

**ROLE OF I, U AND T IDENTITY WITH DYNAMIC  
NATURE OF IDENTITY INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN  
THE WORLD OF NEW MEDIA**

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**Abstract**

***Keywords:***

Identity,  
Communication,  
Identity influential factor  
(IIF), New Media.

Every person who has his domicile in the territory of India and who is born in the territory of India is the citizen of India. Article 5 of Indian Constitution confirms the identity of an individual as an Indian or not. Similarly the physical body or sex chromosomes of an individual help to detect one's gender identity. We identify a person as rich or poor, strong or weak by observing some specific criteria. An individual develops his or her identity based on own perception regarding himself and others opinion about that individual. But in reality, it is quite difficult to figure out 100% original identity of an individual by himself or by others. So identity can be of three types; first of all an identity which is given or accepted by a person by him/herself (which can be named as "I" identity), secondly identity of a person created on the basis of other's perceptions (YOU Identity) and thirdly identity which is a true identity or complete identity of an individual ("T" for true identity). All these three types of identity are greatly influenced by both physical (like Geopolitical territory) and mental factors (like culture, ideology). These Identity influencing factors are having some limitations or boundary. The people who come under the boundary of identity influential factor that factors become the part of their identity. For example, people staying inside the territory of India become Indian

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and who follows the Hindu philosophy they are identified as Hindu. Nowadays due to the impact of new media irrespective of the rigid political boundaries, ideological and cultural boundary of the society are becoming more dynamic. Therefore it's important to understand the relation of digitally influenced dynamic boundaries of the identity influential factor with the identity of an individual.

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## 1. Introduction

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary "who or what something is Identity". The origin of the word 'Identity' is from a Latin (idem) which means 'same'. This Identity can be determined from some special characteristics such as common behaviour, general activity, skills of a person. With these Identifying characters, people get identified. A group of people can be identified from their similar character. Similar gender identifying characters identifies the gender of a person. All those people who share the territory of India and obey the Constitution of India they are identified as Indian. Scholar Erving Goffman stated that "personal identity is concerned with what makes an individual distinct from other individuals" (Jackson 545).

## 2. Different Types of Identities

The identity of an individual can be of different types when it is viewed from different angle and perception. An individual can judge his/her own identity by self-analysis but that identity would be different if any other person judges his/ her identity. To understand and to discuss these differences we can name them as "*I identity*" and "*YOU identity*" or "*U identity*".

When we ask someone that "who are you or tell me about yourself". Then whatever he/she will explain about his/herself that come from their own perception. That is the self-detected identity of an individual or it can be represented as "*I identity*". This "*I identity*" or "personal identity can be defined as a self-description of highly specific details and experiences" (Jackson 545). It may be expressed in different forms such as name, designation, qualification, place of living, age,

ideology etc. Otherwise, we can say “on the personal, individual level, identity can be defined as the understanding of oneself in relation to others” (Rejwan 1). When two people interact for a period of time, then they know about each other’s characters, likes and dislikes. Out of this collected information, they develop broad perceptions about each other. Based on those views one classifies, designates and identifies another person. When the identity of a person depicted, viewed and decided by another person then this type of identity can be called as “*U identity*”. But in reality, it is not so easy to define or identify a person. Commonly people get identified by some identity identifying factors like attitude, behaviour, dressing assent, beliefs etc. But these identity identifying character like perception, taste, attitude of a person is not always constant. So it is difficult for everyone to judge themselves and to judge other. As these identifying, factors are not fixed so identity is always dynamic in nature. So there is a strong probability of misinterpretation our self-identity (I identity) or the identity of others(U Identity). So we can imagine that there must have a true identity of every individual, which is not easy to figure out perfectly for anyone. Whatever we are detecting as the identity of anyone, that may be a portion of the true identity. We can designate this True identity as ‘T identity’.

### **3. Germination and Growth of Identity**

To discuss Identity, it is important to know how the self-identity of an individual germinates and grows. “People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something one finds; it is something one creates” (Szasz.49). So let’s see how the identity of a person created by themselves. An identity of an individual influenced by closest relations, repeated life experiences, duration of exposing to an external factor, important situation, unique and attractive individual etc. Now let’s understand how ‘*I identity*’ is developed and takes its shape in human life.

The process of identity development starts at early days of human life. At the age of 8 months, all our external sensory systems like eye, ear, nose, touch and taste are developed. “Around this time your baby starts working out how to learn more about his world” (7-8 Months). A human baby now can collect external information in the form of visual, sound, test, smell and touch etc. Unconsciously baby consumes a huge amount of information in a different way and from different sources.

