

University with Potential for Excellence of University Grants Commission was awarded to the University of Mysore in the disciplines of Science and Social Science. In social science, the focus area of study is '*Media and Social Development: A Case Study of Karnataka*'. The project aims to study the different paradigms of media and social development; Analyze the nature, forms, levels, phases and consequences of media intervention in the process of social development; Study the development "deficit" and its implications on social categories; Assess how media intervention can transform the State; Develop new social development indices to greatly disadvantaged groups; Based on the findings of this study, design an alternative Model of Development for Karnataka.

The Journal of Media and Social Development is an initiative to create scholarship in the area of media and social development by encouraging scholarly work by the academicians in interdisciplinary areas of social sciences. The Journal is a platform for publishing high quality original research and experiments in the significant areas of economic, political, social, cultural and media perspectives of development.

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Journal of Media and Social Development

Usage of Social Media in the 2014

Indian General Elections -

A Review of *Modi* Factor and IT Czar's Digital Trail

ASHA K., USHA RANI N.

The Online Public in India: An analysis of

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New Communication Technologies and News

Making Process: A New Discourse?

G. NAGAMALLIKA

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Activities of the Project

The Project has established Centre for Area Studies. The Centre has started M.Phil in '*Area Studies - Karnataka Studies*' for the first time in the state of Karnataka. The Project has established state of art infrastructure in the Department of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore to make media education more relevant and meaningful. The Project has ventured into publishing a monthly Newsletter, *ABHYUDAYA* (meaning Development) to create awareness about human development and its indicators among Research scholars and students.

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

For the first time in India's general elections of 2014, social media was used extensively by certain political parties and candidates. It was no different in Karnataka. Social media provided an alternative forum for parties and candidates to reach out voters. Social media has turned into additional vote base for political parties and candidates points out this study. The two national parties and one regional party made efforts to make use of the Internet based tools, though their efforts, interest and investments in terms of money were not equal. However, the social media tools used by them were more or less the same. The two national parties – the Indian National Congress (INC) commonly referred as the Congress party, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – were way ahead of other national parties when it comes to using social media. Between the two, the BJP was more aggressive than its nearest rival the Congress on social media plank.

Key Words: *Lok Sabha elections, Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, Google+, Blog, Websites*

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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, U.S. Presidential election was hailed as the social media election providing powerful platform for e-participation and ‘microtargeting’ of the voters truly democratizing the elections. During elections, Barack Obama had more than 20.4 million followers on Twitter, 29.1 million on Facebook, 2.3 million on You Tube and over 1.4 million on Instagram. Instagram is a popular photo-sharing application which was used as a media tool by Obama to post pictures of election campaigns and family to catch the attention of over 100 million Instagram users. Today there are more than 1.11 Billion users of Facebook in the world and their number is growing.

Unlike USA, in India it is too early to expect social media to influence elections in general and voting behaviour in particular. The political consequences of social network sites in India however were evident in the 2014 elections causing a paradigm shift in the national election campaigns. Indian general election of 2014 dubbed as the largest election in the world had whopping 814.5 million voters with 23.1 million or 2% of first time voters in the age group of 18-19 years. Interestingly, the total voter turnout bordered on 66.38% where around 8251 candidates contested for the 543 seats in the elections held in 9 phases covering 29 States and 7 Union Territories. Surprisingly right wing political party BJP and its allies NDA came to power with a thumping majority winning 336 seats. The ruling party Indian National Congress that dominated national political scene for over six decades was routed in the 2014 elections winning a meagre 8.1% (44) seats in a house of 543 seats.

India with its impressive growth with the IT exports naturally depended on the power of social media in challenging the conventional political communication channels with the aim of political empowerment and inclusion of young voters. To escape the gatekeeping by the media, politicians and political parties took shelter under social media. The new media has broken media stereotype and has become a medium for public discourse and has emerged as new power centre knocking down the mainstream media which wielded power for more than a century.

Social network sites are defined as ‘web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system’ (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The definition that “Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) tries to establish that social media is more a new label for the existing web based technology and is merely touted as a new generation Internet tool. Observations like, ‘the web is more a social creation than a technical one. It was designed for a social effect to help people work together’ (Lee Tim Berners, 2008) sums up the power of integration of social participation and technology.

It is well said that politics would progress to diversity and multifaceted communication channels and content (Robert Dahl, 1982). From this perspective, it is opined that use of Facebook could widen the scope of democracy and bring in pluralism (Anderson, Medaglia, 2009).

The present study is about the use of social media by the political candidates from Karnataka State contesting elections in 2014 to the parliament – the high seat of power in India. There are 28 *Lok Sabha* (Lower house of the Parliament) seats in the state of Karnataka and the major political parties - the Congress and BJP contested all the seats in 2014. The regional parties – the *Janata Dal* (Secular) fielded its candidates for 26 seats, while the *Aam Admi Party* (AAP) fielded 13 candidates. The real challenge for a candidate contesting any election is to reach out to maximum number of voters. Contestants try to get maximum foot prints and visibility. The digital forum is fairly a new platform added to the effective modes of communication. The study aims to understand the use of digital discourse in world's biggest election campaigns in India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study which political party used social media tools to the maximum extent in the *Lok Sabha* elections of 2014.
2. To examine the type of social media tools used by prime ministerial candidate and a politician, Narendra Modi and a technocrat, Nandan Nilekani.
3. To study whether social media served as an alternative platform for political parties and candidates to reach out the target groups.

METHODOLOGY

Many researchers have evinced interest in the Facebook phenomenon and the role of social media in elections and e-participation to measure the potential of interactive media vis-a-vis conventional approaches to elections. The methodology poses a

challenge in such studies as research tools and techniques are new bordering on experimentation.

Study of user behaviour of social network requires different methods of study. Conventional research methods are not appropriate to study new media. In the age of OSN – Online Social Network users can customize their pages and control content facilitating sharing private life and professional life in public platform and participate in public discourse on varied issues. As a result the medium of social networks have become distinct and unique posing a challenge for researchers prompting one to devise appropriate methods to study the new media. The rapid expansion of Internet technology has created platform for its use in political activities like elections which require high degree of participation of the electorate. So, social media have enabled large scale participation of the people in heavy internet penetrated countries where social networking services are serving the political cause. A review of methodologies adopted by the researchers throws new insight into the complex nature of media under study.

In order to study one of the popular social networks, Facebook, few researchers developed methodology consisting of a multi-threaded crawling which can track and store individual Facebook user profile pages in a file system (C. Tang et al.). They used this method to recognize the gender based identity and behavior pattern among Facebook users. In the study by Tang and others, Facebook public profile pages for 1.67 million users in New York City were traced through crawling. Based on the users a comprehensive name list and a technique was developed for inferring gender of the users and the researchers achieved accuracy in their study with this technique thus illustrating the ingenuity of the researchers. Since methods are being improvised with every study, the field is wide open for large scale

experimentation as the last word has not yet been said about the methodology to study new media.

In one of the studies on visual identity in Facebook that focussed on studying profile photographs of Facebook users to correlate with their self presentation, a combination of digital, sensory and visual research methods have been used (Paula Uimonen 2013). Most of the studies are using online survey method with email to access questionnaire as a tool for data collection. E-questionnaire is a popular, credible and tested empirical research tool that has helped researchers not only to test the potentialities of the tool but also to study the non linear pattern in access and consumption of new media content by the users. In a study on the use of social media in elections, the researchers (Anderson , Medaglia, 2009) have used the Facebook registered friends of the political candidates contesting as the universe for drawing a representative sample of the study. A questionnaire to collect data was used with the help of SurveyMonkey, the online survey software.

In a study on Facebook (Hilsen, Helvik 2010) researchers have selected purposive non-probability sample through snowball sampling (Thagaard 2003). A snowball sampling is found appropriate when there is no authentic list of population to draw the sample. It uses a technique wherein initially few subjects are deliberately chosen and they are in turn asked to recommend some of their friends or acquaintances that meet the desired needs of the study and elaborate the chain by recommending few more thereby gradually increasing the size of the sample. This is based on an analogy of how a snowball gathers more snow when rolled down the snow capped mountains and increases in size.

In a study on the role of information technology in motivating Facebook users, the researchers have used a sample of Facebook users

using CheckFacebook.com to draw purposive sample (Tsai, Huang, Hsieh, 2011). This website though not hosted by Facebook tracks data generated from Facebook advertising tool. It helps researchers as well as marketing people to know the penetration of Facebook in the world. This website could be resourceful for researchers to draw the sample pertaining to the study of Facebook.

The fact that it is possible to draw representative sample in Facebook has been established by researchers who have built a random sample out of student enrolment register in the university. Here selected students were sent a mail to participate in the online survey specifying the purpose of the study and those who provided email Ids and completed survey were rewarded with a lottery draw to win 10 gift vouchers of \$50 each. In some surveys respondents who happened to be students have earned extra credit in a course or an honorarium for participating in the survey (Yang, Chia-chen and Brown B.Bradford, 2012). Many studies have offered gifts to encourage more users to participate in the survey. Some surveys have been administered anonymously to reduce the degree of bias. This technique has paid rich dividends as students have responded and participated in the online surveys but it raises the question of ethics. Should researcher pay the respondents for participating in surveys? Online survey requires respondents who are users of online media. Some researchers used crowd-sourcing market like Amazon's Mechanical Turk to gain access to huge number of workers available. The website claims that Amazon Mechanical Turk is a 'marketplace for work that requires human intelligence'. Despite apprehension expressed about the quality of data that one may end up getting, this data source has been supported by some researchers who see more benefits like survey platform services that help researchers to get country based data and the speed

of data collection. This data source has been appreciated for its consistency in all the published studies (Bohannon 2011; Goodman et al. 2012) and it has also been increasingly used in quantitative studies with focus on perception and behavioural studies (Mason and Suri 2012).

Many studies have adopted different methods to recruit respondents for the Facebook study as sampling is one of the challenges in online research. Most of the studies require purposive sample like active online social network users who are invariably recruited through advertisements or announcements in colleges and universities. The established technique is to post online announcements inviting volunteers on number of social groups. Interestingly, in a study on analysis of characterization of ego networks formed inside Facebook, the researchers have performed data acquisition campaign and the respondents were asked to use a Facebook Analyser (FBA), the Facebook application designed for this study with an embedded electronic survey (Arnaboldi et.al, 2011). In a study on the intervention of Facebook in community learning, researchers selected a sample of students already enrolled for a particular course and were encouraged to form a learning group in Facebook on a project work (Wong et.al 2011).

Many autonomous software tools have been devised by the researchers for mining data devising different sampling methodologies like breadth-first-search and the uniform sampling illustrating that there is opportunity for every researcher to build research methodologies determined by the variables of the study. Websites hold huge voluminous amount of information which is difficult to quantify. More and more research is depending on web based media tools to understand the nature and process of communication. Conventional

methods like content analysis need to be improvised and modified to study and integrate with network analysis to experiment, evaluate and analyze the content of web media. In the present study, the social media content of political parties and candidates were studied through network analysis. The reports published in newspapers and websites on the topics were also read to verify the difference between conventional and new media coverage. The IT cell members monitoring political social media sites and candidates were interviewed for data collection.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As far as Indian electorate is concerned about 23 million people are in the age group of 18-19 years enrolled to vote out of the total electorate of 815 million. This also means that at the national level 10 per cent of the total eligible voters are the first-time voters. As per the Election Commission's data, the proportion of 18-19 year old registered voters in the state of Karnataka is 1.8 per cent. Interestingly, India has witnessed addition of young voters (in age the group of 18 to 25 years) in the 2014 elections. As per the Press Information Bureau (PIB) and Election Commission of India, in Karnataka, which has a population of 63.9 million, 46 million are the electorate with 23.5 million male and 22.6 million female voters. Half the total electorate of 46 million are below 40 years. Interestingly 25.14 per cent are in the age group of 18 -29 years. The new young voters' population in terms of real numbers have gone up by 1 million as compared to 2013 Assembly elections in Karnataka.

It is this emergence of new voters or to be precise youth force which gave courage for the promoters of social media tools as well as political parties and candidates to focus on maximising the usage of digital space. Regarding new media technology, it is said that there

are more than 39 different kinds of social media tools (Jay Baer) that one can explore individually in public discourse. However, the study finds out that prime political parties – the Congress and the BJP – mainly confined themselves to Facebook, Twitter, and Google Hangouts. Interestingly, the *AamAdmi* Party, the one year old party, was active on Facebook and Twitter.

The major parties like Congress, BJP and AAP generated a lot of reading material and raised debates, expressed views, reacted swiftly to developments, made snide remarks, backtracked on their utterances in public and issued clarifications on social media. Interestingly, the JD (S), which has been reduced into a regional party from the status of a national party, is living up to its image of a rural party when it comes to using the technical innovations in communication. The party's leaders and candidates were not active on social media though some of them had opened accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Interestingly, the party's website offers more information and insight into its policies compared to the Congress and the BJP. But the JD(s) party found to use less of social media in the 2014 general elections compared to the 2013 Assembly elections in Karnataka. No doubt the elections were keenly fought this time unlike in the past. The candidates were found doing all possible acrobats to reach and read the pulse of voters.

The Election Commission too engaged with civic agencies, citizens groups and NGOs besides colleges in its voter's awareness campaign. The website of Election Commission (EC) both at the national and state level were voter friendly by giving lot of basic information on the elections. It also hosted ward-wise voter list to enable voters to check whether their names were in the list. Probably, the vigorous campaign to make voters exercise their franchise by the

EC as well as by political parties also led to increased voting percentage across the country. As per the EC information, the total voter turnout after the 9th and final phase of elections was 66.38 per cent as compared to 58.19 per cent in previous 2009 *Lok Sabha* elections. This is the highest turnout since the elections held in Independent India since 1952. The Press Information Bureau in association with the EC of Karnataka also made arrangements to Tweet results besides announcing results in real time on its web portal.

