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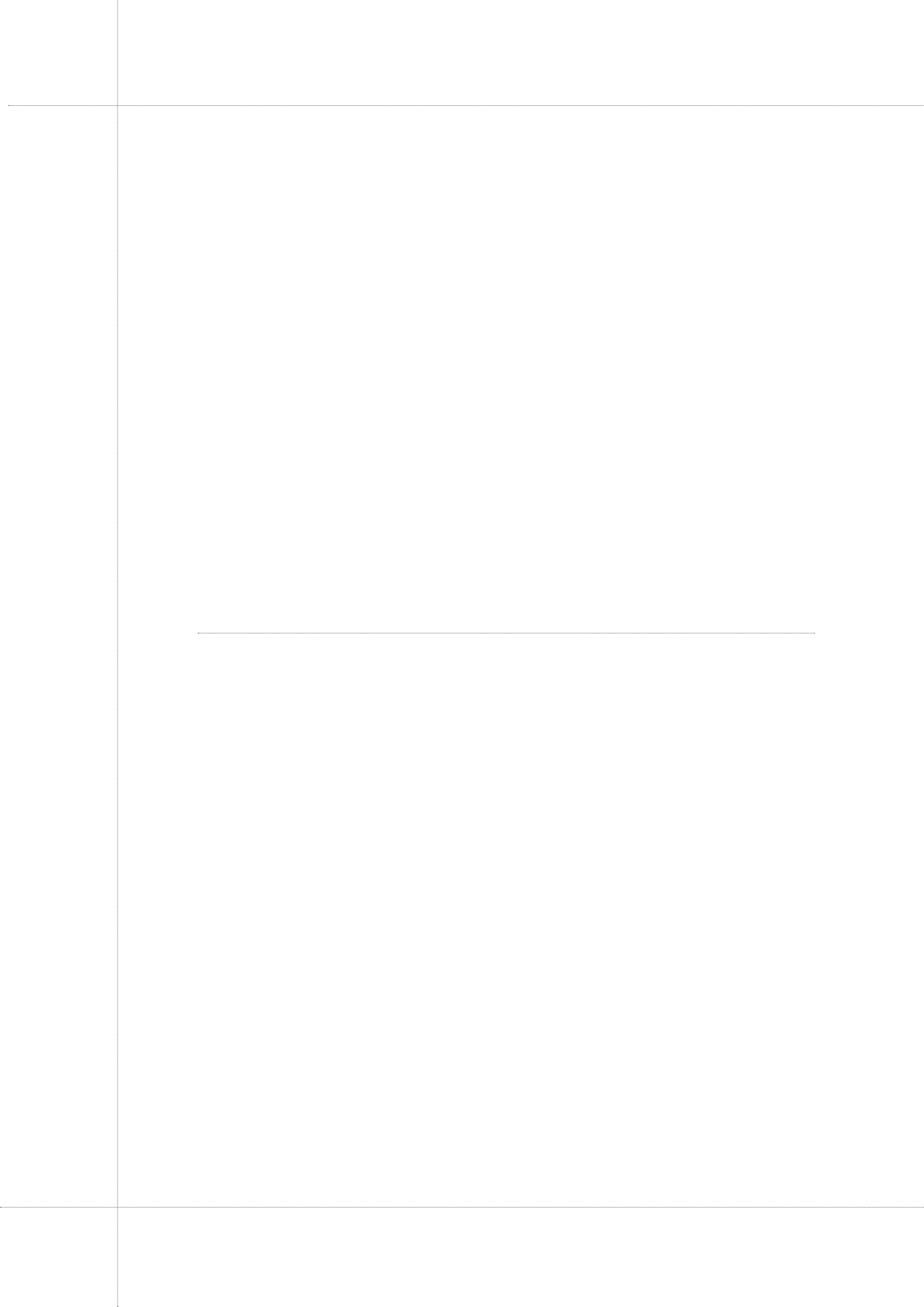
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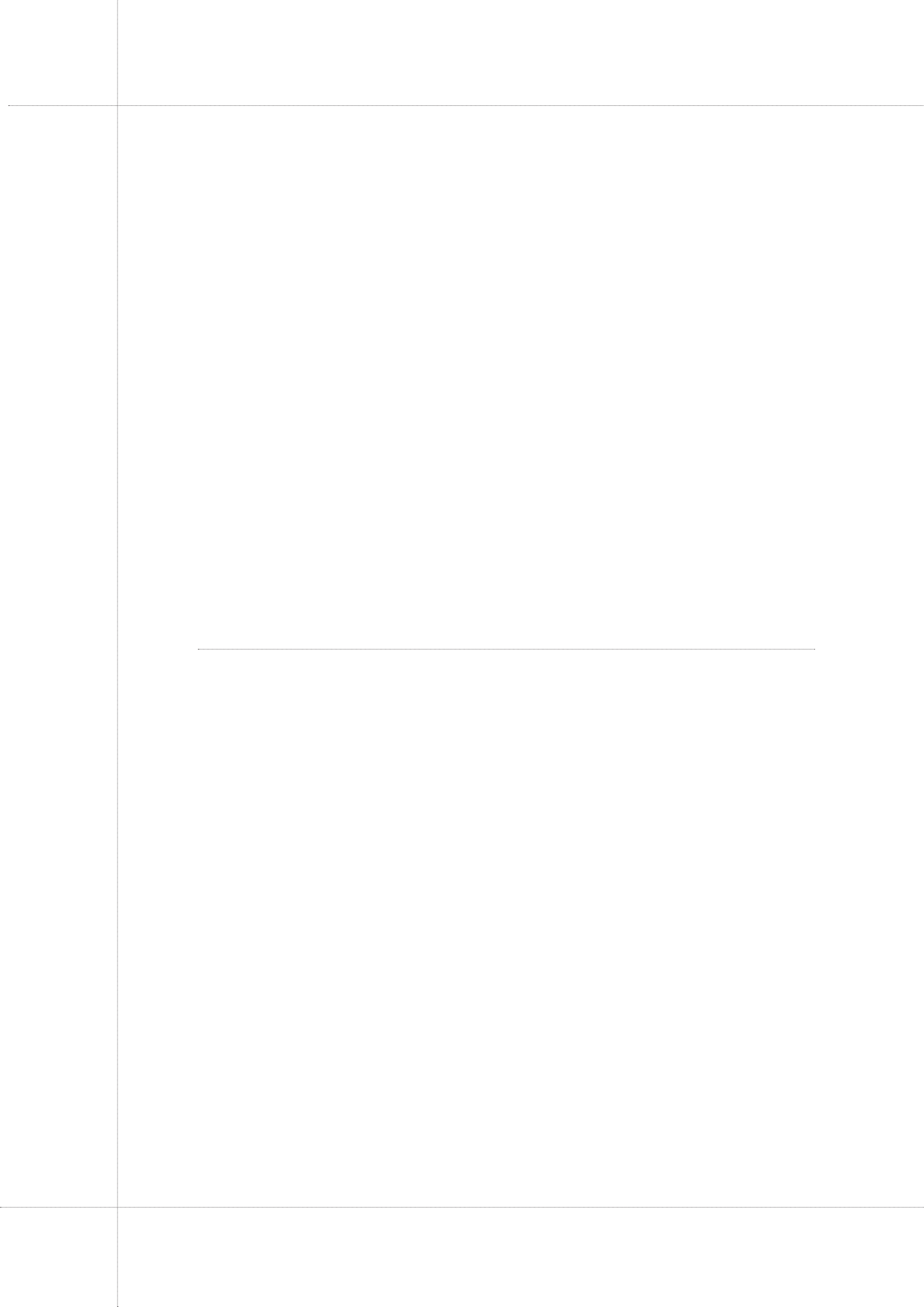
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EDITOR'S NOTE

We travel through an age of digital transformation. Cultural, organisational and operational changes embrace and impact all aspects of human activities. The digital space has made a profound alteration to existing processes, competencies, opportunities and businesses. Futurists predict much more revolution in the coming days. It is in this context, the studies presented in the current issue of the journal attain momentum.

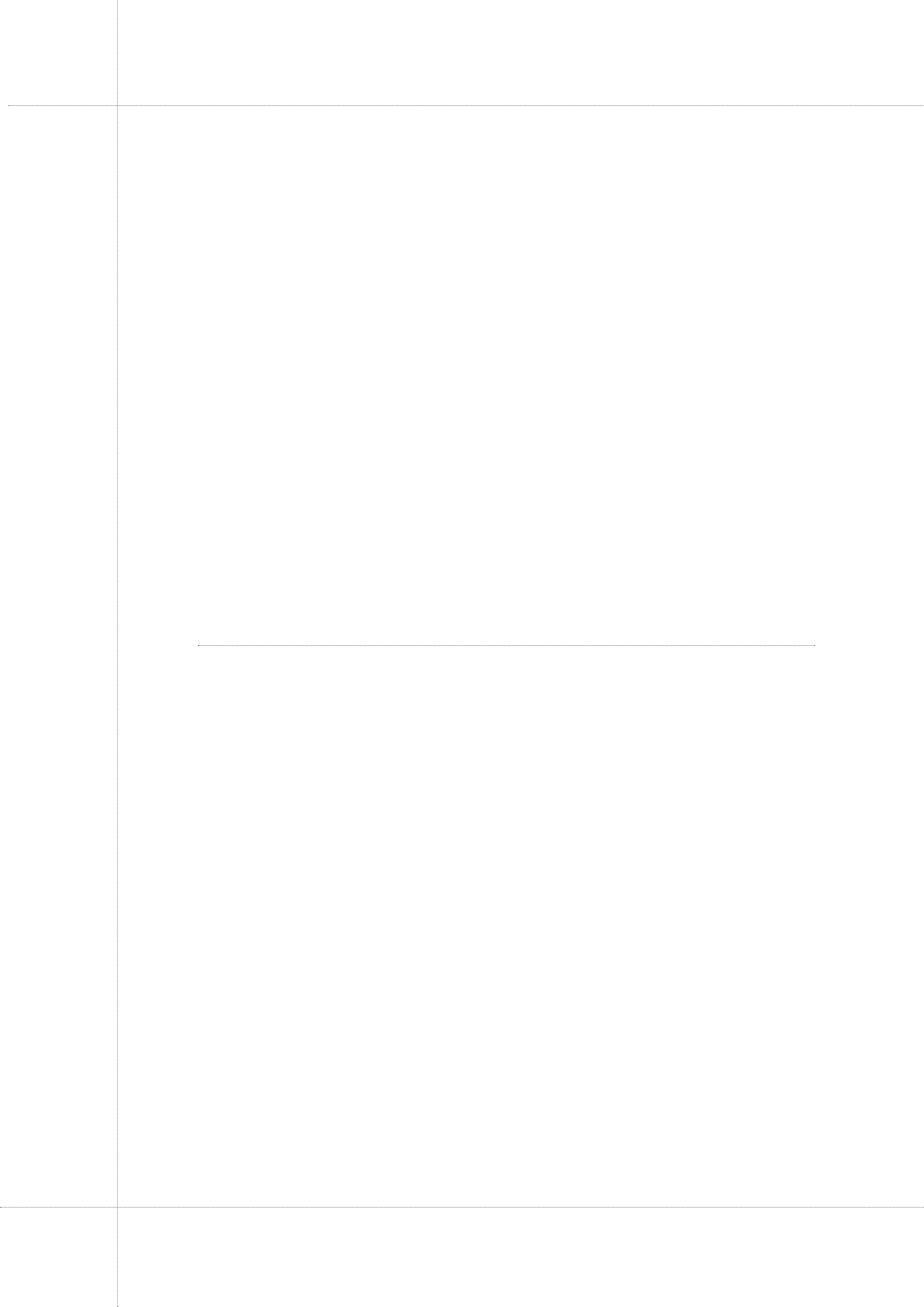
Use of digital technology for public service utilities is examined through an empirical study on the effectiveness of e-governance through common service centres at the micro (Panchayat) level. Another study looks at the changing preferences, trends and patterns of internet use among students, which yields interesting inference on both positive and negative cognitive behaviours among them. Social media is also evolving fast and many innovations like Facebook algorithm, augmented reality and influencer marketing are re defining the scopes of networked world. Such shifts are well detailed through a perspective article.

Changing landscape of Mass Communication pedagogy became a hot topic of discussion among the faculties of Communication and Journalism across the globe and the process of revamping the approaches to current curriculum are in the pipeline. A study paper exploring such dramatic turns during the last decade prescribes critical policy changes. An interesting and thought provoking tip from an experienced Professor on classroom pedagogy is also given.

Language Politics have played a major part in the bifurcation of states in India. Now more debates about the need for re organisation of the larger States on other parameters gain currency with the recent bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in 2014. This development to re draw state boundaries using non-linguistic means is the topic of discussion in one of the studies presented here. Articles examining the relevance of Public service broadcasting, surveying studies of TV audience's engagement with the text, reviewing the influence of TV debates on voting behavior and revisiting the concept of rhetorical strategies of persuasive communication are also included.

A separate section titled "Stand Point" which showcases articles providing a perspective or argument has also begun with the current issue.

Dr. M. S. Harikumar
Chief Editor



Effectiveness of E-governance Services in Implementing the Centrally Sponsored Schemes at Panchayat Level in Kerala

■ SARANYA P. S.*
DR. P. P. VIJAYALAKSHMI#

ABSTRACT

New media became a mainstream media in this digital era due to its transparency, connectivity, easy access and interactivity. It paved the way to the utilization of new media in governance arena too. Gadgets like smart phone and personal computer help to facilitate government services via e-governance mode. Introduction of e-governance platforms like common service centres (Eg:Akshaya) help common man to get familiarize with digital services up to an extent. The central government introduces numerous welfare schemes that cater to the needs of the citizen at different times. The schemes or yojanas are meant for various category of people like farmers, senior citizens, girl children, marginal groups, young entrepreneurs etc. As citizens are the beneficiaries of these schemes, its success depends on the active citizen participation.

This study is to find out the effectiveness of e-governance services through common service centres and other media platforms like smart phones in the implementation of central sponsored schemes at panchayat level in Kerala. The data analysis on the survey results from 100 respondents shows that people are not much aware about the centrally sponsored schemes and its participation via e-governance platforms is not very high.

Keywords : e-governance service, Central Schemes, Akshaya, Panchayat, Citizen Welfare

Introduction

Innovation of the internet marked a paradigm shift in the global, social, political, economic and service scenario. As the digital divide became narrow, the usage of internet or the new media jumped to higher levels. It ensured connectivity and access to each other from one part of the world to another at faster rate. These advantages of new media over other media helped it to become a major tool

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of governance too. Implementation of the governance system via electronic media with the help of internet or 'e-governance' is an innovative approach to augment the quality of government services in the public administration system. India as a democratic country, it is the duty of the government to ensure the citizen participation in the governance process. Transparency, interactivity, speed, time & cost saving, convenience, increased access to information are the major advantages of e-governance. At the same time the need of digital literacy, security of cyber space and misuse of data are still holding back the citizens to adopt the facility.

E-governance in the Indian public administration context meant to enhance the quality of government services to citizens, to speed up the communication via technological means, to reduce the government expenditure, to bring more transparency, to reduce the corruption and nepotism, to reduce the service costs for citizens and to make government more accessible and accountable to the citizen. Computerization of government services like income certificates, Passport/VISA, Railway services, ration cards, Property Registration, Road Transport, income tax payments and land records, etc. made the service delivery more convenient, efficient, time saving and transparent for the citizens.

Launching of National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1977, establishment of Union Ministry of Information Technology in 1999 and the National e-governance plan (by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)) in 2006 were major milestones in the Indian e-governance history. The launching of 'Digital India' program on 1st July, 2015 accelerated the implementation of e-governance services in the India. It facilitated improved online infrastructure by increasing internet connectivity. (Meity, 2015)

The Government of Kerala established 'Kerala State Information Technology Mission' (KSITM) in 1999. Strengthening of e-governance, IT infrastructure development and IT enabled services are the main objectives of KSITM. It provides technology and managerial support to various initiatives of the ministries. To make ICT accessible to all citizens in the state, the government introduced projects including (Kerala State IT Mission, n.d.): Akshaya, State Data Centre, Fast Reliable Instant Efficient Network for Disbursement of Services (FRIENDS), Kerala State Wide Area Network (KSWAN), IT@School, Common Mail Service, Citizen Call Centre, Digital Document File System (DDFS), SPARK, E-District,

KISSAN, Mobile Service Gate Way, Kerala E-enabling paddy procurement, E-Filing of commercial tax and Sutharyakeralam.

The central government introduces numerous welfare schemes that cater to varied needs of the citizen at different times. The schemes or yojanas meant for various category of people like farmers, senior citizens, girl children, marginal groups, young entrepreneur, etc. Some of them are: Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Manthri Ujjwal Yojana (PMUY), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, Gold Monetization Scheme, Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Digital India Programme, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Atal Pension Yojana (APY), Stand Up India, DigiLocker, etc.

Significance of the Study

The objective of a welfare scheme will be accomplished only through the participation of citizen the respective schemes. Current central government has introduced number of citizen beneficial schemes with varying purposes. This research will help to find out whether e-governance services through common service centres and other media platforms are effective in the implementation of centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes at panchayat level in Kerala. The study will help the administrative people to analyze the acceptance of such schemes among the citizens in Kerala and the government can adopt media plans according to the findings and results of the study.

Review of Literature

The study (Chandra & Malaya, 2011) mentioned that, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a key role in the development & Economic growth of the Developing countries of the World. Political, Cultural, Socio-economic Developmental & Behavioral decisions today rests on the ability to access, gather, analyze and utilize Information and Knowledge. ICT is the conduits that transmit information and knowledge to individual to widen their choices for Economic and social empowerment

Dr. Pardeep Mittal and Amandeep Kaur (Mittal & Kaur, 2013) said, as the usage of Information Technology is growing very fast, Indian government is making many efforts to provide services to its citizens through e-Governance. Although Indian government is spending a lot of money on e-Governance projects, they are not successful

in all parts of India. Unawareness in people, local language of the people of a particular area, privacy for the personal data of the people etc. are main challenges which are responsible for the unsuccessful implementation of e-Governance in India. Government must take some action to make the people aware about the e-Governance activities so that people may take full advantage of these activities and e-Governance projects can be implemented successfully. And they conclude that, the participation of people can play a vital role in implementation of e-Governance in India.

Dr. Manoj P. K. in his study, 'E-governance initiatives in Kerala: the way ahead' states that the ongoing government initiatives themselves appear to be quite successful and sustainable in the state. However, the state needs to raise resources to meet the huge financial outlay required for the full-fledged maintenance of the ongoing schemes; and further it has to take immediate steps to improve the personal computer presentation rate in the state from the current very low level. Only then, the desired results of the large scale ICT investments would be meaningful.

In a study, Nissar P and Dr. Yakoob (Nissar & C, 2014) concluded that AKSHAYA has been trying to make government services more accessible to villagers, which attempts to reduce the time and money people spend, trying to communicate with public officials and to provide immediate, transparent access to local government data and documentation. The radical changes in Government through e-Governance may lead to lot of resistance to change and the Governments must opt for sequential change.

In a study, Jhumur Ghosh found out that, if the e-panchayat enables interaction in local language, then the participation of the citizens would be much more prominent. And digitalization of the panchayats would make the system more receptive and interactive for the rural population. He suggested that the comprehensive digital panchayat platform generating content for the panchayat and adequate training of panchayat representatives in computer skills and management would improve the capability of the rural people in governance and lead to their implementation.

Methodology

Objectives

1. To find out the effectiveness of major e-governance channels like smart phones, common service centres or government office;

utilized by the citizens to participate in the centrally sponsored schemes at panchayat level in Kerala.

2. To find out the impact of different media in propagating governance policies at panchayat level in Kerala.
3. To assess the response of citizens towards digital services/e-governance
4. To analyse whether the selected samples prefer digital services or manual services.
5. To study the role of e-governance in educating citizens on internet and ultimately which help to accelerate the interest in e-literacy.

Hypothesis

H1-E-governance platforms like services common service centres and smart phones are successful in implementing the central schemes at Panchayat level in Kerala.

H2-Every media has its own vital role in propagating governance policies at panchayat level in Kerala.

H3- People have positive attitude towards e-governance because it ensures speedy delivery of services and easy access.

H4-Common service centres and smart phones accelerated the utilization of e-governance services in Kerala. So the samples prefer digital services over manual services.

H5-E-governance initiatives have greater influence in educating citizen about the internet and it creates more interest towards digital literacy.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Administration has always been a relevant research area as it affects every individual citizen. So e-governance at panchayat levels in Kerala has scope for wide area of researches as it has great social influence in the current digitalized society. Areas like utilization and advantages of e-governance in daily life, citizen participation in governance process, etc. can be explored for the effective utilization of digital technology and for the betterment of current system of e-governance in the country.

Although the research has attained its objectives, there are some limitations for the study. The most obvious limitation is its sampling technique. The study used judgment sampling and snowball sampling methods for the convenience of the researcher. So the results might be generalized only up to a certain extent. Even though the study aims to find out the effectiveness of e-governance service centres in implementing the centrally sponsored schemes at panchayat level in Kerala, the data collection was confined to only five districts out of 14 districts of Kerala. The replication of the study in other districts of the state would enable better generalizability of the study findings. The sample size for the study comprised of 100 samples. This sample is only a very small proportion of the entire population in the state. The researcher focused only 8 citizen welfare schemes when there are more than 20 schemes. Notwithstanding these problems, the responses obtained are genuine.

Research Design

Tools to collect the desired data were structured questionnaire, survey, observation and interviews with officials from panchayat office and common service centers. Secondary data from journals, books, and periodicals was also gathered.

Sampling Design

- i. **Sampling Technique:** Judgement sampling & Snowball Sampling
- ii. **Type of Universe:** People in Kerala
- iii. **Sampling Unit:** The study was done among people from Kannur, Ernakulam, Idukki, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta districts to cover north, central, east, west and south Kerala respectively.
- iv. **Size of the Sample:** Sampling size of the study was 100. 10 Panchayats (2 Panchayats from 5 districts each). 100 People (10 people each from 10 panchayats).

Selected Schemes were: Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (Financial inclusion scheme), Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (Financial support for entrepreneurs), Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (Savings scheme for girl child), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (Crop insurance scheme), Pradhan Mantri Atal Pension Yojana (Pension scheme), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (Life insurance scheme) & Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (accident

insurance scheme)

Data Analysis

Questionnaire Results and Interpretations

Gender: Out of 100 samples who completed the questionnaire, 57% are male respondents and 43% are female respondents. It is quite an equal participation, so it won't have any negative influence on the research result. No one has marked as third gender option.

