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## UNIT 3 SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE INDIAN SCENARIO

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### *Structure*

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- 3.1 Learning Outcomes
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### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Social media refers to the digital platforms, services, and apps used to communicate and share content for personal and interpersonal communication. With the advent of social media, we humans can communicate. India has a vibrant and diverse culture, and social media is a tool that provides a platform to showcase this culture and help preserve it. India has approximately 820 million internet users; every year, the number increases by 8%. These internet users spend an average of 1.5 hours online daily.

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### **3.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand how social media platforms help preserve Indian traditions;
- Explore social media uses in political communication during the election;
- Analyse how socio-economic status influences social media use in India; and
- Understand how linguistic diversity in India influences social media content.

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### **3.2 CULTURAL INTEGRATION**

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India has a very rich and diverse cultural heritage. Traditional practices play a significant role in our daily lives, and they have been passed from generation to generation. Social media can cross geographical boundaries, causing cultural change, especially in cultural integration. With the advent

of social media, these traditions got a new dimension in adding how to celebrate and preserve our cultural heritage. Let's understand how social media integrates with our traditional Indian cultural practices.

In today's global society, Cultural integration is a critical process, especially when facing the challenges of multiculturalism and globalisation. Cultural integration is the process of amalgamation of different cultures, values, practices and perspectives to create a more cohesive community. This process involves adopting aspects of another culture side by side and maintaining their own. A successful cultural integration can influence social stability, ethnic harmony and the development of diverse societies. In the continuously expanding social media ecosystem, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds have access to communicate and share their cultural values, beliefs and norms. This provides a unique opportunity to observe the influence of social media on the cultural integration process.

However, even after this positive potential, social media also raises concerns. Cultural integration occurs in society through diffusion, acculturation, assimilation, and inculturation. These four have certain characteristics due to their different goals and needs. Cultural diffusion occurs when cultures interact through trade, migration or geographical proximity. This cultural diffusion also happens when the popularity of a cuisine spreads from one country to another. In acculturation, the process of cultural exchange and contact occurs when people or groups adopt the values and practices of another culture. This process happens on an individual level when a person moves to a new country and on a large scale when another colonises a country. In assimilation-type cultural integration, minority groups or cultures adopt a dominant culture's values, behaviours, and beliefs. However, this can result in the minority group losing its original cultural identity. Inculturation is translating and realising Christian meanings and practices in different cultural contexts. It is also defined as the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture. In this process, Inculturation involves scientific discernment to determine which cultural traits are compatible with the Christian faith.

We discuss social media in the Indian scenario, where festivals are integral to our culture. All festivals are celebrated enthusiastically and joyfully from Holi to Diwali, Christmas to Eid. Social media provides platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc., to share these moments with a broader audience. For example, the Jagannath Yatra in London and Christmas celebrations in the interior states of India. These platforms allow their audience to understand how social media integrates with traditional Indian cultural practices. The traditional arts and crafts segment is quite popular on social media. Artists from various fields create their pages and profiles to display their work and virtual exhibitions and even sell their products online. Many artists from various fields, such as Madhubani painters, pottery, or handloom weaving artists, conduct online workshops and share their tutorials with interested learners. This helps them to keep their art alive and thriving in the market. As India has a diverse culture, it's also bestowed with various dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Hindustani classical music, which have a significant place in our culture. Various renowned musicians and upcoming performers share their videos on Instagram and YouTube, where they get recognition and a

fan following, which helps them generate finance and boost their art forms. Online classes and tutorials for learning classical music and dance have become popular, such as Korean music, known as K-Pop, which is gaining popularity in India and is also affecting personal styling and food habits in India. Social media helps students connect with renowned teachers and gurus from different parts of the country. It is a well-known fact in India that after 15-20 Km, our dialect changes, and languages change after a few 100 km. Social media is crucial in promoting these regional languages and their literature. On various social media platforms, a few content creators are helping their audience pronounce Hindi proficiently, and which specific words are taken from Urdu, Farsi or other languages. Live sessions of the storytellers and budding poets make this literature and their work accessible to the common person.

Social media is acting as a bridge between traditional Indian cultural practices and the modern world. It has enabled the innovative preservation of our rich heritage. It connects people worldwide with the same interests and helps keep cultural practices alive for future generations.