All the prime political parties made their presence on the Internet through their IT cells. In addition, some of its contestants had personal accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Blog and website. Their efforts were independent of their party's efforts. Compared to the previous *Lok Sabha* elections and Assembly elections, the 2014 LS elections saw the maximisation of the usage of social media tools. However, it is not possible at this stage to scientifically analyse the impact of the same on the voting pattern or the poll outcome.

The parties invested money on social media unmindful of the outcome. Though no party has spelled out as to how much it invested on publicity and communication, it is estimated that the prime party like the BJP invested in the range of 2 to 5 per cent of the total funds earmarked for the elections. The political parties drew confidence to invest money on employing social media for campaigning due to various factors. The usage was despite the hard fact that the Net based tools usage is limited to the urban youths who are by and large hooked on to surfing the Net and using smart phones. It is definitely yet to catch up with the rural masses. And not less than 70 per cent of the Indian population lives in rural areas.

Facebook in Indian Elections

The American companies – Facebook, Twitter and Google – seem to have made conscious decision to keep track of Indian elections as they were sure of getting more hits or eyeball movement as well as revenue in terms of advertisements. When it comes to popular social media tools, Facebook is estimated to have 100 million users in India, which is largest outside the US. Twitterites have doubled in India from January 2014.

In 2009, Congress politician Shashi Tharoor showed that politicians can connect well to the computer literate masses by Tweeting. He had about 6,000 followers in 2009 and it has bulged to 2.16 millions. And, now almost all prime politicians and political parties are into micro blogging. Among Indian politicians, it is Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP-led NDA in 2014, who has the highest followers on Twitter – 3.89 million and stupendous 14 million fans on Facebook. The US President Barack Obama, at the global level, is the topper in the usage of Facebook and Twitter. Katie Harbath, Manager for Policy at Facebook, had said that Facebook began working on the Indian elections during the end of 2013 and stepped up its efforts in March in 2014 when the elections were notified. Harbath had said that the entire India was discussing the LS elections and Facebook was really the key place of the conversation that was happening. According to Adam Sharp, Head of government and nonprofits at Twitter, Facebook is a powerful way to return to retail politics. The elections helped Twitter in India expand its presence. According to Sharp, the 2014 LS elections were turning into India's first Twitter elections. It is not just the candidates, even the media and citizens were using the Twitter platform extensively to discover elections content, converse with

others in real time and express their views. It is estimated that Facebook has 100 million users in India, next only to the United States. In 2013, India had the third highest Net users in the world. It stands next to the US and China in terms of users.

As per a report of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB), in December 2012, 74 per cent of the Indian population who are using Internet are urban people. It is natural for political parties and contestants to try to reach out this upwardly mobile population including the young and first time voters on the Net, whatever may be the tool. The IRIS Knowledge Foundation, a public service initiative of IRIS Business Services Limited, during the research conducted in March 2013, had estimated that the usage of social media would spread by the 2014 LS elections. Facebook would be the emerging giant in the social media space, as the clout that the users enjoy is immense. It would leave the citizens empowered, it had said. About 10 per cent of the voting population have Facebook account and 97 per cent of them are active members. And, on a daily basis almost they make their presence felt. For the first time the Election Commission gave voting power to Non Resident Indians (NRIs). About 25 million NRIs, if they willed, could have voted. Even if they had not made it to India only to participate in the democratic process, majority of them would have watched the campaign and the related activities back home.

The Congress and the BJP conducted Google Hangouts for its prime leaders to engage in conversation with their party workers and select groups of citizens. It provided the leaders to express their mind as well as take questions. Internet and Mobile Association of India had estimated that well executed social media campaign can swing 3 to 4 per cent of voters. As per the 2011 Census report, India has more

mobile phones than toilets. It also means that nearly 1.2 billion population is using cell phones. With the ever evolving smartphone technology and wide use of the same across India, social media tools have become easily available to the users at affordable rates. Hence, political parties and candidates tried their best to exploit the tools for vote gains.

Narendra Modi and Social Media

In Karnataka, the two most discussed and visible politicians on the Net were Narendra Modi, the PM candidate of the BJP, and Nandan Nilekani, the co-founder of Infosys, who had contested from Bangalore South as the Congress candidate. Modi had not contested from Karnataka. But he was the de facto BJP candidate pan India. Hence, the Netizen-cum-voters followed the campaign of Modi keenly. His digital presence was very high as compared to any other candidate in the poll fray. Modi has exclusive IT cells in his home state. The BJP's IT cell - National Digital Operations Centre (N-DoC) in New Delhi is branded as IT war room. The party had identified 155 LS seats where it had extensive social media campaign besides the conventional campaign. This is based on the assumption that the BJP's prospects are better here. The details of voting pattern in each of the assembly constituencies in these select LS seats were monitored by the Delhi IT cell. According to Chennamallikarjuna, IT Cell Head of the BJP in Karnataka, Modi turned into usage of social media post 2002 or *Godhra* incident. As the mainstream media began almost a hate campaign against him, Modi began depending more on the new tools to reach out people so that he can express his mind. He has been able to strike a chord with citizens through the extensive usage of the Net, said Channamallikarjuna. An engineer by profession, Channamallikarjuna said he worked in a team which created a Twitter account

for Modi a couple of years ago. A bunch of professionals worked both at the IT cells of Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Delhi. It is said that more than one IT room functioned in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar.

The Modi's office did not give out much information on its IT offices. But what is written in the media is that they nearly worked 18 to 20 hours a day. The dedicated technical team, mainly youngsters, kept track of issues related to Modi, his campaign and developments related to the elections. This helped in keeping touch with the Netizens and media besides keeping Modi updated on the developments. The feedback was helping Modi to quickly react to the development and his detractors. Modi's website www.narendramodi.in consisted of his promotional material and the decisions taken by the Gujarat government. The presence of publicity material during the election campaign went up dramatically. It is said, according to a Daily News Analysis newspaper's report, the site on an average received 27,000 responses for the postings on the web on any given day and during the campaign period it touched 2.5 lakh responses a day.

The website had Modi's campaign letters, audio and video prints of campaigns, updates on his public rallies and daily engagements, news photographs and YouTube videos. There was provision for real time watching of his election rallies. Modi is hyper active on Twitter and Facebook. He was regularly posting his thoughts on his blog. Even on the last day of the polling on May 12, 2014 he had put a long thought cum thanking note. The content on this Twitter, Facebook, webstie and blog are same though the length varied.

Interestingly, for the first time a prime politician has acknowledged the power of social media. In his blog, Modi wrote on May 12, 2014 '....We have to profusely thank social media – it has caused the downfall of manufactured lies and half-truths at a very nascent stage.

Earlier during elections we had people whose lies would reach every section of society. In a time when means of communication were less, they could get away with their same old speeches and half-baked assurances. Social media has changed that! In this age of information and social media the lies that come out of their microphones cannot even get past the podium of their speech venues, forget reaching others. More power to social media in the days ahead.' Modi did Google Hangout to connect to party workers and youth. He used Flickr, Tumblr, Stumbleupon, Google Plus among others. He has been able to post a lot of publicity material using the social media tools.

The election season also witnessed the mushrooming of *NaMo* brigades from cities to villages in the country. *NaMo* stands for Narendra Modi. Youngsters formed groups or *NaMo* brigade to improve the chances of Modi to become the Prime Minister. The groups also extensively used the Net to unleash publicity. The *NaMo* websites were created besides getting connected to the people using other tools such as Facebook and Twitter. The brigade members are said to be volunteers. The groups were disintegrated in Karnataka soon after the polling.

A bunch of Gujarat based businessmen also launched 'Modi Android' for smartphones. In addition, he went for a 3D holographic speech delivery programmes. He could reach out to the masses through videos in different constituencies simultaneously. It got him a place in Guinness World Records for delivering a speech at 53 locations simultaneously. Modi app India 272+ was launched on Google Play store on January 1, 2014. There were caller tunes to promote him and SMSs regarding all his 477 rallies that were sent to the target groups. The office of Modi came out with *NaMo* Number which allowed electorate to register with the party and get the date, booth number

and other details of voting. A voice based mass messaging system was another novelty. It helped volunteers talk to each other. In this closed group application, sending and receiving important messages on the campaign was allowed.

It is said that the people who were involved in boosting Modi on social media, spent considerable time on creating a database of information related to polling and potential voters. In addition, a separate cadre worked for his prospects besides not less than a million volunteers. He and the BJP both succeeded in crowd sourcing, both conventionally and digitally/social media mode. The BJP also has *YuvaiTV* Internet channel through which Modi's speeches were live telecast. His appeals to voters seeking their blessings were also telecast. In addition, cyber *Hindu* groups were active in promoting Modi.

Modi turned into a big canopy under which almost all candidates took shelter or did piggy riding on his back. The BJP's Prime Minister nominee also used social media to issue rebuttals to media houses when his comments got coloured, twisted or backfired. He asked the people, especially media houses to watch the content of his speech on videos, before drawing conclusions. One such incident was his interview to *Doordarshan* recorded by *Doordarshan* – the public broadcaster on April 26, 2014 in Gandhinagar. There were rumours that in the uncensored version of the interview, Modi had said Priyanka Vadra Gandhi, daughter of Congress party president Sonia Gandhi, was like his daughter. Priyanka had sharply reacted to his reported comment, while the BJP maintained that *Doordarshan* telecast censored version of his interview due to the Central government pressure. Modi argued that he has been wrongly quoted. When the row did not subside, his office hosted the entire uncensored interview on his YouTube and eventually the statements and counter-statements on the issues ended.

A Factfile of Social Media Usage by the Narendra Modi Election Campaign

- By dialling 4501-4501 number, 3 million people heard Modi's speech in April 2014
- WhatsApp message to 78200-78200
- An average of 100,000 missed calls on a daily basis
- Distance travelled 300,000 kms; events attended 5,827 public programmes covering 25 states
- YouTube video downloads 13 million
- Facebook Likes – 13 million
- Twitter followers – 3.9 million
- Called tunes downloaded - 100,000
- SMS, WhatsApp texts sent and voice calls made to 130 million people
- Total electorate in 2014 elections – 814 million
- Total direct interactions – 234 million
- 38 mega rallies attended by 11 million people
- 196 *Bharat Vijay* rallies attended by 15 million people
- *Chai pe Charcha* in 4,000 locations reaching 5 million people
- 3D hologram rallies in 1350 locations reaching 14 million people

As per the infographic published by India Today on May 19, 2014, Modi unleashed a poll blitzkrieg never seen before in the history of Independent India. The massive campaign of Modi overshadowed the campaign of his candidates in Karnataka. Among the 28 candidates, it was Ananth Kumar, BJP general secretary and Bangalore South candidate who was more active on the Net. Ananth Kumar's website – [ananth.org](http://www.ananth.org) – made him connect to his Net savvy people. His Facebook page was <http://www.facebook.com/Ananthkumar.official>

was no match to his rival, the maker of IT corridor in Karnataka, Nandan Nilekani's digital campaign.

The website has bigger image of Modi than Ananth Kumar. Kumar has a Twitter, Facebook, google+ and YouTube accounts. The content of his website is bilingual – English and Kannada. It was giving updates on Modi, as a one line scroll. There were a whole lot of pictures of Ananth Kumar campaigning across Bangalore South. His family- run NGO *Adhamyachetana's* work occupies a special position on the website. There is nothing spectacular and even special about the website except giving basic information on the candidate, constituency and activities. Ananth Kumar, a key person in BJP has website since 1997.

Nandan Nilekani and Social Media

It was Nandan Nilekani who made significant presence on the web space during the campaign. He is a known strategist. He built Infosys as well as created a huge database as the Chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIADI). His website is <http://www.nandannilekani.in> and the Facebook account is - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nandan-Nilekani>

While appreciating and adopting the US presidential form of campaigning by Barack Obama in 2012, Nilekani, however, followed social media as well as traditional mode of campaign. Months before he was declared as the official candidate of the Congress to take on the five-time MP Ananth Kumar of the BJP, Nilekani had launched 'Operation Agile'. In IT sector, Agile is a popular practice to handle unpredictability in the business field. So Nilekani, with an aim of getting connected to the masses as an alternative to the traditional mode of conducting rallies, taking out *padayatras* and group discussions, decided to get in touch with people through social media.

The Congress candidate went after development agenda while trying to lure voter on the Net. In his website, under the banner “Ideas for Bangalore”, he engaged citizens in discussions on ideas and suggestions as how to improve Bangalore City.

The cover pages on his Facebook focussed on ideas and plans to effect changes to make Bangalore a better city. It had hashtags #ideasforbangalore and @CityChallenge. He had eloquently explained on YouTube how *Aadhar* scheme was launched and worked for the good of the country. He also took initiative like ‘Photo of the Week’ where he, his wife or followers took pictures of public importance and campaign and posted on the Facebook and Tweet. He also shared his thoughts on various issues but mainly related to Bangalore. He introduced ‘Ask *Nandan*’ campaign on the web to elicit suggestions for improving the city. Basically he projected himself a saviour of Bangalore. This was a strategy to strike a chord with young Bangaloreans, who discuss a lot on improving the City, on the Net. His office developed a software programme which was split into different modules which can fit into different situations, areas and groups. For example, if a particular polling booth was witnessing a very less percentage of voter turnouts, then the module helped the Nilekani team to adopt aggressive approach to reach out to voters to make them cast their votes.

Bangalore South has about 1.8 million voters and half of them are digitally educated. That also means they are fairly younger. The constituency has many industries including the Electronic City. Nearly 10,000 employees are into software profession. Keeping this in view, Nilekani tried to lure them through Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. He, at one time, had about 80,000 followers on Twitter. He extensively Tweeted his mind and posted photographs on Twitter.