Age: Age group of the respondents ranges from 18 years old to 76 years old. And the majority of the respondents belong to 23-30 years old. The least were people belong to 65 to 76 age category. It might be because of the sampling technique opted by the researcher, the judgement sampling.

Educational qualification: Out of 100 samples who completed the questionnaire, 34% are X and below X qualified, 27% are under graduates, 25% are XII qualified and 14% are post graduates.

Monthly income: 58% of the respondents have above 25k salary and 26% and 16% have 10k-25k and below 10k salary respectively.

1. Are you aware about the e-governance service centers like Akshaya/FRIENDS in your locality? (Fig.1)

The given pie chart clearly indicates that almost everyone in the selected samples for the study is aware about the e-governance service centers in their locality. Out of 100 respondents, only 3% are not aware about these service centres and rest 97% is aware about it.

Awareness

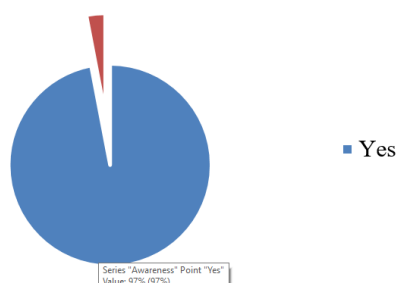


Fig. 1 People's awareness about e-governance service centers

2. Do you make use of e-governance services from these centers? If no, please give the reasons. (Fig. 2)

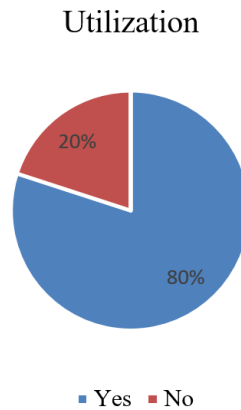


Fig. 2 Utilization of e-governance services

The above chart shows that out of 100 samples, 80% are utilizing these facilities and only 20% are not utilizing these common service centres. Major reasons for not utilizing these facilities are due to the unawareness about these platforms and some have internet facility at their homes which help them to avail these services their own.

3. How often you do visit e-governance centers? (Fig. 3)

Lion share of the respondents replied that their visit to e-governance service centres depends upon their need. It was selected by 83.3% of the respondents who do visit these centres. Quarterly and a few times each month options were given each by 3.3%. And 10% of the respondents said that they do not make visit to e-governance service platforms for any reason.

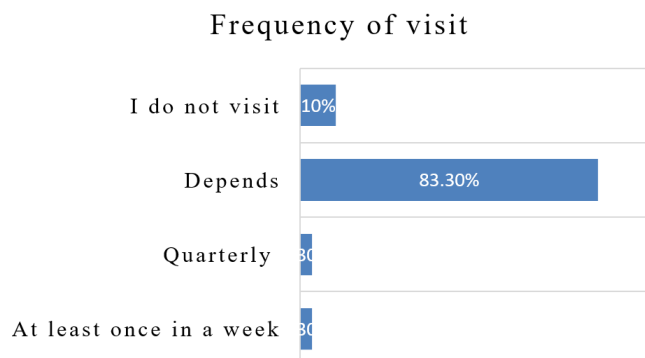


Fig. 3 Frequency of visit

4. Which of the following services of e-governance platforms do you utilize? (Select at least 5) (Fig. 4)

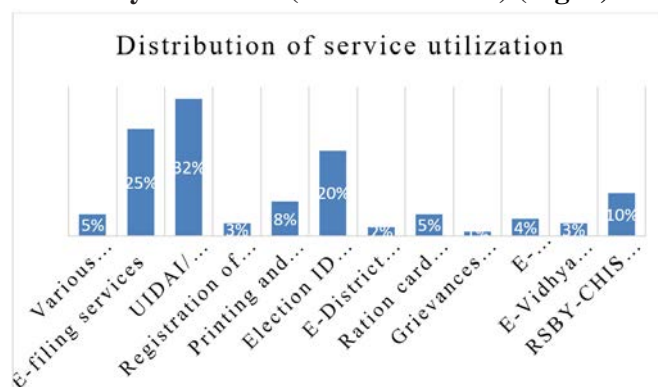


Fig. 4 Utilization of e-governance services

From the above column diagram, one could see that the e-governance service centres are utilized majority for UIDAI (Universal Identification Authority of India)/aadhar enrollment, e-filing services and election id card services. Out of 100 respondents, 32% use these common service centres for UIDAI/aadhar enrollment, 25% use for e-filing services, 20% for election id card services, 10% use for RSBY-CHIS health card services, 8% use for printing and photocopy services. Various insurance schemes were utilized by 5% of the respondents, ration card related services by 5%, e-payment/ Fee services by 4%, E-Vidhya course by 3%, registration of APL/ BPL families by 3% and grievance redressal usage is by 1% of respondents.

5. Factors in favour of e-governance platforms in order of preference. (Fig. 5)

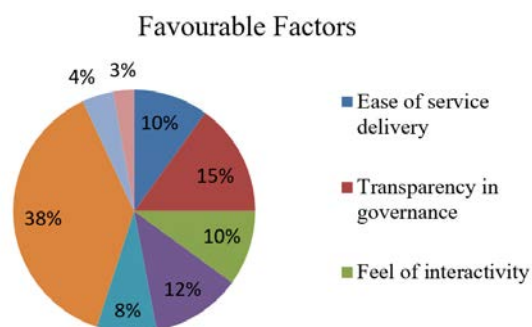


Fig. 5 Favourable factors of e-governance platforms

Most of the respondents selected availability as the most favorable factor regarding e-governance service centers and least people selected

rate of time consumption among the options. The respondents opted for availability, transparency, service charge rate and ease of service delivery by 38%, 15%, 12%, 10% and 10% respectively. The least opted options like atmosphere inside common service centres, use of local language and rate of time consumption have opted by 8%, 4% and 3% respectively.

6. Unfavourable factors regarding e-governance platforms? (Fig. 6)

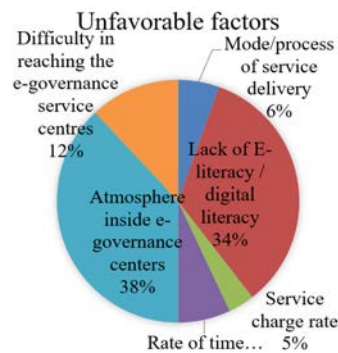


Fig. 6 Un favourable factors of e-governance platforms

Most of the respondents selected atmosphere inside common service centres as the most unfavorable factor regarding e-governance service centers and least people selected service charge rate among the options. The respondents opted for atmosphere inside common service centres, lack of e-literacy/digital literacy and difficulty in reaching these centres by 38%, 34% and 12% respectively. The least opted options like rate of time consumption, mode/process of service delivery and service charge rate have opted by 7%, 5% and 4% respectively.

7. Did you participate in any of the following schemes? If yes, please do select the respective schemes. If no, please mention the reason. (Fig. 7a) & (Fig. 7b)

Participation in schemes

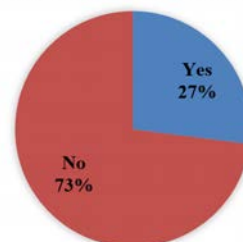


Fig. 7a Participation in schemes

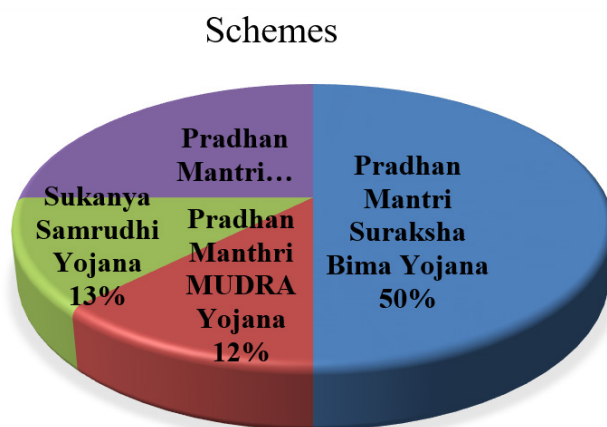


Fig 7b Schemes participated

This chart shows the participation level of respondents in the centrally sponsored schemes. Only 27% of the respondents have participated in these schemes and rests 73% are not participated in any of the centrally sponsored schemes. The evidences show that participation in the citizen welfare schemes are not that successful in Kerala. A scheme will be successful only if it could reach its deserved beneficiary.

Out of these 8 schemes, respondents have selected only 4 schemes in which they have participated. Those are Pradhan Manthri MUDRA Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Sukanya Samrudhi Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana. Those who have participated in the schemes, 50% are opted Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. And 25%, 12.5% and 12.5% of the respondents were participated in Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Sukanya Samrudhi Yojana and Pradhan Manthri MUDRA Yojana respectively.

Major reason for not participating in these schemes is the unawareness of these schemes and objectives behind them. Many think that they don't need these schemes at all. Even though people see those advertisements regarding the welfare schemes in the newspapers and in TV but they think that it is not meant for them. They ignore that information just like any other advertisements they see in the media.

The frequencies of such advertisements are very low also. And the researcher thinks that people may notice such ads if it contains any celebrity. The presence of such celebrities increases the credibility and acceptability of those schemes also. The renowned film actor,

Amitabh Bachan acted in the ads of Padhan Manthri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and it repeats after a particular interval of time too. This might be the reason for the majority participation in those schemes as given in the above chart. Some say that they did not even hear about the majority of the schemes given as options. It is very much clear that the problem lies in the media planning regarding the citizen welfare schemes.

8. Mention the source of information about centrally sponsored schemes like PMJDY, APY, etc.? (Fig. 8)

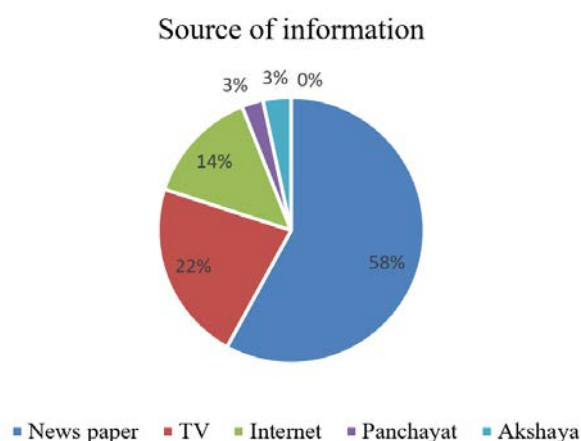


Fig. 8 Source of scheme information

Majority of the respondents got informed about these schemes via newspapers and TV. 58% opted newspapers and 22% opted TV as their source of information about these schemes. The other three options, internet, panchayat and Akshaya were opted by 14%, 3% and 3% respectively.

It is clear from the given pie chart that the major source of information about these citizen welfare schemes is newspaper. Following are some inferences on the observed data.

- Frequency of advertisements of citizen welfare schemes are more in newspapers.
- People rely on newspapers for information even in this digital era.
- Clarity of such advertisements is more in newspapers because it uses written statements about the information. This increases the credibility of newspaper as source of information.

Panchayat offices and common service centres are ranked last as a source of information regarding the centrally sponsored schemes. And the percentage of respondents who marked these options is very low also. It indicates that these service platforms are not that successful in the awareness creation regarding the schemes.

9. Please mention the mode of participation in citizen welfare schemes. (Fig. 9)

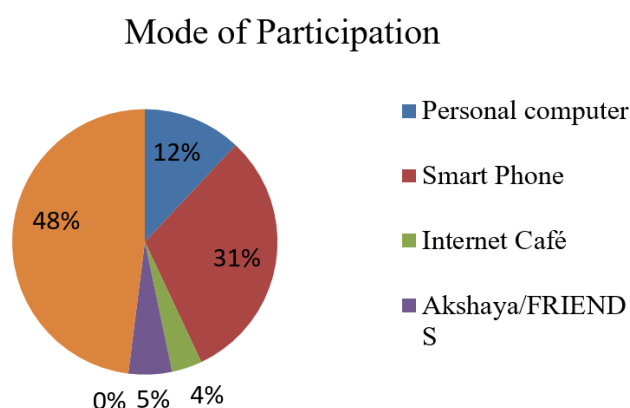


Fig. 9 Mode of participation in schemes

Out of these 5 options, majority of the respondents selected 'not participated' option. It was selected by 48% of the respondents. Out of the 52% those who have participated in the schemes, 31% participated via smart phone, 12% via personal computer, 5% via Akshaya and 4% via internet café. And no one has participated via panchayat offices. Most of the respondents are not participated in any of the given schemes. As mentioned before this can be due to the lack of awareness, need of e-literacy and lack of interest in such schemes. It indicates that the governance messages are not reaching the citizen properly.

It is clear from the given data that the mode of participation in citizen welfare schemes is maximum using smart phone and personal computers. It indicates the e-literacy level of the respondents. The samples are self-reliant because of the availability of internet and the technological devices like mobile phone and computer/laptop. One could infer from the observed data that e-governance service mode helps citizen to become self-reliant regarding the participation in welfare schemes. It is evident from the collected data that people started to participate in the schemes by themselves. This is a positive sign regarding the acceptability of digitalized services/e-governance services.

10. Have any of your family members participated in centrally sponsored schemes? If yes, please mention the relationship with the scheme beneficiary. If no, kindly give reason for the same.



Fig. 10 Level of satisfaction regarding digital services

The intention behind this question was to know whether more than one person in a family do participate in central schemes and in utilize the e-governance service centers. 83.3% of the respondents said that their family members do participate in centrally sponsored schemes. By observing the above data, it is clear that at least one family member of the respondents do participate in the centrally sponsored citizen welfare scheme.

Many respondents said that the scheme in which their family member participated is Pradhan Manthri Jan Dhan Yojana. It might be due to the demonetization of rupees 500 and 1000 denominations occurred on 8th of November 2016. A report (Mazoomdaar, 2016) says that, in the first two weeks of demonetisation, the total balance in no-frills accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana increased by 60% to Rs 72,834.72 crore. That is a jump of Rs 27,198.11 crore in 14 days. To put this in perspective, the scheme, launched in August 2014, took 16 months until December 2015 before it could accumulate a net balance of Rs 27,283.05 crore. Another report (PTI, 2016) says that an Dhan Accounts have seen a huge surge in deposits, with Rs 21,000 crore being parked in such accounts following demonetization announced earlier this month. In the last 13 days, banks have been flooded with deposits in Jan Dhan accounts that have touched Rs 21,000 crore, sources said.

11. How satisfied are you with digitalized services (e-governance services) in comparison with the previous manual service delivery? (Fig. 10)

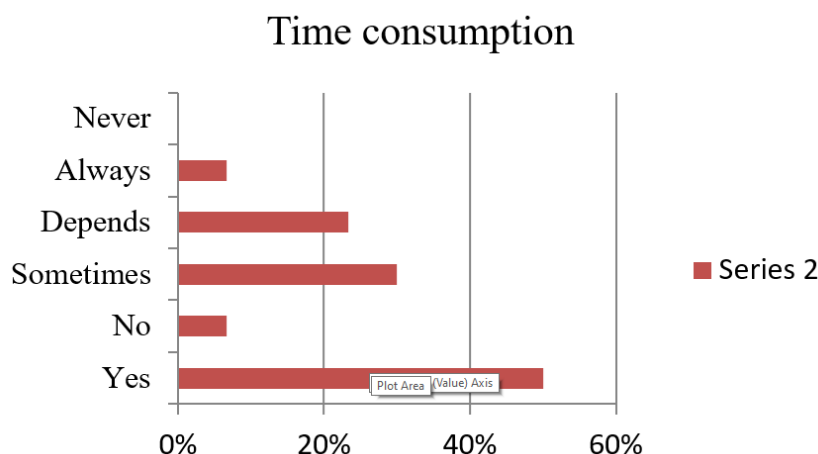


Fig. 11 Time consumption of e-governance service centres

As shown in the above chart, majority of the respondents opined that they are satisfied with the digitalized services. 46.7% of the respondents opted this rating. 26.7% opined that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. There is only 13.3% who replied that they are highly satisfied with this service mode. 3.3% recorded their dissatisfaction and 13.3% opted not applicable option.

The Akshaya Center Entrepreneurs can be considered as the human link between the novelty of ICT and local community. The Centers are widely used for the e-learning programmes and e-governance services. E-Krishi, E-Literacy, E-Payment and E-Vidya are the highlights of the Akshaya project. The existence of Akshaya Centers depends primarily on the community. So, the provision of services should be familiar to the people. Hence it is the duty of Akshaya officials to create people friendly IT environment, which in turn promote users to come to Akshaya Centers and use the services. Inclusion of more context based services will attract new clients and retain the existing ones and thus to satisfy the changing needs of the community they serve. (K, 2016).

12. Do these e-governance services help to save valuable time? (Fig.11)

Yes, was the majority response and it is 50% of the response. 30% of the respondents replied that these services centres sometimes help

to save their time. 23.3% opined that consumption time depends on other factors too. 6.7% each opted for no and always option among the given options.

13. How likely are you to recommend the e-governance services to others? (Fig. 12)

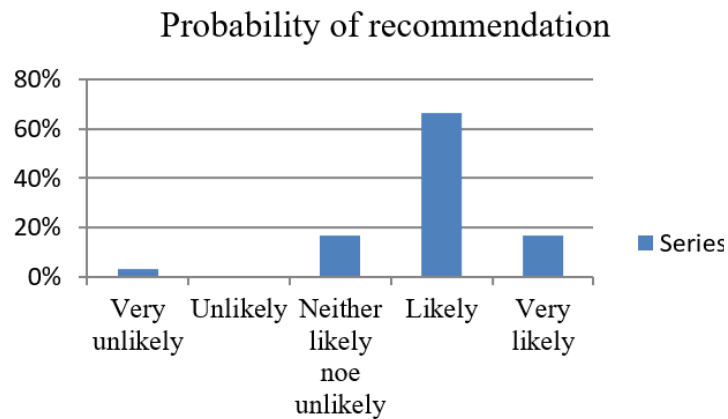


Fig. 12 Probability of recommendation

66.7% respondents said that they are likely to recommend these service centres to others. 16.7% each replied that they neither likely nor unlikely and very likely to recommend these centres. A very few, 3.3% are unlikely to recommend these centers to others.

Analysis of Interviews

1) In your opinion, what are the advantages of digitalized services when it compares to the previous manual service delivery?

The very basic objectives behind the digitalization of government services are (1) to bring transparency in the service delivery and (2) to ensure citizen participation in governance process. Where more data is available to the public and other government departments, there is more accountability. This can range from filling out taxes online, registering to vote to the publication of national trade statistics and department budgets. And ultimately it will lead to the growth of the nation and efficiency in governance at faster rate. It meant to reduce red tapism and corruption or what is called bureaucratic inertia.

It ensures the citizens, fair and equal access to the government and make the process more inclusive and interactive. Just like usage of electronic payment systems reduce leakages and ensure that the government and the beneficiary seamlessly interact with each other.

This way, all benefits will directly reach the end user, the deserved citizen, thus making the process more efficient. There are various government portals and websites which act as a platform for government to citizen interaction. Now we have an app for almost everything. Smart phones and internet are creating a digital revolution in our country and this will lead to a digitalized society where citizens are self-reliant regarding the participation in the governance process.

2) Do these service centres actually help to reduce your work load?

Yes, actually the implementation of common service centres like Akshaya and FRIENDS help to reduce our work load. As a part of the digital India programme, every documents and governance related activities are done using internet. It helps in the easy storage and retrieval of data at any time. Service like DigiLocker provides online storage space for individuals. It secures the data as it ensures the digital signature for accessing the data.

Akshaya and FRIENDS provide a variety of services like e-filing of documents, e-payment, online passport application, registration of APL/BPL category, online grievance redressal, numerous online applications, etc. So people started to rely on these centres for such services. It seems they all fed up with the long queue for various needs in front of government offices. And people go to different e-governance platforms as they can be utilized according to their convenience.

3) Which are the major centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes in which people participate more?

Pradhan Manthri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Manthri Jan Dhan Yojana and Pradhan Manthri Jeevan Jyothi Bima yojana are those welfare schemes in which people's participation is more.

4) In your opinion, what is the people's attitude towards digitalized services?

In its earlier stages, people had a reluctance towards e-governance system. It might be due to the non-familiarity of digital process and lack of e-literacy. But after the initial hesitation towards e-governance process, people started to take efforts to understand how it works and its advantages over previous manual service delivery. And now we can see people go to common service centres like Akshaya for their needs. Availability of such platforms also increased its acceptability among citizen. And in rural areas we can see that neighbors go to e-governance platforms together and they share their experience with

the same to others also.

5) In your opinion, what is the people's attitude towards citizen welfare schemes?

Majority of the people in Kerala do not want to participate in any welfare schemes. They think that these schemes are not meant for them. They see the advertisements regarding these schemes, but never try to make an effort in the proper understanding of the schemes and its objectives. In my opinion, the frequency of ads regarding such schemes are also too less. So first we need to create awareness regarding such schemes and its objectives. Only then people will have interest in participate in those schemes.

Major Findings

The following observations are the major findings from the results of the questionnaires, interview and observation.

- Most of the people in Kerala are aware about the common service centres like Akshaya and they utilize these service centres for various purposes.
- People rely on e-governance services than approaching government offices for their needs. People can avail various e-governance services at any time. So it can be utilized according to the convenience of the citizen.
- Out of various services from these centres, people utilize aadhar enrolment, e-filing services and election ID card services more than any other requirements.
- Need for e-literacy programmes are getting reduced. It might be an indication of increasing e-literacy rate in the state. Smart phones and availability of internet are the reasons for this development.
- People consider availability of the e-government services, transparency in the governance process and service charge rate are the major favourable factors regarding the e-government services.
- Atmosphere inside these service platforms are the most unfavourable factor regarding the e-governance systems as far as people are concerned.
- Participation in the centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes is very low in the state. Unawareness of these schemes is the prime factor behind this status.

- Among the centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes, most popular schemes in Kerala are Pradhan Manthri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Manthri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Manthri Jeevan Jyothi Bima yojana and Sukanya Samruddhi yojana. The advertisement frequencies of these schemes are much higher than others. And the presence of celebrities like Amitab Bachan in the advertisements increases its credibility among common people. This can be the reason for the popularity of these schemes than others.
- People rely on newspapers for information and they have more credibility than other media. So acceptability of information via newspapers is more than e-governance service platforms and panchayat offices. These service centres have a very little role in creating awareness about centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes.
- In Kerala, the number of people participate in the centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes are very less. Those people who participated in these schemes utilized smart phones and personal computers like laptop as the major tool for their participation. It shows that Keralites are self- reliant in participating in these schemes. It is a positive sign for the acceptability of e-governance services in the state.
- Unawareness of e-literacy classes by Akshaya / Panchayt and the increasing rate of e-literates in the state are the major reasons behind the lower rate of participation in such classes.
- Majority of the people in Kerala are satisfied with the current e-governance services.
- People say that e-governance services help to save their time as it consumes less time than manual service delivery.
- Chances for recommending this service mode to others are high and people are likely to suggest service facility to others.
- People prefer digitalized service delivery than the previous manual service delivery.
- E-governance service platforms like common service centres and personalized services like smart phones and laptops actually help to reduce the workload of many government offices or departments.
- People were reluctant to avail digitalized services in the beginning. But now, the scenario has changed. People rely on e-governance service platforms for various needs than government offices as it

provides convenience to them.

