.3	10.4
Religious videos	48.6	53.3	50.4
No. I do not send-receive messages	2.9	0.0	1.7
Others	1.4	4.4	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Do you follow or visit religious websites for seeking religious information</b>			
Yes	7.0	9.3	8.1
No, I do not follow	93.0	90.7	91.9
<b>Ever raised queries related to faith</b>			
Yes	37.5	55.6	47.1
No	62.5	44.4	52.9
<b>Downloaded from religious websites</b>			
Gospel songs	62.5	88.9	76.5
Preaching	50.0	33.3	41.2
Others	12.5	11.1	11.8
<b>I have not downloaded anything from the websites</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>17.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>

Table 7. Social Media Account-YouTube/ Twitter

YouTube/Twitter	Male	Female	Total
<b>Watch Religious Videos on YouTube</b>			
Yes	19.3	20.6	19.9
No	80.7	79.4	80.1
<b>Downloaded Religious Videos from YouTube</b>			
Yes	86.4	65.0	76.2
No	13.6	35.0	23.8

<b>Updated Religious Videos on YouTube</b>			
Yes	9.1	10.0	9.5
No	90.9	90.0	90.5
<b>Type of Religious Videos</b>			
Live Worship	31.8	30.0	31.0
Gospel Songs	90.9	75.0	83.3
Preaching of various preachers	22.7	40.0	31.0
Celebration of Mass	4.5	20.0	11.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Twitter account</b>			
Yes	1.8	3.1	2.4
No	98.2	96.9	97.6
<b>Accessing Twitter Account</b>			
Smartphone	50.0	66.7	60.0
Computer at home	50.0	0.0	20.0
Laptop	50.0	33.3	40.0
Computer in office/place of work/ place of study	0.0	66.7	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 8. Religious Access, Encouragement, Inclination and Reduction of Dependency

Easy Access to Social and Digital Media	Male	Female	Total
Yes	73.7	72.2	73.0
No	3.5	1.0	2.4
Maybe	228	26.8	24.6
<b>Encourage Kids to use Digital Media for Religious Message</b>			
Yes	88.6	876	88.2
Better Understanding by two-way communication	5.3	3.1	4.3
Low reliability, accessibility and others	5.9	9.3	7.6
<b>Inclination towards religion after using digital media</b>			
Increased	36.8	35.1	36.0
Decreased	1.8	2.1	1.9
Remained the same	61.4	62.9	62.1
<b>Digital Media and Christian Faith</b>			

## Communication, Culture and Buddhism in Asia: Structural Adaptation and Integration of Digital Media

*Binod C. Agrawal*

### Introduction

Radhakrishnan (1969:353) observes that the “Sixth Century B.C. was remarkable for the spiritual unrest and intellectual ferment in many countries. In China we had Lao Tzu and Confucius, in Greece Parmenides and Empedocles, in Iran Zarathustra, in India Mahavira and the Buddha. In that period many remarkable teachers worked upon their inheritance and developed new points of view.”

Scholars of Buddhism have agreed without any reservation that the Buddha was the founder of the religion who attended transcendental wisdom under the *Bodhi* tree. The Buddha himself did not announce the birth of new religion and remained a Hindu in which he was born until his death. He remained closely wedded to the idea of *Vaidic* religion though he opposed associated rituals and sacrifices of *Vaidic* religion. The Buddha remained firm in negating the ritualism and sacrifices as a part of religion (Radhakrishnan 1969). The Buddha believed in the conception of *dharma* considered as imminent order denoting the laws of nature. “For the Buddha, *dharma* or righteousness is the driving principle of the Universe” (Radhakrishnan 1969:341).

“The quest of religious India has been for the incomparable safety, fearlessness, *abhaya*, *moksa*, *nirvana*. It is natural for humans to strive to elevate themselves above earthly things, to go out from the world of sense, to free their souls from the trammels of existence and gross materiality, to

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