

**"NEW MEDIA CONFIGURATIONS - CHANGING SOCIETIES? CURRENT RESEARCH
PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH ASIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA"**

Panel 5: Converging Media – Changing Practices: What is new about New Media?

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„Media mobility and convergence within India’s matrimonial market“

Abstract

When asking for the ‘newness’ of so called New Media, mobility features as a key notion in current discourses. With the ever-increasing mobility of emerging media formats and applications, mobility in turn reflects on media practices.

India’s matrimonial market undergoes a rapid process of medialisation, resulting not only in a boom of matrimonial websites but also in cooperation between the printing press, representing the traditional medium for matrimonial advertisement, television channels and Internet companies. Professional matchmakers revert to new strategies of cross-media marketing and offer their clients personal, online, and mobile phone services. They print catalogues, release TV advertisements and distribute calendars. Millions of young Indians (along with their family members) looking to find the perfect life partner, are simultaneously active on many media levels. With the advent of Web 2.0 they have become “producers” or “prosumers” (Bruns 2008) who consume/use the same media they actively fill with content. Examples of media-supported matchmaking illustrate several key components of “new” media: promptness, flexibility, immediacy of communication, and intergenerational differences in usage patterns.

Taking the example of Indian matrimonial media, this paper explores the dynamics of media mobility including cross-media-based strategies and practices as well as integrated multimediality in media production. It thus analyzes new media practices related to marriage matchmaking on two levels. First, the inter- and cross-medial strategies of matrimonial media production; Second, the communicative mobility of users and the multimedia paths they take to find marriage partners. The exploration of new media terrains in matrimonial matchmaking is shaped by the underlying question of the motivation that drives match-seekers and media professionals alike and the changes the new patterns may have on society and vice versa. Does the emerging multi-million-rupees matchmaking industry replace previous practices of mate-seeking or do we observe the advancement of a long existing trend of medialisation?