

Use of Digital Media to Enhance Spiritual Growth by the Inhabitants of Religious Houses in Mysore Diocese

Sr.Tressie Rodrigues¹; Gopakumar²

Teresian College, Mysore¹; Goa University, Goa²

*judytressy@yahoo.com*¹; *gopan@unigoa.ac.in*²

ABSTRACT

The digital media connects to a world-wide net, and offers various results. Digital media is useful irrespective age, religion. This study is to conclude how valuable digital media is in helping the Christian inhabitants of religious houses in the Mysore Diocese in obtaining information so as to enhance their spiritual growth. This digital media is encoded in a machine comprehensible format, and has a local storage device with a plurality of driver applications. The digital medium under consideration is the digital library, and the assistance it offers to achieve the preferred result.

Keywords: *Digital media, inhabitants, Religious, Diocese*

INTRODUCTION

Among all the great religions of the world, Christianity is perhaps one of the most prominent. It may not be as ancient as the older religions, but it is the most widespread, and one of the religions of the world. From humble local beginnings in a town in present Israel, this spiritual and Philosophical order, based and developed on the teachings of Jesus Christ. It arrived in India in the 1st Century A.D. The birth of Christianity, its development, spread and its impact on the various aspects of life constitute a significant part of human history. In the last twenty centuries, in growth and development, it has touched every aspect of human life. Christianity occupies a outstanding position in the global religious pantheon.

Demographically, it is ranked the topmost amongst the other religions. Christianity has spread to all the continents and to every country in the world.

Christianity in Mysore:

Many foreign travelers came to India in the ancient and medieval period. There have been a series of migrations in the ancient period; the foreigners brought their own culture, religion and social system. But these travelers and emigrants did not come with the aim of spreading Christianity in India. Christianity came to India (and it is difficult to believe this), when two Apostles of Jesus Christ came to India (to South India, in particular) in the first century A.D. and gave their lives for the sake of their religion.

In Mysore, the story of the spread of Christianity is a tale of struggle, sacrifice, service, achievement and dedication. Mysore is also particularly fortunate that the Christian missionaries who came to the Kingdom were great scholars, scientists and experts in many fields like literature, mathematics and science. They were pioneers in many fields and in other fields they were specialists, scholars and men with compassion and commitment. The King of Mysore, who was readily inclined to be the patron of such brilliant people, encouraged the Christian missionaries and their brilliant intellectual side. The contribution of these missionaries to many fields is astonishing. The Christian missionaries had to tread a new path. Many of them became martyrs while serving the people of the country. Sometimes, their involvement in

many subjects was so deep and serious that it was at the cost of their evangelical services. The Christian missionaries thus have rendered yeoman service to India in the fields of science, technology, social sciences, literature, industries and other areas.

The various services performed by the Christian Missionaries, coupled with their other intellectual pursuits have interested not only the scholars but have also attracted the missionaries and evangelical historians. Scholars and intellectuals interested in the socio-religious history of India also found this a fertile field for study. Their monographs are very useful for the study of the origin of Christianity in India. *Histoires de La Mission Due Mysore (1325-1890 A.D.)*, written by A.M. Gerbier in French, was translated into English by Fr. Jaunet. This highlights the French missionaries who have played a vital and prominent role in the history of Christianity in Mysore. This book provides an outline of the services of Franciscans, Dominicans, Capuchins, Carmelites and Jesuits in Mysore. It includes the remarkable work of Abbe Dubois and Bishop Charbonnaux in Mysore.

Jesuits played a very important role in establishing Christianity in India during medieval times. In English, D. Ferroli's, 'The Jesuits in Mysore' is a constructive work for the study of the Jesuits. The first important writer in Kannada on Christianity was Dr. B.S.Talwadi, who has written a number of works in Kannada and English, on this subject. His first book 'Christa Janapada Geethegalu' is a collection of Christian folk songs in Kannada. The same author's work, 'Karnataka Christhara Ithihasa' discusses various aspects of the different phases of the development of Christianity in Mysore. It traces the growth of Church organizations and throws light on many protestant denominations. Dr. Talwadi has also written many other books like 'Lekhakar', 'Yesu Charita Mathe Mariamma' and others.