Like Obama and Modi, Nilekani too depended on volunteers to campaign for him. Despite being a novice in politics, he did not entirely depend on the party cadre to help him to get visibility and reach out the masses physically. He sent not less than 6,00,000 personalised letters to houses seeking their support to win the seat. His tech team also developed a smartphone app called Hawkeye which kept tracking information on the local issues, corporators, local issues bothering the citizens besides the health of the local civic body, BBMP. This helped the candidate to talk relevantly on the city matters. The volunteers, who tried to complement the efforts of Nilekani, also used social media to maintain the heat of the campaign. The volunteers, basically IT professionals, ranged from 20,000 to 1,00,000. A good number of youngsters took leave of absence from their office to voluntarily campaign for Nilekani, it is said. But there is no official confirmation to this effect. Majority of them worked behind the scene and did not like to get any media coverage.

As a first timer, Nilekani made his presence felt more than any other candidate in Karnataka and also gave his rivals run for money in the fray. Thanks to extensive usage of social media and also traditional mode of campaign. Being the richest candidate in the country and IT firm founder, he received extra media attention too. Weeks before Karnataka went into polls in April, Nilekani had 718 Tweets with 101,000 followers, while Ananth Kumar had 583 Tweets and 24,200 voters. Both of them made themselves available to voters and select citizens through Goole Hangouts. Nandan’s plus point was he issued pop up ads in online media. The high decibel campaign of Nilekani was well supported by social media as well as the conventional style.

Even for breaking news, Nilekani used Facebook and Twitter.

When the campaign was on, he tendered resignation as the Chairman of UIADI. When his office was contacted by media houses to get a confirmation and quote from him, his media managers said, Nilekani would be Tweeting his take on this particular issue. And, of course, he tweeted regarding his resignation.

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) representing a national party had constituted a 90-member team to run its online campaign. Party national Vice President Rahul Gandhi had interacted on Google Hangout twice with party workers in the state. It was part of the nation-wide exercise. But it was a lacklustre campaign. The party hardly made its presence felt in digital world.

AamAdmi Party (AAP) and Social Media

AamAdmi Party (AAP) made its maiden debut in the LS elections. It made its presence felt on social media to a considerable extent in Karnataka though not to the extent it did when it carried out anti-corruption campaign. Going by the spectacular performance in the Delhi Assembly elections, the AAP was expected to make right noise. But as far as the campaign on social media, the AAP candidates in Karnataka did not make much presence.

AAP had fielded 13 candidates. Of them, one who made use of Facebook to promote himself and the party was Ravi Krishna Reddy. Interestingly, he was contesting from Bangalore Rural. Probably he is the only one candidate in rural Karnataka who used Facebook to the maximum for campaigning. This could be a conscious decision too. He is basically an IT professional. His constituency has three assembly constituencies which come under the Bangalore city limits. Hence it helped the candidate to maximise his presence in the fray through online. He has a website www.ravikrishnareddy.com. On his Facebook,

he was running phone-in campaign for his party prime candidate Aravind Kejriwal in Varanasi. The post said '*Phone ghumao, desh bachao*' – call toll free number 1800-3010-1223. But for him, the rest of the AAP candidates were not very active in terms of using social media.

Karnataka's AAP website is bilingual. It has basically the Kannada version of English content that is hosted on the AAP website which is managed from Delhi. Tweets of AAP founder Aravind Kejriwal is retweeted from the party's Karnataka unit. Sometimes the Kannada version of the same is also available. The website of AAP in Karnataka had good basic information on the 13 candidates. It is also a member of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. The party's website of Delhi has online TV channel where Kejriwal's speeches are uploaded. At times, it had real time coverage of the rallies too. Kejriwal is the world's fifth most popular leader with 4.9 million Facebook fans. The party has also developed a mobile App.

Some Facts about Social Media and 3 Prime Political Parties:

Facebook

- Fans of BJP – 3.4 million
- Fans of Congress – 2.5 million
- Fans of AAP – 1.8 million

Twitter

- AAP – 5.17 billion followers
- BJP - 417,000
- Congress – 163,000

Karnataka and Facebook

- BJP has 90,816 likes
- AAP – 24,713 likes

- Congress – 20,713 likes
- JD (S) – 196 likes



‘Everywhere man’ Factfile of Modi’s Campaign 2014

Courtesy: indiatoday.intoday.in

There are certain significant differences among social media content of the BJP, Congress and AAP. The BJP and Modi had well equipped and qualified IT professionals to run their shows on social media. The content was well thought of, sophisticated, structured well, thinks before inking, no flaws in the usage of language, sharp and witty replies to detractors on Twitter. The downloading of information and opinion was well orchestrated. The packaging and marketing was well carried out. The content was almost picture perfect. But that was not the same with social media content produced by Modi’s fans or supporters.

The Congress, the oldest party of the country, remained a bit aloof when it comes to using the alternative platform created by technology. The party, unlike the BJP and AAP, did not depend on social media for reaching out the masses. The reasons could be many including continued trust in traditional campaign methodology and thus maximising voters of its trusted vote bank. The Congress, despite having IT Cells in Delhi as well in states, had outsourced publicity task to an online marketing firm and a public relations office. Rahul Gandhi, the undeclared prime ministerial candidate of the Congress and the Vice President of AICC, does not have a website of his own. He has shunned Twitter and Facebook. He is the youth face of the Congress as he is just 41 years.

In case of AAP, the campaign whether online or offline, is managed by volunteers. Kejriwal has often come out with spontaneous reactions to developments and his detractors. There is no set pattern when it comes to the content because Kejriwal as well as volunteers, who are mostly youth, quick in their reaction which is not well thought of. But the reactions do not look like manufactured to outsmart the rivals by mere rhetoric. They react like real common man. The fans

of AAP call themselves as AAPsi and voluntarily work for the party. AAP has a separate website managed by NRIs and it also has an IT cell of 8 members in Delhi.

Social media also spread lot of humour, satire and spoof videos. There were unlimited jokes circulated and WhatsApp also served as a mass messenger. On April 1, Fools Day, three hashtags were trending on Twitter making mockery of Modi, Rahul and Kejriwal. Compared to the mainstream media, social media tools were put to best use when it comes to mocking at politicians who were claiming that they can give best administration to the country.

FINDINGS

The two national parties and one regional party made efforts to make use of the Internet based tools, though their efforts, interest and investments in terms of money were not equal. However, the social media tools used by them were more or less same. The two national parties – the Indian National Congress (INC) commonly referred as the Congress party, and the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) – were way ahead of other national parties when it comes to using social media. Between the two, the BJP was more aggressive than its nearest rival the Congress on social media plank. Like in many parts of urban India, urban Karnataka too witnessed for the first time usage of Twitter for campaigning in LS elections. Parties seem to have been well influenced by the presidential form of campaigning in the US where in addition to usage of social media tools volunteers were engaged in large numbers. More than political parties, key contestants in urban constituencies use social media to maximise their reach to voters. The content of social media is by and large in English. Twitter seems to be emerging as the easy and quick mode of communication with

the usage of smartphone increasing. Social media left the Netizens energised to engage in electoral process. Journalists of print and television, which are considered as traditional media, had to follow up on social media for keeping track of developments as tech-savvy candidates chose to break news and react on Facebook and Twitter. Social media is growing stronger than opinion polls in urban areas. Social media has arrived to stay and politicians can't ignore it anymore as its usage will only grow. Political parties and candidates are mainly depending on traditional or traditional mode of campaigning while not averse to social media in urban areas.

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The Online Public in India: An Analysis of BJP's Online Election Campaign

M.SUDHIR SELVARAJ

Abstract

The 2014 general elections in India were significant for a number of reasons. One of them was the widespread use of social media by many of the parties in their campaigns. This essay is not an analysis of the effectiveness of social media used by political parties in the campaign. It is the examination of the social media campaign used by the Bharatiya Janata Party -BJP for the national elections in India in 2014 and how this has created an effective 'public', as defined by Michael Warner. The essay will examine online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and the BJPs community organizing website - Mission 272+ to demonstrate this.

Key Words: Public, Tweeter, Facebook, BJP,AAP, Elections, Social Media, Mission 272+

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INTRODUCTION

Michael Warner, in his article *Publics and Counter Publics* describes 'a public' as a 'partial totality which is thought to include everyone within the field in question (Warner, 2002).' It is more than just a group brought together by common interests. It must transcend one's friends list to include strangers. A 'public' organizes itself independently of state institutions, law, formal frameworks of citizenship, or pre-existing institutions such as the church, commerce or government. Warner differentiates 'publics' from nations, races, professions, or any other groups because 'publics' do not saturate identity. It also does not require a permanent state of being, even minimal participation is sufficient (Ibid).

This essay examines the means by which BJP's online campaign for the national elections in India in 2014 has created an effective 'public', as per Warner's definition. The essay will examine online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the BJP's community organizing website – Mission272+ to demonstrate this. Between January 1987 and August 1989, state run *Doordarshan's* serialization of the *Ramayana*- the great Indian epic, coincided with the high point of the *Ram Janma Bhumi* campaign. The BJP took advantage of the record setting viewership of the show to promote its agenda to attack a mosque built on the site believed to be the birthplace of Lord *Ram* and replace it with a grand temple dedicated to him (Rajagopalan, 2001). Despite the show not being created by the BJP, they were able to leverage its popularity to create a 'public'.

THE BJP AND TECHNOLOGY

Today, we are witnessing the emergence of another 'public' created by the efforts of the BJP's online campaign for the national

elections. The BJP has always been very tech-savvy. They were the first party to launch a website in 1998 and had a strong social media presence in the 2008 elections (Kaul, 2014). The run-up to the 2014 elections has, once again demonstrated the BJP's penchant for riding the technology tidal wave. A sign of their genuine belief in the potency of social media is the hiring of IT gurus Rajesh Jain and B.G. Mahesh as advisors for their online activities (Thopil, 2013). A majority of the campaign is focused on the individual – Narendra Modi, as opposed to the party. However, all the messaging contains subtle and some not-so-subtle hints at *Hindu* nationalism.

MAJORITY 272+

Warner describes 'publics', as 'lacking any institutional being. They commence with the moment of attention, continue to predicate renewed attention, and cease to exist when attention is no longer predicated.' They are virtual entities, not voluntary associations (Warner, 2002). The BJP is currently using a central online platform to organize volunteers and funds. Its website Majority272+ (www.india272.com) describes itself as 'an Online and On-ground Volunteering Platform to help the BJP in its Mission towards gaining a 272+ seat majority in the 543 seat *Lok Sabha*- the nation's highest seat of power.' This website transcends the usual announcements about upcoming campaign events and information about the candidates, to subtle (and not-so-subtle) attempts to use messaging laced with *Hindu* nationalism to influence and create a 'public'.

All the information available on the website is also made available across other platforms such as a Facebook app and an Android app to ensure better accessibility. In addition to direct view of Modi's Twitter

feed, visitors have access to e-books titled ‘Modi’s Gujarat Miracle’, ‘Modi 2002’ and ‘NaMo Vision’. The thumbnail of the ‘About Us’ video asks visitors to “Join the Mission to ensure that India gets the leadership it needs.” The video is dotted with strong phrases such as ‘A grand opportunity towards nation building’ and ‘strong and vibrant India’, the latter being reminiscence of Modi’s Gujarat campaigns. When the narrator of the video refers to the past 67 years, viewers are confronted with depressing black and white images, while the mere mention of the name ‘Modi’ brings colour to the screen. An especially interesting sequence is when a series of images of young people, obviously from different parts of the country flash across the screen while the narrator says, “Your volunteering will make a difference. You are the change that India needs to see.”

As you scroll down, you are introduced to a few more testimony videos. One example is hotelier Rahul Mehta, an young professional and one of the volunteers on the website describing the people he met on the websites forum as “like-minded people, working towards the common goal of better governance and civic awareness building up to the elections.” He confidently endorses the BJP stating that information from the forum is “synthesized, processed and passed upwards to the political leadership.” He is one of the many volunteers who contribute their time as a ‘specialist’ talking specifically about how his profession is going to be aided, should the BJP come to power. There are also volunteers who help answer general questions such as where to vote, how to vote, etc.

The websites intended audience is obviously young, English or Hindi speaking, middle class and professionals. Phrases such as ‘nation-building’ and ‘vibrant’ are meant to connect Modi to Gujarat’s progress with a promise to replicate it on a national scale. The website logo consists of 543 dots of orange and green, of which orange largely

outnumbers the green. People can draw inference on the use of colour depending on one’s political or religious affiliation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Warner suggests that a ‘public’ might be considered to be stranger relationality in a pure form as compared to other ways of organizing strangers such as nations, religions, races, guilds, which select strangers based on territory, identity, belief or some other test of membership. A ‘public’ unites strangers through participation alone. Strangers come into relationship by its means, though the resulting social relationship might be peculiarly indirect and unspecifiable (Warner, 2002).

The BJP has been incredibly effective on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, as well. While several senior BJP leaders such as Sushma Swaraj, Rajnath Singh and Arun Jaitley actively tweet to a strong following, none possess the stardom that Narendra Modi has achieved on Twitter and Facebook. When this paper was being written, Modi had more than 10.5 million fans on Facebook (Narendra Modi’s Facebook Page, Feb 16, 2014) and was very close to reaching 3.5 million followers on Twitter (Narendra Modi’s Twitter Page, Feb 16-23, 2014) - the highest of any Indian politician surpassing the Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. Not surprisingly, ‘#modi’ was also the most trending topic in politics in India in 2013 (2013: The year of Twitter in India). His tweets and status updates are both in Hindi and in English. Each status update on Facebook enjoys numerous ‘likes’, ‘shares’ and ‘comments’, and his tweets are retweeted constantly.

This social media campaign is a step up from the 2009 elections and even rivals the 2012 Obama campaign which mapped the electorate based on multiple data points for each individual voter rather

than sampling. In this campaign, the BJP shifted from looking for broad categories that divide the electorate to precision target individual voters based on each individual's language, religion, caste, gender, age and class. This helps them specifically target those leaning just to the right of centre, or just leaning away from the Congress (Khilnani, 2014).

VIDEO ON YOUTUBE

Warner mentions that an important precondition of a 'public' is members' activity, however relevant, and not on its members' categorical classification, social position or material existence. In the self-understanding that makes them work, 'publics' thus, resemble the model of voluntary association that is so important to civil society (Warner, 2002). Public discourse is not necessarily dispersed from a central source and absorbed directly by a receptive mass rather it circulates into what Warner calls "a social sphere created by the reflexive circulation of discourse" (Ibid).