#### Activity - 1

Choose one regional dance and one traditional dance of India and compare their presence on social media.

### 3.3 REGIONAL PLATFORMS

As we already discussed, social media is essential to daily life in India. We are quite aware of global platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, but we also have India-specific social media platforms that cater to regional languages and cultural preferences. These platforms play a significant role in impacting communication, sharing content, and connecting the Indian people.

India-specific social Media Platforms such as:

1. **Sharechat-** In 2015, Ankush Sachdeva, Bhanu Pratap Singh, and Farid Ahsan, graduates from the Indian Institutes of Technology Kanpur, incorporated Mohalla Tech Pvt Ltd, the holding company for ShareChat. ShareChat is a social media platform like Instagram that allows users to share content and opinions and record their lives in their native language. It is headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka. ShareChat, in October 2015, launched in four languages: Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, and Marathi. By 2016, it allowed its users to create and share their own content. ShareChat reached 4 million monthly active users in 2017. In March 2018, ShareChat added Bhojpuri, Haryanvi, Rajasthani, and Assamese to its list of supported languages and in 2022, ShareChat acquired MX TakaTak.
2. **Koo-Koo** is a microblogging platform that offers an Indian and alternative Twitter but in Indian languages. It allows its users to use multiple Indian languages, post updates, follow their favourites and engage in discussions in their preferred languages. Founded in 2020 by serial entrepreneurs Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka, Koo was the first Indian microblogging site available

in over 10 languages. The app, with a yellow bird as its logo, was touted as a potentially formidable opponent to X. It has had more than 60 million app downloads since its launch. The company received investor attention and wooed top Indian politicians and movie stars to join the app. It also expanded to at least two other countries within a short span of time. In August 2020, Koo won second place in the Indian Government’s Innovation Challenge by creating the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat App (Self-Sufficient Indian App). At the start, this app flourished due to its regional content, and various prominent politicians like Piyush Goel, the Commerce Minister, and celebrities like Kangna Ranaut joined Koo. Even Republic TV Channel collaborated with Koo to conduct surveys regarding policies and people’s viewpoints on various issues. However, in 2023, this app shut down due to a lack of funds and an inability to cater for its audience.

- 3. **Moj**—Moj is a short video-sharing platform similar to TikTok, which the Sharechat company opened in 2020. This app is specifically designed for Indian users. It supports 15 regional languages and allows its users to create and share videos with music, filters, and various effects. However, it is primarily used for entertainment purposes.

### Impact of India-Specific Social Media Platforms

- 1. These platforms play a crucial role in promoting and preserving regional languages. They allow users to share content in their native languages and help them keep their languages and dialects alive in this digital age.
- 2. India-specific social media platforms like Sharechat, Koo, and Moj enable their users to share content related to their cultural practices, festivals, and traditions and promote India’s diverse cultural heritage.
- 3. These platforms help raise local communities’ voices, where they share their stories, issues, concerns, achievements, etc. Issues like potholes and corruption complaints can all be raised by these platforms.
- 4. These apps provide local talents with an opportunity to reach a wider audience. The biggest example is the Nooran Sisters from Jalandhar, who sang the Pataki Guddi song for the Highway movie. Many more talents like them have career opportunities.

Embracing these platforms can enrich our social media experience and help us celebrate India’s diversity.

### Check Your Progress: 1

- Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.  
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.
- 1. How has social media contributed to preserving and promoting traditional Indian cultural practices?

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2. Discuss the impact of regional social media platforms on urban and rural communities in India.

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### 3.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

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Socio-economic factors refer to a person’s social and economic position, which actually affects their access to various resources and opportunities. Now let’s understand how the following socio-economic factors influence social media use in India:

#### Economic Factors

1. **Access to Technologies**

An individual’s income level is one of the major factors affecting social media use. People in the higher-income group can access smartphones, computers, and high-speed internet, which allows them to use this medium more effectively. On the other hand, a low-income group of people has limited access. They can’t afford good-quality smartphones and have to rely on low-bandwidth internet connections, which affects their online experience.

2. **Urban vs Rural Areas**

People in urban areas have better infrastructure, connectivity, and device availability. In contrast, people in rural areas have limited access to these technologies.