Another prolific writer in Kannada was Fr. I. Anthappa. His work 'Srirangapattanadalli Christha Dharma Ugama', discusses the growth and origin of Christianity around the capital town of Srirangapatna. Similarly, he has written many books which correlate and describe the growth and the spread of Christianity in many parts of the state. Fr. Anthappa deals only with the origin of Christian faith and does not provide a concurrent historical account of the Christians in Srirangapatna. The volumes published by 'Church History Association of India' throw light on the growth of Christianity in Mysore. The first volume edited by Dr. Mundadan covers the early period up to 1542. The 2nd volume edited by Dr. Joseph Thekkedath covers the period from 1542 – 1700 A.D. The volume edited by E.R. Hambye covers the 18th century. Many scholars have thrown light on the contribution made by Christianity to various fields. There are many microfilms, microfiche,

monographs, souvenirs published by various organizations, societies and religious organization.

The Catholic Faith has clearly asserted the great significance of the consecrated life in the Church, and the role that the ordinary men and women play in the firm rooting of Christianity and in the development and growth of that religion. Men and women committed to the evangelical counsels "constitute gifts of God which the church has received from the Lord and which by His grace, she always safeguards" (LG 43) and the evangelical counsels do not enter into the hierarchical structure of the Church. It belongs undeniably to her life and holiness" (LG 44). "All religions are under an obligation, in accordance with the particular vocation of each, to work zealously and diligently for building up source and growth of the whole Mystical Body of Christ". However, this contribution and its responsibility do not devolve on the Church alone by apostolic activities, but "primarily by means of prayer, works of penance and by the example of their own lives" (CD 33). That is to say, every Christian must strive not only for his own betterment, but also for the growth and development of Christianity as a whole. For religious life which by its nature is neither clerical nor lay (CCL 586) and is a state complete in itself in its profession to evangelical counsels (PC 10) must be seen as a call to be the discipleship of Jesus.

Use of Digital Media for the growth and strengthening of Christianity:

With the prolific development of the digital media, it was thought that the faith could be propagated faster and in more assorted ways by the use of the digital media. Using the internet, the faithful could delve not only into libraries all over the world, but also into discussions, webinars, videos and other such material, and increase their knowledge and subsequently their faith.

Area of the study

In the beginning, the Mysore Mission was a part the Vicariate Apostolic of Pondicherry, but during the reign of Pope Gregory XVI the Mysore Mission was separated from the Vicariate Apostolic of Pondicherry on 16th March, 1845, and was made into a Pro - Vicariate Apostolic. Later in 1850, Pope Pius IX converted it into a Vicariate Apostolic and entrusted it to the charge of the Rt. Rev. Msgr. E.L. Charboneaux, MEP, and the co-adjutor Bishop of Pondicherry. Mysore later became a Diocese with Bangalore as its headquarters in 1886 when Pope Leo XIII established the Indian Ecclesiastical Hierarchy by a Papal Bull, "Humanae Salutis Auctor".

Almost a century later, on 13th February 1940, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Rene Feuga was appointed the first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Mysore, which comprised the districts of Mysore, Mandya, Kodagu, Shimoga, Hassan, Chikmagalur, the Nilgiris and a part of the District of Coimbatore by Pope Pius XII by his Apostolic Letter “Felicis Increscente”. The Diocese of Bangalore was bifurcated from the Diocese of Mysore in the same year. Later, Ootacamund (Ooty) was separated from the Diocese of Mysore with the Nilgiris and a part of the District of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. In the same way, the new Diocese of Chikmagalur was formed in 1963, bifurcating the districts of Chikmagalur, Hassan and Shimoga, from the existing Diocese of Mysore.

The present existing Diocese of Mysore comprises of four civil districts of Mysore, Mandya, Kodagu Ootacamund, Salem, Mananthavadi, Kannur, Calicut, Mangalore and Chikmagalur. In Mysuru the religious Institutions belongs to different Religious priests, brothers and sisters, and there are 19 religious priests orders, 4 religious brothers and 42 religious sisters consecrated to serve Jesus Christ through various ministries. The following are the orders in which they belonged and served the Diocese of Mysore.

Religious Priests:

1. Congregations of Missions – CM
2. Discalced Carmelites – OCD
3. Holy Spirit Fathers – ALCP-OSS
4. Indian Mission Society – IMS
5. Missionaries of Compassion – MoC
6. Missionaries of Our Lady of LA Salette – MS
7. Missionaries of Francis De Sales – MSFS
8. Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – MSC
9. Montfort Fathers – SMM
10. Norbertine Fathers – O. Praem.
11. Order of the Friars Minor, Capuchin – OFM
12. Order of the Friars Minor Franciscans – OFM
13. Precious Blood Missionaries – CPPS
14. Silesians of Don Bosco - SDB
15. Servants of Charity (Guanellians) – SDC
16. Society of the Catholic Apostolate – SAC. Pallottines
17. Society of Jesus – SJ (Delhi Province)
18. Society of the Divine Word – SVD
19. TOR Franciscans – TOR