- Acceptability of welfare schemes is relatively less in the state of Kerala. People are not informed well about these schemes.

Conclusion

The study concludes that most of the people in Kerala are very well aware about the e-governance service centres in the state. They go for digitalized services than previous manual service delivery. Convenience and less rate of time consumption attracts people towards these e-governance services. Availability of common service centres in the state is the major advantage of e-governance services. Media like smart phone and new media (internet) increased the utilization of e-governance services in the state. It increases the interest for digital literacy among people.

Implementations of centrally sponsored schemes are not very successful in the state. Citizen welfare schemes meant for the welfare and prosperity of citizens in the country. So its objective will be accomplished only when citizen take participation in such schemes. In the case of Kerala, most of the people are less aware or unaware about the centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes. People do not even hear most of the schemes given in the questionnaire. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana are the most popular central schemes in the state.

People think that those schemes are not for them. It might be because of the Hindi names of the schemes. Those names are bit difficult to remember also. Majority of the people do not know the meanings of those Hindi words. Using images of native people and geographical area of Kerala may have positive influence on people to notice such advertisements. Because, localness/proximity increases the importance and value of any information. Another factor for the less participation in the citizen welfare schemes is due to the higher living standard of people living in Kerala than other northern or southern states of the country.

Suggestions

- An applicable segmentation and prioritization of the governments' service catalogue ought to be the first step of e-governance service initiative. It should accompany with a clear definition of its different implementation phases and plans on the way to

comprehensive e-government.

- Government should implement more awareness programmes about e-governance service centres and welfare schemes in the panchayat level. The hierarchy of governance ends with panchayat as it delivers directly the services to the people or works at grass root level.
- Government need to be more focused on the media planning of citizen welfare schemes. It seems people rely on newspapers for information. They think that information they get from newspapers are more credible than other media. People depend on smart phones and personal computer when it comes to participate in the e-governance process.
- If possible, the government should take effort to translate or convert the names of these centrally sponsored citizen welfare schemes to the local language of the state. Because for a common man, it is bit difficult to remember these Hindi names. They may not even understand the meaning of such words.
- Establishment of appropriate e-governance evaluation measures by the citizens will help the government to modify/improve the overall e-government strategy for the future.
- Disclose additional data on government services. Speed up the method of information disclosure. Government data ought to be discharged on the net at the same time with corresponding press releases. It is necessary because there might be variations in media coverage. Therefore, the extent and the extent and timing of information disclosure may cause confusion or discrepancies among users.

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Internet Use: A Comparative analysis of Changing Trends among Students

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ABSTRACT

The increasing importance of internet in all domains of life and the fast changing nature of online activities require continued empirical examination of the socio demographic predictors of use. This study seeks to compare and analyse the changing preferences, trends and patterns of Internet use, among students over a period of six years from 2009 to 2015. Internet usage pattern was explored from the perspectives of longevity of use, regularity of use, and time spent using Internet. The influence of demographic variables gender, place of residence (urban or rural) and income was examined.

The study was conducted in two phases; the first phase in 2009, and the second phase in 2016. The findings indicate that the digital divide is shrinking in terms of access as more students are connected online, irrespective of income, gender or location. Yet concerns remain about the second level digital divide where the focus shifts from access to usage. Glimpses of the second level digital divide, in terms of quality of access, defined in terms of factors such as the technical specifications of smartphones, broadband connections, data packs, multiple internet access points, speed of connectivity and related peripherals.

Internet use can lead to positive outcomes in terms of life chances, social position, and well-being. Just like basic grammar and arithmetic, having online skills is needed in every sphere in modern networked life. There is a difference in the ability to search and use internet effectively among the demographic groups, putting the vulnerable groups at a disadvantage. Even though students are spending a lot of time online yet awareness of cyber traps, cyber crime and privacy issues are not adequate. A tendency of overuse, misuse and the possibility of internet addiction and ensuing health hazards are areas of concern.

Keywords : Digital Divide, Internet Addiction

Introduction

The Internet scenario has undergone a transformation over the years and surfing the net has become an important part of life as people have started using it in myriad ways. The fast spread of internet and its increasing importance in all domains of life and the fast changing nature of online activities require continued empirical

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examination of the socio demographic predictors of use. Just like basic grammar and arithmetic, having online skills is needed in every sphere in modern networked life.

How this new medium is being used has also undergone drastic changes over the years. This study seeks to compare and analyse the changing preferences, trends and patterns of Internet use, digital divide, among students over a period of six years from 2009 to 2015. A comparative study of the internet use by students would give a clear insight of the emerging trends amongst different segments of the student community based on their demographic variables.

Internet use has become very common among all segments of the population, yet it is children and young adults who use it more extensively. The students of today are regarded as the Digital natives as they grew up using this technology. Moreover students are a valuable asset of a nation, so it is important to analyse how they are using this medium in a constructive manner. This study focused on students, as youngsters being instinctively exploratory and inquisitive take to new media technology more quickly. One can see the emergence of vertical networks that function between generations where the skills are no longer passed on from oldest to youngest but from teenagers to adults as they are early adopters and act as technological gurus who pass on information about new technology to the elders in the family. (Drotner, 1999).

The Internet penetration has increased over the years both worldwide and in India. The figures vouch for this. The net penetration worldwide in the years 2009, 2015 and 2017 were 25%, 41% and 46% respectively. In India it was 5% in 2009; 27% in 2015 and 34% in 2017. India is one of the fastest growing Internet markets in the world. (Statista, 2017). However increased Internet penetration rates at the aggregate level do not necessarily lead to narrowing digital divides across socio economic groups, in fact, it has been argued that the gulf based on prevailing social stratifications may at times even be reinforced (Moritz, Natascha & Michael, 2016).

The present study is a comparative cross sectional study of students conducted in 2006 and 2015 and seeks to analyse how the internet scenario for students in Kerala has changed over a period of six years. The first phase was a quantitative survey conducted in 2009. The second phase of the study in 2015 adopted quantitative and qualitative methods.

Objectives

The objectives of the study was to compare changes in the follow-

ing social dimensions of internet in 2009 and in 2015.

To assess students' Internet usage in terms of (i) longevity, (ii) regularity and (iii) time spent; to explore if there is excessive use of internet among students; to gauge students' Internet usage variations in respect of demographic variables; analyze the evolution of digital divides and to find out popular websites amongst the students.

Study Design

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase in 2009, survey was conducted using a questionnaire. To arrive at a representative student sample of Internet users in the state of Kerala, a multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. A total of 900 students were surveyed in the three districts; 300 each in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode districts respectively. Following elimination of 183 incomplete questionnaires, the sample size was reduced to 717. Internet usage pattern was explored from three perspectives of (i) longevity of use, (ii) regularity of use, and (iii) time spent using Internet. The influence of demographic variables gender, place of residence (urban or rural) and income was examined.

In the second phase quantitative and qualitative methods were used. In December 2015 data was collected from 100 students from Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode districts using a questionnaire, and 25 students were interviewed from Kozhikode. A pilot study was conducted on 10 students before the field work.

Findings

1. Longevity of Internet Use

The length of experience with a medium is an important factor. In 2009, the internet was still a young medium in Kerala. There were four categories of since how long the student has been using internet; less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1 year to 3 years and more than 3 years. The status of longevity in respect of three independent variables- gender, place of residence and income – was examined and the significance of distribution was assessed through Chi square test.

In 2009, the students' urban rural background had a statistically significant bearing on their longevity of internet use. The rural students formed the bulk of the new users of Internet (76%), ie those who had used internet for less than 6 months. This substantiates the proposition that technologies often spread from the urban centres to rural hinterlands. Such a disparity between urban and rural areas has

been noted even in some parts of developed countries like rural US, Canadian North, Australian Outback (Hudson, 2007).

In 2009 it was found that the family income had a significant bearing on students' longevity of internet use. Those hailing from higher income families had started using internet much earlier than those from low income families. Significantly a higher proportion of high income (54.4%) and middle income (44.5%) families' students were using internet for more than 3 years as against a low 24.9% of those from low income families. This contrast was evident in the longevity slab of less than 6 months. It consisted of only 6.4% of high income; 16.2% of middle income and 28.2% of low income students. Such a statistically significant distribution clearly demonstrates the dependence of longevity of internet use on the economic status of students. Historically those with disposable income are the early adopters of technology.

By 2015, the earlier four categories of longevity seemed to be insufficient to get the larger picture, so it was categorized into five as follows; less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1 year to 3 years, 3 years to 9 years and more than 9 years. However by 2015, 91% of the students have been using the internet since more than three years. And out of them, 37% have been using for more than 9 years. Hence it has become a part of their lives. There were no students using internet for less than 6 months. Truly they were Digital natives. The first level digital divide seems to be narrowing as access did not seem to be an issue, no significant differences could be noted in longevity, regularity and time spent based on income, gender and place of residence. The data points to the shift in Digital Divide from access to usage. The face to face interview gave glimpses of the second level digital divide, in terms of quality of access, defined in terms of factors such as the technical specifications of smartphones, broadband connections, data packs, multiple internet access points, speed of connectivity and related peripherals. This difference was seen between the high income and low income groups and to a certain extent between urban and rural students. There was also a difference in the ability to search and use internet effectively among these groups. The privileged groups had a headstart in these factors.

2. Regularity of Internet Use

The dimension of regularity of internet use reflects how strongly it is embedded into the media habits of students and thereby the importance they attach to internet. In 2009 it was noted that 56.3% of students were regular users, while 13.9% used it occasionally and 29.7% used it only rarely. Regularity was examined in terms of students'

three socio demographic variables of gender, place of residence and economic background. Data was cross tabulated and subjected to chi square test of significance. Early research had suggested that girls lagged behind in using Internet as they had less access to computers (Kubey & Larson, 1990). The results of the 2009 phase of this study also lent support to the existence of the 'gender gap' in Kerala as male students were more regular users of Internet than females. While 63% of male students used internet regularly only 50.8% female students regularly logged on to the net. On the other hand more female students were rare users (36.2%) of internet as compared to men (22%). In 2009 it was found that the gender had a significant bearing on students' regularity of internet use.

So also in 2009, the analysis of internet use regularity vis-à-vis the place of residence affirmed that regular internet use was more prevalent among urban students (63.7%) than rural students (51.6%).

The cross tabulated data of 2009 unfailingly points out that the economic status of students defines their internet use regularity. While the proportion of regular users was the lowest (48.6%) among low income group students, it was a high of 75.25 among high income family students. A reverse pattern was prevalent in the rare use of internet. So the male, affluent students residing in urban locations scored high on Internet use regularity. One plausible reason for the female students lagging behind in regularity of Internet use in 2009 could be lack of Internet facilities at home and colleges. More than one-third of the sampled students reported using Internet at cyber-cafés. Many girl students mentioned about societal pressures which inhibited them from going alone to cybercafés.

In 2015, there was a sea change in this pattern, indicating that the digital divide is narrowing to a certain extent. Regularity was examined in terms of students' three socio demographic variables of gender, place of residence and economic background. However no statistically significant differences were noted. The popularity of inexpensive smart phones coupled with falling internet prices has helped to bridge the gender gap and digital divide. A vast majority of the students are regular users of the internet with 89% accessing it on a daily basis in 2015. Most of them access net on their smart phones. Girls were found to access internet regularly, yet they were found to use it more for social interaction rather than for other instrumental purposes, leading to less tangible outcomes. On interviewing students agreed that internet had become a part of their lives, and 70% admitted to feeling 'left out' in case they were unable to go on-line for a few days.

3. Time Spent

The time spent using internet is a better measure of media use as it reflects the nature of engagement which may range from mere scanning to an in depth engagement. In 2009, It was found that only a small minority of 16.2% used internet for more than 2 hours. Those using it for the smallest duration of less than half an hour also formed a minority of 18.7%. Around 325 logged on for 30 minutes to 2 hours. In 2009 statistically significant differences were not evident based on gender and location. However family income had a bearing as students from higher income families were spending more time on the net than their less affluent counterparts.

One significant difference was that the time spent by students online had drastically increased by 2015. Now students are spending more time on net compared to 2009, with 36% spending more than 2 hours daily, out of these, a large chunk of these students ie 60% spending 4 hours or more daily. Now the pattern of time spent has also changed. Earlier they were sitting for longer periods of time at one stretch, but now they are accessing net frequently, but only for a short period of time. The reason is that most students are accessing net on their smart phones, which is always easily accessible to them. They frequently check WhatsApp, Facebook, even in the midst of other activities. Is this the beginning of internet addiction amongst youngsters? The falling cost of smart phones and internet access has brought it within the reach of middle class families. The few students (9%) who do not have internet access in phones or at home, use net occasionally, and whenever they use for specific purposes, spend more time at one stretch. On examining time spent in relation to independent variables of gender, place of residence and economic background no significant differences were noted in 2015. Online shopping, Gaming, watching videos, social interaction have gained in popularity among students, but email seems to be losing popularity over the six years. However there is a tendency of overuse, misuse and the possibility of internet addiction in future. So the policy makers and Government authorities must take appropriate measures, such as Online Deaddiction centres and awareness programmes about how to use the medium constructively.

Digital Divide

The digital divide is shrinking in terms of access as more students are connected online. Yet concerns remain about the second level digital divide where the focus shifts from access to usage. There have

been several efforts to bridge the digital divide from the government over the years. The year 2014 saw the launch of the National Digital Literacy Mission, and Digital Saksharta Abhiyan . Yet It is obvious that digital divide is a major issue in India . Very often it is the marginalized and vulnerable who are sidelined. Regional disparities are obvious. States like Kerala are faring better than the rest. As per the 2015 all India figures, with 27% internet penetration, we can see that for every one person who can access internet, nearly three are left out. There is a need to explore the evolution of digital divides and the interrelations between the first and second level digital divide to find how Internet use lead to tangible and intangible outcomes in terms of life chances, social position, and well-being. The interview data in 2015 revealed that students coming from affluent families are more familiar with commercial transactions and information. So also in the case of gender divide many girls were found lacking awareness on optimal use of internet for employment, technology, commercial transactions etc, thereby leading to spending time in unproductive ways. The demographic variables gender, income and location were relevant in influencing how fruitfully this new medium was being utilized.

Popular Websites

Which are the websites or Apps commonly frequented by students? A notable finding in 2015 was the overwhelming popularity of WhatsApp, followed by Google, Facebook, Wikipedia, and Youtube in that order. In 2009 Google, was ranked first, followed by Orkut, Gmail, Yahoo and Facebook. Email which was one of the popular uses of internet is no longer important for the students, as they increasingly turn to Whatsapp, Facebook or Twitter for interpersonal and group communication. Pass time, and social interaction appear to be the primary drivers of net use amongst youngsters. Online banking, shopping, downloading music and films have also become more popular now. Wikipedia is the most popular informative website.

The interviews with students in 2015 reveal the shift in Digital Divide from access to usage. Socio demographic usage divides, persist even when access gaps are closed and this calls for further theoretical and empirical inquiry into these issues. Students are yet to realize the immense potential of web in serving their education related needs despite the fact that it is a treasure trove of education. Some of the reasons could be lack of awareness about the educa-

tion potential of the net, lack of efficacy in searching for educational content, limited high speed access, language barriers in educational content and expenses involved in downloading large amount of data. Awareness of cyber traps, cyber crime and privacy issues are not adequate among 70 % of students interviewed in 2015. Merely accessing internet will not suffice, instead they must utilize the immense possibilities of this medium.

These findings demand the attention of society. Concerns arise as a large majority of students are using Internet for excessive periods of time, for pass time and social interaction. This trend is disturbing as it negates potential of internet to serve the important instrumental uses of education and learning. It can also lead to addiction and other health hazards.

Yet another perspective that was enquired in the interview was based on the idea put forward by technology writer Nicholas Carr in his seminal work 'Is Google making us stupid? What the Internet is doing to our brains'. He argues that Internet might have detrimental effects on cognition that diminish the capacity for concentration, contemplation and memory retention. "Thinking has taken on a staccato quality, I fight to stay focused having lost the ability to read and absorb a longish article or book" (Carr, 2008). Many critics have disagreed with this concept as whenever any new media arrives, such fears are common in society. They say that long term psychological and neurological studies have yet to yield definite results.

This question was explored in 2015 and students were asked if they had the inclination to read lengthy books, or articles. 80% of the students interviewed opined that they do not have the patience to completely read longish books and articles. They preferred to scan through headlines, brief summaries, and photos and online videos.

The evolution of the Internet has mirrored an intense focus on the self, that is the hallmark of the new generation. The Web 2.0 has capitalized on our need to feel significant, admired and, above all, seen. "If you aren't posting, you don't exist. People say, 'I post, therefore I am,'" this, captures the essence of Web 2.0, which is driven by our hunger for self-expression and cyber fame. Our celebrity culture, and internet use patterns, has fueled subtle changes in personality patterns (Chaudhry, 2007). Keeping this aspect in mind, students were asked in the interview in 2015, how often they posted personal photos, videos, and how much importance they gave to the number of likes, followers, shares etc. More than 70% students agreed that their online image was very important to them and they spent considerable time and effort in this matter. They were deeply affected by their im-

age in the virtual world.

The findings suggest that in general the students are enamoured of this medium and consider it important in their lives. Internet use is associated with decline in traditional media use, such as newspapers. The digital divide appears to be narrowing at first glance yet it continues in subtle ways. Internet addiction and ensuing health hazards is certainly a genuine fear in the near future. This study is relevant because it maps the changes among two groups of students with a gap of six years. Some of these findings are on expected lines, some are pointers to future trends, and their implications are thought provoking, especially in the light of increasing diffusion of Internet in Indian society. Such studies besides providing a new theoretical framework to explain Internet will perhaps also give a framework for formulating policies suited to prevailing conditions.

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Negotiating Culture in Television Texts

■ Dr P. P. SHAJU*

ABSTRACT

Mass communication research has evolved over the years from source dominated to audience centred. Stuart Hall's reception analysis states that media programme will be understood, interpreted or negotiated by audience depending upon several factors. Accordingly, a programme can have dominant, negotiated and oppositional reading. Negotiation of culture portrayed in television programme is a complex process involving a complex linear structure affected in varying ways by the text portrayed, audience's engagement with the text and their sociocultural antecedents.

Keywords: Source Dominated, Audience Centered, Reception Analysis, Negotiation of Culture

Introduction

Communication research in the first half of the 20th century focused on what media did to its audience, that is, media content had an immediate and direct effect on thoughts and actions of individuals. Later, attention was shifted to limited effects perspective of mass communication. The research in this line concluded that media rarely had powerful and direct influence on individuals. This perspective further deliberated that mass communication created effects only on a few people and influenced trivial thoughts and actions.

Mass communication research further shifted to active audience perspective where the focus was on what people did with media rather than the earlier concept of what media did with people. Thus,

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a perceptive shift was visible from source-dominated approach to audience-centred approach. Although the latter approach was round the corner from 1940s, it gained momentum and academic attention in the 1970s and 1980s at the hands of the exponents of cultural media researchers. By this time, the reach and use of television in Europe, US and other countries expanded exponentially and research concentrated on what the viewers did with television programmes.

As stated earlier, the audience-centric approach was round the corner from 1940s. The uses and gratifications theory (Herzog, 1944; Schramm, 1954; Blumer, 1979) was one of the early audience-centric approaches which conceived that individuals seek certain uses from media and derive satisfactions in terms of the motives and self-perceived needs. McQuail (2005) lists some of the major gratifications sought from media such as information and education, guidance and advice, diversion and realization, social contact, value reinforcement, cultural satisfaction, emotional release, identity formation and confirmation, lifestyle expression, security, sexual arousal and filling time.

Stuart Hall, one of the prominent figures at the Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, contributed greatly to the audience-centric approach popularly known as reception studies or reception analysis. Hall (1980) argued that researchers should direct their attention to the twin aspects of social and political context in which the content is produced (encoding) and the consumption of the media content (decoding).

A key feature of Hall's reception analysis is the manner in which various types of audience make sense of media content. A centrally packaged programme beamed on a television will be understood, interpreted or negotiated by the viewers depending upon several factors. He stated that a programme/text can be read/decoded in three different ways.

1. Dominant/preferred reading

All messages/texts will have an intended meaning as perceived by the producer of the text. When a reader's interpretation coincides with that of the producer/s, there takes place a dominant reading.

2. Negotiated reading

Media messages are also open and they can be interpreted according to context and cultural backgrounds of a viewer. Thus, a reader may interpret the meaning of a message differently from what is intended by the producers. This process of understanding or

interpreting a message differently from the preferred understanding is referred to as negotiated reading.

3. Oppositional reading

In some cases, individuals can make interpretations that are in direct opposition to preferred meaning. Thus, depending upon a host of experiences and outlook, an individual may resist the intended meanings of the messages altogether and read them differently.

As cultural studies began to take roots, audience-centred approach gained ground in media studies. In that direction, David Morley (1980) conducted an extensive study from the perspective of Stuart Hall's reception analysis, to determine the ways in which audience make sense of media content. Morley showed an episode from *Nationwide*, a BBC television news magazine programme, to 29 groups of people drawn from various levels of British society ranging from business managers to students and trade unionists. After watching *Nationwide*, the groups discussed the programme and provided interpretations. Morley tape-recorded the discussions and then placed the views expressed by them into three categories as classified by Hall (1980). The categories being: dominant, negotiated and oppositional decoding. The upper-class group consisting of business managers considered the programme as mere entertainment and they had no dissonance with the views expressed. This decoding was categorized as dominant. Another group of shop stewards liked the format but objected to the message. They, however, felt that the programme failed to address the fundamental economic issues. Morley labelled this reading as oppositional. The groups of teacher trainees and liberal arts students had made a negotiated reading. In general, very few groups articulated the dominant decoding. Many of the groups made negotiated and oppositional readings of the programme.

Keeping line with reception analysis, Purnima Mankekar (1991) elaborately studied *Mahabharat*, a religious epic, serialized on Doordarshan from September 1988 to July 1990. She particularly laid emphasis on the public disrobing of Draupadi, one of the important female characters of the epic and the wife of the five *Pandava* brothers. Mankekar investigated the televisual experience of women viewers of *Mahabharat* on the discourses of nation, sexuality and gender. The researcher drew inputs from the *Mahabharat* crew as well as women viewers. According to the production team of *Mahabharat*, Draupadi indexed the position of women in society and her rage reflected the power of women. However, this power must be contained in the interest of the family and also the nation.