3. **Digital Literacy**

People in urban areas have more chances to acquire digital literacy as abundant opportunities are available. Developing digital literacy is difficult in rural areas, so people might use only simple and user-friendly platforms.

4. **Language Proficiency**

Users more proficient in using multiple languages, especially English, have more access to a broader range of content and platforms. English is the most dominant language, used primarily for social media platforms. However, users who are exposed only to regional languages face real problems. Platforms like Sharechat create India-specific regional language content to cater to the Indian audience.

5. **Economic Opportunities**

People from higher socio-economic backgrounds often use social media platforms like LinkedIn to get more job opportunities and Instagram and Facebook to market their businesses. As per the new statistics on social media, Facebook is mainly used for digital marketing. Small business owners, budding entrepreneurs, and local artisans also use social media such as Instagram to reach their customers. The statistics

show that Instagram is primarily used for influencer collaboration. According to a study by Statista, Facebook had the largest market share among social media platforms across India at roughly 64% as of October 2024.

## Social Factors

### 1. Age Groups

Younger generations are more tech-savvy and use social media extensively. A 2003 study by the Internet and Mobile Associations of India (IAMAI) found that teenagers spend more than 2-3 hours per day on social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram instead of Facebook or WhatsApp, while older adults do the opposite.

### 2. Gender

Gender is also a consideration in India regarding access to these social media platforms. Men in India have more access to these technologies, although women face restrictions, especially in rural areas. However, this trend is depleting in the coming years.

Access to technology, education, social factors, and economic opportunities are vital in shaping social media usage patterns. By understanding these factors, we can appreciate the diverse ways in which different groups in India engage with social media.

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## 3.5 POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

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In today's scenario in India, politicians and political parties use social media to communicate with the public, share their messages, and influence elections. Social media has become a powerful political tool, especially in a diverse and populous country like India. Let's understand the numerous benefits social media provides in creating political communication. The Election Commission of India (ECI) leverages the power of social media to engage young and urban voters for enhanced participation in the General Election 2024. The Election Commission of India runs various campaigns, such as "Turning 18", which targets all the first-time voters in India and calls the election procedure a festival of democracy. The ECI also ran unique campaigns to curtail all the fake news and misinformation on the election processes. ECI even uses tailored messaging strategies while incorporating compelling themes to collaborate with popular ECI icons such as Sachin Tendulkar to create Gen Z-related content. Even the government can try to install a 'social media analytical tool' to create digital profiles of citizens who supposedly can show their opinions about various official policies and use this information to felicitate the individuals with personalised campaigns to promote positive opinions to neutralise the negative sentiments about government schemes.

### A. Political Campaigns

#### 1. Reaching a Wider Audience

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow politicians to reach a large audience easily. Connecting with voters

through social media is much more affordable than conducting a rally or a door-to-door campaign. Politicians can engage directly with citizens through social media by responding to comments, participating in live sessions, and conducting Q&A sessions. This makes political leaders more accessible to the public.

## **2. Cost-Effective Campaign**

If we compare traditional advertising methods like TV, talk, and Print media, we will find that social media marketing is very affordable and cost-effective. This allows the new parties and the independent candidates to promote their ideas to huge masses without spending so much money to run their political campaigns. Social media also helps the parties to reach specific target groups based on their demographics, such as age, gender, income, race, and education, as well as psychographics, such as attitudes, values, interests, and other psychological characteristics. This helps the politicians reach the right audience with tailored messages.

## **B. Information and Awareness**

### **1. Instant Updates**

Renowned politicians and their national parties can use social media to instantly share updates about their upcoming policies, events, and activities. This keeps the public informed about what their leaders are doing and planning.

### **2. Educational Content**

Social media can be used to educate voters about important issues, government programs, and how to participate in elections. This increases political awareness and encourages informed voting among voters.

### **3. Countering Misinformation**

Social media plays a significant role in countering misinformation and fake news. Many organisations, such as the Election Commission of India, use social media platforms to correct false information and help the country maintain the integrity of the election process.

