

MEDIA AND PUBLIC JOURNALISM IN INDIA: SOME GAPS IDENTIFIED

Akanksha Shukla

Abstract:- The paper records the pre-poll content analysis of television programs before the Assembly polls of Uttar Pradesh in 2012. To validate how far such programs were impacting viewership, a survey was conducted to analyse the extent of the impact. First, the paper illustrates the data gathered and conclusively draws that it is only the intellectuals that is media literate to intercept media messages clearly. Second, the paper also exfoliates important conceptual theories put forth by researchers and restates them in Indian perspective. It is pertinent to point out that online discourses have displaced the ancient perspective of spiral of silence, which in the online discourses is surprisingly missing. Third, the agenda setting function of the press has been challenged and re-stated by the online discourses which have taken a lead to persuade media to look in the direction of the agenda put forth by them. The net conclusion is that Public discourse does result in the rise of a civic society and public journalism goes a long way to prove that but in the current phase of transition the impact is limited and steps are needed to accelerate the penetration of public discourse into the psyche of the common man who needs to learn the art of media literacy to understand the clarity of news amidst the clutter of media agenda which is an evident fallout of the new trend of corporatization of the media.

Keywords:- Public Journalism, Public Discourse, Indian TV data, agenda setting challenged corporatization of media

Introduction

This paper was presented in the seminar on the theme “Public Discourse and New Media” deals exclusively with the ground reality of how much impact does public discourse make on the psyche of the individual audience. Basically, Public Discourses is a collective term given to public discussions. They represent that public sphere which is an area of social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion may influence political action. Public discourses are essentially conducted with the core purpose of igniting civic and political involvement of the people. This paper deals with the aspects of public journalism. A new term Public Journalism also sometimes called civic journalism or citizen journalism is essentially gaining prominence today due to the impact of commercial imperatives functional in the operative mode of journalism. With an increase in the private networks and a battle for Television Rating Points (TRPs), the noble cause of journalism has eclipsed into a somewhat dramatic

dose of infotainment served as a daily meal. Public Journalism serves as the philosophy that media should try to solve civic problems as well as report the news. It is a hope that reform oriented news organisations can challenge long standing journalistic conventions despite management's interest in maximising profits. History reveals that public journalism movement began as a response to the gap between government and citizens and between news rooms and its audience. There was a wide spread withdrawal of citizens from the democratic process of election and voting. Scholars at that point had interpreted this mass alienation and disaffection as a result of the mass mediated political discourse. Therefore, to work as a catalyst of generating political debate among citizens, it was the news organizations that began to convert their role from merely being a provider of news to the facilitator of discussion. There has of course been an alternative theory where scholars have said that public journalism was no more than an alternative approach and a marketing strategy to serve the profit motive of media by encasing audience concerns through

circulation of such news (Hardt, 1999). Nevertheless public journalism today has come to mean the idea of integrating journalism into the democratic process. This paper attempts to analyse how far the public discourses and panel discussions which are absorbed with the theme of enlightened public debates on relevant public concerns, in a way representing the public journalism premise of involving citizens into the democratic process, actually impact the audience they are meant to motivate.

The word Media needs no introduction, but the New Media and its applications are under scrutiny for the last decade or so. As new research is done to understand its impact and implication, New Media tends to throw up new weapons of control to bridge the gap between the fantasy and the reality, the personal and the public and finally friends and foes. New Media has allowed the writings on the wall to be accessible to the entire world. This open communication has resulted in increased participation at all levels, personal, social, cultural and political. There has been a systematic investigation by social scientists to study the impact of media and the role it plays on the psyche of the viewers that determine their political behaviour. (Philo and Miller 2001), (Berelson, 1952), (Gunter 1997, *Measuring Bias on Television*, Luton: John Libbey, William, 1992), Curran C, 1979, *A Seamless Robe*. London. Collins). Mc quail et al, 1972, Blumler and Katz, 1974), (see Bode 1992; Dionne 1991; Rosen and Taylor 1992), Basil, Schooler, and Reeves (1991), Kosterman 1991).