In addition to a large number of 'memes' and news reports that critics and fans alike share on Facebook about Modi and the BJP campaign, there has been active participation in content creation. One example is a fan video titled '*Na Mo Youth Anthem*'. In this video the creator - Sugavanam Krishnan uses a catchy tune, accompanied by special visual effects to proclaim Modi as a 'preacher', 'conqueror' and 'curator'. The chorus of the song is a chant "*Na-Mo-Na-Mo-PM-Go!*".

The appeal of this video is for a very different class of Indians from the ones on Twitter and Facebook. While the messages and videos described earlier are meant for consumption by an educated English/Hindi speaking elite this video which comprises of a series of words ordinarily found only in a thesaurus is meant to be an anthem for

individuals from a very different educational and economic background.

Affluence is no longer an indicator for internet and mobile phone usage in India anymore. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India estimates that as of June 2013 there are 198 million internet subscribers in India of which 89 percent accessed the internet through mobile devices. Social media use jumped last year in India, with Facebook's active users growing to 82 million by mid-2013 - up 15 per cent in six months. Question-and-answer site- *Quora* estimates that by 2020, India will have more people online than the United States (Roy, 2014).

Webfluenz, a company that monitors and analyses social media has done a detailed analyses of the three most prominent parties on social media. Their results show that the Congress has failed to effectively participate in the social media frenzy surrounding the elections. The party has only 1 million followers on Twitter compared to the BJP's 2.1 million. What is more troubling is they rank lower than both the *Aam Aadmi Party* and the BJP in terms of positive sentiments expressed in 'tags' (Webfluenz, Feb 16, 2014).

A fair comparison for the BJP would be the AAP which has the most number of mentions across Twitter and Facebook, 69% of which was positive. While the BJP focuses its social media content around Narendra Modi, the AAP has created a niche for itself as an 'anti-corruption' force. The rallying around one figure, especially one that epitomizes nationalism is another sign of the BJP's attempts to create a nationalist 'public' (Ibid).

CONCLUSION

An Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) report lists 160 out of 543 constituencies can be termed as 'high impact' which

indicates likelihood of being influenced by social media in the general elections. However, 256 are classified as ‘no-impact’ constituencies (Kaul M., 2014). Even though the better half of constituencies are no impact constituencies, the same report estimates that political parties will spend up to 5% of their campaign budget on social media (Sivadas, 2014).

While it is unclear if the BJP's adoption of effective social media strategy will lead to a positive result in the elections or specifically in the 160 ‘high-impact’ constituencies, it is evident that its high level of social media use indicates the tool's potential for political impact. With access to social media increasing, connectivity improving and technology becoming cheaper, the percentage of voters being impacted by social media will only increase in the coming years. However, what is becoming increasingly clear is that their efforts, despite being primarily geared towards elections have ignited a new ‘public’ – one that spends large amount of time online, ready and eager to change the perceived system of corruption at the centre.

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UPE & UNICEF Media Orientation Workshop for Journalists - An Analysis of Feedback

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Abstract

Communication is part and parcel of development. Information is a pre-condition for development. Media should help articulate the grievances and local problems of the marginalized classes. The broad aim of media should be to give greater participatory role to the neglected and marginalized people. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened. In this direction it becomes imperative for the journalists to understand the importance of public health and schemes launched by the government so as to improve the standard of living.

Media being one the most important tools of disseminating information, it is vital that the public is informed through media about Public Health Schemes. However this agenda cannot be achieved unless the journalists themselves are exposed and informed about Public Health Schemes and made to understand the importance and gravity of covering such issues. In this context, a workshop was organised to orient Journalists of Bijapur, Bagalkot and Belgaum districts to enhance their level of participation in media coverage of social issues like maternal and child health. Media and journalist

more so, whose, sole consideration of news value depends on commercial factors should be sensitized towards social agenda. It is in this direction that workshop like this will come as savoir.

Key Words: *Maternal and Child Health, Journalists, Writing and Reporting Skills, Government Health Schemes.*

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INTRODUCTION

Media and Development

The vastly changed media scenario calls for breaking media stereotype in promoting development. The economic reform has resulted in the democratization of media facilitating media reach and access never witnessed in the history of humanily. Media have broken walls between government and public. Media convergence has the immense potential to create media, i.e. media with concern for development to provide alternative to commercial mainstream media. Today there are several initiatives to provide alternative media tools to realize the goals of development.

There is need to address the current tension between media and development. Initiatives to examine the role of media in development

and the application of communication as potential means of solving the problems of development have helped us understand the process of media intervention in development. These studies have assumed significance for the fact that they aim to show how media can play the role of a catalyst in the society where poverty and unequal political power influence the lives of the common people.

It is evident from past experiences in India, that decentralized community media are crucial for sustainable economic and social development. One of the achievements of post liberalization era is the emergence of highly interactive new media that could be harnessed to deal with the problems of development. New media tools democratize the media and create space in the community for the poor and impoverished at the grassroots. These new media endeavours have the potential to overcome the inadequacies of the early attempts to harness media for development. Many experiments in the past have proved beyond doubt that non-commercial information requires exclusive participatory channels of communication.

The earlier policy of reaching people for pro social needs through mainstream media consisting of public service broadcasting and commercial-broadcasting channels has been done away with. It is evident that these conventional channels which are rich in quantity and quality cannot bring about sustainable development. Today one can count on new media and social media to reach the voiceless, oppressed and those living below the poverty line and bring them under the umbrella of development.

Today the unique concept of interactive communication technology can overcome the technological obsolescence as it is compatible for media convergence. It has the potential to become a unique tool for imparting continuing education and training with greater degree of flexibility.

In the post liberalization era, the market forces have compelled the de-linking of media such as radio and TV from state control. The privatization of electronic media and the rapid changes in communication technology has brought about the emergence of participatory communication and the intervention of media in community development. When radio and television were in the formative years, specific need based programmes on agriculture for example would be decided and produced by the experts from the apex body for education, research and extension education in the field of agriculture and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in New Delhi. In the later years this practice was gradually discarded and the mandarins of *Akashvani* and *Doordarshan*- the public service broadcasters, became the decision-makers of the special interest programmes. Today technology has come to the rescue of the intended beneficiaries of such programmes by allowing experts to have a better say in the content of the programmes. The communication revolution has resulted in decentralization of media and facilitated its application to cater to specific needs and demands of the people.

However, development cannot be isolated from politics as political agenda of a party in power determines the social agenda of the government. Therefore, development is also a political issue and needs the participation of politicians. Arnold J. Toynbee said that 'the twentieth century will be chiefly remembered in future centuries not as an age of political conflicts or technical inventions, but as an age in which human society dared to think of the welfare of the whole human race as a practical objective'. In the era of new media, there is need for political will to harness media for development of poor and oppressed.

Health Communication

Health communication is not mere dissemination of information to target people with a purpose of bringing behavioural change, but should be regarded as a dialogue requiring more feedback and sustained communication. Health communication is an experience and it therefore should be linked to people or facilities that create the environment for change and facilitate implementation of the program. People who receive the message must have an opportunity to perform and participate in the program to cause behavioural change. Sustained Media campaigns should create demand for health information. It also helps people to demand for better health facilities and access to government health programs. The success of health programs also motivates media to increase its coverage despite secondary priority.

Media should not set short term goals. High coverage leads to high rate of implementation is the premise on which health officials work. But depending only on media coverage and expecting it to give immediate results within a short span of time will lead to the failure of health communication. Media complements the use of volunteers, nurses, doctors, health educators, *anganwadi* workers and NGOs who meet the beneficiaries and personally communicate the health information. Studies have endorsed the success of health programs supported by media intervention owing to high rate of coverage. The problem with government health educators is they suffer from poor image and public especially in rural areas avoid them as they consider them to be rude, insensitive, corrupt and inefficient. Therefore, mass media intervention is necessary in training the trainers to reach the beneficiaries and win their confidence. Media should help improve the image of the educators so that more people approach them for counselling or treatment. Media portrayal of image of educators

assumes importance as it is capable of motivating or demotivating people seeking assistance.

Health communication is continuous and therefore requires sustained media coverage. Media coverage is not one time intervention. It becomes meaningful only if it is part of a sustained campaign. One of the attributes of a campaign is, it's continuous and consists of different stages but never ends.

Mass media shy away from contacting research institutions presuming that they are far from reality and their experiments are not practical and relevant to the society. However, it is high time that mass media should constantly in contact with research institutions to bridge the gap between public and research programs.

Theme: Maternal and Child Health

Journalism is a powerful tool that empowers individuals, helps in building stronger communities and elevates awareness on issues relating to development. Though media has taken a front seat in delivering information on all avenues of the society it is sometimes overshadowed by more news on politics, crime and sports. Development does not just mean economic or political stability alone. But, many other factors like Health, Education, Literacy etc., also form a major part in the overall advancement of the society.

Journalists being the eyes and ears of the society it becomes very vital in transmitting the message and sensitizing journalists on developmental issues which are often overlooked or under represented. Once the journalists are sensitised it becomes easy to percolate the same information to the public through the media. One such development issue is Maternal and Child Health which is one of the most important criteria to measure Human Development. As far as

health is concerned, despite availability of health information on government schemes they do not find place in the media. It has been observed that though maternal and child health is the most basic and vital issue it has been neglected and not given priority in the media coverage.

However, on scrutiny it is found that most of the health related articles in media focus on life style diseases like diabetes, stress etc., focusing more on urban lifestyle. Chronic diseases like cancer, HIV etc., also find priority in the print media. It is a fact that mainstream media hardly focuses attention on public health programmes and the privileges given by the government to the poor to achieve a better health status especially in the rural areas.

Media should disseminate simple health related skills to common man. For example Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) can easily be controlled by taking a few simple steps like providing iron and folic acid substitutes for pregnant women and the need to have hygienic conditions for delivery to avoid infections. Similarly awareness about how to reduce IMR - Infant Mortality Rate by providing a clean and hygienic atmosphere for the new born, educating the mothers on breast feeding, use of ORS packages can be created by the media. This initiative will help rural women for long in completely controlling the IMR and MMR. In this direction it becomes imperative for the journalists to understand the various issues of public health and also different schemes launched by the government improve the health of women and children.

Schemes by Government of India

Under the National Rural Health Mission, many programs have been launched by the Government of India to reduce MMR & IMR.

1. *Janani Suraksha Yojana* (JSY), Integrated Management of Neo-natal and Childhood Illness (IMINCI) and *Navjaat Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram* (NSSK), Newborn care corners (NBCC) Special New Born Care Units (SNCUs) at District Hospitals and New Born Stabilization Units (NBSUs) at First Referral Units for the care of sick newborn have been launched. Along with the above initiatives iron and folic acid supplementation to pregnant and lactating women for prevention and treatment of anaemia is also provided.
2. Home Based Newborn Care (HBNC) through ASHA has been initiated to improve new born care practices at the community level and for early detection and referral of sick new born babies. *Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram* (JSSK) has been launched to eliminate out of pocket expense for pregnant women delivering in public health institutions and sick newborns accessing public health institutions for treatment till 30 days after birth.
3. Management of Malnutrition particularly Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) by establishing Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) have been launched. Universal Immunization Program (UIP) against seven diseases for all children is also supported by the Government of India which provides vaccines, syringes, cold chain equipments and provision of operational costs.

Schemes Launched by Government of Karnataka

Some of the schemes in line with the central government already launched by Government of Karnataka to aid Maternal and Child health are:

1. **JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA**- Helping the poor pregnant women after delivery *Janani Suraksha scheme* is continuation of the previous delivery allowance scheme of the Central Government. The objective is to give financial assistance to the poor pregnant women during delivery. Under this scheme pregnant women belonging to Below Poverty Line - BPL families and SC, ST families will get an assistance of Rs. 500 if delivered at home, Rs. 600 for urban institutional delivery, Rs. 700 for delivery in health centres in rural areas and Rs. 1500 for caesarian delivery. This benefit is available if delivered in recognized private health institutions other than government hospitals also.
2. **PRASOOTI ARAIKE** – Care for the pregnant: *Prasooti Arike* scheme was introduced in six “C Category districts of Gulbarga, Bidar, Raichur, Koppal, Bijapur and Bagalkot for the benefit of pregnant women belonging to BPL SC and ST families. This has now been extended to all BPL pregnant women of all the districts.
3. **MADILU** - Caring for the mother and the child, *Madilu* scheme was started by the government to provide post natal care for the mother and the child. The objective of this scheme is to encourage poor pregnant women to deliver in health centres and hospitals in order to considerably reduce maternal and infant mortality in the state. Under this scheme a kit containing mosquito curtain, bed sheet, blanket, bathing soap, washing soap for mother and baby, sanitary pads, comb, coconut oil, towel, tooth paste and toothbrush, bed spread, rubber sheet for the baby, bed sheet for baby, diaper, baby

- vest, sweater, cap and socks for baby are provided.
4. **THAYI BHAGYA Scheme** - is a Public-Private Partnership in maternal health care. This revolutionary scheme provides totally free service for the pregnant women belonging to BPL families registered in private hospitals.
 5. **AROGYA KAVACH** - Karnataka launched *Arogya kavacha*, the free ambulance service also for the commonman.
 6. **Universal Immunization Programme:** The Karnataka government has implemented Universal Immunization Programme (UIP). The vaccine has been administered by the private practitioners in India for over a decade now. The vaccine, which prevents killer diseases in children like diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis-B and Influenza-B, has been incorporated into UIP in Karnataka from March 17, 2013. The vaccine will now be a single injection providing protection against Hib diseases and will replace earlier used DPT and hepatitis-B injections.

