

# Media Usage In Rural Areas: A Study Of High Ranges In Kerala Media Usage

Ebin V Francis

*Slaas*

*Hindustan Institute Of Technology And Science  
Chennai, India*

T. Nirmala

*Slaas*

*Hindustan Institute Of Technology And Science  
Chennai, India*

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## **Abstract**

*Media usage is a vital factor in forming opinions, obtaining information, and developing education in rural areas. The high ranges of Kerala are among such regions where topography and technological advances intertwine, causing dramatic shifts in media consumption conformance soil and water conservation. This paper is aimed to studying the usage of media in Kerala's high ranges from the rural point of view. The research collects data from governmental sources, education reports, and conversations with the population to study how media affects rural life, including education, agriculture, and public governance.*

**Keywords:** *Rural media usage, high ranges, digital access, Kerala, technology in rural areas*

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## **I. Introduction**

Kerala, the state known as the model for social development has unique disparities in the use of media, between urbanized and ruralized people. Rural population of Kerala is situated in the high ranges of Kerala, mainly at Idukki and other places. These areas are far from commercialization, irregular planes, scanty population and have cultivate main agricultural practices. But this agro-based high ranges of Kerala experiences the new developments in media usage due to technological access. Over the past three years, India's BSNL had introduced top speed 4G internet in this high range of rural area, which forms an opportunity for the change in consumption of media. The present study aims at to analyze the changes in the media usage of these rural high ranges with the use of technology, age, occupation, educational programme, and government programmes.

## **II. Background And Literature Review**

Research on media usage in rural areas, particularly high ranges such as Kerala, highlights the shift from traditional to digital media. According to Kumar and Ravindran, television, radio, and newspapers dominate media use in rural areas. Nair et al. assert that the use of smartphones and social media has increased over the years due to increased internet penetration. However, Mehta and Roy avow that a digital divide still exists, with older people and those in low-income households being unlikely to have access to digital tools. In education, Prakash and Sharma conclude that online platforms became mandatory as schools closed to curb COVID-19, but use suffered due to connectivity issues. Similarly, rural schools using digital tools have been faced with infrastructure and low digital literacy challenges.

Research by Sundaram and Bose shows that digital literacy campaigns have been implemented in India but need to extend to rural areas and low-income households. Ramesh and Pillai and Nandakumar and Mathew add that the government of India has modified its "Digital India" campaign by introducing "Akshaya" to promote the use of technology. While access has improved, various infrastructure needs still abound. Qualitative research conducted by John and George and Rao and Kannan illustrates that social media is the main form of community mobilization and political organizing. However, it is still more accessible to farmers and women.

### **Research Gap**

While there have been vast changes concerning media access and digital infrastructure in rural areas and especially in the high ranges of Kerala, several research gaps characterize the existing literature:

1. There has been much talk regarding the digital divide; however, the research gap is best presented through the absence of thorough research on literate and effective digital programs geared toward rural, high range communities. There is a consequent lack of evidence in terms of the lack of research contributions into older adults, marginalized members of the population, and poorer households in the high ranges concerning digital skills.
2. Recently, studies occasionally emphasize the change in telecommunications infrastructure and introduction to enhanced 4G connectivity, as is the case with Idukki. Nevertheless, the research results aimed at assessing the change in connectivity and its use within the education, agriculture, and social communities of high range people following many years of enhanced access remain few, unrepresented, and underdeveloped.
3. Supplementary, media's instrumental role in managing and conducting educational processes during the ongoing pandemics is thoroughly examined. However, the research on divided and mixed technologies and hybrid learning results between the high ranges and the rural areas is still in its developmental stages. This question can be explained as dependent on the organically growing nature of the learning process inherently different in the two geographical zones.
4. Finally, the current research premise is limited primarily to infrastructure-based barriers, such as the lack of internet connectivity. However, there is no conclusive policymaking data concerning the social and cultural difficulties leading to media resource non-adoption, such as gendered social roles, differences in language perceptions, and generalized rural-urban generational divide.
5. The final research gap states that while considerable results have been gathered concerning social media use and digital divide, the research largely eschews detailing the specific media needs of varied categories of high range people and, particularly, women, youth, and farmers and their entrepreneurial, curative, and general health informational uses.