Here political behaviour for all academic purposes relates to the political views that help to determine the voting behaviour in the election. To build up consensus media is used by the politicians to display their stand on policy issues. Historically, when the penetration of media was limited, the major means of communication were speeches broadcasted over radio and excerpts printed in newspapers. Today, with the increasing penetration of TV channels per million household (esp. in developing Democracies like India), political campaigns and debates form a part of our daily meal of media consumption.

Increased political participation is claimed to be one among many contributions that political talk and citizen-to-citizen deliberation bring to society (e.g., Fishkin, 1995). Some scholars go so far as saying that conversation is “the elementary building block of participatory democracy” (Katz, 1994, p.30) and propose including political discussion alongside voting, volunteering, or donating money to candidates (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). Others conversely argue that exposure to dissimilar views, which happens during interpersonal talk and which deliberation should entail, may decrease citizen participation in the democratic process. Those researchers note that deliberative and participatory democracy may be mutually exclusive (Mutz, 2006). Empirical evidence exists to support both claims and the debate is still unresolved.

The present paper emanates of a pre-election survey conducted in Lucknow. A two pronged methodology, is used encompassing two types of the research tools. First an interview schedule with both open and closed ended questions was used to conduct extensive interviews. Secondly, the programs and talk shows were recorded which were put to content analysis for reaching further interpretations.

The interview schedule was designed in two languages- English and Hindi. Hindi is the predominant language of Uttar Pradesh, the capital of which illustrates the data gathered and conclusively draws that it is only the highly intellectual class that is media literate to intercept media messages clearly. The interview schedule was developed after much deliberations and discussions. It was designed by keeping the basic principles in mind. Most of the questions asked were closed ended. Some had to be sequenced according to individual priority and finally some closed ended questions had sub-parts which were open ended. A few questions were open ended. The questionnaire consisted of several sections. Part one consisted of General Particulars of the Respondents, Part two consisted of sources of information for Political News, Part three dealt with Level of Interest in Political News and Part Four dealt with Role of Media. Finally, the interview schedule

ended with an open-ended question based on role of media and how people perceived it. It is pertinent to point out that the year 2012 was a year of Assembly Elections in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

To make a systematic analysis the constituency map of Lucknow was studied. The Election Commission had divided the city into nine constituencies. The central part of the city which is also the oldest was divided into five constituencies. These were namely Lucknow Central, Lucknow East, Lucknow Cantonment, Lucknow West and Lucknow North. A list of polling booths from each constituency were drawn and two polling booths that were apart in a single constituency were chosen at random to represent that constituency. A voter list of the two chosen booths was thus downloaded from the website of the Election Commission and a total of fifty names covering the entire booth with locations largely a part were selected for interview randomly. At the time of conduction of the field work, in case the person whose name had been marked was not present then someone else from the family was interviewed. At times the location of the house could not be established or the number printed in the list was not correct or there was no one present to respond from the location, in all such cases the house next door whose address was mentioned in the list was taken. Care was taken to seek response from only one person from a house, male or female. In fact during the course of the field work, it had become obvious that though men viewed talk shows more and were keen to respond to the questionnaire but women neither watched talk shows regularly and were least interested in political news. Therefore drawing response from them was more difficult, they shied away, shirked and sometimes vehemently denied approach to gain response. Still the male and female response ratio was maintained though women respondents proved to be very difficult to get. The data was collected after running an interview schedule. Accordingly, the demographic profile of respondents is of the complete sample of 525 whereas the main analysis is of 521 individuals as the four respondents refused to answer

THE DATA ANALYSIS
TABLE 1

Sex	Religion	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
	Hindu	62	19	19	0	0	100
Male	Muslim	9	1	0	0	2	12
	Total	71	20	19	0	2	112
	Hindu	37	19	2	0	0	58
Female	Muslim	3	1	0	0	0	4
	Total	40	20	2	0	0	62

all the questions. The demographic profiling of the data is as follows. The data has been given in frequency but the discussion is in percentage for better understanding. The conclusions drawn has been outlined at the end.