Table - 1
State Factsheet : Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka
A. Demographic and Economic

No.	Indicator	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	India	Source
1	Population (million)	84.7	61.1	1210.2	Census 2011
	Population (Male) - in million	42.5	31.0	623.7	
	Population (Female) in million	42.1	30.0	586.5	
2	Child Population (0-6) years in million	8.6 (10.2%)	6.8 (11.2%)	158 (13.1%)	
3	Sex ratio (females per 1000 males)	993	968	940	
4	Child sex ratio (girls per 1000 boys)	939	943	914	
5	SC Population (%)	16.4	17.1	16.6	Census 2011
6	ST Population (%)	7	7	8.6	
7	Birth rate (per 1000 population)	17.5 (R-17.9, U-16.6)	18.5 (R-19.4, U-16.9)	21.6 (R-23.1, U-17.4)	
8	Death rate (per 100 population)	7.4 (R-8.4, U-5.1)	7.1 (R-8.1, U-5.3)	7.0 (R-7.6, U-5.6)	SRS 2013
9	Natural growth rate (per 1000 population)	10 (R-9, U-11)	11.7 (R-12, U-12)	15 (R-16, U-12)	
10	Literacy rate of population aged 7+ (%)	68 (M-76, F-60)	76 (M-83, F-68)	74 (M-82, F-66)	Census 2011
11	Population below the poverty line (%) - Tendulkar Methodology	9.2 (R-10.96, U-5.81) (78.78 lakhs)	20.9 (R-24.54, U-15.25) (129.76 lakhs)	21.9 (R-25.70, U-13.70) (2,697.83 lakhs)	Planning Commission, Gol 2011-12
12	Per Capita net domestic product at current price (Rs.)	71,480	68,374	60,603	Economic Survey 2012-13

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka : Last modified on 8 Jan. 2014

Table - 2
B. Child and Maternal Health

No.	Indicator	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	India	Source
1	Neonatal Mortality Rate	27	23	29	SRS 2012
2	Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) per 1000 live births	41 (R-46, U-30)	32 (R-36, U-25)	42 (R-46, U-28)	SRS 2012
	IMR - Male	40	30	41	
	IMR - Female	43	34	44	
3	Under 5 mortality Rate (Total) (per 1000 live births)	43	37	52	SRS 2012
4	Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 1,00,000 live births)	110	144	178	SRS 2010-12
5	Children fully immunized (12-23 months) (%)	68	78	61	Coverage Evaluation 2009
6	Vitamin A1 st of children 12-23 months (%)	84	86	64	
7	Children 12-23 months - measles vaccine	90	90	74	Survey 2009
8	Mothers who three and more antenatal visits for their last birth (%)	97	91	69	
9	Mothers who had full antenatal check-up	46	40	27	
10	Institutional births (%)	94	86	73	
11	Skilled birth attendance (delivery by doctor, ANM/LHV/Nurse)	96	88	76	
12	ORT or increased fluids for diarrhea (among children <2 year of age who had diarrhea in preceding 2 weeks)	88	91	83	
13	Adult HIV prevalence				NACO Factsheet 2012, HSS 2011
	Total	0.9%	0.6%	0.3%	
	Male	1.1%	0.8%	0.4%	
	Female	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	
	Pregnant Women	0.8%	0.7%	N.A.	

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka : Last modified on 8 Jan. 2014

The profile of the districts covered by the media orientation workshop:

Bijapur

The city of Bijapur is the headquarters of the district, and is located 530 km northwest of Bangalore. Bijapur is well known for the great

monuments of historical importance built during the *Adil Shahi* dynasty. Bijapur has five taluks namely Bijapur, Muddebihal, Indi, Sindgi and Bagewadi. The HDI for the district for the year 2011 is 0.630 with the life expectancy index of 0.669, education index of 0.702, gender index of 0.619 and income index at 0.520. Other statistics related to the Bijapur District are as follows:

Table - 3

Population	2,177,331
Male population	1,111,022
Female population	1,066,309
Literacy rate	67.15
Male literacy rate	77.21
Female literacy rate	56.72
Sex ratio	960
Child sex ratio	931
MMR	36
IMR	21.74
HDI rank	0.589

Demography of Bijapur District

Source: Census 2011

Bagalkot

With re-organization of the Bijapur district in 1997, the new Bagalkot district came into existence on 50th year of India's independence. The bifurcated Bagalkot district consists of six C.D. blocks namely Badami, Bagalkot, Bilagi, Hunugund, Jamakhandi and Mudhol. The district is located in the northern part of Karnataka.

Historically it is the home land of great *chalukya* dynasty. Aihole is place described as the laboratory for architecture rather university of Indian architecture. Badami is famous internationally for caves carved in monolithic single stone in the period of *Immadi Pulakeshi-I* along with historical famous temples of Pattadakal, *Mahakuteshwar* temple in *Mahakuta*, *Shivayogmandir* and *Banashankari* temple in Badami. Mudhol is the birth place of great poet "*Ranna*". Some Important statistics related to Bagalkot are as follows;

Table - 4

Population	1,889,752
Male population	950,111
Female population	939,641
Literacy rate	68.82
Male literacy rate	79.23
Female literacy rate	58.40
Sex ratio	989
Child sex ratio	935
MMR	07
IMR	28
HDI rank	0.591

Demography of Bagalkot district

Source: Census 2011

According to HDI, MMR is comparatively lower than Bijapur district and IMR too is lower but has better literacy rate among males and females and scores high in overall rate of literacy.

Belgaum

The city of Belgaum is the district headquarters in North Karnataka. According to the 2011 Census of India, it has a population of 4.7 million of which 24.03% live in urban areas, making it the second most populous district in Karnataka (out of 30), after Bangalore. The district has an area of 13,415 square kms, and is bounded on the west and north by Maharashtra state, on the northeast by Bijapur district, on the east by Bagalkot district, on the southeast by Gadag district, on the south by Dharwad district and Uttara Kannada district and on the southwest by the state of Goa. Belgaum is the Divisional Headquarters of North Karnataka. The ancient name of the town of Belgaum is Venugrama, meaning bamboo village. The most ancient place in the district is Halsi; and this, according to inscriptions on copper plates discovered in its neighbourhood, was once the capital of a dynasty of nine *Kadamba* kings. Kittur in Belgaum district is a place of historical importance. Rani Chennamma of Kittur (1778–1829) is known for her resistance to British rule.

Belgaum distinguishes itself in North Karnataka with high rate of literacy including heavily literate males and better literate females. Sex ratio is better than Bagalkot and Bijapur but IMR is higher than the other two districts. The gender ratio illustrates unsatisfactory tilt in favour of male children.

Table - 5

Population	4,779,661
Male population	2,423,063
Female population	2,356,598
Literacy rate	73.48
Male literacy rate	82.20
Female literacy rate	64.58
Sex ratio	973
Child sex ratio	934
MMR	14
IMR	35
HDI rank	0.648

Demography of Belgaum

Source: Census 2011

From the details of the above tables on the profile of all the three districts, it is evident that IMR and MMR in all the three districts are still high and steps need to be taken to reduce them to improve the Mother and Child health. Belgaum has a better HDI rank than Bagalkot and Bijapur districts. Of the three districts, Bijapur has the lowest HDI rank. Gender ratio is highest in Bagalkot than Belgaum. There are 989 girls for every 1000 boys which is highest in Northern Karnataka.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. To impart education and training on the new trends in health communication.
2. To sensitise journalists to increase the coverage of news on public health.

3. To strengthen journalists’ understanding and perception of child rights and child health.
4. To impart skills of writing news reports in print and electronic media.
5. To provide guidelines for journalists to write on maternal and child health.

METHODOLOGY

Undoubtedly the success of any scheme requires that the stakeholders should be aware of the privileges made available to them by the government so as to effectively utilise them. Media being one the most important tools of disseminating information, it is vital that the public is informed through media about Public Health Schemes. However this agenda cannot be achieved unless the journalists themselves are exposed and informed about Public Health Schemes and made to understand the importance and gravity of covering such issues. A close look at the above schemes reveal that all the materials required for maintaining child and maternal health are provided by the government. But the sorry state is that the beneficiaries do not avail the kit as they are ignorant about it and many times it is misappropriated by the officials who in fact are responsible for the management of these kits. At least awareness among the public can help them to demand the privileges given to them and hence there is need for a proper implementation of the schemes launched by the government.

In this context, a workshop was organised to orient Journalists of Bijapur, Bagalkot and Belgaum districts to enhance their level of participation in media coverage of social issues like maternal and child health. The workshop was attended by over 100 participants among whom a sample of 67 journalists were chosen for the study.

The workshop was jointly organized by the UGC’s University With Potential for Excellence Project of the Univeristy of Mysore and the UNICEF. It was held at the Karnatka State Women’s University, Bijapur, Karnataka, as the focus was Maternal and Child Health.

Survey method of research was used in the current study to understand the impact of the workshop on the participants. A well designed questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions comprising two parts. Part A focused on Socio Demographic and Economic profile of the participants and Part-B focused on information related to the effectiveness of the workshop. The participants of the workshop are journalists working in print and electronic media. The participants totalling 100 formed the population of this study. A sample of 67 respondents was selected through simple random sampling for the study.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

SDE – Socio Demographic and Economic Profile

Male and Female ratio and marital status

Table 6

Sl.No.	Gender	f	Percentage
1	Male	66	98.50
2	Female	01	1.49

Showing Male and Female Ratio

In the media orientation workshop out of 67 respondents 66 were males and only one was female indicating that male presence is high in media which is also indicative of the fact that, the female participation in media especially in northern Karnataka districts of Bijapur, Balgalkot and Belgaum is negligible. Among these respondents 80.59% of them are married and 19.4% are single.

Age

Table 7

Sl No.	Age (In Years)	f	Percentage
1	20-25	6	8.95%
2	26-35	25	37.31%
3	36 >	36	53.73%

Showing the Age Distribution

It is seen from the above table that most of the journalists i.e 53.73% of them are above 36 years of age and 37.31% are of 26-35 years. Only 8.9% are young in the age group of 20-25 years. Since majority of them are above 36 years it becomes imperative to organise a workshop so as to educate them in the recent trends in journalism as their chances of going back to college for education and training are bleak.

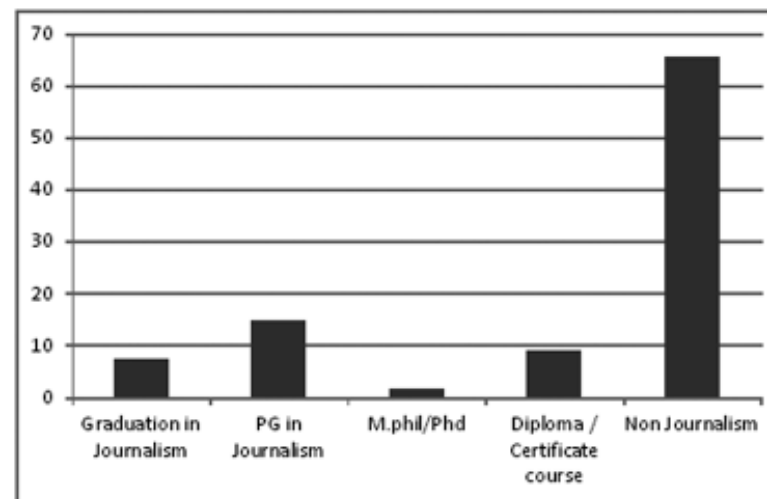
Education

Table-8

Sl no.	Education	f	Percentage
1	Graduation in Journalism	05	7.46
2	PG in Journalism	10	14.92
3	M-Phil / Phd	01	1.49
4	Diploma / Certificate course	06	8.95
5	Others	45	65.67

Showing Educational Qualification

Graph-1



Showing the Educational Qualification

Journalism education is not compulsory to take up a job in media. However, a total of 28.85% have education with journalism background. Among them 7.46% are graduates and 14.92% are post graduates and interestingly 1.49% of the participants have doctoral degree in journalism. 8.95% of participants hold diploma / certificate course in journalism. But the alarming fact is that, more than 65% of the journalists do not hold any degree in journalism and have been in the field reporting for years. This also indicates that those who have writing skill, good interpretation, knowledge, ideology and interest in news coverage can be a part of journalism without a formal degree in Journalism. But, the participants who are already in the field for many years belong to the age group Of 40-50 years and hence do not have a formal degree in journalism. However, it is the recent trend where professional degrees like journalism are sought after.

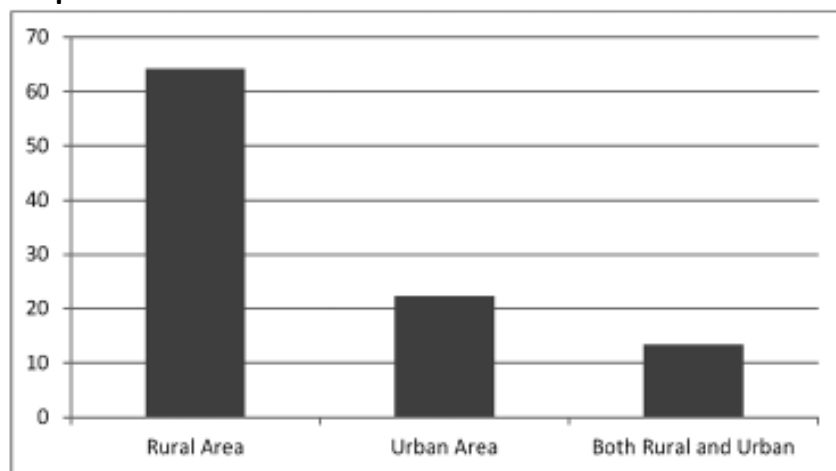
Place of Education

Table 9

Sl no.	Place of Education	f	Percentage
1.	Rural Area	43	64.17
2.	Urban Area	15	22.38
3.	Both Rural and Urban	09	13.43

Showing the Place of Primary and Secondary Education

Graph 2



Showing the Background of Education

The study shows that most of the journalists who attended the workshop are from rural areas. In fact, more than 60% have received their education from rural areas and only few from urban centres indicating that unlike other fields, journalism accepts people from all background especially with rural background. It is also appropriate to have people from rural background as reporting on rural issues with their proximity will influence covering the issues effectively. More

so in relation to issues related to the vulnerable class of women and children.