### **III. Research Design And Methods**

This research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Media usage was surveyed among the rural households of Idukki district while interviews speakers from local educational and local institutions, government offices, and community leaders provided qualitative data. Corresponding reports of BSNL, Department of Telecommunications, and Government reports were referred to measure the impact of 4G roll out on rural media consumption.

#### **Sample Selection**

A survey was carried out across five panchayats in Idukki district, among the households that access both traditional and digital media. The sample is represented by school students, farmers, and government employees.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

**Questionnaires:** The instrument is designed to collect data on media platforms used by respondents, their sources of news and information, and how frequently they resort to digital media.

**Interviews:** The method is semi-structured and applies to principals, government officials, and key informants at village level. The representative of the latter category is a female leader selected by local communities.

**Secondary Data:** Reports from the government, mobile companies, and local cable operators will be used as secondary sources of information.

### **IV. Results**

The study identifies significant trends about media usage in high ranges of Kerala, especially in Idukki district, as a shift of traditional to digital media due to the advent of 4G. The survey states:

Traditional media use:

- 85% of the households depend on television
- Radio and Newspapers are widely used with the combination of both
- It mainly focuses on older people and lower-income groups

Digital media use:

- It has increased a strong level during the period of 4G
- 60% of the population has started to use the internet

-Most widely used social media is WhatsApp Videos and study materials such as Google CLASSROOM AND youtube are widely used in the school levels

**The challenges:**

1.37% of upper and rich elderly people cannot use digital media because the money to buy the medium is high. Similarly, low-income group people are in high number cannot use digital media. Though, ay of the 37% have mobile phones of traditional system use the modern formations

2.In a 35% of the upper belongs remotely located heir signals and connectivity is less or does not provide the online studies. At the end either technology has developed more people and to get full scope on online Tata connects the internet is bad

3.on one side the WhatsApp is used for connectivity and information transmission. At the side to be used for the political information and the group agitations in the 45% of the group of people are using Facebook

**Media use in Education:**

-Pandemic has a bell the student to learn dfree changes and 72% of the student Indian online

-B all attempts in 40% of the student to failure because of the connectivity problem and ssimited mobile phonesThe programs like ‘digital Kerala” and ACDKSHA have increate ad the digital use and now 43 of the people are minimum infrastructure developments. They organizationseduatinal developments but they think the 57of the money is used for the construction of buildings

Thus we see how the specifics of the high ranges of rural Kerala work the directions of media usage. First, it is evident that the digital revolution makes these media a more accessible and less expensive tool, which possibly results in the simultaneously affecting the lives of the local population and reforms in agriculture. However, the digital divide that accompanies this process and poor infrastructure in the area may considerably slow these changes down. In this connection, development of digital literacy, production of cheaper and more accessible devices, and improvement of internet access quality can bridge the gap between the rural high ranges and urban habitats of Kerala within the coming years.

**V. Recommendations**

- Improve Digital Literacy : Firstly, governments NGOs need to pay more attention to improved digital literacy. It is possible to provide programs that may be directed towards older adults or families with lower income. Moreover, it is possible to subsidize devices and make it possible for rural students and farmers to afford smartphones and tablets to access more digital media.
- Infrastructure development : The implementation of the policy also relies on the development of the internet infrastructure. To promote the policy, investments in the infrastructure are recommended to ensure these rural and hilly regions have appropriate internet connectivity which at a high speed and is not interrupted.
- Increased use of media : Besides, the integration of more digital tools into curriculums in schools in high-range areas would ensure that students use more modern media.

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