Religious Brothers

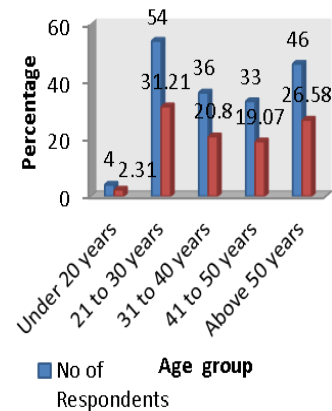
1. Franciscan Missionary Brothers – C.M.S.F.
2. Missionaries of Charity Brothers – MC
3. Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel – SG
4. The Brothers of Holy Cross – CSE

Religious Sisters

1. Adorers of the Blood of Christ – ASC
2. Apostolic Carmel – AC
3. Ashram of Visitation of Bethlehem – VHM
4. Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate – ASMI
5. Bethany Sisters – BS
6. Camaldolese Congregation of the Order of St. Benedict – SCB. CAM.
7. Carmelite Sisters of St. Teresa – CSST
8. Carmelite Teresian Sisters – CTS
9. Catechist Sisters of St. Ann – CSA
10. Congregation of the Carmelite Religious – CCR
11. Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate – ESAC
12. Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
13. Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy – FDM
14. Daughters of the Church – FDC
15. Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul – DC
16. Daughters of St. Francis De Sales’
17. Deena Sevana Sabha – DSS
18. Foreign Missionaries Sisters – ME
19. Franciscan Missionaries of Mary – FMM
20. Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Graces – FSLG
21. Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts – SFSC
22. Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Little Hapton.
23. Good Shepherd – RGS
24. Little Sisters of the Poor – LSP
25. Missionaries of Charity – MC
26. Missionaries of Mary Mediatrix (MMM)
27. Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians – MSMHC
28. Order of Discalced Carmelite – OCD
29. Order of the Most Holy Saviour

- 30. Oblate Hospitaler Franciscan Sisters – OHFS
- 31. Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary Sisters – RMI
- 32. Saint Anne’s, Luzern
- 33. Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
- 34. Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes – SJT
- 35. Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon – SJT
- 36. Sisters of Servants of Mary – SM
- 37. Society of Jesus, Mary Joseph – MJM
- 38. Society of the Helpers of Mary
- 39. Teaching Sisters of St. Dorothy
- 40. Ursuline Franciscan Sisters – UFS
- 41. Ursuline Sisters of St. Jerome in Somasca (USS)
- 42. Ursuline of Mary Immaculate – UMI

Figure 1: Age group of the respondents



Objectives:

The objectives of the study are the following

- To examine the frequency of use of Digital Media among inhabitants.
- To ascertain the correlation between the use of digital media and spiritual growth.
- To understand the available facilities and services in the library.
- To determine how satisfied the user feels towards the information obtained.

Methodology of the study

Details regarding the Benefit of Digital Media to Enhance Spiritual Growth by the Inhabitants of Religious Houses in Mysore Diocese are based on the information collected through questionnaire. Primary data collected from the respondents with the help of questionnaire. A group of 173 respondents were chosen. They were all equipped with at least a desk-top computer, with many connected to the internet based on the information regarding the benefits of digital media on the religious group is analyzed.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Data was tabulated and analyzed manually. Simple statistical techniques such as percentages were used to analyze and interpret the data.

Some of the important findings were as follows:

The above figure shows the age group of the respondents. Digital media is used by various people for various purposes. The religious too use digital media for prayer and meditation. A majority of 31.21 % for respondents belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years which stated that it is the middle aged religious who uses more of digital media for spiritual growth followed by the age group belonged to above 50 years. However the respondents who were under 20 years were only 2.31% which stated that there was restrictions imposed by the authorities for young religious and they were using books and journals for religious growth.

Table 1: Visits to the Library

Visit	Response	Percentage (%)
Daily	42	24.28
Twice a week	30	17.34
Once a week	35	20.23
Once a fortnight	18	10.40
As and when required	48	27.75
Total	173	100.00

The above table shows the respondents visits to the community library and the frequencies of their visit to the libraries. The study shows that about 27.75 % of the respondents revealed that they visited the library as and when required. However 24.28 % of the respondents stated that they visited the library daily and only 10.40 % of the respondents reported that they visited only once a fortnight. It shows that due to technological development

the reading habit has decreased and use of digital media for information has increased.