Much against the intended meaning, Mankekar study among

women viewers of New Delhi on the public disrobing episodes found the presence of oppositional reading with large number of viewers held Draupadi as an icon of women's vulnerability. Such an oppositional reading as Mankekar reasons out, stems from the daily experiences of women's emotional, financial and sexual vulnerabilities in Indian society. Draupadi's rage also had several interpretations. For some, it was a symbol of women's power. She did not bow her head and accept the public humiliation. Instead, she initiates revenge on her tormentors. Mankekar concludes from her ethnographic study that Draupadi is considered a role model for the contemporary Indian womanhood in contrast with Sita, an ideal role model for the traditional Hindu womanhood.

Negotiation Process

Negotiation of culture portrayed in soap opera refers to the way the members of the audience process, understand and assimilate the information either as such or by redefining/modifying it to suit their own self. Negotiation of culture portrayed in television soaps is a complex process. It involves a complex linear structure affected in varying ways by the text of the portrayal, audience's engagement with the text and their sociocultural antecedents. The linearity of the negotiation process consists of: i) soaps' text, ii) audience's attendance, iii) processing of the text, and iv) acting upon the meaning.

i) Soap's Text

In qualitative research, any sign and symbol message system are referred to as 'text', a concept advanced and used by semioticians. To a great extent, soaps' text as conceived and presented to the audience determines the nature of the audience's response. It is well known that all soap operas do not sell well. While some get rejected, some others are lapped up by the audience for considerably long periods. This suggests that the text of the soap matters. Factors such as the story line, the denotative and connotative cultural facets of the story, the appeal to the emotions, the unfolding drama, the way the ups and downs of life as managed by the characters, and soap production ingredients tell upon its popularity with the audience.

ii) Audience's Attendance

The audience is the master. It can make a soap endure or pack it off into oblivion. Audience is a heterogeneous entity. Its members belong to diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Besides these antecedents, their frames of reference in relation to soaps' text

and cultural proximity with soaps' settings and characters play an important role in the audience's attendance of a given soap opera.

iii) Processing of the Text

As the audience does not attend to the media messages uniformly, they tend to process messages in multifarious ways. In that, they are selective. They select a few messages and subject them to a processing in which they attach varying degrees of importance to the selected message/s. In addition, they also decide whether the selected message/s should be subjected to the next stage of negotiation: understanding and assimilation of the meanings. The processing of text is a complex cognitive process as scores of variables of the text and audience's antecedents come to bear influence. Central to this stage are the aspects of comprehending the text, its interpretation followed by making meaning synchronous with one's own frames of reference.

iv) Acting upon the Meaning

Acting upon the meaning inferred or conjured from the messages is the last stage of negotiation. The meanings derived from messages may bring about attitudinal changes and/or behavioral changes. The former could either reinforce existing attitudes or modify them. Corresponding to the attitudinal changes, some changes in the behavior of the audience may also manifest. These changes could range from changes in the use of languages, relationship within groups, behavior patterns, to life style facets.

Negotiation is a concept. Its construct is frame of references, that is, a set of viewpoints or presuppositions through which individuals assimilate and accommodate the incoming texts/messages of the central ideas of any communication, be it a news item, a novel or a television serial.

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Television and Voting Behaviour: How Television News and Debates Matter

■ Dr ABDUL MUNEER V*

ABSTRACT

When it comes to voting behaviour as a bone of contention, there are majorly two streams of discussions that the academics resort to. They are election surveys and election polls on the one hand which the commoners are also privileged to participate, and the other is purely academic entailing the areas like political science, mass communication and sociology. Most of these deliberations are pertaining to mass media which is said to be a major factor in moulding the voting behaviour. Despite the mushrooming of new media in the latter-day scenario, it is found that news and debates on television still have the most viewership. These news and debates help people formulate their political opinions and arguments, and also reinforce their political choices. This research paper attempts to argue that television news and debates factor much into voting behaviour. The reviews made in the paper establish that while these news and debates during election time reinforce predisposition of the voters, more often than not, they effectuate conversion. Whereas the act of reinforcement on the predisposition of voters is made by such debates in the cases of presidential elections, studies from Canada do not negate the possibilities the debates in changing the voting intentions of the viewers.

Keywords : Television News, Television Debates, Voting Behaviour, Persuasive Influence, The People's Choice

Introduction

Rajdeep Sardesai, in his book '2014 the Election that Changed India' observes the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaigns saying that, "Two battles were fought in the elections of 2014. One was the traditional battle across the heat and dust of a vast country, in basti and

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maidan, in street corner and chai shop; the other on television screen near you. Election 2014 was India's first general election where television became the defining arena of the contest" (Sardesai, 2014, p.220). The argument can be substantiated with the data provided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. As per the data, as many as four hundred 24/7 channels—both national and regional—across the country were broadcasting news on election and of current affairs during the election time. The number is an index to the change happened in the people of India in the ways of consumption and communication of news. Thus, the Election 2014 can be seen as having initiated a mini revolution in the entire gamut of the discussions on the influence of mass media on voting behaviour. Television's role in the same became a major topic of discussion thereafter. According to Sardesai, with the 2014 polls, a peculiar trend of television defining politics and politics being played for television was emerged (Sardesai, 2014). In the same fashion, the National Election Studies (NES) of 2019 conducted by Lokniti-CSDS also establishes the argument that 49 per cent of electorates responded depend on television news and debates to obtain information and to form their choices (Sardesai, 2020). It is against this background, the article attempts to probe into the scope and role of television news and debates in influencing voting behaviour.

Voting Behaviour: Two Streams of Studies

Voting behaviour, otherwise known as electoral behaviour, is made up of varied determinants which have the capacity to lead a person to voting for a candidate or a party. These determinants can be subjected to studies and understand the voting pattern. Voting behaviour as a field of study involves politics, sociology and psychology, and categorised field of studies like political psychology and electoral psychology have emerged recently.

The study of voting behaviour started as early as in the first decade of the twentieth century. Right from the inception of the branch, one can trace majorly two streams: First stream has always attempted to carry out inquiries pertaining to election surveys, election polls or exit polls. These activities are accompanied with opinion poll organisations and media units. Whereas, the second stream of inquiry emerges from various academic disciplines like political science, sociology, psychology and mass communication. Relevance of the streams of inquiry was established side by side with the accurate predictions made in the US magazine titled *Literary Digest*. In other words, the journal inaugurated election polls. The predictions made in the journal were proved correct consecutively for the four presidential elections in the US from

1920. The predictions of the journal fell wide in the 1936 US presidential election. By the US elections, the area of election studies developed and more refined methods of election predictions were adopted. George Gallup of the American Institute of Public Opinion emerged as a veteran in the field as all of his predictions were realised in the outcomes of elections.

Whereas in India, Dr. Eric da Costa, the founder of Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO) pioneered Voting Behaviour Studies (Kumar & Rai, 2013). The predictions that he made in his first attempt in 1957 just before the Lok Sabha Election were accurate. Dr. Eric da Costa had conducted a national level survey in the same year before the elections. Later in 1967, the inception of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) made the field brisk with activities related to elections. The purpose of establishing CSDS was “to map and measure voting behaviour and opinion of the Indian voter and help explain the electoral outcome” (Kumar & Rai, 2013, p. 20). CSDS continued to undertake various projects in order to achieve its set goals. It conducted a study of three parliamentary elections between 1996 and 1999 with a six-wave panel survey with a sample size of 15,000 electorates. Further in 2009, it carried out a project of National Election Study in order to comprehend the factors that help mould the voting behaviour of electorates and also to find out reasons for the consecutive success of some parties.

At the same time, a new wave in the field of election studies was felt in 1980s as the exit poll process was introduced into the field by Prannoy Roy. His exit polls became popular as the voters became curious to know the results beforehand. Prannoy Roy made the exit polls possible by the collaboration of Marketing and Research Group. By 1990s, other media organisations such as AC Nielson and Centre for Media Studies acquired reputation in the field. A new trend of both news channels and print media having collaborations with research organisations and psephologists was emerged in by 2004 general elections. These organisations helped the companies conduct their election polls. The same was witnessed in 2009 general elections also.

On the other hand, it was in the middle of the twentieth century that the second stream of voting behaviour study enters the field of academics. The field of study in academics started theorising various socio-political eventualities that conditioned and influenced the voting behaviour of the electorates. As a result, enduring theories and models pertaining to politics, election, communication and voting behaviour were produced.

Seminal Studies

An empirical study conducted by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet on the 1940 can be found to be the pioneering academic enterprise on voting behaviour. It made the 1940 US presidential election the subject and Erie County as the field of experiments. The study followed sociological approach and also longitudinal survey design with multivariate analysis. The findings of the study highlighted the 'minimal effects' thesis of media. It questioned the old hypothesis that media have great power of influence. Lazarsfeld and his associates state the objectives of the study in the introduction to the study:

We are interested here in all those conditions which determine the political behaviour of people. Briefly, our problem is this: to discover how and why people decided to vote as they did, and what were the major influences upon them during the campaign of 1940 (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944 p. 1).

The study adopted an imaginative panel method toward comprehending the voting intentions. The researchers collected data from a panel of sampled respondents at predetermined intervals. The panel method proved to be highly experimental in the sense the sampled respondents were exposed to interpersonal communication means during the ongoing election campaign. The samples were determined through stratified random sampling procedure administered on the four groups of 600 prospective electorates of Erie County. Three among the four groups were kept as control groups and the fourth group comprised of the core panel. The members of the group were interviewed every month from May to November of 1940. This design helped the researchers formulate opinion and identify voting intentions side by side with the election campaign incorporating the independent variables which always have a commendable influence. Those independent behaviours were the socio-economic status of the voters, party identification and the amount of exposure the electorates had to newspapers, magazines and radio.

The study established the thesis that the role of media in changing voting intentions was minimal: "Whenever respondents were asked to report on their recent exposures to campaign communications of all kinds, political discussions were mentioned more frequently than exposure to radio or print" (Lazarsfeld 1944, p. 150). It was further ensured by the results that opinion leaders had greater influence on the people of the locale. Lazarsfeld states that electorates "were resistant to conversion because of their strong dispositions" and the media had little influence to changing the behaviour (Lazarsfeld 1944, p. 95). Ac-

According to the study, the election campaigns helped 53 per cent of the respondents only to reinforce their initial vote intentions. It indicates that more than half of the respondents were preoccupied with voting decisions even before election campaign began. Conversion was detected only 8 per cent of the panel of voters as they shifted their preference from one presidential candidate to another (Lazarsfeld 1944, p. 103). To sum up the study, mass-communicated election campaigns “activated the indifferent voter who was predisposed; reinforced the partisan; and converted a few of the doubtful” (Lowery and De Fleur, 1988, p. 96).

Another study conducted by Lazarsfeld and associates in Elmira, New York was based on the 1948 US presidential election. It once again established the same argument that mass media campaigns do result in any change when it comes to voting intentions. The study further identified ethnicity, class, and family traditions as the influential factors. These variables are found to be not responding to mass media campaigns, but at the same time, they are vulnerable to direct social influence (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954). Both the studies revealed the minimal role of media in voting decisions. At the same time, they could bring out panel surveys and other methodological details as holding greater relevance in comprehending the course of election campaigns and voting behaviour.

The pioneering researches in the field of voting behaviour initiated by the Columbian University scholars were limited to semi urban locals. National level surveys were conducted in the year 1952 by the researchers at Michigan University. This research endeavour paved way for the American National Election Studies which still continues to conduct election surveys twice every election time—one before and another after the election. Field experts claim that the Michigan University’s national level election researches have been modelled after by the western European countries like Britain, Sweden, Spain, France Norway, and West Germany (Thomassen, 1994). The waves had reached other democratic countries like India where Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) conducted National Election Studies since 1967.

Whereas, the role of media in influencing voting behaviour of the electorates cannot be overruled in the current scenario. Any form of election-related programmes that feature on television—be it the coverage of campaigns; news and debates during electioneering; debates between candidates; comments made by anchors, field experts and party representatives—influence the voters in different ways. These televised programmes help them imbibe all that is important and dis-

card others. Variables that influence voting behaviour are as follows: the socio-economic background of the voter, the demographics, stance of party or candidate on issues, and personality of the candidate. Such campaigns, coverage and factors are evaluated by political scientists and election experts in order to identify their influence on three possible effects: activation, reinforcement and conversion. In this background, reviews of studies on the influence of television news and debates are made and presented in two sections. The first category of reviews is on television news and the second one is made up of reviews of studies on the role of televised debates in relation to voting behaviour.

Television News and Voting Behaviour

At the time of election campaign, television news always calibrates the focus on issues directly or indirectly related to the candidates or parties. Such news programmes tend to take a stock of the issues of relevance from the past, present and future and subject to analyse the reactions of the public toward the responses made on such issues by the candidates or political parties. In countries like the US where presidential elections are held and the debates between candidates play a major role in forming public opinions, news covers the debates between the candidates, and also analytical debates by political and election scientists on candidates' debates. On the other hand, in countries like India, where debates between candidates are not held, television news covers public addresses of the candidates and also the views of political and election analysts. Adequate reviews of studies discussing the role of news that cover debates and the subsequent commentaries are made.

Television newscasts always focused on the candidate's prospects of winning or losing. This practice can be found extant from 1970s. The study conducted by Patterson (1980) established this fact. Having analysed the news in television, newspapers and magazines, which were made during the presidential election of 1976, Patterson found that the as much as 58 per cent of the news time during the election was centred on the questions of who would win and who would lose, fashioned after the commentary made on a "horserace." Only 29 per cent cared to discuss the political scenario, policies and the good will of the candidates.

The "horse race" phenomenon during elections was found rampant in news networks like ABC, CBS, and NBC. The nightly evening shows of these networks were analysed by Larson (1999) during the 1996 presidential election. Larson examined the content of the stories to find out that there was hyper focus on "horse race."

The Handbook of Election News Coverage around the World, establishes the same argument. Editors Stromback and Kaid (2008) are of the view that “horse race coverage is prominent or dominant. This means that news media have adopted coverage habits that favour reports of campaign strategy, polling and “game frames” over analysis of substantive policy issues” (p. 425).

A departure from the minimal effect of television news on voting intention was traced by Robinson in his study conducted on the 1968 presidential election in which the electorates subscribed television news voted for the candidate George Wallace. A section of voters irrespective of education, age and class controls found being influenced by television news. This reinforcement effect of television news on voters was established by the study (Robinson cited Kraus and Davis, 1976).

It was by the 1970s, the practice of broadcasters covering election campaigns came into the trend and as a result, efforts to comprehend its influence on voting behaviour were made by researchers. A study using panel survey and content analysis was conducted by McCulure and Patterson during the 1972 US presidential election probing the possibility of any attitudinal or intention change in the viewers of television news programmes. This study found out that 30 per cent among the low-interest political group being influenced by the television news programmes. The voting intention of this group was affected by the candidate McGovern’s stance on corruption issues. Further, the change in this group’s beliefs was traced consistent with the content of the news programmes. This study established the ‘conversion effect’ of television news (McClure and Patterson, 1973).

At the same time, the studies of the 1980 NES panel survey conducted by Finkel (1993) established the ‘reinforcement effect’ of the newscasts when it came to the analysis of the voters’ partisanship. It paved way for further studies arising from the question if the partisan television news could reinforce voters’ predispositions. One of such studies was taken up by Hopkins and Ladd (2012) on the 2000 US election focusing the newscast content of the Fox news Cable, a conservative news channel. The content was found to be reinforcing the Republican loyalties. The channel was not involved in any form of persuasion to voting against or for. The Fox News thus reinforced the partisan voters, and thus the possibility of any form of ‘conversion’ was not possible. In the same vein, the study conducted by Dilliplane (2013) also vouches the argument. Dilliplane analysed the influence of partisan television news during the 2008 US presidential election. The study also found the partisan television newscasts having a sway in a way to reinforce the voting intentions and predispositions. It reduced

the possibility of conversion.

The television newscasts' capacity to produce reinforcement and conversion effects can also be found in different other countries like Norway, UK and West Germany. As much as 56 per cent of voters were found to have influenced by NRK1, the Norwegian television channel. The study conducted by Aardal (2007) claims that most of Norwegian people were influenced by the election campaign coverage in the channel, and a 47 per cent of voters changed their voting preferences according to the newscasts (Aardal cited in Haug, Koppang & Svennevig, 2010).

Another study in this category was conducted by Lawson and McCann (2005) in order to bring out the argument that television news can influence the voting behaviour. The study took up the 2000 Mexican elections by facilitating a four-leg panel survey. The data analysis substantiated the argument that television news during election campaigns have a sizable amount of influence upon the voting intentions of electorates who subscribe to the messages and content that feature in news channels. The study also suggests that the scope of television news acting as an intention-changer is mostly possible in emerging democratic systems. It shows that the political structure available in a country would also factor into the level of influence that media can exert upon the voters.

The role of Party Election Broadcasts (PEBs) during elections—election ads also—play a vital role in influencing the voting intentions. Johnson et al (1997) argue that advertisements during the election campaign attract the doubtful and undecided voters. Such voters are susceptible to persuasion. PEBs are commonplace in the US and UK elections. According to Norris and Sanders (2003), PEBs can “persuade voters to take a more favourable view of the broadcasting party vis-a-vis its opponents” (p. 526). They are supposed “to reinforce the commitment of their existing supporters, to persuade neutrals to view the party more sympathetically, and to raise doubts in the minds of supporters of opposing parties about the likely performance of their currently preferred party choice” (p. 526). PEBs can work in two ways: on the one hand it can ‘advocate’ for the candidate/party by highlighting the positive aspects; on the other hand, they can be used to “attack” the opposition by projecting the negative facets. Norris and Sanders conducted an analysis of both the possibilities of the PEBs and found out that the “attack” advertisements proved to be counterproductive as even the non-partisan voters as well as the predisposed voters of the three major parties—Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, and Conservatives—too them for granted.

Television Debates and Voting Behaviour

Political debates are characteristics with mainly the US elections. Debates between the candidates as well as news on debates are telecast. Whereas, this practice of direct debates between candidates is not found anywhere in the democratic states. In countries like India, either the representatives of political parties or political pundits engage in television debates. In the US, the debate is made on the news of relevant issues involving a panel of anchors, political scientists, and experts. Katz and Feldman (1962) opine that plethora of studies on the influence of election debates was carried out around the 1960 US presidential address. In such an effort, Middleton (1962) investigated how the debates between John F Kennedy and Richard Nixon by sampling a population of 143 Whites and 127 Blacks. He concluded that one of eight registered voters was influenced by such debates. He sums up his finding thus: "Certainly, the mass media can no longer be considered of minor significance in political campaigns" (1962, pp. 428-29).

At the same time, Abramowitz (1978) examined the influence of 1976 Ford-Carter debate (1978). The research was carried out using a panel survey. His study establishes the reinforcing effect of such debates as the viewers of them showed a tendency to subscribe to the issue stance of the already preferred candidates.

An indirect influence of the debates was traced by Bishop et al (1978) in their study conducted on the 1976 Ford-Carter debate. The study was carried out in the greater Cincinnati metropolitan area where the researchers interviewed as many as 898 adults using random digit dialling. Along with establishing the indirect effect of debates on electoral intentions, the study indicated to the unflinching predisposition of the respondents between their stance on issues and their voting behaviour on Election Day.

Similar findings were made in the study conducted by Cho and Ha (2012). The researchers facilitated a before-and-after panel design to investigate the effects of the debates during the election campaign of the 2004 US elections. Having gone for two-wave national panel survey, they concluded that debates between contestants found to be reinforcing the partisan predispositions. Also, the Pew Research Centre's post-election survey indicated that 67 per cent of the total respondents agreed that the debates between Barack Obama and John McCain were 'very helpful' or somewhat helpful. As much as 28 per cent agreed that the debates were 'very helpful' and 39 per cent said they were 'somewhat helpful' (Pewresearch, 2012)

When it comes to the discussion of election debates in the UK, Denver (2010) opines that 40 per cent of electorates formulated their intentions during the election campaign which was indicative of the changing trends in the nature of electorates who used to have deep rooted predispositions. It does not mean that the debates and following discussions of experts and representatives affect the intentions uniformly. Reasons for the same can be cited as follows: Some voters are neither aware of nor interested in the whole affairs of election campaigns. At the same time, others have always developed a partisanship for a party or candidate. Researchers argue that these reasons prepare a ground for shifts in electoral intentions of the voters (Blais and Boyer, 1996). At the same time, the studies conducted on the Canadian elections involving television debates and media coverage state that television debates had a sizeable amount of influence on the electoral intentions (Blais et al, 1999). The same trend was traced by the studies conducted on the influence of debates on electoral intentions during the 1997 elections in Canada (Fournier et al, 2004). The study concludes by saying that, "Over half of citizens say they made their voting decision during the course of the campaign, and they form a relatively interested, attentive, informed, and less committed group which is more likely to be reached by, to be receptive to, and to be responsive to campaign stimuli" (p. 677). Moreover, they found out that "This proportion surpasses comparable statistics from Great Britain and the United States" (p. 677).

Tsfati (2003, p. 76) who investigated into the influence of debates during the 1996 presidential election states that, "Many people might follow the news coverage of a debate even without watching the program itself. Other people might watch only parts of the debate but take in much of the accompanying media treatment of it. For many, following the coverage of a debate might be more instructive than watching the lengthy debate which some time is boring. The news provides a synopsis of what happened in the debate, a review of its interesting moments, and commentary that might help people make sense of it. Following the news coverage of the debate is thus useful for both debate watchers and non-watchers."

In addition to the variables that influence voting behaviour during election campaign, the panel consisting of "political pundits" and representatives of political parties also affect voting intentions of electorates. Having conducted a long-term study, Page and Shapiro (1982) confirmed that the discussion panel including former Presidents catalysed to change public opinion (Cited in Gulati, Just and Crigler, 2004).

Based on the reviews of studies involving various factors of influence, it can be said that television debates between presidential can-

didates do bring about changes in the voting behaviour of the electorates. Despite the number of voters watching election debates is less, the news that provide the highlights of those debates are resorted by most of them, and this practice has a capacity either to reinforce the predispositions and preferences. Whereas the debates and news on debates bring about reinforcement effect in the US, conversion is found as the outcome of the same in Canada. Moreover, apart from the socio-economic positions of the electorates, factors like their interest in debates and election campaigns and their interpersonal interaction among same interest groups act as a key mediated variable in deciding the course of voters' intentions.