After the above stage by comparing different information another factor is originated that is “I”. After interpretation of collected data, an identity of an individual takes shape. They able to identify their own things out of others. ‘Separation anxiety and stranger anxiety are a normal part of a child’s development around this age (7 to 8 month).’ (7-8 Months) This type of behaviour of a baby shows the development of “*I identity*” of a baby. Development of “*I identity*” depends on repetitions of information, closest factor, a level of comfort, a level of availability of information. Readily available and closest information act as basic ingredients to construct the primary “I” of a baby.

**Baby I:** This “*Baby I*” out of so many sounds selects the most repeatedly audible sound as its own name. Out of so many faces recognises the nearest and dear face as its mother’s picture. In this way, the radius of “*Baby I*” expands with the selection and accumulation of new information. Our parents, friends, teachers, society and the media help to give shape to our identities “Our sense of self is often shaped by how others see us and what is reflected back to us by the interactions of others”(Ballantine116 ).

Now pre-existed “*I element*” plays a decisive role in selecting the available information to accumulate with its own “*I identity*”. “*I element*” means those factor which are accepted by an individual as the base of its own identity. As like the selective exposure theory of communication “I Identity” exposes them only to select information. “Selective exposure means people may only watch or read media output that fits in with their existing views and interests” (Browne.332).

**Rigid core and a flexible external surface of Identity:** With this process of selection, rejection and consumption of external information a complete identity of an individual develops. This has a rigid core and a flexible external surface. Factors which shape the core identity they are not easily replaceable. They decide which information should be consumed or rejected. Above this core identity, a more flexible surface identity develops. This can be easily influenced by external factors. Very often when some logically strong information repeatedly comes in contact with “I”, it may change the inner structure. As this external information like any idea, opinion or cultural character influence the identity, so they can be technically called as identity influential factor (IIF).

#### 4. Different Types of IIF

Identity influential factor (IIF) may be of different types based on their nature and quality. They can be like a nation which has a rigid political border and also can be like belief or idea which is invisible in nature and things like culture have a dynamic influential area. The border of a culture can be demarcated by some rules, beliefs, rituals, practices etc. Both consciously and unconsciously people enter into the boundaries of IIF and shape their identity accordingly. Based on the strength of IIF, it constructs the identity of an individual. So here in the fig.1 it is showed how different identity and borders of IIF interact with each other.

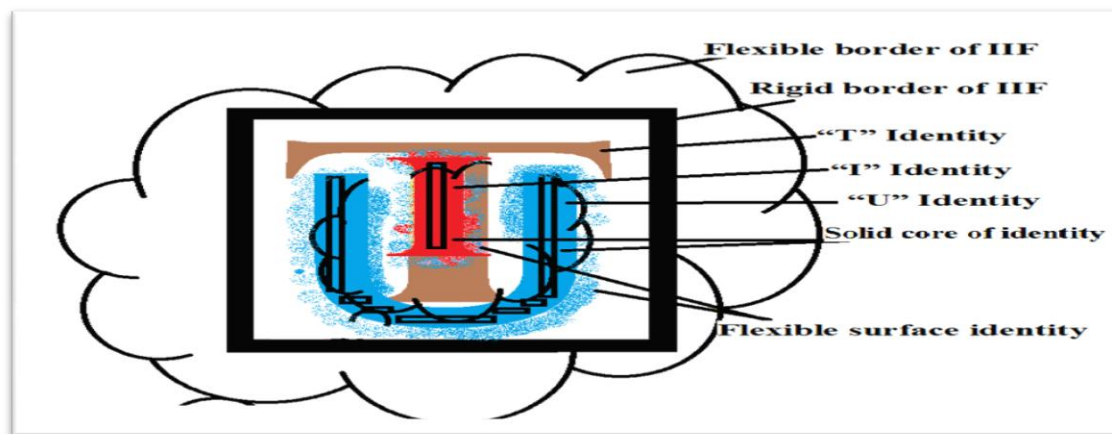


Figure 1: “I”, “U” and “T” Identity with IIF

#### 5. Border and Identity

IIF is having specific borders which influence and reshape the identity of an individual. Such as culture, beliefs, customs, thoughts etc. are some of the most important identity influential factors. “A culture is defined as the entire pattern of belief and behaviour that is learned and shared by people as members of a social group” (Kiefer 4). Factor like an own traditional culture of a person greatly influences to the core of “I identity”. Culture ‘serves to give an identity to a group, ensures survival and enhances the feeling of belonging.’(Cultural)

The cultural values are limited to a specific area. People those come under specific boundary of that culture, they get influenced by that culture. These factors give shape to the values, attitude, behaviour and finally the identity of an individual. People when they come inside the

influential area their identity will be affected by this factor. Nowadays boundaries of this IIF are also greatly influenced by new media.