### **4. Transparency**

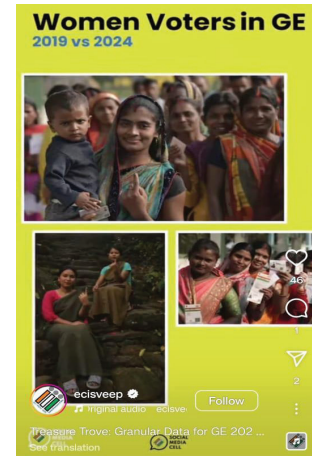
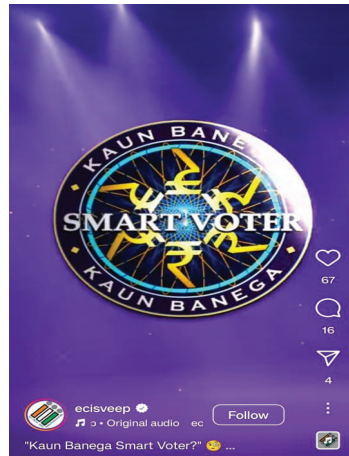
Politicians also prefer to use social media to be more transparent about their actions and decisions, building trust with the public.

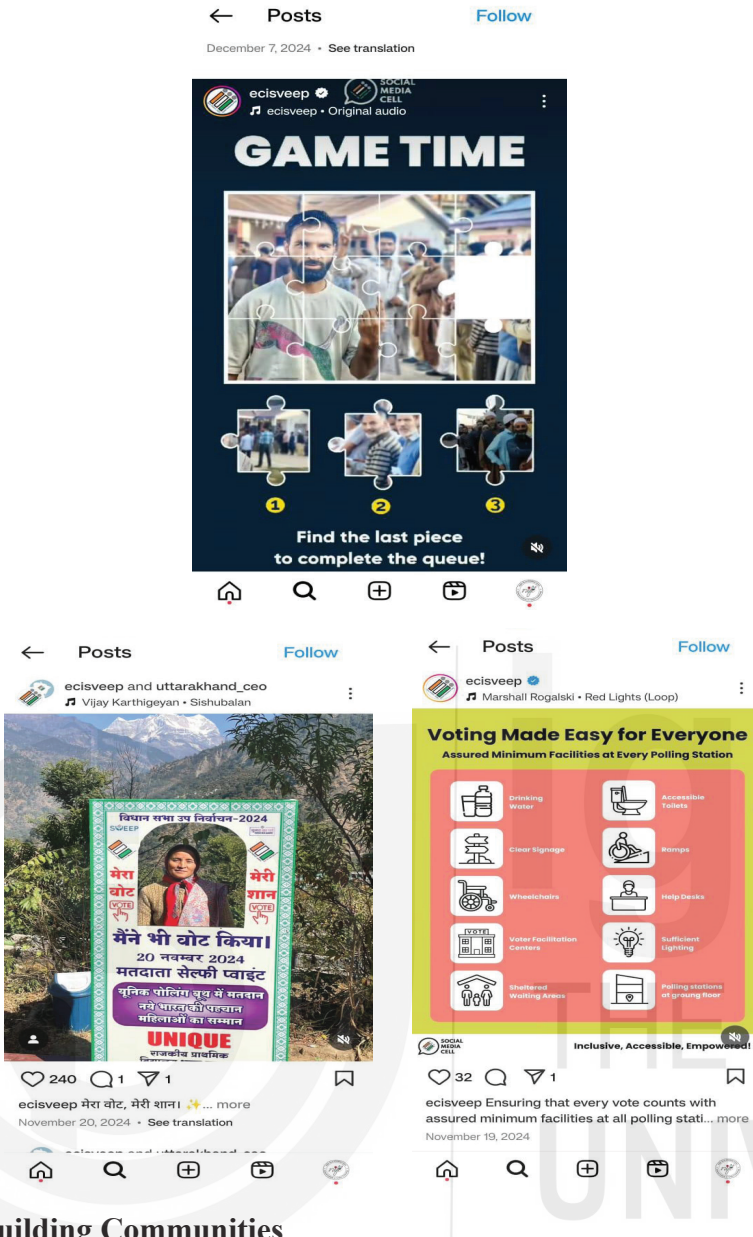
## **C. Mobilising Support**

### **1. Encouraging Participation**

Social media is a handy tool for running political campaigns. The Election Commission of India often uses these platforms to remind people to vote, provide information and encourage political participation. Campaigns like “Voting = Adulging, ‘It’s not just about paying bills its also about showing up to vote and shaping the

future' Indian youth are heavy users of social media, and they can be encouraged to participate in politics through engaging content, memes, and interactive posts. ECI motivates the youth by using phrases like 'You are the game changer of democracy'.