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Communication Smart Gadgets Empowering ‘Human Transformed into Proactive Media’ in Kerala

■ Dr RAJEEV MOHAN R.*

ABSTRACT

This is an explorative study that analyses on the social media catalysed incidents that hoisted the intervention of a common man into an active participant/respondent of events. The technological evolution and proliferation of communication smart gadgets along with the internet connectivity abundance turns social media platform into a discursive space. Every person turned to be a producer as well as a consumer of message to become a prosumer (Toffler, 1980).

This study focuses on different issues that enabled a normal onlooker into a prosumer. The issues selected in a random sampling method are like Hanan Hameed issue, Sreejith 764 day strike and Kerala floods. These incidents attracted prominence in mainstream media after it was highly viral and widely debated in social media platforms. The selection of cases are done in a purposive sampling method considering the wide intervention in its full round cycle.

For this an in-depth analysis of the cases selected will be analysed with a pre-set scale and through interviews were held among the social media activists to identify the extent of peer group influences, like-mindedness and political influences in the choice of such events.

Keywords : Social media, New Media, Digital era, Prosumer, New media Activism, Kerala, Media Democracy

Introduction

Communication possibilities by and large gain importance when a medium assures active involvement of its participants. Different online applications elevate human interest to express ideas through social media. Advantages of such platforms are its utility regardless of any social, economic and political status. Going back to Aristotle,

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human is identified as a conglomerate of rational and soul that drives the thought and reflection. In which the soul is considered as the form for communication. Human by nature have an innate quality from the beginning to make any possible means to express and record his/ her existence. Experience in dealing with the known and unknown forces of nature groomed human developing signs and language from the beginning. Even though literature has a much impact sound and sight became the most engaged faculty that guaranteed effective discourse for understanding. Social situations were expediently paving way for new norms and conditions. Gradually the society surpassed through progressive thoughts reassigning each yardstick into a new structure of living. The transformation in information and communication technology happened in bringing novel methods of interactive communication. The communication potentials also developed along with the advancement in inventing new machines. Technology went on transforming and developing new gadgets with multifunction for communication prospects. There were more consumers for limited number of medium at one stage, availability of more medium in the second and now individually each one having a personal medium. Also after the technological evolution and proliferation of communication smart gadgets along with the accessibility of internet connectivity it enabled social media platform into a discursive space. Every person turned to be a producer as well as a consumer of message to become a prosumer (Toffler, 1980).

Several instances exhibit a takeover trend by the mainstream media including newspapers and television channels after the social media platform started reporting it. While looking at the presentation of such events it is evident that they don't follow a structured manner of reporting news rather an unstructured presentation of events in social media. By a regular viewing experience it may be hypothetically stated that there happens to be a structure forming out of this unstructured. Major players of such online applications stretch its wings through YouTube, Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram and online portals. Several cases were smartly reported through these major platforms either from the point of a citizen or in the banner of the mainstream media house.

Kerala society and ideological interventions

Society at large is a formulation from several deliberations of socially, politically diverse groups that coexist in a same geography. Social factors like gender, caste, religion, weaker sections of the society and political differences due to the existing social situation of upbringing become decisive about the morality. Moreover to become

an ideal society several factors like ethics, law & order and living practices of diversified groups conglomerate to find a shared space to lead a considerate life. In general it can be identified as a country, state or other jurisdictionally accepted and approved exercise on the basis for a peaceful coexistence. India is the largest democratic country in the world that encompasses diversity in a liberal ground. Kerala is the southernmost tip of the country which rarely resembles any other states in India. Factors like literacy, gulf money, matriarchy, communism, renaissance movement, social and philosophical society's et al transformed the cultural traits and social behaviour of the state from time to time. Media has intervened as a part and parcel of the society at large regardless of any discrimination. High importance was bestowed upon the media activities with a strong belief to its content. An avenue to form media content then were very limited or nil instead being a good consumer. After the advent of internet and new media a large scope for content formation was rapidly made available for many. It have effectively attracted the proactive masses overall and the youth in specific. Involvement in the social media became directly an intervention towards the general public. There is a very active participation visible by social media enthusiasts who gradually turn into content producers with regular exposure to it as a consumer.

Study focus and relevance

The major focus of the study is on covering the social media driven incidents that have lifted the level of human into a proactive media beholder. As an interactive media platform consumers of events are habituated to interact on any issues with respect to their own ethical and societal upbringing. Every person turned to be a producer as well as a consumer of message to become a prosumer. Different issues that have been discussed vehemently like Hanan Hameed issue, Sreejith 764 day strike and Kerala floods are taken as cases for an in-depth analysis. Projection of the issue is analysed by the treatment made in describing each one. The emotional and rational factors like satire, sympathy, encouragement are scrupulously identified.

For the relevance of the study the active reasons for participatory involvements are analysed like peer group influences, like-mindedness, political affiliation et al. An open interview with the active users of various social media groups and individual accounts are administered along with and tabled for a thematic analysis of the rational and emotional approach of the respondents. The sample of the study was chosen through snowball sampling method which constituted from different geographical areas of Kerala regardless of

a ceiling to the age or social difference. Those who were selected had high intervention in social media regardless of widely discussed social issues chosen for the study. Communication smart gadgets opened ample scope for the users along with various platforms available via the internet. This is an explorative study that analyses on the social media catalysed incidents that hoisted the intervention of a common man into an active participant/ respondent of events.

Hanan Hameed issue: A 19 year old college going student who sold fish in a market place for living in a student uniform attracted media attention.

Sreejith 764 day strike: A 30 year old youth lead a strike of 764 days in front of the secretariat alleging his brother's custodial death.

Kerala floods: A massive flood happened in Kerala due to monsoon outbreak in 2018. Several youth came into rescue and support.

These three issues are taken as cases that include individual driven event and a massive event for the study. Similar scale is offered to measure the technological supported intervention of the activists in social media and its expression on mainstream media.

Technological advancement of communication smart gadgets and confidence level

Technology empowered the common citizen irrespective of their profession to shoot and talk in front of the camera. Majority of the respondents who are active users of social media especially You Tube and Face book accepted about the increase in confidence level after smart phones started bringing out more defined tools. Open ended questions pertaining to the utility of smart phones, knowledge of the configuration, ease and experience of using it, clarity of the events selected, social commitment and confidence were taken for identifying the efficacy of smart gadgets use. (Table 1)

As the table represented in percentage of online content generation activists from Row 3, 6 and 7 ease of using new gadgets and good smart phone catalyses confidence along with the level of social commitment very high and high. Where the understanding about the configuration of gadget as on in Row 2 (Average 9%) and clarity of issues or events selected in Row 5 (Average 4%) brings an average level for users. Row 1 and Row 4 regarding the utility and experience in using them remain in total with the high and very high level.

No.	Questions	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very low	Total (%)
1	Smart phones utility	87	13	-	-	-	100
2	Knowledge of the gadgets configuration	73	18	9	-	-	100
3	Ease of using new gadgets	97	3	-	-	-	100
4	Experience in using	89	11	-	-	-	100
5	Clarity of issues/ events selected	88	8	4	-	-	100
6	Thought about social commitment	94	6	-	-	-	100
7	Good smart phone catalysing confidence	97	3	-	-	-	100

Table 1

Content of social events produced and disseminated in social media at large

The content of social events is extended from different perspectives. It can be either individual or a mass event that is highly portrayed and discussed in. Major respondents more or less express the similar opinion about the rational and emotional method of expression while interacting with different events. Alarming the approach towards the individual issue and mass issue differs in various representation levels dissected under emotional as sympathetic, adverse and satirical as well as under rational level empathy, critic and solution are selected. When observing the reaction for the individual issue under emotional appeal, sympathetic (37%) along with satirical (32%) gains the most support and in the mass issue under rational appeal, empathetic (48%) strike the most choice next to be critic (16%). Alarming in both individual and mass issues the solution (2%) under rational issue stands very less and similar. (Table 2)

Appeal	Reaction	Individual issue	Mass Issue
Emotional	Sympathetic	37	7
	Adverse	15	9
	Satirical	32	18
Rational	Empathetic	11	48
	Critic	3	16
	Solution	2	2
Total (Percentage)		100	100

Table 2

From the table 2 emotional and rational approaches of the issues are considered for scrutiny. The content was dissected with the role and responsibility of state in tackling the issue, the civil society concerns and content towards the plight of living situations. It is evident from the respondents that looking at an individual issue and mass issue are diametrically opposite with its emotional and rational approach.

The table 2 elucidate the sympathetic and satirical boxes are more checked in while addressing an individual issue (Hanan Hameed, Sreejith 764 days) where as in a mass issue (Kerala floods) empathetic box is checked 48%. The critic and solution under the rational approach for individual issue is very less as to 3% and 2% correspondingly. For the mass issue approach sympathetic and adverse approach under mass issue stands 7% and 9% correspondingly. The suggestion for solution of such issues remains similar as figured in table as 2% each.

Expression of events with a subjective interpretation

While looking at the content the use of words, sentence and spoken language carries a colloquial method of expression. While looking at the use of language through communication smart gadget different dialects are used in plenty by the activists. Human turns to be a proactive content creator of news expressing through micro level geography. The large and wide possibility for dissemination of event is made possible through the connectivity assured via internet technology. The widely accepted issues even though carry a subjective

interpretation in developing the content the general outlook for the issues remains with common perspective. Individual level events got more sympathetic level of acceptance while treated in a satirical method. Mass level issues received a more empathetic appreciation leaving critic space under the rational approach (Table 2).

Thought of the Study

The conduct of the study resulted in revealing the interest of mostly active respondents and prosumer of social media as enthusiasts with social outlook. The main stream media promulgating content among general public gives lesser opportunity of involvement for the consumers to the content generated. Recent space for active participation to the enthusiasts in media has paved a wider highway after the proliferation of online media. More and more respondents actively participate leaving their mark in the public sphere through this media opportunity. Any social differences regardless of gender, age, class or caste utilizes the space in an active method. The rational and emotional approach towards events created in social media content is widely discussed based on its proximity in content. Mainstream media space was grabbed by new media discussed events after the involvement of its wide acceptance. Adverse approach was less towards mass events circulated than individual events in online platform. Satirical method of expression is the part more likely accepted while considering the individual event and mass events. Even though the social commitment spread out through the notion of active users of the online media the interest towards satirical expression warns about the psyche of the participants. Issues selected for expressing content of events have more or less similar objective.

Recommendations of the Study

The wider acceptance of satirical expression brings a new insight for this study as it can be used for more research prospects in future. The selected cases were randomly assembled for the benefit of the objective of this study, more cases may be chosen with individual issue and mass issue in future with a comparative approach.

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Language, Politics, and the Reorganization of States

■ Dr B. HARIHARAN*

ABSTRACT

It is relevant to reread some of the arguments that shaped the linguistic reorganization of states in India after independence. For, the states continue to reorganize the idea of India taking in the many critical concerns presented before the Justice Fazal Ali Commission. This paper will discuss briefly B. R. Ambedkar's position on language and reorganization for the lessons it gives when we look back at 1956. A discussion on these lines is relevant today in the context of the many debates in media and society about the need for a second reorganization of states and the division of larger states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and the most recent bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in 2014. The paper examines how there is a kind of lingua politics that is played out and asks whether it will be possible to redraw State boundaries using non-linguistic parameters. Or, how much are we entrenched in the official language politics of the State?

Keywords : Language, Politics, State, Reorganization, Nation, Nation-State, Sub-nation, Nationalism

This paper is an attempt to reread some of the arguments that shaped the linguistic reorganization of States in India after independence. Such an undertaking is significant for even to this day, the States continue to reorganize the idea of India taking in the many critical concerns presented before the Justice Fazal Ali Commission. In this context, I propose to discuss briefly B.R. Ambedkar's position on language and reorganization for the lessons it gives when we look back at 1956. A discussion on these lines is relevant today in the context of the many debates in media and society about the need for a

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second reorganization of States and the division of larger States, and in particular, the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

Language is a socio-cultural phenomenon. India has a rich linguistic history that is distinct. Till at least independence, language was not harnessed for an explicit political project (Pollock 288 – 292). It was not allied to any specific religion (28 – 29, 424). There was no concept of mother tongue in pre-modern India (319). Language did not identify groups (417). This history makes the diversity of languages and their lives in India stand apart. “Linguistic diversity was considered in some sense natural, not a deviation to be corrected. Despite linguistic diversity, different languages could share literary forms, a common intellectual culture and through a range of common references even develop in relation to each other” (“Babble of Babel”). A central concern that free India had to address had to do with the sustenance of these relationships that shaped diversity.

And yet, when we look back, the germination of the idea that brought together party, politics and language somehow did not acknowledge this diversity. Consider, for example the important 1920 Nagpur conclave of the Indian National Congress. “In 1920, the Indian National Congress meeting in Nagpur resolved to reorganize its own party structure according to linguistic provinces and called on the government to reorganize the administration of the provinces of British India along similar lines” (Joseph E. Schwartzberg 139). What the meeting resolved merits attention for it was a curious proposition that is a pointer to the idea of the emergence of the nation-State.

Any discussion of the idea of nation-State has to acknowledge Johann Gottfried Herder who believed that “with language is created the heart of a people” (<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1784herder-mankind.asp>). Drawing from the work of Herder who does not specifically use the term, Louis L. Snyder sums up the concept of the nation-State drawing attention to the premise of its formation and notes that in, “...the concept of the nation-State, ... the boundaries of the State must coincide with those of the nation” (Louis L. Snyder 5 – 6). Discussing the origins of national consciousness, Snyder sums up what makes the nation: “The idea that nations should be defined by ethnic and linguistic criteria, and that each such nation should govern itself in a separate nation-State, spread through Central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century” (6). It is important to emphasize here that Herder’s theory of the *Volk* “provided Germans with a rationale for belonging to a single State on the basis of their specific ethnic characteristics” (5).

It is not surprising therefore that politics and culture come together in the name of the people to draw up group identities. There are examples in history like the unification of Italy or Germany with notable differences. Apart from this, ethnic homogeneity of Italian States, and the multinational character of Austria (8) and Hungary (8-9) come to mind. To return to the Nagpur conclave, the question is whether the Congress party in 1920 was advocating a kind of linguistic nationalism that collapsed identification of language groups and the *Volk* for a political narrative.

To address this question, it is imperative to examine the background of this narrative. Schwartzberg discusses the factors in favour of the division of States on linguistic lines and shows how the idea first came up. He writes: "...the idea [of establishment of linguistic provinces] had been mooted by both the British and the Congress on a variety of occasions since 1903, when Sir Herbert Risley, then Home Secretary in the Government of India, first raised the issue in connection with the proposed partition of the sprawling polyglot Bengal Presidency" (Joseph E. Schwartzberg 143). He also draws attention to the fact that "The 1905 partition, arguably, was what first aroused Congress' sensitivity to the language issue in respect to the territorial organization of British India, and it was in the context of the protest over partition that the first Congress linguistic province was established in Bihar in 1908" (143). This idea of a linguistic nationalism was very evident in Mohandas Gandhi who clearly articulated his position of using language in the independence struggle. "Gandhi placed the language issue at the heart of the independence movement. 'It is my humble but firm opinion,' he said in 1918, 'that unless we give Hindi its national status and the provincial languages their due place in the life of the people, all talk of Swaraj is useless'" (Granville Austin 47 – 48).

It is against this background that I now attempt to revisit in some detail the Linguistic Reorganization of States. Sri Potti Sriramulu began his last fast on October 19, 1952 at Madras for a separate Andhra State and continued his fast until he died on the night of December 15, 1952. In December 1953, Prime Minister Nehru appointed the States Reorganization Commission to prepare for the creation of States on linguistic lines. Justice Fazal Ali headed this and the commission itself was known as the *Fazal Ali Commission*. G.B. Pant, who served as Home Minister from December 1954, oversaw the efforts of this commission. The commission created a report in 1955 recommending the reorganization of India's States.

Any discussion of this very seminal recommendation and its implementation will be incomplete without reference to B. R. Ambedkar's thoughts on forming States on linguistic lines. It

is interesting to note Ambedkar referring in 1948 to the Austro-Hungarian problem in discussing situations in Non-linguistic provinces in his Statement submitted to the Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948. He wrote:

The reasons why a unilingual State is stable and a multi-lingual State unstable are quite obvious. A State is built on fellow feeling. What is this fellow-feeling? To State briefly it is a feeling of a corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel that they are kith and kin. This feeling is a double-edged feeling. It is at once a feeling of fellowship for one's own kith and kin and anti-fellowship for those who are not one's own kith and kin. It is a feeling of 'consciousness of kind' which on the one hand, binds together those who have it so strongly that it over-rides all differences arising out of economic conflicts or social gradations and, on the other, severs them from those who are not of their kind. It is a longing not to belong to any other group ("Thoughts on Linguistic States").

Ambedkar's discussion of fellowship and fellow-feeling here takes one back to the idea of Herder's *Volk* and nation-State. As Snyder puts it,

The concept of the nation-State pre-supposed an exact correlation in the boundaries of the nation and the State; in reality this seldom occurred. Whenever it did not occur, so that some other ethnic group was also encompassed within the State, tension arose between the majority and minority groups, because the minority was *ipso facto* an alien element. The minority could not join in building the national character and culture of the dominant people, nor could its own national aspirations be satisfied. Minority peoples were anomalies within the nation-State, and were received as elements which weakened and divided it. It was thought that such minorities must be assimilated, so that the entire population of the nation-State might belong to one culture and speak one language (Louis L Snyder 10).

The kind of problems in forming and consolidating identities discursively shape group formations and Ambedkar was aware of it as is evident in his critique of forming States on linguistic lines.

He thus raised three crucial points on the recommendations of the Commission. His remarks must be quoted in full here as it touches

on certain seminal concerns regarding the political idea of the State, the nature of its constitution on linguistic lines and the accompanying issues that could emerge depending on the manner of division:

- 1) The Commission evidently thinks that the size of a State is a matter of no consequence and that the equality in the size of the status constituting a federation is a matter of no moment. This is the first and the most terrible error cost which the commission has committed. If not rectified in time, it will indeed be a great deal.
- 2) This scheme of dividing India in the name of Linguistic States cannot be overlooked. It is not so innocuous as the Commission thinks. It is full of poison. The poison must be emptied right now. The nature of Union of India expresses only an idea. It does not indicate an achievement.
- 3) This consolidation of the North and balkanisation of the South is not the way to reach it. ("Thoughts on Linguistic States")

At the same time, he was of the opinion that India needs States based on language. He had two important reasons for it: "To make easy the way to democracy and to remove racial and cultural tension." He was further convinced that "In seeking to create linguistic States India is treading the right road. It is the road which all States have followed. In the case of other linguistic States they have been so, from the very beginning. In the case of India she has to put herself in the reverse gear to reach the goal. But the road she proposes to travel is well-tried road. It is a road which is followed by other States" ("Thoughts on Linguistic States").

He was not in favour of having a mixed State. Quite categorically he said that this idea must be completely abandoned. "Every State must be a unilingual State. One State, one language. The formula one State, one language must not be confused with the formula of one language, one State."

The formula one language, one State means that all people speaking one language should be brought under one Government irrespective of area, population and dissimilarity of conditions among the people speaking the language. This is the idea that underlies the agitation for a united Maharashtra with Bombay. This is an absurd formula and has no precedent for it. It must be abandoned. A people speaking one language may be cut up into many States as is done in other parts of the world.

Into how many States a people speaking one language should

be cut up, should depend upon (1) the requirements of efficient administration, (2) the needs of the different areas, (3) the sentiments of the different areas, and (4) the proportion between the majority and minority.

As the area of the State increases the proportion of the minority to the majority decreases and the position of the minority become precarious and the opportunities for the majority to practise tyranny over the minority become greater. The States must therefore be small.

The minorities must be given protection to prevent the tyranny of the majority. To do this the Constitution must be amended and provisions must be made for a system on plural member constituencies (two or three) with cumulative voting. ("Thoughts on Linguistic States")

But, as Asha Sarangi points out, "Through these considerations, Ambedkar wanted to avoid an impending danger of the communalisation of linguistic identity. However, how Ambedkar could have explained the rise of Shiv Sena in Bombay as a 'sons of the soil' movement is an intriguing aspect to understand within the schema of linguistic States proposed by him" (Asha Sarangi "Ambedkar and the Linguistic States"). Is it all that intriguing? Consider his argument while discussing the position of the city of Bombay and Gujaratis. "Again it is not realised that the increase in the non-Marathi-speaking people in the Bombay City is due to the absence of a local law restricting citizenship. If Bombay State had such a law all this influx into Bombay from all parts of India could have been shut out and the Maharashtrian majority retained" ("Thoughts on Linguistic States"). One need only recall what happened to workers from Bihar in Maharashtra, or even the typecasting of people from South India in Bollywood or in the Hindi-speaking belt, or for that matter the way in which we have notions of developed and backward States. The problem is precisely the bureaucratic rationale that worked out a formula that bounded language, region, and geographies. This rationale overlooked the fact that languages are contextual in a different sense of the word.

Was there any other way in which the States could have been reorganized? It certainly required an understanding of the linguistic diversity that opened up new possibilities and recognized the fluidity of living in such a symbiotic State. But the way in which language identity consolidated with territorial boundaries and crystallized sub-nations was certainly not what Prime Minister Nehru wanted when the linguistic division was settled. In a well-argued article, Pratap

Bhanu Mehta draws attention to this when he writes,

Another casualty of the 1956 settlement was a remarkable idea of Nehru's: he thought of genuinely multi-lingual areas like Hyderabad, Bombay and Madras, as something like cosmopolitan zones, a standing riposte to the idea that language, territory and ethnicity should coincide. These would be the zones where languages and identity would seamlessly meld into each other, creating all sorts of new languages and possibilities. The great virtue of modern India is that in some ways what Nehru thought was true of places like Bombay is increasingly coming to define more of India. The lines of different languages run through each one of us rather than between us. A time might come where the alignment of language, territory and identity will seem as ineffectual as attempts by snooty custodians of language to preserve its purity. But, as the rest of India becomes more diverse, it is precisely these cosmopolitan zones that have become hostage to the politics of identity. Perhaps there is an argument to be made, both in linguistic and economic terms, for carving out these dense concentrations of populations as administrative zones in their own right. ("Babble of Babel")

As the States were reorganized based on language for administrative purposes, it might help to look at the premise once again. We need to remember that twenty two Indian languages find space in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. A proposal to increase it to thirty-eight has been with the government for some time and English interestingly finds a place in the list. Incidentally, the Indian Constitution is written in English; the Constitution or any law making body has not defined any national language though Hindi and English are used as official languages. English is not phased out of the administrative system; there is lingua-politics that plays itself out. In this scenario, Kancha Ilaiah called for a rethink arguing that "Linguistic States deserve a relook at a time when English is developing as a pan-Indian language. Indian regional languages are not as advanced as European languages like English, French, German, Spanish, and so on....Now there is no possibility of these languages developing to the level of European languages. In an underdeveloped language system, thought processes will also remain underdeveloped" (Feb 21, 2007. *Times of India*). The argument about the development of English in India is very convincing but Ilaiah's claim that the notion of an underdeveloped language system in relation to European languages smacks of condescension and does not recognize the fact that all those languages had much more than a curious history finding some space in a footnote. It is important to recognize that the kind of environment in which regional languages in India consolidated their

power is in relation to the politics of the boundaries drawn in 1956.