Impact of Workshop

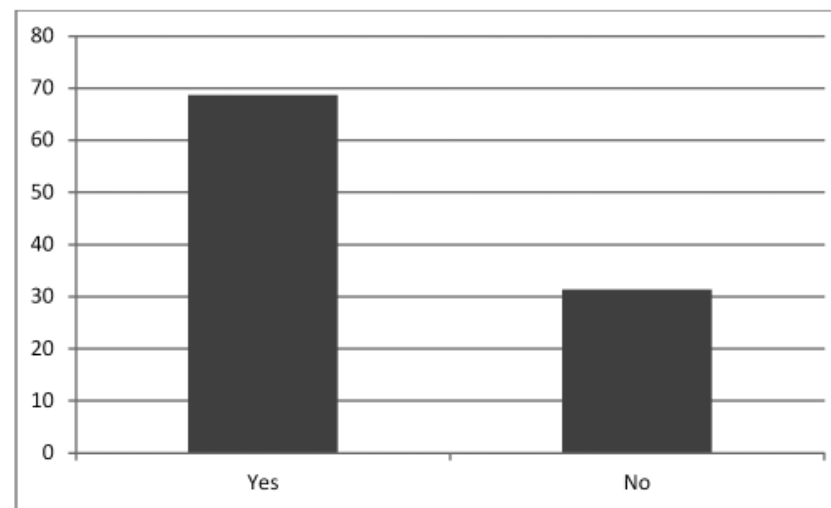
Participation in Similar Workshop

Table 10

Sl no.	Experience of Participating in Similar Workshop	f	Percentage
1	Yes	46	68.65
2	No	21	31.34

Showing the Participation in Similar Workshop

Graph 3



Showing the Participation in Similiar Workshop

68.65% of the respondents have earlier participated in similar workshops organized by the Journalists Association and Media Academy. However 31.34% of the participants have not participated in any workshop or any orientation programmes. So journalist's

orientation workshops are absolutely necessary to improve their writing skills and knowledge.

Professional Experience

The participants of the workshop have had a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 30 years of experience in media. Some journalists also have served as an editor of local newspaper. Many journalists have worked in local as well as state and national newspapers. Journalists with an experience of nearly 1 to 10 years in radio and electronic media too participated in the workshop. However, very few journalists are from the background of new media indicating that new media impact on journalists in this part of the state is low. This is suggestive of the fact that new media penetration is more of a urban phenomenon as compared with rural areas.

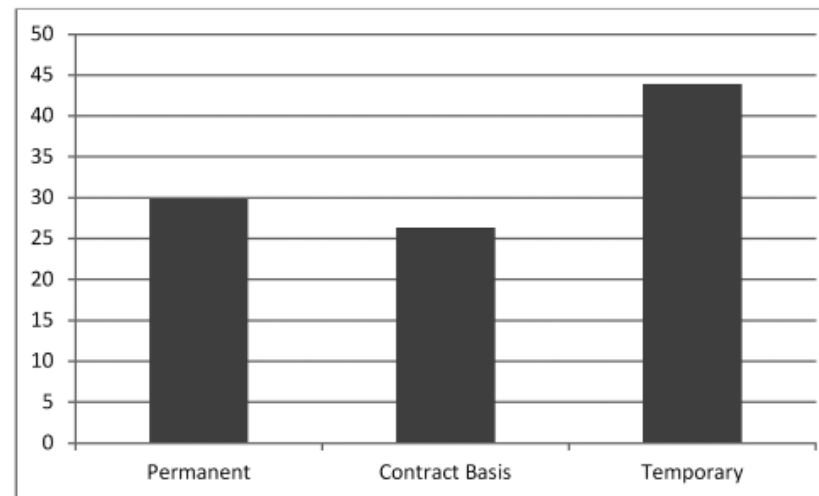
Professional Status

Table 11

SI No.	Professional Status	f	Percentage
1	Permanent	17	29.82
2	Contract Basis	15	26.31
3	Temporary	25	43.85
	Total	67	100

Showing the Professional Status

Graph 4



Showing the Professional Status

Most of the journalist respondents are working on temporary basis and only 29.82% are on permanent basis. It is alarming to note that in a profession like journalism which is the heart and soul of the society many are on contract or temporary job making the profession more vulnerable to exploitation by the management. A permanent job will enable journalists to do justice to the profession and work without fear or favour.

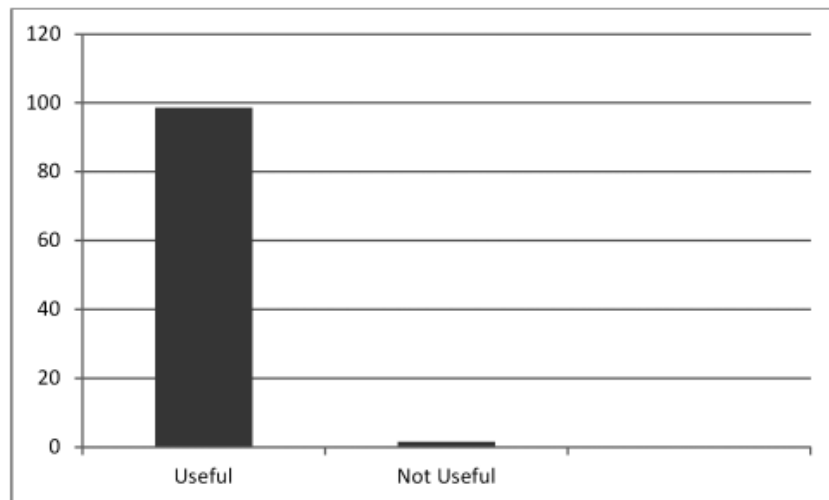
Effectiveness

Table 12

Opinion	f	Percentage
Useful	66	98.50
Not Useful	1	1.49

Showing the Effectiveness

Graph 5:



Showing the Effectiveness

Among the respondents an overwhelming majority of them opined that information provided in the workshop was useful and only one participant opined that it was not helpful. However, an overall of 98.5% of the respondents were satisfied with the information provided in the workshop which illustrates that the workshop had an impact on almost all the participants.

Impact of the Workshop

Table 13

Sl.No.	Impact	f	Percentage
1	We are already reporting	11	16.41
2	This workshop has influenced us to report more	37	55.22
3	Helped to write more innovatively after this workshop	24	35.82

Showing the Impact

Graph 6



Showing the Impact

More than 50% of the respondents said that this workshop influenced them to report more on development issues. However, 35.82% of the participants said that they will be more innovative and shall try to write in a new way after the exposure to new information in the workshop. Only 16.41% participants felt that they are already reporting in the expected way implying that they know the techniques.

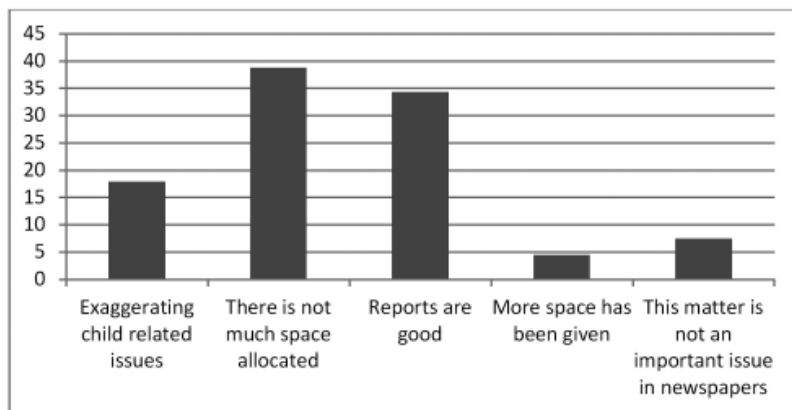
Media Stance with regard to Maternal and Child Health

Table 14

SL NO	Media Perspective	f	Percentage
1	Exaggerating child related issues	12	17.91
2	There is not much space allocated	26	38.80
3	Reports are coming out well	23	34.32
4	More space has been given	03	4.47
5	This matter is not important in newspaper	05	7.45

Showing the Media Stance with regard to Maternal and Child Health

Graph 7



Showing the Media Stance on Maternal and Child Health

With respect to media intervention in promoting maternal and child health, most of the respondents said that by and large there is not much space dedicated in newspapers. However, 34.33% opined that reports related to child issue are good and 17.91% said that they are exaggerating children related news. Only 4.47% opined that sufficient space has been given and 7.45% also felt that comparatively this is not an important news in the newspaper.

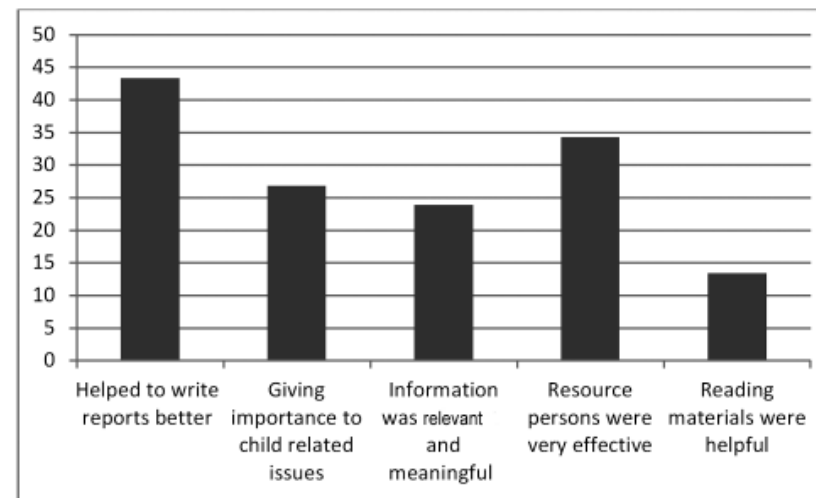
Benefits of Workshop

Table 15

SL.NO	Benefits of workshop	f	Percentage
1	Helped to write reports better	29	43.28
2	Gave importance to child related issues	18	26.82
3	Information was relevant and meaningful	16	23.84
4	Lectures by resource persons were very effective	23	34.27
5	Reading materials were helpful	09	13.41

Showing the Benefits of Workshop

Graph 8



Showing the Benefits of Workshop

Majority i.e. 43.28% said that the workshop helped them in writing reports and 23 % said that the lectures organized in the workshop are very helpful and effective. 26% of them felt that the workshop focussed on maternal and child health. However only 18% said that the workshop influenced them to give more importance to child related issues and 13% opined that reading materials provided are helpful. A large number of participants must have faced time constraint and many couldn't go through them in detail as the material was distributed on the day of the workshop.

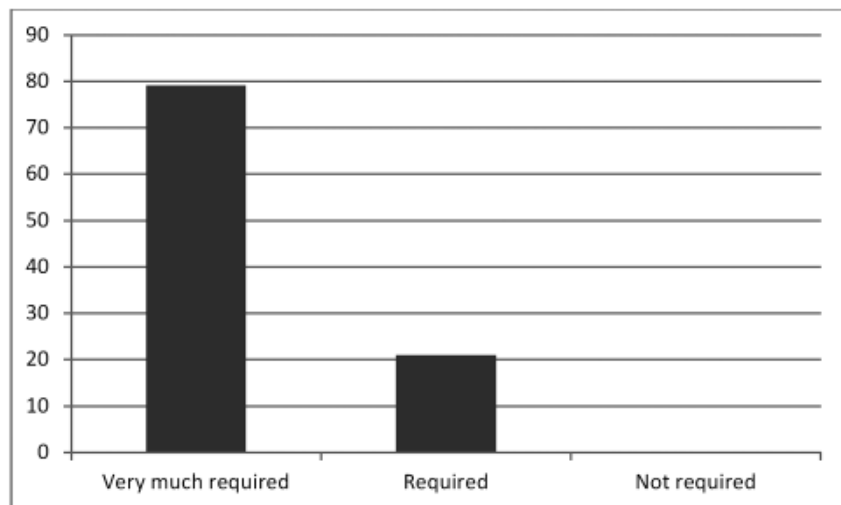
Need of Workshops

Table 16

Opinion	f	Percentage
Very much required	53	79.10
Required	14	20.89
Not required	00	00

Showing the Need of Workshops

Graph 9



Showing the Need of Workshops

Majority of the respondents i.e., 79.1% of them opined that workshops are very much needed followed by 20.89% saying they are needed. It is worthy to note that none of them opined that there is no need for such workshops. As all participants are active in their field and hardly find time to evaluate their work they felt the experience rewarding. Workshops like these will help not only to evaluate them but also gives a different point of view to write on socially relevant issues.

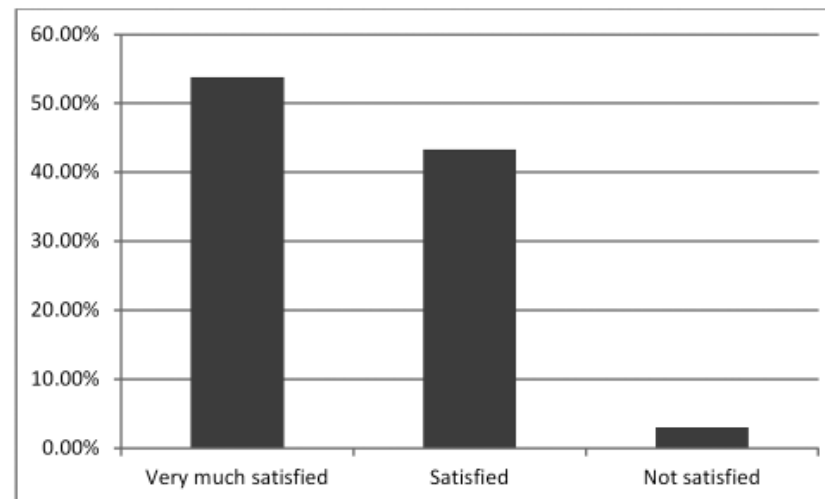
Overall Opinion

Table 17

Opinion	f	Percentage
Very satisfied	36	53.73%
Satisfied	29	43.28%
Not satisfied	02	02.98%

Showing the Satisfaction Level

Graph 10



Showing the Satisfaction Level

Nearly 53% and 43.28% of the respondents said that they are highly satisfied and satisfied respectively with the workshop. However only 2% of them were not satisfied with the workshop. An overall 87% of the participants were satisfied with the workshop.