## 2. Building Communities

Social media helps political parties form online communities and support groups. These groups help the parties organise events, rallies, and discussions, fostering a sense of community and collective action for the audience.





To encourage Indian voters, ECI used hashtags like #NothingLikeVoting #IVote4Sure #DeshKaGarv #ChunavKaParv #EveryVoteMatters #NVD20 24 #ECI #GeneralElections2024 for its 2024 Lok Sabha Election. These hashtags helped create an online movement that significantly impacted political engagement and voter turnout.

### D. Challenges and Considerations

One of the biggest challenges social media faces in politics is to discourage misinformation and fake news, which mislead voters, create confusion, and harm the image of political parties and the election system in India. This misinformation and misunderstandings need to be cleared, and verified information should be given to the voters to remove the confusion in their minds. Verification by credible sources is required before believing and sharing such information.

**Verify Before You Amplify** an initiative by ECI for the 18th Lok Sabha elections. This proactive measure aims to empower citizens to verify the accuracy and authenticity of content before amplifying it, thereby mitigating the spread of false information and safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process.



### E. Privacy concerns

Political parties often use data from social media to target their voters. However, it is essential for them not to manipulate this data and to use it ethically to protect users' privacy.

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## 3.6 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

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The development of social media platforms has revolutionised the way we communicate and interact with each other. Social media is becoming a hub for creativity and innovation in languages by creating new words and different ways of expressing an emotion, such as LOL, ASAP and memes. For instance, the use of “LOL” (laughing out loud) and “OMG” (oh my god) has become commonplace in online conversations. Similarly, hashtags have emerged to categorise content and facilitate searchability. Phrases like “#ThrowbackThursday” or “#OOTD” (outfit of the day) have become part of the lexicon of social media users. These linguistic adaptations demonstrate social media’s influence on language evolution.

Social media has provided its users abundant opportunities to be creative and innovative in their languages. Specifically, Memes are very prominently used for online communication to convey ideas and emotions on social media with interesting audio (Music dialogue) and captivating videos accompanied by catchy captions or text. Let’s explore the influence of social media in benefiting regional languages in India.

### 1. Multiple Languages

The Constitution of India’s Eighth Schedule recognises 22 scheduled languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Urdu, and two official languages, Hindi and English. India is considered the most multilingual country in the world. Besides the scheduled languages, the Indian Census recorded 1,576 rationalised languages and 1,796 other mother tongues.

### 2. Multilingual Platforms support regional languages

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram support multiple Indian languages. These platforms provide content to their users in their preferred languages. Platforms like Sharechat and Koo were made explicitly for Indian users to support many regional languages.

### 3. Creation of Unique Content

These media platforms reflect regional trends, festivals, and cultural practices. For example, Bihu, Pongal, and Durga Puja users share posts and videos in their regional languages to celebrate these events. Even audiences use these mediums to share memes or stories in their own local languages to create more relatable and engaging content for their regional followers or audience.

### 4. Educational and Informative Content

Educational videos and posts in various regional languages help aspiring students improve their knowledge and language skills. For example, coaching companies like Physics Wala and Khan Sir classes on YouTube create content in Hindi to connect with and motivate more aspiring students for the Civil services, etc.

## 5. Interaction and Community Building

People from different groups and communities create Facebook groups based on their regional languages. For Example, Groups for Marathi Literature or Telugu film fans have their specific groups. These groups and communities facilitate cultural exchanges and allow everyone to share their traditions, music preferences, recipes, and fashion styles from their regions.

Linguistic diversity in India plays a crucial role in shaping communication. But yes, we also accept that we face many challenges, such as communication gaps due to a lack of knowledge of the language and the spread of misinformation. As social media continuously evolves, it is crucial to study and understand its impact on language and communication to direct the digital landscape effectively. By embracing and promoting multilingual content, we should ensure that social media remains an inclusive space for all.