Ambedkar's concern about the power language has merits citation here. He wrote, "One language can unite people. Two languages are sure to divide people. This is an inexorable law. Culture is conserved by language. Since Indians wish to unite and develop a common culture it is the bounden duty of all Indians to own up Hindi as their language" ("Thoughts on Linguistic States"). He developed his ideas about having an official language and saw clearly the function of regional languages when he wanted to "...provide in the Constitution that the regional language shall not be the official language of the State. The official language of the State shall be Hindi and until India becomes fit for this purpose English. Will Indians accept this? If they do not, linguistic States may easily become a peril" ("Thoughts on Linguistic States"). In the present circumstances, it will be difficult to gloss over this position about the way regional languages function in a linguistically designed State. The reference to Hindi here has strong echoes of Gandhi's position even as it limits the play of languages that promote their growth and development. And yet, he had publicly acknowledged that at the Congress party meeting that deliberated on the Draft Constitution the vote adopting Hindi as national language was tied evenly at 78 votes each and when it came for vote again the tally was 77 against and 78 favouring Hindi. Why is it that Ambedkar's proposal about official languages for States has not come up for public discussion when there are calls for a second reorganization of States?

The question then is how effectively has Indian civil society addressed the problem of working out the distinction between one State, one language, and one language, one State? We have recast language and State in a power differential that proclaims one language-bound 'nation' against another. Paul R. Brass asks how does one "explain the attachment that most people feel towards their language, the passion that it arouses, and the willingness of some people to die in defence of their language in language movements?" (364). If context demands, language can be the instrument of imperialism. Likewise, it can incarnate any avatar. What it also underscores is perhaps the romantic consolidation of an identity that has a strong emotional quotient. Consider, for instance, Karnataka where a people identify their language and culture in the interesting synecdoche of a flag.

Paul R. Brass' observation about the emotional politics language opens up does not see this potential. He writes, "It is not clear to me that most people are so attached to their language, that their attachment is passionate, and that it may move some amongst them to die in its cause. It appears to me rather that such attachments,

passions, and commitments also arise only under specific conditions, that they are often a mask behind which lie other interests, and that the passionate attachment is not to the language but to the self” (364-365). He further adds, “In a word, this love of one’s language is a form of displacement of narcissism of the self onto the language, and of derision and disregard onto the language of the other” (365).

What we have here is a kind of balkanisation that Ambedkar feared. We must see here precisely the presence of the Western intellectual tradition of the idea of the Herderian *Volk* continuing to shape the language politics of sub-nationalism that draws clear boundaries within the nation. For it is useful to remember that for Herder, language distinguishes human beings from animals; language is learned as part of communities and it is specific to communities and moulds culture. This has a lot of bearing in the formation of the nation and its character. Following Herder’s conception of nation and national character, we may understand the history of nineteenth-century Europe as a progress toward the goal of having the political boundaries of nations coincide with the boundaries of language communities. When we compare the emergence of ‘language-bound’ nations in India with the model of European States that were thus bound and available as a template in the reorganization of States, it helps revisit some of the anxieties expressed in Ambedkar.

An example here will illustrate the point. D. Javare Gowda and the Kannada literati sought Classical Language Status for Kannada because Tamil Nadu got it. Kerala claimed and got the same for Malayalam after Tamil and Kannada. Other States followed suit claiming the status for the languages spoken by their people. The status of Indian languages now is such that we have succeeded in creating an iconography for the language we speak and sustain it emotionally. And so, there are people who speak, for example, of ‘*Amma Malayalam*’. Kancha Ilaiah’s comment is quite pertinent here: “The Dravidian or Pali linguistic roots of these languages are set aside and every linguistic State wants to prove that its language is great.” Kancha Ilaiah’s 2007 remark sounds prophetic now: “With English developing as a language of administration and the market in India, the country can now afford to sidestep the European model of linguistic nations. It is important to initiate a debate on this larger question before Andhra Pradesh, the first linguistic State to be formed, is split on developmental grounds. Once this happens, the principle of underdeveloped regions within every linguistic State being divided on the same grounds as AP comes into play. Each region can put forth its own case” (“State of English”).

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in 2014 seems to have been anticipated in Ambedkar’s

remarks about the size of States for administrative purposes. Language identity is reinforced in tracing the genealogy of the struggle for Telangana that goes back during the time of the initial move to divide States based on language. “The seeds of Telangana struggle were sown in 1955 when the recommendation of the States Reorganization Commission to retain Hyderabad as a separate State went unheeded” (“The Story of India’s 29th State: Telangana”). What has also happened is that language politics enmeshes itself in the vortex of the language of developmental realpolitik that the two Telugu speaking States speak differently when it comes to sharing natural resources like water or even infrastructure that was once the result of a unifying linguistic identity. It is useful to recall a rather similar conflation of language politics and economic development in the 1960s which is discussed in Karat Prakash’s *Language and Nationality Politics in India*. Karat Prakash’s insights on the anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu draws attention to how the fight “for Tamil (if not English) has been also motivated by feelings of economic domination from the North” (93). It remains to be seen how language and identity politics will be played out especially when the two Telugu speaking States grapple with the question of sharing the waters of Krishna and Godavari. This could get even more complex when the other riparian States involve in the discussion for their share of water.

There is another example that collapses language and river water into one of sub-national identity politics: “...the contests and conflicts between different, especially neighbouring States, though coloured by the language of the parties involved are not linguistic in their origin. The Cauvery water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka is not a fight between Tamils and Kannadigas, though politics, at times, makes it appear so.” (Shastri Ramachandran). The conflict may not be just linguistic, it is about sharing natural resources. But implicated in the identity of water is an anxiety that expresses a unitary, sealed-off language identifying a Kannada or a Tamil nation to the extent that TV channels and highways are blocked. This recipe has always been served with rich toppings.

Language has intentions. We have to understand that languages grow with intentions. State boundaries are fixed in Acts of Parliament (or so we think and forget that the Union of India is an idea); languages transgress boundaries in multiple ways. Now would it be possible to redraw State boundaries using non-linguistic parameters? Or, how much are we entrenched in the official language politics of the State? Fundamentally, the intervention of the State into the dynamics of language creates an uncanny language politics that is here to stay. Since language is Priapic, it swallows the State. The consolidation of identity over the years needs to be critiqued as a first step to check

the tendencies of language-bound chauvinism of the State.

We need to understand the implications of the coincidence of political boundaries with boundaries of language communities especially when these have consolidated the various matrices that describe sub-national identities. If the Herderian ideal of the overlap of nation and language unified European countries in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century and into the first two decades of the present, it generated aggression and intolerance as collective national identities became increasingly reified. Given the way language, emotion, and State are mixed, the call for classical status for any language, or a further demarcation of linguistic identities that shape inter-state relationships falls into the trap of a very outmoded notion of “period-bound languages” (Bakhtin 49). The challenge now is to invite another blessing of Babel that must engage with nationalisms of the mind.

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Towards Critical Mass Communication Pedagogy: Some Thoughts on Policy Prescriptions

■ **Dr S. R. SANJEEV***

ABSTRACT

This study explores the changing landscape of Mass Communication pedagogy by analysing the practices and their connection with theory and research. It argues that conventional understanding of the processes of Mass Communication needs to be updated and reimagined in the wake of 'digital'. Reinterpretation of the vocabulary of Mass Communication has been necessitated in a networked world, and the pedagogy should further progress in terms of critical thinking, unlearning and relearning. It should enquire the possibilities of having a 'learning-teaching' method instead of the dominant 'teaching-learning' routine. The study also advocates widespread media teaching that does not confine itself to the professional arena, but also imparts media literacy in larger population to counter the tensions created in social life due to fake news, misinformation and hate campaigns. In order to achieve this, the study calls for making use of the emergent discourse in the realms of policy prescriptions such as multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary engagements, vertical mobility and specialized domain knowledge acquisition.

Keywords : Media Pedagogy, Mass Communication, Digital-scape, Media Education Policy

Ever since the advent of Media Education or specialized study in Mass Communication, the issue of gaps between theory and practice has been discussed and deliberated without many tangible results. Critical observations have been made on the quality of output in Mass Media Research which has been approached as the bridge in closing the gap between theory and praxis. The debate on whether media education is part of an on-the-job activity or whether it is

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an attribution of specific skill sets with background knowledge is unlikely to be concluded in the near future. The process of framing the Mass Communication curriculum is beset by difficult questions such as whether it should be confined to the theories of Mass Communication and Principles of Journalism and essential traits of allied subjects such as Advertising, Public Relations, Mass Media Management etc. or whether it should expand its scope to other disciplines such as History, Politics, Economics, Cultural Studies, Arts and Aesthetics etc. Emphasis on knowledge and skills in content or focus on technologies that make the content more consumable is another issue that gains currency in this discussion.

In all such broader areas, answers could be found in the centre of extremes. Advocating synergic interaction between theory and praxis, collaboration with industry along with academic pursuits, inclusion of liberal arts subjects clothed in Mass Communication vocabulary, and provision for technical know-how with the nuances of content-making are some consensual prescriptions that are focussed in this debate. However, in reality, students are stranded with half-baked academic and professional capabilities. Therefore, asking critical and relevant questions that are necessitated by the context will be an important step in addressing issues related to Mass Communication Education and the search for critical media pedagogy. Such questions will evolve out of an analysis of prevalent information and media ecosystem and concepts of Mass Communication.

Transformation of Media and Mediation: Interaction and Modification as key aspects of Mass Communication

Much has been talked about digital disruptions in traditional media forms and Mass Communication practices. It has undermined the top-down bias of information provisions of Mass Communication by transforming the processes of intervention, mediation, and hierarchy. In traditional norms, mediation is conducted by journalists, opinion makers, leaders etc. and the message is subjected to intervention by them. Strong hierarchy prevails in this process since the mediators assert their views on the original message. But in digital networks - not social networks - receivers are deanonymised and the process limits mediation or persuasion and often surpasses the technological boundaries set out by the power structures. It gives a sense of freedom and autonomy to individuals who partake in this process through its inherent strength of interactivity and modifiability. Although there are filter bubbles and echo chambers in play in digital networks, they sometimes break away from the hierarchies of traditional Mass Communication process. Hence, rethinking the traditional concept

or definition of Mass Communication and redefining the process within the matrix of digital media systems is imperative to build a framework for critical media pedagogy. Mass Communication can now be defined as:-

“continuous and evolutionary triggers of messages which spurt from all possible outlets, not necessarily in a coherent form, but adapting, modifying and appropriating at every reception point and proliferate in networks with contextual connotations and impact on receivers in an altogether different frame of reference from that of the originating source”.

Specific URLs are no longer a single originating point of information in such networks. We consider ‘News’ as information of value or with topical interest. But in networks, premise of news, value, and topical interest are being appropriated and individuals end up in an altogether different gratifying plane. Personal interests will be like shifting of goal-posts all the time. ‘News’ or ‘Information’ which originates from non-conventional sources often lacks context and gives innumerable hermeneutic choices. Most of these messages are opinionated and interpreted at the originating point itself, thereby limiting their functionality of information. The digital networks are not mere carriers of information or message. They prompt responses and leave traces for further appropriation of message through its inherent interactive capacity.

As Stuart Ewan stated, ‘News, today, is a process of participation and of relationships. It is not just a set of message systems or a commodity’. Alvin Toffler said there are no longer consumers or producers of media messages. Instead we can see ‘prosumers’ of media’. The linearity of information dissemination has been replaced with circular and globular modes of message diffusion wherein an individual is subjected to information overload or infobesity. This is the media that we are dealing with in the digital-scape. We are not empowered enough to deal with this situation. Therefore, it is important to understand the complexities of convergent media systems and nuances of media production, dissemination and consumption in order to tackle the larger question of media and mass communication education in future.

Changing Landscape of Media Practices

The traditional concepts of news value should give emphasis to perspectives and reliable forecasts, verified and contextualized messages, data reading, analysis and synthesis and so on. The news

arena and its actors will always be there in the digital sphere, but they have to encounter more demanding and challenging consumer aspirations. The process of news gathering will be more intense wherein personal anecdotes, interpersonal interactions, eyewitness accounts, historical and contextual analysis of new information, seeing behind the obvious, or presenting the x-factor that is hidden beneath physical appearance may gain traction than a dry description of news events.

Emphasis on textual aspects of presentation should also be incorporated with multi-faceted audio, visual, and graphic tools. A new convergent format wherein the narrative is a product of both textual and multimedia tools should be understood and transacted effectively. Active audience who partake in the production-distribution-consumption cycle of information seek autonomy in digital-scape. The quest of the audience for independence and control over information may not be in tandem with the priorities of mediapersons. Hence, it is imperative for them to understand the changing social dynamics of the audience in order to address them effectively. The conventional norms of discerning news or information of value should also consider background, context, societal response, ethics, audience and changing landscape of the medium in a holistic manner. The media narratives in future will be multi-modal, conversational, and a confluence of individual and social within the larger media matrix.

A print mediaperson should be able to construct long-form narratives with case studies, logical sequencing, relevant backgrounders, historical reading of the context, and interpretation of data and information in order to give informed perspectives and forecasts for future. If a sentence is inadequate to present the content, visuality along with its language and grammar should be brought in the text. A visual communicator should not be contended with the rich visual content. S/He may be compelled to search for powerful words that fill the gaps in visuals. The visual communicators should not restrict their aesthetics to horizontal frames; they may have to find better compositions in vertical aspect ratios as well. Therefore, convergence is not just adding visual or textual hyperlinks in the story, but the ability to weave in a comprehensible and sensible text that features all forms of media. In sum, this discussion leads us to the need for empowerment of students in multi-faceted story-telling formats with informed perspectives. In other words, the skill of how to use camera to take a shot and the knowledge of what is a better shot alone will not suffice in future. But, the knowledge of what more this shot tells us than its physical appearance is what we are looking for in the convergent digital-scape.

From Teaching-Learning to Learning-Teaching in Mass Communication

Some scholars hold a critical view towards treating Mass Communication in isolation. They are of the view that since the broader study discipline is Communication, there should be a holistic approach towards its pedagogy and practice. However, let us confine our discussion to Mass Communication alone. It is an umbrella term that encompasses Journalism, Audio-Visual Communication, Advertising, PR etc. The principles, theoretical approach, history and norms that guide each of these areas have a common thread which can be located in Mass Communication theories and its methodology. But the existing pedagogy often fails to identify this thread and treats individual themes in a compartmentalized way. For example, while engaging in the process of teaching-learning of Journalism principles and practices, we often fail to read and synthesise the rich literature on audience, medium, and effect theories of Mass Communication. Similarly, a PR practitioner should get gainful insights from the literature on Media and Society in order to design a campaign that promotes better public health systems. Mass Communication academics are duty-bound to help and empower students achieve a nuanced understanding of theories and their application value in their practice.

The teaching-learning process of Mass Communication is often formulaic in nature. It attempts to suggest formulae for news reports, ad designs, PR campaigns etc. in an extremely superficial manner. For example, the discussion about beats, exclusives, human interest stories, precision journalism etc. in classrooms is often limited by the prescription of the constituent elements of these terms and some examples. This discussion should progress to the realms of critical thinking, identification of the not-so-obvious facts, the atmosphere that led to the human-interest elements of the story, the immense possibilities for telling these stories for the benefit of audience who have varied interests and choices. Thus, the teaching learning-process in this sense, will gradually shift its priorities towards learning-teaching.

Although postgraduate programmes in Mass Communication are in greater demand in India, undergraduate and higher secondary level learning is also happening in many States. Unfortunately, the distinction in curriculum is not so obvious. A student with reasonable understanding of Mass Communication lessons at the higher secondary level can secure a PG degree since the modes of assessment are not so different. The rationale for having similar course content

at various levels is that students from other disciplines who enroll for PG in Mass Communication may not have basic exposure of the field. This is a gross underestimation of student abilities. If at all, such an issue is to be addressed, it can easily be tackled with the introduction of bridge courses and mentoring programmes. But such efforts are not seen in many institutions of our country. The first step towards strengthening the teaching-learning of Mass Communication should be the clear demarcation of curriculum with distinct progress and expansion at all levels of higher education.

At the higher secondary level, introductory aspects of the discipline should be dealt with precisely. At the graduate level, the learning should be translated into actions and outputs. At the postgraduate level, students should gain the ability to engage the media with critical, creative and constructive outlook. They should be able to master at least one sub section of Mass Communication of their choice. They should have the expected level of historicity, cultural, and social understanding, deep domain knowledge in their selected discipline, and basic skills required for practices.

Emerging Opportunities of Mass Communication Education in Digital-scape

To redraw the canvas of Mass Communication education in the digital era, it will be appropriate to revisit a prevalent concept as an illustrative example. Gate-keeping theory in Mass Communication, which was enriched by the contributions of Kurt Lewin, David Manning White, Bruce Westley, and Malcom MacLean, is a familiar knowledge area that is being used widely to understand the process of inclusion and exclusion of information as news in media systems. It highlights the journalistic process of selection of news based on ambiguous parameters and the significant role of this process in following norms that strengthen values suited to modernity and democracy. We are critical of digital network-led information systems about their near absence of gate-keeping. We lament the absence of editors in so-called social networks and worry about their destructive interventions in our social fabric. But here an important opportunity to cultivate a number of gate-keepers who are active in such networks is being missed. If an active audience member can become the producer of or *prosumer* of information, he can also become an efficient gatekeeper provided s/he is armed with media literacy and news literacy. This aspect opens up scope for widespread Mass Communication education programmes that empower people from various walks of life with media and news literacy.

International agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF are engaged in promotion of media education among all school-going students and have brought out a model curriculum suited to less developed countries as well. In future, Mass Communication may not be confined within the walls of specific academic institutions or media houses, but it will expand far, wide and deep to all sections of society since media literacy is going to be an essential requirement for social well-being at large. Global tech giants such as Google and Facebook have taken efforts to build technological solutions such as network gatekeeping, which restrict negative content with algorithmic interventions. But these efforts also require human intelligence and support. All such developments in the digital media-scape offer expansion of Mass Communication education in an enormous way. But to make use of this opportunity, academics of media education should update, up-skill and understand the networks and their operations in society in depth. This may require unlearning and relearning our lessons to make sense of the transformations in media systems.

Digital citizenship cannot be mechanically provided by governments or institutions by installing huge IT infrastructure alone. Access is just an entry point towards digital citizenship. It should be critically addressed with issues such as knowledge gap or information divide, political economy of information provisions, and equity in digital space. Against this backdrop, Mass Communication academics and professionals need to play an active role in ensuring access, equity, and bridging the information divide.

Mass Communication Education and Research and Policy Prescriptions

The essential goal of Mass Communication education right from its inception is nurturing creativity in all aspects of information gathering, processing and distribution. Thus, engagement of Mass Communication with other disciplines in order to foster critical thinking and innovation is quite relevant. Although Mass Communication professionals are dealing with politics, public finance, law, constitution, arts, commerce and almost all facets of human life, specific domain knowledge is always acquired through on-the-job assignments. This adversely affects the quality and output of professionals, at least in their early stage of careers. Often such backlash may deter them from continuing in the profession for a longer period. A student with an aspiration to specialize in business or politics may be well-equipped with the domain knowledge offered by the chances of vertical mobility. For this purpose, we may have to accept double or triple majors in graduate level education and

may offer PG programmes with emphasis on such subjects. Another way is to have flexible electives and projects that enable a student to become a specialist in a particular field. This requires co-learning by the teacher and student in order to find solutions posed by the study discipline.

Multi-disciplinarity refers to work on a given problem by different disciplines with their own tools and methodology to find a common solution. Inter-disciplinarity is a step ahead wherein different disciplines work together and seek inter-related methodologies to find answers. Let us consider digital humanities as a case to understand the subtle differences. Digital Humanities incorporates digitized (both born and remediated) materials and combines the methodologies from traditional humanities discipline such as rhetoric, history, philosophy, linguistics, arts, cultural studies, and social sciences, with tools provided by computing such as data visualization, data mining, digital mapping, AI etc. Such engagements and interactions between disciplines offer novel ways of doing research and finding solutions and increasing the speed of knowledge dissemination. Thus, it can be both multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary in nature.

Similarly, Mass Communication discipline can have conversations with not only Humanities and Social Science subjects but also pure science as well. For example, with the help of data modeling and advanced computing technology, data scientists have developed algorithms that can trace and locate emotional quotients in messages traversing through networks. This has been helpful in fact-checking and myth-busting of social media messages. Emphasis on multi-disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity offers an excellent opportunity to take forward Mass Media or Communication research to areas that are unexplored previously. It calls for an eclectic approach which is not restricted by notions of either empiricism or abstraction.

Conclusion

There is a dire need to revisit the prevalent concepts of Mass Communication in an evolving digital-information sphere where intervention, mediation, and hierarchy are questioned by interactivity, modifiability and autonomy of individuals in the Mass Society. Approach towards practices of media and Mass Communication should be multi-modal, conversational and creative in order to address the evolving aspirations and value systems of modernity and democracy. However, onslaught of emerging digital technologies should not deter from the core ideals of media and mediation which are hinged on egalitarian, humane and empathetic standpoints. Mass

Communication education should make use of the chances of vertical mobility and multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary engagements in order to strengthen its capacities in addressing emerging societal problems through rigorous research and suggestions for innovative practices. In sum, Mass Communication education in future may not necessarily address the Mass, but the individuals in massive networks and it may embrace a practice of learning-teaching rather than teaching-learning with critical thinking at its center.