CONCLUSION

Majority the participants felt that the workshop was very helpful. The workshop has influenced the journalists to report more. Though the journalists expressed that the articles on child related issues are good most of them said that there is not much space allocated in the media for these issues. The workshop has helped the journalists to write reports in a better way. The content of the workshop was very satisfactory. Since majority of the journalists are from rural background and do not have any formal education or training in journalism, the workshop has helped them to write more innovatively, professionally and has oriented them to new trends in health communication.

Communication is part and parcel of development. Information is a pre-condition for development. Media should help articulate the grievances and local problems of the marginalized classes. Unfortunately poverty, health and rural development are not the priority issues of the media. Further media is urban centric and elite and have no social agenda. The fruits of democratization of media are not reaching the people at the grassroots level. The broad aim of media should be to give greater participatory role to the neglected and marginalized people. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened.

It is quite a fact that, women and children comprise vulnerable populations in terms of health and are gravely affected by the impact of economic inequalities through multi-dimensional outlet. Urban areas are believed to have better socioeconomic and maternal and child health indicators than rural areas. Therefore, the objective of this workshop in sensitizing the journalists in covering health issues related to women and children is appropriate in the current situation. It is also true that journalists who are from the rural areas will be able to elicit the desired result by disseminating the information required to its maximum effect.

Media and journalists more so, whose, sole consideration of news value depends on commercial factors should be sensitized towards social agenda. It is in this direction that workshop like this will come as *savoir*.

This type of workshop also helps the journalists who are from non media background. As seen in the above analysis most of the journalists have no formal background and have been in this field for many years. Workshop like these which are addressed by professionals, the ones who are and who have been part of the media with the same background will help them to address the issues more professionally

and the less trained will learn the shades of journalistic writings.

Overall, the workshop was successful with more and more participants being vocal about their views. This kind of initiatives will definitely help in bringing the journalists together and make them understand the gravity of issues that are so inter connected with development.

Note: The workshop was jointly organized by the UGC's University with Potential for Excellence Project of the University of Mysore and the UNICEF office for Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The workshop was held at the Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur, Karnataka.

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New Communication Technologies and News Making Process: A New Discourse?

G NAGA MALLIKA

Abstract

The emergence of new communication technologies has had several implications for socio-political as well as cultural transformations. While changes in language form and structure have been the subject of many studies, their effect on the socio-political discourse has not come in for much discussion especially in the Indian context. New communication technologies have blurred the lines between private and public space to an extent that it is difficult to gauge the influence of one on another. The new communication technologies have been incorporated by mainstream media in almost every sphere of their activity. They not merely influence the way information is disseminated but have become the source of news as also news itself. The more conversational, informal and multilingual vocabulary that seamlessly merges the private and public discourses has the potential to change national political discourse. In this article, the writer explores how this new form of discourse has seeped into mainstream media, impacting fundamental process of news making. An analysis of some of the prominent issues in mainstream newspapers helps understand the shift in the issues that make news. This shift has been necessitated by the changes in language that new communication technologies have brought about.

Key Words: *Print Media, New Media, Tweeter, Reply, Feedback, Discourse, Private and Public space.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indian media is as diverse as the languages in India. South differs from North, but the elements of commercialisation and politicisation, the two main developments can be witnessed all over, albeit in different ways. However, the scope of this study is limited to 'mainstream national media'. This article explores how the entry of traditional news media into new media which includes online news websites, online news media as well as blogs, twitter and other discussion forums has changed the way in which news is produced, re-produced and consumed as news flows from the traditional to online media and back.

Joshua Meyrowitz attempts to organize and distinguish theories associated with mass media by separating the schools of thought into three main categories: medium as a vessel, medium as a language, and medium as an environment (Littlejohn and Foss, 2008). Medium by itself is neutral like a vessel and will take the shape of the messages that are poured into it, while different mediums will express themselves in different ways, with different cultural slang or grammar to define the genre. Finally, media has the ability to create and directly influence personal and individual experience within a mass population whether or not one realizes it. The present study will focus on the way language and environment of the new medium has influenced the experience of news production and consumption.

PRINT MEDIA IN INDIA

The 'medium as a language' in print, reflects in the format of the piece, the way in which something is written (choice of words and style), and even the font choice. (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). The 'print media environment', on the other hand is highly politicised and commercialised in India today due to the rapid technological advances as well as the enormous economic resources that are associated with them which affect both language and environment of the medium. "The pursuit of profit has altered the profile of the media entrepreneur. Today, a media enterprise is seen as a necessary subsidiary for a growing business enterprise, a political party and even individuals seeking to leverage public influence for private gain." Commercial success of media organisations had become a function of advertising revenues rather than subscription and circulation figures. The advertisers had thus replaced the recipients of media products. By the same logic, circulation figures, meant to attract advertising, became more important than content (Ansari, 2010).

Even the choice of content depends on what can be exploited both by the media as well as the political parties for economic gain, as one cannot separate media from politics in India. For example, increase in celebrity news, life style news and speculative news has become the order of the day. The word 'infotainment' rightly described the current media's news sense which came to be known as 'Page 3' news, popularised by papers like Times of India. In fact, absence of an editorial in some newspapers, speaks of the editorial discretion of the media house in trying not to displease any of its investors by 'taking sides'. At best, the newspaper medium has turned from being credible-informational and critical-investigative-adversarial to that of being entertaining (Ram, 2011). Indian journalism is facing increasing

pressure from advertisers, marketing personnel, corporate managers, and even senior journalists to present and prioritize 'feel good' factors - rather than highlight the reality of mass deprivations and what to do about them. Issues like poverty, especially rural poverty, was not a fit subject for news and editorial coverage as this coverage had to cater to the 'aspirations of young readers because poverty is 'not a condition to which one aspires', and a newspaper's editorial philosophy, which was derived from its business philosophy, had to be one of optimism (Auletta 2012 cited in Ram, 2012). The editor of a top newspaper says that 'we are not in the newspaper business, we are in the advertising business...a derived business...of aggregating a quality audience' for advertisers to 'facilitate consumption' (Auletta 2012 cited in Ram, 2012), considerably reflecting the sad state of affairs of Indian media.

TELEVISION IN INDIA

Television too finds itself in a bind over the overwhelming political and commercial interest, resulting in the commodification of news. High investments and severe competition from other media has compelled 24X7 TV news channels to find ways and means of standing out among the clutter. So, they literally out shout each other to be heard. The medium is no more a source of information as 'today's competitiveness and battle for TRPs has forced newsreaders to resort to hysteria to grab eyeballs' stated Shammi Narang, one of the news readers of *Doordarshan* before the entry of private television. He points out that changes in the field reflect larger societal changes. 'Privacy is no longer privacy in the classic sense', he says. "Some of the so called 'Page 3 Privacy Believers' even lure newsreaders to peep into their private lives. Often, it's a two-way street where hunter and

hunted are hand-in-glove" (Shankar, 2011). In their bid for TRPs, television has altered the definition of news. News became judgemental, highly opinionated, according to Neeti Ravindran and speculative with no background research, leading to long drawn debates with no intent of resolution. News no longer depends on investigation of facts as 'journalism has been reduced to reporters running from one "source" to another, first for an allegation and then for a "denial", "reaction" or "comment". The news reports run along the lines of 'so and so said that, which so and so denied. So and so on the other hand said it was an effort to de-stabilize or blackmail something or someone, meanwhile another so and so said they will hold a demonstration....' (Menon, 2012). One example from the magazine Caravan illustrates how Times Now, one of the popular TV News channels in India today operates:

A massive fire that erupted at Mantralaya, the headquarters of the Maharashtra state government in Mumbai, shortly before 3 pm on 21 June, 2012, immediately saw over the course of one typical minute-between 6.04pm and 6.05 pm-58 studio-induced flashes on the broadcast. No bar stayed still, words evaporated and reappeared, and at the centre of this sea of red and blue were reporters performing the simple task of describing what the viewer could see for himself. "We used to call it deaf and dumb," said Naman Chaturvedi, a former associate producer who handled on-screen graphics. "Hum jo bolte the woh likhte the. Jo likhte the woh dikhate the. Jo dikhate the woh sunate the. (What we spoke was what we wrote was what we showed was what we told you.)".... The coverage that afternoon was a typical Times Now production, designed not just to attract viewers, but to

mesmerise them with an array of visual effects and excited voices... Few facts emerged as the fire raced towards the Chief Minister's office at Mantralaya, but Times Now layered the incident with meaning. An editorial line was given shape in the form of a question: a flashing banner under the headline "Controversy breaks out" asked, "Could there be a sabotage angle?" The question referred to the Adarsh Housing Society scam, which involved impropriety by bureaucrats, politicians and military staff-and suggested, without evidence, that files related to the case were cooking somewhere inside the building. An anchor's voice proffered that "there is a whiff of conspiracy theory", while flashes on the screen read "Adarsh files gutted?" until the Central Bureau of Investigation declared that the files in question were safely in its possession (Bhatia, 2012).

On the other hand, the extent of politicisation of media is apparent where Arun Nehru blatantly defends 'political parties straying into the many folds of the media. Like many democracies, most political parties have their favourite media players who are made Rajya Sabha members, given commercial or real estate benefits'. People now look for what is behind the news rather than news itself knowing the political and commercial interests of the media whose credibility has been hit. Thus, both technology and economic environment and ideology influence its content. Television has created personalities that sell (anchors, politicians as celebrities) rather than report or analyse news leading to a dumping down of news. There is complete control of what becomes news from the producers. For example, Arnab Goswami, the television anchor of Times Now, is more popular for

his loud interruptions than for his journalistic skills. So, what Arnab decides becomes 'News Hour' prime time news.

Excerpts from the report of the magazine *Caravan*:

Tall and wide, and possessed of an acid personality that singled the newsroom often, Goswami, who some privately referred to as "meethi churri"-a knife sheathed in honey-had come to care so deeply about ratings that he controlled every knob, button, lever and handle on the production line of news that ran through the channel. He dictated the colour of flashing panels, changing them whenever he wished. He decided the size of on-screen fonts, following no particular style guide. Even cameramen were told which angles to choose while filming. "I will set the news agenda for India today," Sonorita Chauhan, a former correspondent, recalled him saying. He did this by exercising absolute control over the flow, substance and appearance of news (Bhatia, 2012).

NEW MEDIA IN INDIA

New media or online media, is commonly described as multimedial, hyperrelative, and interactive (Chung, 2012), while the language of the medium is rich due to its characteristic of multimediality. The language of 'news' of the Internet is 'reporting live' (Ingrid Volkmer, 2006) through Twitter, Facebook, and online newspapers which update every few minutes as any event unfolds. A new genre and slang has emerged peculiar to new media. McLuhan famously stated that 'Print was obsolete which was critiqued by many, but what he meant was the death of linear way of presenting news. McLuhan's argument was that the 'cultural patterns' he attributed to

print culture (such as one-thing-at-a time, one-thing-after-another thinking and experience) would diminish in significance in the face of patterns fostered by electronic media. (Meyrowitz, 2001). Similarly, the advent of new media changed the way we experience news. McLuhan's point about the form of an older medium becoming the content of a new medium, as when the narrative form of the printed novel is adopted by the newer motion picture, is also true as the form of the old medium (the visual, conversational and written forms of both television and print) has become the content of the new medium.

The Internet's capacity of linking textual and visual materials to each other has increased the internal and external intertextuality of journalism, partly as a consequence of the new possibilities for 're-producing' news that the escalating digitisation of the media industry has brought. As Knox (2007, 48) points out, 'there is a pressing need to describe the evolving multimodal macrogenre of the online newspaper'. In this context, the present study explores how the new media environment influenced the ways in which news has been produced and re-produced in the Indian context.

The entry of new media has been much more than a new competitor to the news media. The multimedial and multimodal environment has enriched the content on new media which is a tapestry of a range of issues to suit various publics in a relatively democratic space, although one cannot deny the economic and commercial interests of the new medium. It has challenged the existing patterns of news ecosystems, where the traditional media perforce had to have a presence through online newspapers and news bulletins uploaded. The immediacy and interactivity of new media has added a new dimension to the language of news. Any event is now not just reported or given as breaking news, but is also tweeted simultaneously both

by the actors involved as well as by the media that covers it. Almost all political parties and leaders as well as all media (both print and television) have a 'twitter' presence. There is an element of 'live' in the event, as the tweets of the actors and the reactions that are evoked invokes a 'personal experience' that is absent in traditional media. A sense of participation in the event changes the perception of the consumers as well as the media about the unfolding news. Moreover, many a time, the personal experience can be literal, as the Tweeter could be on the spot, sending tweets of the event. For example, in the NDTV headline on 5 March, 2014:

HEADLINE:

- **NDTV Videos**@ndtvvideos 52 mins
I apologise for today's violence: Arvind Kejriwal - <http://ndtv.in/1f7LGJV>
- **Tweets:**
- **Angry Amdavadi DrJay** @VegGujju 24 mins ; @ndtvvideos
Actually you should apologize to BJP Delhi office. @ArvindKejriwal
- **Siddharth Goyal** @sidgoyal1 18 mins ; @ndtvvideos
@ArvindKejriwal My God. This is height of lying! 2-3 patthar fenke? I was there. I know what happened

The news of 'consequence' in traditional media as dictated by commercial and political ideology alone might be of little consequence in the new media environment, as news is highly customized and individualized. This is all the more so, in an atmosphere where traditional media are seen with cynicism regarding their political and commercial commitments. So, the mainstream media now have the

onerous task of catering to both mass as well as individual consumers of news. One way of trying to retain the audience's mind space has been to create their own 'new media' space (does not mean the online presence of newspapers). For instance, Times Live Blog, and Google+ give real time updates on news through pictures and short commentary along with readers' responses, to cater to the twitteratti or Facebook or other new media users, along with its regular online news for the non users.