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### 3.7 RURAL VS. URBAN USAGE

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The advent of social media has brought both possibilities and challenges to a number of different sectors in India.

#### 1. User Growth:

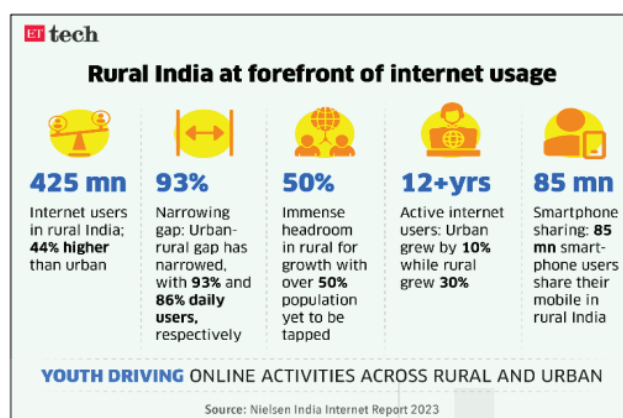
According to a report by Datareportal, India had 462 million active social media users in January 2024. Facebook had 366.9 million, YouTube had 462 million, Instagram had 362.9 million, LinkedIn had 120 million, and Twitter (X) had 26.08 million users. As per the estimate, 56% of new Internet users will join from rural areas by 2025, with only 6% growth seen from urban areas.

Key Information	Data Interpretation
Digital Services in India	Digital entertainment, digital communications, and social media were the most popular services. Social media platforms experienced a 51% YoY growth in social commerce.
Digital Payments	There were an estimated 338 million digital payment users in 2022, with 36% from rural India. 99% of all digital payment users used UPI.
Internet Access in India	In 2022, 52% of India's population (759 million people) accessed the Internet at least once a month.
Rural Internet Users in India	Out of the 759 million active Internet users, 399 million were from rural India, indicating the significant role of rural areas in driving Internet growth.
Digital Divide in India	While rural India is contributing to Internet growth, the report highlighted a digital divide. States like Bihar have significantly lower Internet penetration compared to leading states like Goa.
Projected Growth in Rural Internet Users (by 2025)	It is estimated that 56% of all new Internet users in India by 2025 will be from rural areas, with only 6% growth in urban areas.
Gender Divide in Internet Usage	In 2022, 57% of all new Internet users were females. The report estimates that by 2025, 65% of all new users will be women.

Source: Telecomtalk.com published on 4th May 2023

Social media is quite popular among the youth of both rural and urban areas as it facilitates sharing ideas and information and building thoughts with virtual connections with communities. These platforms facilitate social interaction through blogs, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms (including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and the virtual world. The increased use of social media influences cultural transmission and interpersonal communication among the Indian youth.

According to Nielsen's India Internet Report 2023, rural India had 44% more internet users than urban markets. Of the 759 million active Internet users in India, 399 million were from rural areas. This shows the significant role of the rural regions in driving Internet growth. Rural area consumers are increasingly turning to digital platforms for product information and reviews. This shift is driven by convenience, access to a wider range of products, and the influence of social networks.



**Figure 2** Online Activities Across Rural and Urban India

## 2. Platform Popularity:

Recent studies depict that social media is influencing the buying behaviour of rural consumers, not just for entertainment purposes. Platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook have emerged as influential channels. In urban areas, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are more prevalent. These studies highlight how social media creates a virtual marketplace where rural consumers can discuss products and their preferences, share their reviews and even make recommendations through trusted circles. According to the research, 65% of rural consumers purchased based on their social media recommendations. In addition, the click-through rates on social media ads in rural areas indicate the persuasive potential of targeted advertising on these platforms.

## 3. Usage Patterns:

Smartphones are the popular mode of using social media in rural areas. They are mainly connected to entertainment, such as gaming and using social apps. If we compare this with urban area users' usage, we find that urban area users use social media for communication, travel, business, navigation, and health-oriented apps. However, we observe that rural users use smartphones for entertainment as they have limited opportunities and access to services in rural areas.

India's rural economy relies heavily on agriculture; farmers have found social media a vital development resource. They use these platforms as their knowledge centres to learn about the weather, the stock market, and the best agricultural practices. Social media also helps farmers in rural areas to directly sell their products to customers and get more benefits from their work by removing the mediators from their trade.

