

## Editorial

The current issue of Artha focuses on New Media and its implications in various fields like education, politics, social movements or campaigning along with an analysis of a stroke of history and mythology.

The advent of New Media has simplified lives of the individuals. The benefits of New Media to the student community is immeasurable. In developed countries, students are already using it as an educational tool for more than a decade. However, in India problems like connectivity, bandwidth, e-literacy, and accessibility to the medium still persist. This has not deterred students in cities and urban areas who have begun to use it, though in a minimal percentage. Statistics reveal that India has the second most number of internet users only next to China, although the penetration is only at 34.8 % (July 2016 estimate) of population ([www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country/](http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country/)). At the beginning of this millennium the percentage of penetration was 0.5%. The study published by Pew Research Center in March 2015 shows that 64% of internet users have said internet has a good influence on education and 53% say that it has good influence on their relationships. One of the articles in the current issue discusses the usage of internet by children in Bangalore city. At this juncture, it is pertinent to study different aspects like how people use the new medium, time spent on it, the purpose behind it and more importantly on how it has changed their lifestyle.

Although Internet has played a significant role in changing the lives of the people, it is an irrefutable fact that Social Media platforms, in particular, have transformed the lives of people. The new media has led to the dethroning of dictatorial regimes which use power to terrorize people; has helped people in democracies to build their images and come to power; has enabled activists to mobilize crowds against state power that interferes with the personal life of the individuals and anti-democratic policies. According to IAMAI - IMRB report, as of April 2015, there were 143 million social media users across India of which 118 million users were from urban India and 25 million users were from rural India. The significant part of this data is 34 % of the users are

college going students and school children contribute 12% of the users. It's bound to increase in the coming times. This is a very promising sign for a democracy like India which also has the demographic advantage to create a better society in the coming days. The terming of Social Media as a 'public sphere' has gained ground in the recent times, where people have begun to debate policies of the government and expressing their views. The recent Supreme Court judgment which quashed the Section 66-A of the IT Act was a shot in the arm for social media activists and underscores the role of new media in diffusion of news.

The second article in this issue deals with diffusion of news which takes place through social media with respect to Kiss of Love protest which started in Kerala. In 2011, scholars from Pew Research Center concluded that "if searching for news was the most important development of the last decade, sharing news may be among the most important of the next". This explains why the article is significant in understanding the diffusion of news and its consumption.

On a different note, the last two articles of this issue deal with literary and social concerns. In the article entitled 'Layered Language in Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born', Dr. V. Shantha has clearly brought out the political overtones of the novel with a detailed sketch of Ghana's contentious history under the rule of Kwame Nkrumah. This article traces the deteriorating conditions in Ghana under the rule of Kwame as portrayed in Ayi Kwei's novel.

In the final article of this issue, Mabel Cynthia analyses the impish portrayal of the mythical character of Nagdo Betala in 'Swapna Saraswata' by Gopalkrishna Pai as opposed to the demigod status accorded to him in the Konkani folklore. The author of this article has extensively referred to existing sources and legends to demonstrate the diametrically opposite views of Nagdo Betala.

We wish the readers a good read and congratulate the authors for their diligent research work that helped shape their articles.

**Rajesh and Abhaya**

Issue Editors