The first table shows respondents in the age group of 18-30, the younger lot had 112 male against 62 female. Therefore the young age group has predominant male respondents 64 % as against 35% females. Out of the male, there were 20 OBC and 19 SC voters and in case of women there were 20 OBC voters and 2 SC voters. There is equal number of OBC respondents in both genders. In the same age there was a single respondent who belongs to the SC community and was illiterate as against 11 male persons who were 9th pass and 9 males who were High School. Most of the respondents (38) were Graduates 33.93%. This signifies a high literacy rate. Out of the 112 men interviewed 71 approximately 63.4% belonged to the general category. A total of 62 women were interviewed with as many as 40 in general category. Interestingly, the maximum respondents in this category were either PG/PhD approximately 30.6%. This analysis reflects that women were more qualified than males in the 18-30 age segment. (Table 2)

TABLE 2

Sex	Qualification	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
Male	Illiterate	0	0	1	0	0	1
	upto 9 th	7	2	2	0	0	11
	High School	3	2	4	0	0	9
	Intermediate	5	5	6	0	0	16
	Graduate	25	9	3	0	1	38
	PG and Ph.D.	21	0	3	0	0	24
	Professional	10	2	0	0	1	13
	Total	71	20	19	0	2	112
Female	illiterate	2	3	0	0	0	5
	upto 9 th	3	0	0	0	0	3
	High School	2	2	1	0	0	5
	Intermediate	2	4	0	0	0	6
	Graduate	12	5	0	0	0	17
	PG and Ph.D.	13	5	1	0	0	19
	Professional	6	1	0	0	0	7
	Total	40	20	2	0	0	62

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR POLITICAL NEWS

TABLE 3

	Newspaper	TV	Internet	Radio	Newspaper & TV	Newspaper & Radio	Other
Male	21	51	10	9	18	7	6
Female	8	20	12	3	19	0	0

Amongst the age group of 18-30, there are 18.755% males whose main source of political information is the newspaper and 45.53% are Television consumers for political news diet. The newspaper and TV both as sources of information are consumed by 16.07% males. As against the popular notion that this age group will be heavy consumer of internet, only about 8.9% men sought their information through net. In the come back era of radio, a good 8.03 % men were radio consumers for information and 6.25% were newspaper and radio consumers. Amongst women about 12.9% women were consumers of newspapers which were their main source of political information. A total 32.25% women got information from the Television and a good 30.645 were using both TV and print for information. Interestingly, more women about 19.35% claimed that their main source of political news was internet as against the 8.9% of men who use internet. Interestingly, again in the age group of 18-30 years, there were only 4.83% radio consumers. In the other category where friends and family and even SMS were considered as sources of information on political discussion, about 5.35% men were gathering information through this source. (Table 3)

When analysing the sources of news or information for political news the following data was reflected. Among the men of age group 18-30, as against the popular view that internet will entice this bracket of people, it was seen that only 8.9% men were using internet as against the 19.35% of female but as the population of men covered in the data are 122 as against 62 women, therefore, it can be concluded that penetration of internet amongst both men and women is equal or there is no gender sensitivity as far as internet usage among the genders are considered. The people who said that radio was the main source of news information reaching them is 8.3% in male and 4.83% in female. Again the population of male respondents being double than the female, we can say that radio as a source of political information is limited to only those who do not really try to assert themselves to get information through any other source. Newspaper as a source of information was available to 25.45% men and 30.35% women. The most accessible was the television which was viewed by 45.53% men and 32.25 %

women. Both radio and Television was watched by 16.67% males and 30.64% females. This means that television as a source of political information was enjoyed more by the females than the males. Last about 6.25% men recovered political information from a combination of newspapers and radio as against nil women. Interestingly 5.36% men had quoted other sources of information like friends, family etc.