**4. Community Building:**

As per the convenience provided by social media, people staying in distant regions of India now prefer to connect online instead of in physical communities, saving them time and money. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram allow the people of the rural region to join various communities of interest for better communication, resolving issues, and planning events. This action leads to a sense of connectivity between the communities of rural setups, which was difficult earlier due to fewer resources.

**5. Education and Awareness:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen a huge shift in education, with schools and colleges going online and providing smartphone access in urban and rural areas. Due to the growth of practical content, YouTube and WhatsApp platforms are filling the digital gap in education by providing access to high-quality learning tools and content.

**6. Political Engagement:**

Social media platforms make it easier for people from all distant places in India to participate in political discourse. They also allow rural people to submit their opinions and raise their voices regarding various important issues they face. One of the major effects of social media is the democratisation of information in rural areas, which makes them more participative citizens of India.

**7. Cultural Preservation:**

Social media provided a stage for all the local and regional artists who ever lived in anonymity, but now they have connections with global audiences. Due to the advent of social media, the sharing of traditional culture got a boost, even opening up opportunities for upcoming artists. Instagram and YouTube allow people to document and share their cultural performances, traditional rituals, festivals, artworks, etc. This documentation is crucial for the upcoming generation, especially in areas where keeping archives of the resources is challenging. Although social media has the potential to preserve and promote our cultural heritage, it also has the potential to cause misrepresentation. And this misrepresentation can dilute the significance of our cultural heritage.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. How does socio-economic status affect access to social media in India?

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2. Give examples of how language affects user interaction on Indian social media platforms.

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3. What are rural users' main challenges in adopting social media?

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### 3.8 LET US SUM UP

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Social media increasingly influences India's cultural, political, social, and economic landscapes. To harness its full potential, it is crucial to enhance digital literacy, particularly in rural areas, where social media is primarily seen as a source of entertainment. If utilised effectively, however, these platforms could significantly contribute to the country's progress across various sectors, helping India flourish in all aspects of life.

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### 3.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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#### Check Your Progress: 1

1. Social media has played a crucial role in preserving and promoting traditional Indian cultural practices by enabling communities to share folk art, music, dance, rituals, and festivals online. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram help regional artists gain visibility, while WhatsApp groups support cultural event coordination. These digital spaces allow intergenerational transmission of culture, especially during festivals like Holi, Diwali, and Pongal, where cultural expressions are shared widely, reviving interest in local customs and heritage among younger users.
2. Regional social media platforms such as ShareChat and Moj in India have significantly impacted urban and rural communities by providing localised content in Indian languages. In rural areas, they empower users to share experiences and access information in their

native tongues, reducing the digital divide. Urban users benefit by connecting with regional roots. These platforms foster cultural expression, regional pride, and grassroots mobilisation, bridging gaps between diverse communities through relatable, accessible, and culturally relevant digital content.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. Socio-economic status strongly influences access to social media in India due to disparities in digital infrastructure, affordability, and digital literacy. Wealthier individuals often enjoy better internet access, advanced devices, and digital skills, leading to higher engagement on social platforms. In contrast, economically weaker groups face barriers such as limited connectivity, shared device use, and low media literacy. These inequalities create uneven participation patterns, limiting marginalised groups' capacity to benefit from social media opportunities fully.
2. Language profoundly shapes user interaction on Indian social media platforms. Users tend to engage more actively in content presented in their native languages, fostering stronger connections and broader participation. Platforms like ShareChat support multiple Indian languages, encouraging regional storytelling and community building. Language choice also influences search results, content recommendations, and peer interaction. For example, Hindi-speaking users form large online communities, while Tamil or Bengali speakers engage with localised trends, creating linguistically diverse digital ecosystems.
3. Rural users in India face several challenges in adopting social media, including poor internet connectivity, low digital literacy, language barriers, and lack of access to affordable smartphones. Cultural resistance to digital platforms and concerns over privacy and misinformation further hinder adoption. Additionally, inadequate technical support and content irrelevance reduce user motivation. These barriers limit the ability of rural populations to engage fully in the digital sphere, affecting their access to information, opportunities, and community participation.