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News on Public and Private TV: A comparative study of *DD Malayalam* and *Manorama News*

■ DEEPAK NAIR G.*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the regional programming practices of the news presented in public and private television channels. Most of the past studies on related topics have shown that news presented by Public service broadcasters and Private broadcasters differ on various aspects, including the style of presentation and selection of content. The Government controlled *Doordarshan* is often criticised for their increased preference for news related to routines of the Government and political parties in power. The private channels cashed in on from this weakness and liability of the state-controlled broadcaster and gained a large viewership. Innovative presentation techniques supported by professional approach to facts finding and high quality visual narration of news content are projected to be the winning formula of such channels. However the tendency to sensationalise by adding more colour to events and issues are often regarded as the major feature of news contents in privately owned television channels. It is in this context, the researcher has taken up a study to compare the news contents of *DD Malayalam* channel of Doordarshan and *Manorama News* of Malayala Manorama Company Ltd. News bulletins of thirty minutes duration in both channels (Sandhyavartha *Manorama News* and Varthakal of *Doordarshan*) were analysed on various parameters quantitatively and qualitatively. *Doordarshan* has given more preference to news on National affairs in their bulletins while the *Manorama* channel preferred regional and local news. Exclusive or investigative news stories were a rarity in DD Malayalam channel while *Manorama* news made it a deliberate practice to include such news contents in almost every bulletin.

Keywords : *Programming practices, public service and private broadcaster, news preferences, viewership, visual narration*

Introduction

The world witnessed the birth of a mass communication medium called Television in the twentieth century's second decade. After its formative years, more precisely after the Second World War, its growth had been phenomenal, and the medium is informing,

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educating and entertaining the masses through its innate potential of sight, sound and motion.

Compared with other countries, this magical medium's entry into India was rather late. Television began in India on 15th September 1959 as an experiment. There were only two one-hour programmes a week, each of one-hour duration, featuring developmental and educational shows. Since then, Television's growth in India has been remarkable. The country now has around 800 channels broadcasting round the clock, reaching 80 % of homes in India.

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) as an ethical standard has long been considered the ideal in Radio and Television Broadcasting; with the present proliferation of channels, the presence of a PSB is inevitable for the democratic functioning of any country. Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster, was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1997. It runs the national television and radio networks *Doordarshan* (DD) and *All India Radio* (AIR) respectively. It is administered by the Prasar Bharati board, which is tasked with "fulfilling the broadcaster's statutory mandate of informing, educating and entertaining the public while promoting ideas of national integration."

The generally accepted definition of Public Service Broadcasting is the eight principles outlined by Michael Tracey (1998):-

- (1) Universality of availability.
- (2) Universality of appeal.
- (3) Provision for minorities, especially those disadvantaged by physical or social circumstances.
- (4) Serving the public sphere.
- (5) A commitment to the education of the public.
- (6) Public broadcasting should be distanced from all vested interests.
- (7) Broadcasting should be structured to encourage competition in good programming rather than competition for numbers.
- (8) The values of broadcasting should liberate rather than restrict the programme-makers.¹

Public and Commercial Broadcasting

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) may be nationally or locally operated, depending on the country and the station. In some countries, a single organisation controls the Public broadcasting activity, e.g., India, UK..etc., while in some other countries multiple organisations for Public service broadcasting are there, e.g., USA, Brazil, Mexico.. etc.

Usually, PSB's receives funds for their operations through license fees, government funding, crowd funding, individual contribution or commercial entities. PSB's do not depend on advertising to the same degree as commercial broadcasters. This enables public broadcasters to telecast shows that are not commercially viable. Public broadcasting often attempts to air topics of social benefit that are otherwise not provided by commercial broadcasters. While on the other hand, a commercial broadcaster is privately owned, and they find their revenue through advertisements. The main motive is to make a profit from their activities.

News on Television

Television – as we will see – can often create a different impression of an event from that emerging from other media such as newspapers and radio. The dynamic visual aspects of television undoubtedly play a big part in this phenomenon.

As on the radio, quiz shows and games initially dominated the television airwaves. But when Edward R. Murrow made the move to television in 1951 with his news show *See It Now*, television journalism gained its foothold. As television programming expanded, more channels were added. Networks such as ABC, CBS, and NBC began nightly newscasts, and local stations and affiliates followed suit.

Even more than radio, television allows politicians to reach out and connect with citizens and voters in deeper ways. Before television, few voters were able to see a president or candidate speak or answer questions in an interview. Now everyone can decode body language and tone to decide whether candidates or politicians are sincere. Presidents can directly convey their anger, sorrow, or optimism during addresses.

One of the best and earliest examples of how television can leave audiences with different feelings from other media when they cover the same event occurred in relation to the first televised presidential debates in the US in 1960 in which Republican candidate Richard Nixon debated against Democrat candidate John F. Kennedy. A

telephone survey following the first debate found that television viewers thought Kennedy had won, while radio listeners gave the decision to Nixon or felt it was a tie. The validity of this reported finding has itself been extensively and critically debated with expert opinions differing in terms of whether it reveals anything meaningful (Kraus, 1996; Schudson, 1996)

Relevance of the study

The state of Kerala in India is one of the regions where a large number of news channels are in operation. All news channels are competing vehemently to retain and increase viewership. With their innovative attempts and nimble news coverage, news channels often claim to bring about change in society. Critics say that commercial Television media in Kerala has often resorted to unethical methods and sensationalism while covering burning issues. It is in this context, the news priorities of both channels are analyzed. Hence, coverage of issues of local, national and international by both a public and private channel gains significance.

Past studies

In a study conducted by Vishnu.S.Kurup and Vilas Nair (2017), on the viewership analysis of news channels with special reference to Asianet News, it is found that Asianet News is preferred by majority of the viewers, followed by Manorama News. The latter leads in certain attributes such as credibility of news content, accuracy of reports, unbiased reporting of news, deep analysis and detailing, presentation styles, and latest news updates. Certain key factors such as the attitude and presentation style of the newsreader, unbiased analysis of the news content, and strong preference toward political satires are also found to be influential in driving higher rating and viewership for the channels.³

Vivek (2005) conducted a study to assess the credibility of the Malayalam news telecast of Doordarshan(DD4) and India Vision as perceived by viewers. The study found that India Vision had more credibility than Doordarshan. For knowing more about government news majority preferred Doordarshan over India Vision. All the respondents equally welcomed both channels in news relating to sports and sporting activities.⁴

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the researcher was to conduct a quantitative assessment of the programming practices of a Public service broadcaster with a commercial one. Hence the researcher

has purposively selected two Malayalam language channels namely Doordarshan Malayalam (PSB) and Manorama news (Private Channel)

Specific Objectives of the study were as follows

- 1) To find out the leader in the case of number of stories aired
- 2) To detect the presence of exclusive news stories and their quantity
- 3) Identifying the priorities of news content in both the news channels

Hypothesis

After going through literature resulted from past studies and consulting experts/critics on Malayalam Television the researcher has formulated following hypothesis for the current study

- H1) DD Varthakal airs more number of news stories than Manorama's 'Sandhyavartha
- H2) Manorama has exclusive and investigative stories, while Doordarshan lacks them.
- H3) National news is featured more on Doordarshan while Manorama gives priority to local news.
- H4) International stories are featured more on Doordarshan
- H5) Cultural stories are given more prominence in Doordarshan while Manorama gives more importance to sports news

Doordarshan Malayalam

Doordarshan Kendra at Thiruvananthapuram, popularly known as Doordarshan Malayalam,, is part of India's largest PSB Doordarshan India, inaugurated in 1985. Doordarshan Malayalam Kendra has three production centres located at Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Kozhikode.

Private commercial channels in Kerala

In 1992, the first-ever Malayalam private channel Asianet started functioning from Thiruvananthapuram. Now the tiny state of Kerala and its language, Malayalam, has more than fifty television channels. Among these channels, around eight have news and news-based programmes as their main content and they operate the whole day (24hrs.x7days)

Manorama News

Launched in 2006, Manorama News, a.k.a MM tv, is a commercial Malayalam news channel owned and operated by Malayala Manorama company, a local media conglomerate. The channel telecasts news bulletins every hour and panel discussions and current affairs programmes whole day. Mazhavil Manorama, an entertainment channel, is the sister concern of this news channel.

News Content programming

‘Doordarshan Malayalam’, telecasts ten news bulletins a day, and the ‘Manorama News’ has news bulletins round the clock throughout the whole day.

The researcher has decided to undertake a comparative evaluation of the news contents in both the channels. For this purpose evening news bulletins of both the channels were selected and compared. The slot selected was 6.30 p.m news ‘Varthakal’ of Doordarshan Malayalam and 6 pm news ‘Sandhya Varthakal’ of MMTV.

Since its inception, this Kendra has been allocating time for daily news bulletins under the name ‘Varthakal’. According to the audience research wing, daily 6.30 pm ‘Varthakal’ enjoys higher viewership than any other programme from this Kendra. Nowadays, Thiruvananthapuram Doordarshan Kendra telecasts bulletins at 7.30 am, 10 am, 11 am, 12 noon, 1 pm, 3 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm, 6 pm and 7 pm.

‘SandhyaVarthakal’ (Evening News) of Manorama News is at 6-6.30 pm. every day.

Study Method

The study period chosen was from 21st December to 25th December 2017.

During this period the researcher has done a detailed content analysis of Malayala Manorama’s Sandhya Vartha (6-6.30 pm) and Varthakal of Doordarshan Malayalam (6.30-7 pm) .

Time allotted for each item in the news bulletins were separately coded in seconds (unit of analysis), and tables and percentages were arrived at to compare each channel's programming practices for categories of news items such as National, Regional, International, Sports, Cultural and exclusive investigating stories.

Analysis and Findings

More News stories in DD

On an average 'Varthakal' of Doordarshan telecast 29 news stories a day while 'Sandhya Varthakal' of Manorama News telecast 18 news items. This indicates that DD Malayalam tries to include more number of stories compared with Manorama news. The focus of Manorama News was more on providing in-depth news stories depicting the details of the issue/incident.

This proves that DD Varthakal has more number of news stories than Manorama's 'Sandhyavartha'. Hence Hypothesis 1 is proved valid.

Manorama's focus on exclusive stories

From table 1 and 2 it is clear that Manorama News make it an effort to give at least one news item of exclusive and investigative nature in each of their evening news bulletins. They try to present it in a packaged format and do follow up stories too. Doordarshan Malayalam avoided such investigative or exclusive stories. Follow up stories were also not found.

This proves that Manorama news channel provide the viewer more exclusive and investigative stories while Doordarshan completely lacks it. Therefore the second hypothesis is also found valid.

Importance to National news in DD

15 national news stories were featured in Doordarshan ('Varthakal') a day while only 6 news stories were seen in Manorama news. For the coverage of national news an average of 653 seconds were spent on DD but only 366 seconds were used by Manorma news. So the third hypothesis is also found valid.

Local news runtime more in Manorama news

In a five days of study 'Varthakal' of Doordarshan Malayalam telecast an average 6 news stories of local importance where 'Sandhya Varthakal' of Manorama News telecast an average of 7 items in their bulletins. Doordarshan has allocated an average of 306

Days	Total Run Time (TRT) Seconds		National Items Seconds Percentage		Local Items Seconds Percentage		International Items Seconds Percentage		Sports Items Seconds Percentage		Cultural Items Seconds Percentage		Exclusive Items Seconds Percentage	
	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM
Dec 21	1613	1477	679 (42.10%)	554 (37.51%)	302 (18.72%)	450 (30.47%)	103 (6.39%)	49 (3.32%)	0	116 (7.85%)	329 (20.40%)	0	0	85 (5.75%)
Dec 22	1603	1323	662 (41.30%)	362 (27.36%)	374 (23.33%)	424 (32.05%)	93 (5.80%)	40 (3.02%)	106 (6.61%)	193 (14.59%)	120 (7.49%)	78 (5.90%)	0	84 (6.35%)
Dec 23	1638	1407	780 (42.62%)	253 (17.98%)	337 (20.57%)	535 (38.02%)	0	0	0	79 (5.61%)	340 (20.76%)	75 (5.33%)	0	225 (16%)
Dec 24	1620	1369	589 (34.51%)	395 (28.30%)	312 (19.26%)	496 (35.53%)	125 (7.72%)	58 (4.15%)	56 (3.46%)	27 (1.93%)	353 (21.79%)	77 (5.52%)	0	106 (7.59%)
Dec 25	1461	1416	584 (39.97%)	265 (18.72%)	203 (13.89%)	335 (23.66%)	107 (7.32%)	0	41 (2.81%)	22 (1.55%)	334 (22.86%)	357 (25.19%)	0	196 (13.84%)

Table 1: Duration of News Items Aired on DD Malayalam and Manorama News

Days	Total Stories Numbers (N)		National Items Numbers Percentage		Local Items Numbers Percentage		International Items Numbers Percentage		Sports Items Numbers Percentage		Cultural Items Numbers Percentage		Exclusive Items Numbers Percentage	
	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM	DD	MM
Dec 21	29	18	14 (48.28%)	6 (33.33%)	6 (20.69%)	7 (38.89%)	5 (17.24%)	2 (11.12%)	0	2 (11.12%)	4 (13.79%)	0	1 (5.56%)	
Dec 22	32	19	16 (50%)	7 (36.84%)	8 (25%)	6 (31.57%)	4 (12.5%)	1 (5.26%)	2 (6.25%)	3 (15.79%)	2 (6.25%)	1 (5.26%)	0	
Dec 23	28	20	17 (60.71%)	6 (30%)	7 (25%)	8 (40%)	0	0	0	3 (15%)	4 (14.29%)	1 (5%)	0	2 (10%)
Dec 24	30	19	14 (46.67%)	6 (31.58%)	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)	6 (20%)	1 (5.26%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (5.26%)	5 (16.67%)	1 (5.26%)	0	1 (5.26%)
Dec 25	24	14	12 (50%)	3 (21.43%)	5 (20.83%)	4 (28.57%)	3 (12.5%)	0	1 (4.17%)	1 (7.14%)	3 (12.5%)	4 (28.57%)	0	2 (14.28%)

Table 2: Number of News Items Aired on DD Malayalam and Manorama News

seconds for Regional news while Manorama set aside 448 seconds to feature news items of Local flavour.

Manorama has tried to present stories of local importance with sidelights, backgrounders and analysis. They rarely use file footage during their bulletin and Manorama tried to present as much information as possible while showing news items of local importance. At the same time Doordarshan Malayalam did not care much to present news of local importance. Most of the bulletins during the study period featured news on and about local leaders of National ruling party and their statements with file footages from the library. Almost all the footages in Doordarshan were of such nature and low quality. Hence the fourth hypothesis formulated in this regard by the researcher is also proved valid.

International stories neglected

International stories are featured more on Doordarshan than in Manorama. On a day during the study period (December 23) both of these channels did not include any international stories. Both of the channels are found to be presenting international stories to audience without any depth or backgrounders. Follow up stories were also rare. Therefore hypothesis 4 is also valid.

Less time to sports in DD

DD Malayalam was found to be giving more prominence to cultural stories than Manorama. During the study period Doordarshan had included features on 'Thanga Angi' procession of Sabarimala temple along with stories on and about Christmas celebrations. But Doordarshan's stories of cultural importance are filled with file footages while Manorama news has tried to present the cultural stories with latest footages and visuals with proper editing. Hence though DD has devoted more time (296 seconds) to cultural events Manorama (117 seconds) has scored more on its visual elements and made high impact on viewers.

It was apparent that average time that Manorama allots (88 seconds) was twice than that of Doordarshan (41 seconds). On some days during the study period (December 21 & 23) Doordarshan did not include any stories on Sports.

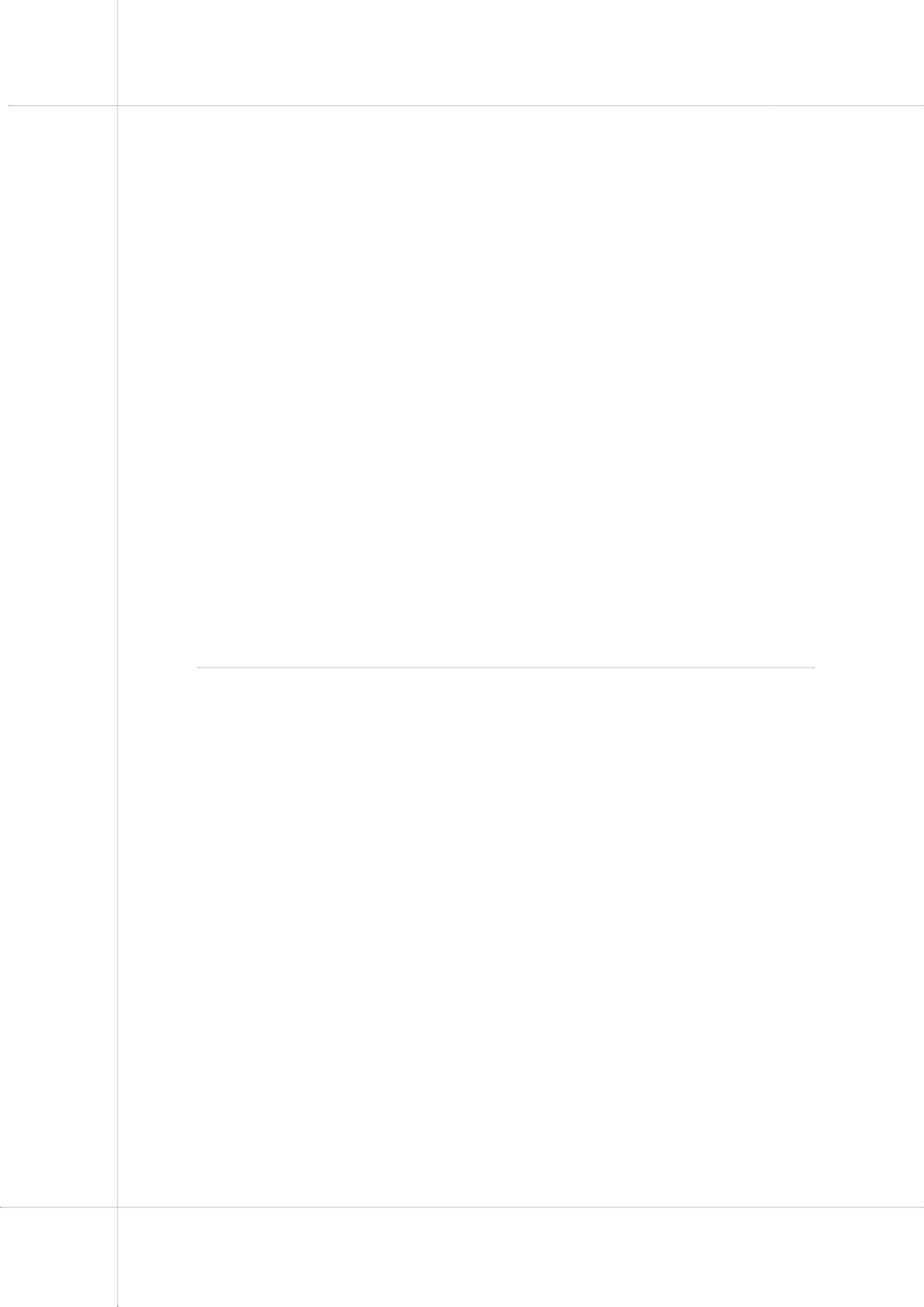
This proves hypothesis 5 stating "Cultural stories are given more prominence in Doordarshan while Manorama gives more importance to sports news" may be accepted.

Conclusion

News selection and programming practices of both the channels were found to be in contrast across various categories of news. Though there is a deliberate attempt to include more number of stories in their bulletins, Doordarshan could not fare well with the professionalism displayed by Manorma news in the selection and coverage of news items. Doordarshan mostly depended on file footages for visual narration and Manorama news on latest visuals shot on the spot. This is a clear indicator that Manorama news is much ahead in the presentation and packaging of news compared with Doordarshan. National news is given more than adequate representation by Doordarshan while Manorama news often neglected news of national importance. However selection and airing of news items unworthy of any significant news values, Doordarshan often found to be acting as a mouthpiece of the respective governments in power.

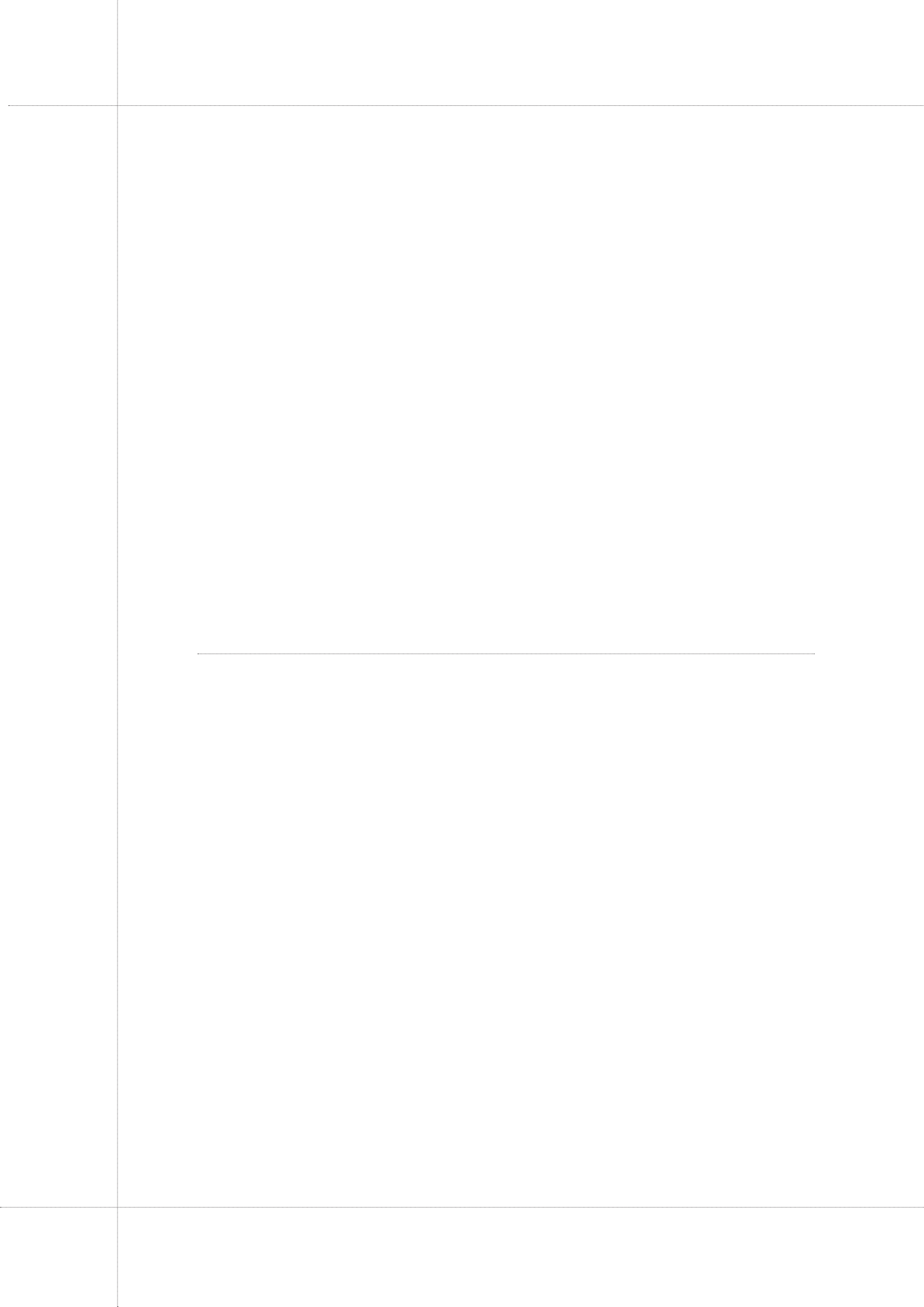
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standpoint.