Times of India news story had a visual footage of Kejriwal in an auto, (in a box) along with the regular news with the headline, (March 12, 2014) : *Arvind Kejriwal Hits Campaign Trail Mumbai: Rides Auto*

- The Times News Live Blog gives a minute to minute account of his Mumbai stay As it happened (its tag line) :12 Mar, 2014 , 11.44AM IST
- Lok Sabha Polls: Arvind Kejriwal On Mumbai Tour
- *Arvind Kejriwal Arrived in Mumbai Today to Campaign For AAP In Maharashtra.* Stay With TOI Live Blog for Latest News And Updates.
- 02:34 PM *Arvind Kejriwal Arrives at Grant Road Station with Medha Patkar And Meera Sanyal.* (TOI Photo)
- 02:21 PM: *Kejriwal Started his Maharashtra Election Campaign by Taking an Auto rickshaw from Mumbai Airport to Andheri Station.* (PTI Photo)
- 02:18 PM *Aam Aadmi Party Leader Arvind Kejriwal being welcomed by Party Members at the Mumbai Airport.* (PTI Photo)
- Readers' opinions (580)
- Post a Comment

Sort by: **Newest** | Oldest | Recommended (84) | Most Discussed | Agree | Disagree



chanddeepak (Gurgaon)

● **1 Follower**

1 hr ago

apply to see such overwhelming response in Mumbai. AAP is going to make its strong appearance in LS election.



Agree (2) Disagree (0) Recommend (0) Offensive

leumas695 (India)

10 Followers

1 hr ago

Corruption is the root cause that today India is ranked third amongst most dangerous place to live in the world. 212 bomb blasts in 2013. More than twice as much bomb blasts as in Afghanistan. Anyone is able to get a new ration card, a new ID card, a new SIM card, a new voter registration card, a new adarsh card, a new driver's license, you name it. People are willing to put our country at risk just so that they can earn some money in their pocket. Corruption is a national security issue. Congress and BJP are the one to blame for

our present situation. They promoted this evil corrupt system. Today everyone feels that corruption is normal. Everyone feels that corruption is a way of life. We don't feel this as a national security issue. Another big issue that is caused by corruption is: China is beating India in almost every field. Are we not as intelligent as Chinese? Of course not. Then why are we behind China in almost every field. Corruption makes unqualified candidates get ahead of a qualified candidate. Our poverty is thrust on us by BJP and Congress. In the name of religion and caste, they cause riots. For politician, causing riot is a fun time activity. If not, would 1984 or 2002 have happened? Congress and BJP openly supported. What a national tragedy. so many innocent Sikhs and Muslims got killed. Where are the murderers? Are we so inept that we can't find the murderers and convict them and put them behind bars. It is this corruption that is standing in the way on murderers and prison. Let's wake up. Join the revolution: The revolution to free India from corruption. GO AAP. Free India from corruption. That is the only way we can make India safe and put India ahead of china.

Agree (2) Disagree (1) Recommend (0) Offensive

One of the factors that differentiate new media from the traditional is that consumers have access to news and news makers as much as the mainstream media with control and freedom at their end. The comments, likes and discussion forums make the consumers, producers as well, in the new media environment. However, this also means that in some cases journalists have to compete with the average citizen for breaking news as sites, such as Twitter, are increasingly being used as a source of news and a way to spread news by the younger generations (Edwards, 2013).

Secondly, the traditional media is forced to re-produce the news

that is being produced in the new media environment. The live tweets unravelling at a very fast pace as well as the dramatic use of 'tweet' language which is also short, make for readymade headlines in some cases. For example, Kejriwal's controversies puts him in the news constantly in the traditional media, while his tweets ensure that he is connected to his voters instantly. At times, the tweets become the only source of news, and are retweeted in all newspapers, as the actors have more than the traditional medium as a way to connect with their audiences. A glance at some of the stories indicates the use of 'tweets' instead of 'quotes' to make a point. For example, in all AAP related stories the news is carried forward through the use of tweets.

As a reaction to the clash of AAP party workers with BJP workers on March 5, 2014, Arvind Kejriwal's appeal to his volunteers was tweeted. The presentation of news in the traditional media and online news media shows how both used tweets as a source of news, but in different ways.

The headline from The Times of India :

- *Violent clashes between AAP, BJP workers in Delhi, UP; Kejriwal's car 'attacked' in Gujarat;* Ashish Tripathi & Himanshu Kaushik, TNN | Mar 5, 2014, 07.55 PM IST

Headline from The Hindustan Times:

- *Kejriwal slams Modi, urges AAP workers to maintain peace;* Mahesh Langa, Hindustan Times Ahmedabad, March 05, 2014
- First Published: 20:09 IST(5/3/2014) | Last Updated: 15:47 IST(6/3/2014)
- Both the stories carried the twitter of Arvind Kejriwal as a separate box item at the end of the story, while it was not incorporated as part of the story. Given below is the twitter

that Arvind Kejriwal gave to his followers.

- Arvind Kejriwal ✓ @ArvindKejriwal
- Follow
- *I urge all volunteers not to raise their hand n to stay calm n non-violent. U shud be prepared to lay down ur life but never raise hand;* 7:47 PM - 5 Mar 2014

The online news website FirstPost.com Headline:

- *AAP vs BJP: Can Kejriwal make Modi's strength his weakness?* by Lakshmi Chaudhry Mar 6, 2014
- #AAP #AAP-BJP clash #Arvind Kejriwal #BJP #gandhian #Lok Sabha elections 2014 #Mahatma Gandhi #Mobocracy #Narendra Modi #Rath Yatra #riots
"I urge all volunteers not to raise their hand n to stay calm n non-violent. U shud be prepared to lay down ur life but never raise hand," tweeted Arvind Kejriwal as TV channels beamed images of the stone-throwing contest outside BJP's office in Delhi.
- http://www.firstpost.com/politics/aap-vs-bjp-can-kejriwal-make-modis-strength-his-weakness-1422045.html?utm_source=ref_article

The tweet itself became the lead for the story from the online media unlike the traditional media where there is a clear demarcation between public and private discourses.

Headline From Oneindia.Com

- *Arvind Kejriwal urges party members, volunteers to remain calm*
- Updated: Thursday, March 6, 2014, 14:02 [IST]
- <http://news.oneindia.in/india/arvind-kejriwal-urges-party->

members-to-stay-calm-1407419.html

- *We are walking on the path of truth, which is a very difficult one. We have to be prepared to sacrifice, and under no circumstances indulge in violence and raise our hand,"* he added. Kejriwal on Wednesday tweeted: *"I urge all volunteers not to raise their hand and to stay calm and non-violent."*
- **Arvind Kejriwal** ✓ @ArvindKejriwal
- **Follow**
- *I urge all volunteers not to raise their hand n to stay calm n non-violent. U shud be prepared to lay down ur life but never raise hand; 7:47 PM - 5 Mar 2014*

Thus the potential of the new media to negotiate with what is 'normal' in traditional media with its rigid and conservative practices makes it all the more interesting (Foucault, 1977).

NEW MEDIA'S POLITICAL LANGUAGE

Just as no traditional media are completely obsolete, no political party can rely only on the new media. New media helps to know the pulse of a certain section of the consumers and voters of traditional media and political parties respectively. All political parties have their own political strategies to keep their voters connected through a mix of both old and new media forums. The political parties themselves have become part of this new media language, as, for instance, AAP has emerged as a 'social media created challenger' in the Delhi elections in 2013, as its leader Arvind Kejriwal is seen to have built his image as a social media urban user on the lines of Barack Obama, the President of United States. (Jain, 2013). Kejriwal first creates news by his unusual acts.. 'the orchestrated spectacle-something Kejriwal loves and the news media relishes' as Anand Vardhan (2014) describes,

naturally make headlines in all mainstream media. He then uses the Twitter to immediately spread his message to his followers. Firstly, he gets free publicity and as he himself has admitted, advertising in media costs money; while using a cheap medium like social media he is able to get his message across much faster and in a much simpler manner. In this way he successfully co-opted even the mainstream media into his activities. For example, his recent use of helicopter sponsored by India Today with his tweet acknowledging it, is a clear strategy of 'using' mainstream and social media to reach out to the *Aam Aadmi* (Common man).

Hindustan Times

- *Kejriwal flies in charter plane, says media house funded it*
- HT Correspondent , Hindustan Times New Delhi, March 07, 2014
- First Published: 23:11 IST(7/3/2014) | Last Updated: 01:35 IST(8/3/2014)
- *On Friday evening, Kejriwal used a charter plane to fly from Jaipur to Delhi to attend an event hosted by a media house. He tweeted to clarify "India Today has paid for it and since there was no regular flight, India Today group hired a charter to take me to Delhi on time."*
- *Kejriwal also tweeted: "I wud urge modi ji and rahul gandhi ji also to disclose whose planes r they using and who pays for them (sic)."*

However, in a country like India, no single medium or one single language can reach out to the entire electorate. Recognizing this, a clever mix of social media, OHH, posters behind auto rickshaws and on flyovers and mobiles were used to reach out to his voter base in Delhi Assembly elections held in December 2013. He used

professionals who identify with the idea of the AAP to use social media to raise funds for the campaign, but planned on getting votes from the real *Aam Aadmi* (common man). The party's website as well as its Facebook page solicits donations, from non resident Indians, professionals and others. He also used it to give notice of ground events such as announcements of *Jansabhas* (public meetings) and their locations. Other material posted on Facebook include statistics related to the party, and Arvind Kejriwal's interviews, as well as campaign pictures. While social media was used for fund raising, personal interaction through door-to-door campaigns and pamphlets distribution outlining the party's agenda and philosophy was used. *Nukkad sabhas* (Street meetings) were other alternate ways of reaching out to people."

Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, on the other hand, belongs to the old school of politicians, extensively uses Tweeter. Further, Narendra Modi hires campaign planners to reach out to various voters using both 'old' and 'new media' in a planned manner, to cultivate a 'friendly neighbourhood *chaiwaala*' image, to offset his earlier media projected image. His '*Chai pe charcha*' takes place in one physical location but is connected to national audience not just through the party television channel, but also through online media, where there is 'live' interaction with thousands of people simultaneously in different locations. Apart from the audience who are present live and online, the event is immediately tweeted and posted on Facebook. This evokes the involvement of the tweeters who respond to the event on Twitter. The event is reported in the traditional newspapers in both offline and online formats. The news also has links with the complete discussions on *chai pe charcha*, the text of Modi's speech and links to Facebook or Twitter. The event by itself becomes the news in the

mainstream and the Twitter platforms and other social media while what is actually discussed in them is available to someone who is interested in it through social media platforms. His approach is to not just directly but personally speak to his audience to which the Twitter response will again be at a individual level. So, at one level, there is personal one to one interaction (through his approach towards his audience and the Twitter responses) while at another level, there is the regular mass audience reach from one source, both carefully planned.

TRENDS IN THE LANGUAGE OF NEW MEDIUM

The way news is read, understood and absorbed by the consumer is definitely 'new media induced'. Although the same news is put out by all media, the fact that a majority of the people who use new media no longer read the news from single news source but scan all other sources for any news that interests them indicates the medium's culture of nonleaner access to news instead of the linear way of reading.

Further, the personalised news that is absorbed and reproduced reflects the personality of the medium which is interactive to the core. So there is difference in the way a reader would react to news that he gets from either newspaper or television to that of Twitter. The retweeting and the debates also seem to influence the media as the media now reflect what the twitteratti accepts or rejects. For e.g., Shekhar Gupta (2014) in a recent talk in Australia, said that he created a new word 'povertarian' and immediately tested its impact in terms of responses it generated on Twitter.

New media allows for knowing the pulse of the mainstream media user, namely the young readers, which can help in the selection of news that interests the readers than by any other interest. Lowery

(2009) discussed how her organization began using Twitter to push out stories as well as perform journalistic news gathering tasks. *"We used Twitter to do live coverage of stories of our choice. There's an emphasis here on 'choice'. Live-tweeting school board meetings might not quite work. Live-tweeting a high-profile court case, on the other hand, might. It's all about listening to readers and applying news judgment in deciding which stories lend themselves to which medium"* (Lowery 2009).

However, one has to be careful while listening. McLuhan-inspired 'medium theory' would gain a heightened sense of the high stakes at play when new media bring the potential for new patterns of access to information and new patterns of access to disinformation (Meyrowitz, 2001). With access to the enormous amount of information and many sources giving out instant news on the web, there is possibility of abuse by posting lies and rumours to mislead or instigate people. With literally no way to check authenticity of information it becomes free for all. This in fact, places responsibility on journalists 'to check, verify and evaluate news claims found on social media before they report on them'. (Edwards, 2013). So, as a positive development, the media that have been routinely held guilty of trivialising and commercialising news, reporting without checking facts, will probably play its normative role, of being more responsible. At best, "Journalists should view Twitter as a 'collective intelligence system' that provides early warnings about trends, people and news" according to Dan Gillmor, veteran news media blogger and Arizona State University Journalism Professor, (Farhi 2009).

CONCLUSION

No old medium ceased to exist with the arrival of the new media.

Although different social media or communication media might change its forms like Orkut was displaced by Facebook, Twitter might be a trend that may be displaced by another new form that might emerge, with essentially the same features.

Although new media usage is increasing at a fast pace as per the I-Cube 2013 report, released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB International, where, the Internet users in India by the end of 2012 were 150 million and estimated that 'by June 2014, India will have 243 million Internet users', New media as a source of news in India can influence only the English speaking national media users to a large extent, as a vast majority still use traditional media as sources of news. Not all regional language media users are familiar with new media as a source of news. Under the circumstances, Indian media need to look at existing strategies to stay in the race, and necessarily go back to the core journalistic values of investigating, checking and providing facts.

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