## **6. Impact of New Media on Border of IIF**

Media theory like magic bullets, Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, Agenda-setting Theory of McCombs and Shaw advocates about the effect of media on human life. (Laughey 20-22). Some IIF like beliefs or lifestyle is greatly influenced by new media. Media and its content play a dominant role in the identity and IIF. Now the present and the future communication are in the hands of new media. Now borders of IIF like culture, beliefs are changing day by day and taking new space in new media. To gratify ourselves we consume the content of new media. One can find on one web portal having the verity of IIF. Just in one click, one can switch over from one border of IIF to another. It is not a difficult task to get influenced by other culture or to influence them. Also, those who are not using new media are indirectly being influenced by them. "Even people who don't engage with technology as much as others are still affected by it, since the people they interact with users and are affected by new media to varying degrees"(New media).

**New media and "U identity and Border of IIF:** The "U identity" is greatly being influenced by the new media. Like social networking site not only provide space to publish personal information like name, nationality, and profile photo but also provide a wide scope to publish any kind of information. People express their emotion, achievement and present state of mind on the social network. They are often recognised by their postings. "The micro-celebrity engages in a form of self-branding that is prosecuted through the presentation of their persona online" (Turner 72). Now this online personal information can help to be identified by others. When someone gets a new friend request they first try to identify that person with online available information. Here "U identity" is developed and it influenced by the online contents. But problem is that online information may be wrong. In computer-mediated communication, there is more scope to present oneself in a more controlled way. Scholars say computer-mediated communication (CMC) differs from face-to-face communication; "one key difference involves the ability to engage in selective self-presentation in CMC. Selective self-presentation refers to the fact that individuals can choose which identity cues they claim in online environments"(Ellison).

**New media and “I identity” and Border of IIF:** Let’s discuss “*I identity*” in the world of new media. “Both the sense of oneself and the sense of belonging are shaped by the values, beliefs and forms of behaving transmitted from the past, but also highly influenced by symbolic materials transmitted by media”(Tubella.1). So media can shape the structure of identity because it is a platform where IIF takes its shape and gets accessed by others. Nowadays directly we are coming into contact with different ideas and facts by digital communication. This, which shapes our identity. Sometimes it challenges our blind beliefs and sometimes it reminds us our glorious history. It can break and reshape the border of “*I identity*” by challenging its core factors and can make a fragile idea into a solid factor of identity.

**Dynamic Border and dynamic identity:**“Factors such as family, history, religion, and cultural identity influence your decisions as to what to think about and how to act.” (Samovar 172) Traditional factors like family, past experiences, cultural practices, political systems, religious texts, geographical border shape the skeleton of self-identity or “*I identity*”. These factors divide people into a specific group for a long period of time. A specific border of culture, tradition can be detected which separates two groups of people. Through that culture and beliefs, people get identified by other people.

In this era the border of this IIF are not at all rigid; they are quite flexible and dynamic. For example, Bengali women prefer to wear the sari in festivals, and widow should wear a white sari, these types of IIF have lost their rigidity. This is because of mass media; it has blurred the boundary of IIF.

As per India today news “in a nationwide survey conducted amongst the youth of India, nearly 76% of youth believe that social media empowers them to bring change to the world we live in” (Social media). During anti-corruption movement of Anna Hazare, most of the people expressed their support through social media. They identified themselves as an activist and other people also presume them as they are Anna supporter after reading their online post. Then after some days some of them became the supporter of AamAadmi Party, then some became a fan of Narendra Modi. Here IIF was not able to maintain their influential boundary for a long time. This happens because of flexible new media.

It is also a unanimous concept that people love to follow their favourite actor's recent style. But they replace the style with a latest and popular one. As people constantly consume more than one views or angle of any topic or style, it creates a dynamic border of IIF. So as the media content is dynamic in nature it is making the identity of a human being more dynamic.

As new media gives a diverse view and more scope of for participation, it is natural that different views will collide with each other. It will provide more scope for discussion, elimination of negative factor and develop mutual understanding among people having a different identity. People can choose the true out of so many misleading IIF. People get a scope to view the two sides of a coin and able to accept all the angles and values of a reality. It may open a wide scope to move towards more perfection to understand our identity and other's identity. Finally, we may thing about our true identity.

## **7. Conclusion**

The "I" and "U" identity is a part of the real identity. The true identities of all human beings are hidden behind the U and "I identity. Hence people have to be a conscious observer to know about the reality out of so many ambiguities. For this one has to be literate on various aspects and practice of mass media driven IIF. One must be aware of the IIFs which are based on propaganda and dirty politics. We must choose or accept those IIFs which will help for the sustainable development of the individual and the whole world.

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