A thick red horizontal bar underlining the word "standpoint."



Chasing The “Most Appropriate”

■ YASEEN P. V.*

We can always do almost everything in a better, more appropriate way.

Any given situation could further be improved by a more relevant idea, expression or action.

Indeed, there is always a more appropriate way to communicate anything.

In fact, we could do almost anything in an alternate, more appropriate way.

In any situation, many often, there remains a scope for a better thought, idea, word, expression or action.

This makes our quest for the better a relentless, tantalizing chase after “the most appropriate.”

The Clock On The Wall

Indeed, hanging a clock on the wall of a hall is apparently an easy thing to do. We tend to do it casually fixing the clock on the wall at a spot that we like.

“I like it to be right there,” one may say.

But, quite often, that particular spot we have chosen might

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prove to have several disadvantages for those who want to know the time.

For instance, consider this particular case of a wall clock in a classroom. The clock is hung in such a way that the teacher could always view the clock easily. However, the entire batch students needs to turn their head back to look at the clock.

Indeed, there is always a MOST APPROPRIATE spot for the clock in the classroom. We only need to locate that most appropriate, ultimate spot.

Once the clock was hung right on that particular point, everyone in the hall could know the time with relative ease, free of any discomfort. Even a casual passerby along the varendra too could easily view the clock.

We need to analyse the situation to fix that precise spot. Once asked to suggest, a child may easily point out that spot in an instant ---- however, even a veteran professor may spend days but fail to locate that magic spot.

Likewise, there is always a more appropriate way to do anything and everything. We all may need to progress relentlessly seeking a still better idea, word, behaviour or action to change and improve the given situation.

Learning To Do It

The skill to do things in “the most appropriate way” could be taught/learned through relevant classroom exercises.

We could give students a single problem at a time requiring each one to suggest creative solutions, preferably in a written form . Each participant could present the set of suggestions for an open discussion.

For instance, we may ask the students to suggest “the most appropriate” spot for hanging a wall clock in their hall. Indeed, each student has to write it down first before the



session for discussion.

In general --- because of countless reasons --- we often fail to use “the most appropriate” thought, idea, expression, behaviour or action in our everyday life.

We often tend to end up in a mess. Many a time, we may slip into embarrassing --- even dangerous --- situations as a result of such failures.

Having fallen into a deep pit, instead of thinking of ways to get out of it, we may ponder over the number of galaxies in the universe.

Instead of saying, “ No milk in my cup of coffee, please.” , we tend to blurt out, “ Milk in coffee is bad.”

Some of our thoughtless expressions and behaviours in certain situations may

cause injuries or breakdowns in relationships.

Sometimes, our enthusiastic, high voltage handshake could “uplift” the other one writhing in pain.

Many often, instead of pulling we persist in pushing.

We may insist on using a hammer to smash the lock where a twist or two with a metal wire could click it open.

We need to seek the “most appropriate” way to effectively

clear up the various problems that we may encounter in our everyday life.

Unlike in the case of our "The Wall Clock," we may not always be able to arrive at what is "most" appropriate that a particular situation demands.

Many often we could only settle for what is "more" appropriate in a particular situation.

Thus, at least in some situations, the quest for the "most appropriate" could very well be a never-ending chase for what is "better."

However, we have to consciously strive to seek and use what is "most appropriate" suitable for the specific situation.

Our general reluctancy or failure to apply what is "most appropriate" --- thought, word, expression, idea or action --- in various situations frequently creates countless problems.

We need to make conscious efforts to sharpen the skills to apply what is "most appropriate" for the changing situations in our life.

Obviously, this presentation so far constitutes only a pinhole. Hopefully, through this pinhole, enthusiasts of all sorts would be able to view a thousand stars of ideas.

Thus, the chase for the "most appropriate" could very well become a tantalizing adventure in our relentless attempt to enhance the quality of our life.

A re-look at rhetorical strategies and persuasive communication

■ **NAYANA R.***

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Introduction

A powerful communication can cause deviations in the mind of the receivers' conceptions that have had perceived long before and can change all the notions that he thought which he had grabbed was right. And when the communication comes in the form of political rhetoric the focal issue has been the approaches and strategies used to build influential statements in formal public discourse and in everyday political arguments. Political rhetoric is always structured and the ruling elite often try to deviate the discourse from the core political issues to other soft and sensational tones to get rid of the disapprovals and the dissents that surface from the public.

All effective communication strategies contain what is called a positioning statement, a clear analysis of what it is for, who it is for and why anyone should be interested in choosing it

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Bruce (1992).

Earlier studies showed that the statements from the political leaders has proved a substantial effect on how the common public perceives numerous issues. The positive perception of the many issues ensued since the source of the message originated from a credible leadership. On the contrary many communication scientists speaks about the authority of political leader makes the public to follow his messages. The “political authority”, a dynamic in which people hold a sort of reverent respect for political elites, which “predisposes followers to accept guidance from leaders who leave coercive power in the background and concentrate instead on the desires and beliefs that can produce willing compliance”. (Donald Searing, 1995).

What is Rhetoric?

Rhetoric is fundamentally an art of persuasion. Aristotle constructed the basis of the study of Rhetoric and many scholars thereafter used these fundamentals from his doctrine. He viewed it in an analytical manner and considered it as a discipline relating to the art and power of discovering the means of persuasion separately in each case. The end purpose of Rhetoric that highlighted was persuasion and the speaker constantly tried to entail as a persuader. The target audience remained as the recipient of persuasion.

Aristotle highlighted three aspects of Rhetoric in his Communication model. In the communication process the speaker required to pay attention to - ethos, pathos and logos. In the setting of rhetoric, ethos sketches the appeal and credibility of the communicator. Pathos, on the other hand is a rhetorical feature sounds like psychological appeal intended to the audience emotions. Logos in a sense considered as an internal expression of logical thought but it purely depends on the recipient's capability to process the information in a rational manner.

Today in the communication stream, quite a lot of definitions of Rhetoric exists. Some scholars still stick to the concepts of language and discourse which got importance in the initial

stages of approach while some had set it in a contemporary way to suit the models in the new era. Foss (2017) defined rhetoric as “the human use of symbols to communicate,” arguing that in addition to the written and spoken word, rhetoric “includes nondiscursive or nonverbal symbols” like (but not limited to) “television programs, films and videos, video games, art, architecture,” and advertisements.

Approaches of Rhetoric

The political rhetoric has been persistently related to and centred on political narrative, discourse and framing the statements according to the political will. Persuading the audience by using myriad forms of techniques of rhetoric to substantiate the claims remained as the general rule that all the ruling classes had adopted for decades. The contemporary intellectuals of political rhetoric inclined to appeal inspiration directly from classical writings on the subject.

Classical scholars more or less concentrate to go on with the formal and public speeches while the contemporary researchers packed the study with all kind of sources ranging from texts, informal speeches to visual images and body language. Rhetorical psychology delves into the intuitions of human mind set and at the same time it focuses on the composition and functioning of the persuasive nature of the rhetoric.

The scholars of political rhetoric often espouse a critical viewpoint for their academic interest. In political science, the study of rhetoric may be presented as an alternative to conventional outlooks on political philosophies and policy-making. In social and political psychology, interest in rhetoric arose as part of the “turn to language”, a movement that involved a rejection of cognitivism, and a commitment to approaching talk and text as strategic communicative action rather than as expressions of inner psychological processes, states or traits (Burman & Parker, 1993; Edwards, 1997; Harré & Gillett, 1994; Potter, 2000; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Shotter, 1993).

Rhetoric and Persuasion

Persuasion and rhetoric are always interlinked concretizing the fact that the language is the most effective power of persuasion. Previous researches on rhetoric stretch on different methods and areas of research in an adept way and explored all the potentials that exist in the political way of using language. Political rhetoric's are used for encouraging, discouraging, verifying, misrepresenting and above all representing the political ideologies. The political dialect can shape political beliefs, and these in turn be persuaded in different ways by political leaders. Edelman (1969).

Some of the early academic works considered the notion of persuasion as a political concept. Persuasion is a condition of good faith and an extremely useful tool in the political arena when applied pragmatically, (Burnell, Reeve 1984). Different versions have put out by different school of thoughts regarding the message and persuasion. Some asserts that some message has got high relevance only for the reason of it was originating from the virtue of political leadership.

Aristotle concept of persuasion was not mislaid even in the 21st century. His emphasize on the 'receiver's emotional framework' on Pathos, the concept that a successful persuasion needs a thorough understanding of the audience have relevance and still it persists. Even though many criticisms, improvisations and different versions of the theory has put down by many scholars.

Persuasion studies under Carl Hovland and his associates initially started during the world war ii to study the effectiveness of propaganda films which was made by the US Army. But the study sustained after the war at the Yale University to formulate new theories of Persuasion. After the rapid spread of the communication means in the twentieth century the study attained new echelons. Mass media has got immense persuasive influence during the war time. Political leaders like Hitler, Mussolini, Roosevelt and Churchill had proved and established how the proficient persuasion had manipulated the entire society Larson (1982).

Shifting statuses of Political Rhetoric

The settings in which the political rhetoric was functioning has come a long way and has been shifting from time to time with the development of the mass media. In the traditional period the style, tone and tenor of talking differ as the political orator is speaking directly to the frontal seated audiences. However, in a modern age, a mediated space is required to communicate the message. The political rhetoric that carried through the new forms of communication channels has resulted in the broadening of political audiences.

The demarcation between the public and private facets of political discourse is breaking into the surge of self-expressive and personalisation of politics, Thompson (2011). The early focus of Rhetoric was purely concentrated on oratory, then the shift has moved to emphasize on 'rhetoric of the image', Barthes, (1977). The upsurge in the mediated communication disseminates the information very quickly to a wider audience. These potential audiences epitomize a wide array of the society and most of the times they represent from another zone which is politically not accountable by the speaker.

The probable impact of technologies and the new media in due course render the prior perspectives on media effects as outdated Bennet, Iyengar (2008). The new era of new media enables the publics' access to political information, paved a direct link to communication between the society and the policy makers. This in turn open up space for public debate and discussions and for political rhetoric and engagement. Politicians turned to new media to inform their views directly to the public facilitated wider ranging political discourse.

Political argumentation and emotions have been an integral part of the political communication process. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle pointed out the emotions can be cognitive which can be assessed like any ideas and thoughts. Although the appeal to emotions is not a new idea in rhetoric but it attained new dimension later with the advent of social media. Emotional rhetoric may augment the self-image of the speakers, shaping a consensus of the public and it can be similarly seen as vital in the decision-making process.

The emotional arguments delivered by the political speakers certainly force the listener to admit their rhetoric without any indication or evidences.

Conclusion

Rhetoric, largely defined as the art of discourse has experienced many critical viewpoints both constructively and destructively. Still today, people have the tendency to accept the notion as 'great' rhetoric and 'mere' rhetoric. Rhetoric remains fundamental to democratic politics. The publics' at large stays keen to watch those addresses that has been delivered by their leaders. These speeches have been the biggest tool to propagate and educate their ideas in the most possible way of persuasion. The discourses have been used for diverting attention of the masses to other platforms of less significance as well. The contemporary society needs a competent leadership, well defined by political rhetoric to persuade the public in sharing his viewpoints.

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Social media with a new paradigm: emerging trends and perspectives

■ ASHIQHA SULTANA*

Introduction

Social Media is evolving and we are passing through a watershed moment in social media history. Many innovations including new Facebook algorithm and other developments such as the sudden hype for Instagram as well as the effect of influencer marketing are visible. In the world of social media marketing, the targets changed and content has all its vigor and power on most of the platforms. Social listening, call out culture and live streaming entirely changed the face of the digital space. Another major paradigm shift lies on augmented reality. Some of the major shifts taken place and has a huge effect over the general public are discussed here.

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Decline of Organic Content on Facebook : A Beginning

The organic content engagement on Facebook have been steadily declining in recent years. According to the latest algorithm viewers no longer engage as it was before. Brands, on the other hand, still using Facebook for marketing purposes. Many small and big business enterprises still look into their target audience and thus maintain a high number of posts. The ability to identify which organic material on Facebook will connect with audience has never been more important, especially in light of Facebook's new spam-punishing algorithm. Posting highly relevant content helps businesses regain lost interaction with Facebook consumers.

Social Listening: A significant change

Social Listening isn't brand new, but it's still significant. Because social media, in all its forms, is only going to grow in importance, you'll need to start monitoring it more closely.

There's more to it than that, though. If one wants to be successful, he/she must pay attention to what others are saying about their own brand and goods. People talk about a person though he/she is not aware of it. In the same way people are criticises, praise, and showcase one's work across a wide range of networks and channels. Some groups where that particular person is a part of, while others not.

Influencer Marketing: The New Face of Selling and Buying

Over the past two decades, the television industry has been more fragmented. As networks expanded their channel lineups, their programming choices grew as well. As a result, marketers found themselves with fragmented markets. They had a slew of options for advertising, but none of them attracted the same kind of attention as they had in the past. This gave rise to the new formats in marketing

communication. Influencer marketing is a rising concept in public relations that involves finding, engaging, and supporting people who start discussions with consumers about a company. This approach has shifted in recent years to focus mostly on social media, opening doors for companies to use social media influencers to promote their products.(Undergraduate, 2017)

There is a constant battle amongst marketers over how best to influence customers, and as a result, methods like “camouflaging” advertising have emerged. Marketers use tactics like product placement, content marketing, and influencer marketing to attempt to sway customers without being seen as intrusive.(Johansen et al., 2017) The pinnacle of influencer marketing has become very apparent that it was neither experimental nor boutique advertising. As a major facilitator of income, many brands are jumping on board with this strategy now. Ad expenditure through Influencer marketing is expected to exceed to a huge extend by 2020. Successful influencer marketing relies on being genuine. Influencing through social media handles have become the new trend where people started believing this and buy products or render services. However, many businesses have found that in order to reap the advantages of influencer marketing, they must relinquish control of their influencers. Rather than material from a business, customers want to see it from real individuals they know and trust on social media channels. However, influencer marketing is at its prime right now, and that means there is a lot of scamming going on. Fake followers, false engagement, and fake interests can be a challenge to lookout for. Brands can benefit from utilising influencer-produced content since it is often considerably less expensive. Even if paying a famous YouTuber to create your product video in his typical manner may save you money, the expense of producing an expensive professional TV commercial will.The goods that an influencer likes are often the reason why they choose to collaborate with a company. India is slowly turning to this new way of advertising or communication

Instagram and the world of stories: Emergence of novel trend

The growth of Stories on social media is arguably the greatest story of this year. A good example of a multi-media post is one with video, images, and text all in one. They are far more engaging, interactive, and appealing to social media users than passive, text-based postings. Social media marketing efforts are increasingly moving to Instagram Stories and has become the platform's brand-new feature to reach a greater number of people. Instagram dethroned Snapchat as the most popular social media network among teenagers in 2018, and the number of businesses using Instagram Stories grew to a big extent. Instagram started off with something quite similar to the News Feed on Facebook Stories but Instagram have altered everything, boosting user engagement and grabbing the attention of brands looking for new ways to connect with their target audience. Instead of having users scroll down social network walls to see stories, Stories take up the whole of the screen and display them for 15 seconds instead. Each tale (i.e., message, video, photo, or image with animated effects) comes over the preceding and next stories in a time-sequenced manner. From celebrities to newsrooms and businesses, to teenagers and artists, Instagram has become the go-to place for visual storytelling (About Us, 2017). For the same reason that Twitter permits hashtags, Instagram does as well. This makes it easier for users to organise, discover and follow posts that are all about the same thing. Instagram's distinguishing feature is the ability to share photos, which gives it a visual edge over other social networking platforms. (Byrd & Denney, 2018) Also, in places like WhatsApp, Stories had a similar impact. A definite trend can be seen even though posts on Instagram are still getting more views than Instagram Stories are. Stories are the new social media stars, and their impressions and engagement will continue to rise in the coming years. Posting movies and pictures to the Story feature makes them vanish after 24 hours. Text, drawings, stickers, and filters may all be used in conjunction with each other. You may also use basic polls to gather information about your audience and ask questions.

This is a simple way to share your stories with your followers, and it doesn't need any prior experience with Instagram to figure it out. However, despite the recent focus on Stories on Instagram, businesses are still lagging behind in adopting this trend. While many brands have moved away from traditional Facebook ads, we still see a lot of them. Instagram's user base is more active and engaged since the emergence of the story trend.

Live Streaming: A contemporary video experience

The advent of social media live video brought several advantages. This is primarily in the interest of both customers and workers. The use of live video has been shown by company leaders to increase employee engagement. To keep up with the latest trends in education, You-Tube is now using live streaming to connect with viewers in real time. These future instructors may record their instructional activities, and students can listen in, ask questions, and interact directly with them as a result of this information being made available. Students who are absent from class may watch YouTube if the channel has not been removed. Using direct broadcasting, one may send a live video feed to a large audience in real time via wired or wireless data medium.(Aniroh et al., 2018) New goods have been introduced through live video on various social media platforms as well as on company websites. The use of social media live streaming for staff training has shown to be very successful too. As a result, social media participation has increased. Customers would rather watch than read instructions, which explains why E-commerce sales have risen, according to companies. This is when the live video and the buy-now experience come together. Due to this, interaction has increased above the pre-recorded video. The number of people using live streaming services has grown recently. Each day, this cycle repeats itself in some way. Live broadcasting on social media has the benefit of attracting viewers of all ages. YouTube and Facebook live have become more popular among Indian users recently.

Live video streaming is popular with viewers due to the immediacy and interaction it provides with their favourite

companies and personalities. Through the use of live video, both brands and individuals may rapidly improve the consumer experience. Explainers, product demos, how-tos, and testimonials are the four most common kinds of videos, but there are many more possibilities like events, product launches, interview sessions, Q&A sessions, and on and on. Because most social media sites now support native live streaming or allow for simple integration, you have more flexibility in deciding where and when to broadcast. It's important to know where your consumers and audience hang out online before deciding on a live streaming platform.

Chatbots: New Age Robots

Chatbots have developed as a new means of interacting with online services and smart devices, offering conversational user interfaces that are purportedly more intuitive and natural than conventional user interfaces (McTear, n.d.). A growing number of companies are investing in the creation of customised Chatbots. There is a dire need of being able to react to customers quickly. Consider a business with millions of customers that shop online. Without a doubt, it's almost difficult to address every issues promptly. Increasingly, businesses are becoming alarmed as their consumers begin making use of social media call outs. Customized Chatbots have been the solution to ensuring that they react to customer problems. There is a growing interest in developing bespoke Chatbots on social media in 2018. Consumers are receiving personalised answers while using Chatbots in the past, as can be shown by looking at examples. Chatbots have found increasing usage on Facebook message, for example. As a result of the bespoke Chatbots, more data may be collected. In addition, they take orders from customers and provide product advice. As a result of the Facebook Messenger Chatbots, companies are now responding to more consumer inquiries. Replika, Google Assistant are some of the popular examples. Many E - Commerce sites have live chatbots which replies to the customers as per the need.

Augmented Reality: Wider than reality

While the first effect of augmented reality will be on mobile games, social media sites found additional methods to integrate the new technology. Most of the social media platforms are using augmented reality and artificial intelligence to enhance the user experience. In fact, it seems like augmented reality is taking over popular social media handles like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. To be at the forefront of AR on social media and discover new methods to increase sales is happening throughout. augmented reality (AR) virtual shops on social media: customers can currently purchase goods through social media, but this may become a far more engaging experience with AR. People won't even have to go to a brand's physical shops anymore since it turns virtual. There will be a chance to test out the items and buy them online immediately. Using AR films, businesses may better engage their consumers by showing them how to utilise or maximise their goods. The usage of AR movies may help companies sell services to customers by allowing them to see what it's like to utilise the service firsthand. People will want to share their favourite AR experiences with their friends and followers if its created for them and indeed this is great news for brands and marketers because it's basically word-of-mouth marketing on steroids and UGC (User generated content).

Social Media and the Call out culture

Nowadays, people may rapidly express their dissatisfaction publicly in ways that simply did not exist before. This is known as "callout culture." Social media platforms gave rise to this call out culture. Those engaged in 'dragging' others criticise individuals based on an action or claimed action, with judgement as the greatest priority and an effort to comprehend the issue as the lowest priority in call-out culture face criticism for mimicking past witch-hunts. (Tucker, 2017) After receiving subpar service or having an unpleasant experience, the most one could do for yesteryears was to directly communicate through phone letters etc. Now consumers all around the world are more connected than ever before because of social media. This has aided in

the development of a culture of social call-outs. This year, companies had a tougher time fending off unfavourable internet criticism. Customers, on the other hand, are more likely to engage with companies they like. This aids in the formation of new connections, but it may also serve to sever old ones. Marketers' public relations may suffer as a consequence of the "call-out" culture. If the brands don't treat the concerns seriously and responsibly, this may happen. As a venue for brand mentions, customers are turning to social media. Marketers should see the bright side of this when it happens. It is thus beneficial to create a thoughtful, empathic, and useful answer in order to keep the customer satisfied. Responses that aren't helpful will not be tolerated. Negative interactions were often the focus of the alerts. These, on the other hand, provide a chance for companies to rehabilitate their reputation. The success of an encounter is largely determined by how well people respond to cues. As a result, when reacting, companies must look for ways to build genuine connections. Social listening becomes critical for a company as a result of this development. In order to cope with this emerging culture, organisations need develop a social strategy. The approach should centre on how to successfully react to consumer concerns while also giving brands a voice. When responding to consumer complaints, being on time is critical. Due of the Call-out culture, brands are being held more accountable. Customers claim that companies' dishonesty is to blame for the social media shoutout.

Conclusion

Social Media platforms has considerably changed the pattern of life itself. The advent of social media altered life and communication altogether and made the process of interpersonal communication easier. Popular handles such as Facebook, Instagram with the latest updates made the digital space a major place to communicate in various ways. Novel updates like social listening, story formats, call out culture, chatbots etc. made the online space important than the physical space itself. This will increase to a huge extend in the coming years while all the existing platforms will keep an eye on latest updates.

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