Table 2: Time spent

Time	Response	Percentage (%)
Half an hour	75	43.35
One hour	68	39.31
Two hours	16	9.25
Three hours	6	3.47
More than three hours	8	4.62
Total	173	100.00

The religious priests and brothers in general use the community library for preparing homilies, preaching retreats and for other spiritual exercises compared to religious sisters. The study found that only few respondents i.e. 4.62% used spent more than three hours making use of the digital media fruitfully for religious growth. However 43.35 % of the respondents spent only half an hour in the library and used the digital media fruitfully for spiritual growth.

Table 3: Internet facility

Internet facility	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	70	40.46
No	103	59.54
Total	173	100.00

From the above table it was found that roughly 40.46 % of the respondents had internet facilities, and 59.54 % did not. Those who had the facility use it, and those that did not have the internet facility availed the facility from outside in browsing centers. The younger respondents make use of internet café for various purposes including for spiritual growth.

Table 4: Use of Digital Media, Religious purpose

Digital Media	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	104	60.12
No	69	39.88
Total	173	100.00

The use of digital media includes various facets of Christianity. From the growth of Christianity to any mystical experiences of religious saints can be browsed in the internet. Every type of prayer and prayer requests are available in the internet. The above table shows that about 60.12 % of the respondents used the internet exclusively for religious purposes whereas 39.88 % of the respondents stated that along with religious purpose they also browsed internet for various other information respectively.

Table 5: Spiritual growth of the Community

Spiritual Growth	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	145	83.82
No	28	16.18
Total	173	100.00

Digital media not only improves the spiritual growth but it can also hinder the spiritual growth it is not used fruitfully. Individual freedom is given to use the digital media and other electronic gadgets wisely by the religious priests and sisters. The respondents were asked whether they had experienced any spiritual growth because of the use of digital media, and a majority of 83.82 % of them stated that cutting across age lines, the use of digital media had a very positive spiritual growth but the growth was in various directions due to the multiplicity of the media employed. However 16.18 % of the respondents revealed that they have not used the digital media not only for religious purpose but other reasons which were not directly helpful for spiritual growth.

Table 6: Level of Satisfaction

Levels of Satisfaction	Response	Percentage (%)
Highly Satisfied	15	08.67
Satisfied	132	76.30
Neutral	21	12.13
Dissatisfied	04	02.31
Highly dissatisfied	01	00.57
Total	173	100.00

The respondents were asked regarding the level of satisfaction they obtained by the use of digital media in the enhancement of the goal of becoming a more devout

Christian. The response was in the shape of a Bell curve, with the high satisfaction group to the highly dissatisfied group, but the group which was satisfied with their growth was the maximum at 73.63 % and the minimum was 0.57 % respectively which clearly showed in the table above.

Conclusion:

A predominant religion cannot rest on its laurels by merely quoting statistics. There is not only the task of getting new members into the fold; rather, the more onerous and ongoing task is to make the members more savvy in the religion they practise. Also, the religion, if world-wide, has many new ideas in the different lands where it is practiced. This problem, for example, does not exist with Hinduism, which is concentrated in India and Nepal; but for Christianity, which is spread the world over, the setback remains on how to get the followers on the same page. The diverse branches of Christianity also compound the problem.

In that way, this study by the Catholic faith to use the digital media to make the community savvy with the various practices in the faith all over the world is very commendable.

As can be seen, the choice in the formation of the community is quite thoughtful. From the young to the fairly aged, the range of age is well chosen. The

community did visit the digital library quite regularly, with times ranging from half an hour to more than 3 hours on a daily to weekly basis. Some had internet, many did not, but the majority concentrated on religion alone, and a large majority reported the growth in their spiritual level due to visits to the digital media on a world-wide basis. Again, there was satisfaction with the method in the majority of the community, cutting across ages.

Hence, the study found that the use of digital media to collect religious information and enhance the spiritual growth of the religious inhabitants was good in all respects.

REFERENCES

- [1]. M. Sharma Rao, *Modern Mysore*, Vol.1, pp. 344 – 354.
- [2]. James Swell, *A Brief retrospect of the Bangalore mission in connection with LMS Archives*, UTC, Bangalore, p.3
- [3]. I.Anthappa, *Origin of Christianity in and around Kollegal*, p.13
- [4]. Thomas Pothacamury, *The Church in Independent India*, p.64.
- [5]. D. Ferroli, *The Jesuits in Mysore*, p.107.
- [6]. *Mutual Relations : Bishops and Religious. Catholic Bishop's Conference of India*. Sept. 2006: 10
- [7]. *Directory 2016. Diocese of Mysore*.p.g.1-2
- [8]. *Mysore District report*, 1929, p.18.