

## “SURF THE GAP”: EXPLORING NEW MEDIA AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO CREATE AWARENESS ON STIS

(#ICMR Sponsored)

Dr.Nandini Lakshmantha\*

Dr.MohanKashinkunti\*\*

Mr.Prashanth V.\*\*\*

### **Abstract**

New media is largely accepted as an efficient tool of networking particularly amongst the computer literate. The alluring features of this wonderful media are believed to be widely used by the youth like elsewhere in India for socializing. It is important to understand if the younger generation is also using the networking sites for a healthy debate on socio-political-cultural issues including much “tabooed” issues, from Indian perspective ex: sex. If so then the uncensored information exchange, which can also be supplemented with visual support can exist between the networking members irrespective of socio-political-geo-cultural stigma attached, it is important to know if the channel is or can be utilized for healthy discussions related to the infections transmitted due to unprotected sexual activity. The study tries to examine whether the young respondents are using new media effectively to understand health implications with special reference to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and with that to analyze and explore how New Media can effectively be used to bridge the knowledge gap that still prevails in the ‘tabooed’ issues in changing society like India.

# This study is an extension work of ICMR Project.

\* Dr.Nandini Lakshmantha: Associate Professor and Head, Department of Media: Journalism and Communication, Manipal University Bangalore Campus; Bangalore

\*\* Dr.MohanKashinkunti.: Professor, General Medicine, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunath Medical College, Dharwad.

\*\*\* Mr.Prashanth V.: Research Associate, ICMR Project, Manipal University Bangalore Campus; Bangalore.

Since the notable change underway in the media market includes the shift from unidirectional, expert-controlled messaging to a participatory culture and interactive communication the shift of focus from traditional popular media to new-age media is essential. It is important to understand how on-line social networking be leveraged to build grassroots engagement, streamline policy advocacy, and build social environments that are supportive to healthy behavior changes.

**Keywords: STIs, SIMS, CSMP, Safe sex, New Media**