TABLE 4

Sex	Religion	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
	Hindu	31	13	6	1	0	51
Male	Muslim	1	2	0	1	0	4
	Total	32	15	6	2	0	55
	Hindu	49	8	4	0	0	61
Female	Muslim	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Total	54	8	4	0	0	66

TABLE 5

Sex	Qualification	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
	Illiterate	2	1	3	0	0	6
Male	upto 9 th	1	4	2	0	0	7
	High School	1	4	0	1	0	6
	Intermediate	4	1	0	0	0	5
	Graduate	12	1	0	1	0	14
	PG and Ph.D.	6	2	0	0	0	8
	Professional	6	2	1	0	0	9
	Total	32	15	6	2	0	55
	Illiterate	11	3	1	0	0	15
	upto 9 th	1	0	1	0	0	2
Female	High School	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Intermediate	5	1	0	0	0	6
	Graduate	20	0	1	0	0	21
	PG and Ph.D.	11	3	1	0	0	15
	Professional	6	0	0	0	0	6
	Total	54	8	4	0	0	66

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR POLITICAL NEWS

TABLE 6

	Newspaper	TV	Internet	Radio	Newspaper & TV	Newspaper & Radio	Other
Male	14	19	2	2	14	2	2
Female	17	29	0	3	13	3	1

The age group of 31-42 had a total of 121 respondents with 45.5% Male respondents and 54.5% females. (Table 4). In males there were 58.2% men from the general category and 27.27% OBC , 10.9% SC and 3.6%ST. Out of a total of 66 females, 81.81% were from the general category and 12.12% OBC and 6% SC. Therefore the predominant population being Hindus, there were least number of people who represented the ST, this is also because the study was conducted in the metropolitan city of Lucknow where there is a very limited tribal population. As far as the literacy scales measured the respondents in the age group of 31-42, the figures reveal that 25.45% males were graduate and 14.54% were PG/PhD and 16.36%were professionals making a total of 55% as employed or eligible for employment. This is significant as this category of individuals has a clear say in

their political decisions. In case of female respondents 31.81% were Graduates 22.72% were PG and PhD and about 9.1% were professionals making a total of 62%. This shows that employed /eligible for employment category of women in the age group of 31-42 are 62% against the same category of men who are 55%. In the age group of 31-42 years, there are about 25.45% men who are avid consumers of newspapers and taking a lead is the 34.54% men who chose Television as the main source of information. A combination of newspaper and TV was indicated by 25.45% men making the print and electronic as the most popular media for this segment. Only meagre 3.6% men were using internet, radio and a combination of radio and newspaper for information. About 3.6% men sought information through friends and family, meaning that they did not consume any mainstream media to seek political information. In the same age category, about 30.35% women were voracious consumers of newspapers, surpassing men meaning that in the age group of 31-42 more women claimed to be newspaper consumers for political news. About 51.78% women claimed TV to be the main source of the information and the combination of both media was consumed by 23.21%. Strangely none of the women of this category were consuming internet for political information and only 5.35% women were using radio alone or a combination of radio and newspaper to gather information. There were 1.78% women who relied on family and friends for information. Amongst the age group of 31-42 years old a whopping 34.54% men consumed political information through television and 25.45 men gathered news from newspapers and TV. (Table 7)

TABLE 7

Sex	Religion	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
Male	Hindu	34	8	10	0	0	52
	Muslim	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Total	35	10	10	0	0	55
Female	Hindu	41	10	7	0	0	58
	Muslim	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Total	42	12	7	0	0	61

TABLE 8

Sex	Qualification	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
Male	Illiterate	3	3	3	0	0	9
	upto 9 th	1	3	2	0	0	6
	High School	2	0	2	0	0	4
	Intermediate	4	1	0	0	0	5
	Graduate	11	0	0	0	0	11
	PG and Ph.D.	9	0	1	0	0	10
Female	Professional	5	3	2	0	0	10
	Total	35	10	10	0	0	55
	Illiterate	7	1	1	0	0	9
	upto 9 th	2	6	3	0	0	11
	High School	7	0	2	0	0	9
	Intermediate	7	2	0	0	0	9
Female	Graduate	10	2	0	0	0	12
	PG and Ph.D.	5	1	0	0	0	6
	Professional	4	0	1	0	0	5
	Total	42	12	7	0	0	61

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR POLITICAL NEWS

TABLE 9

	Newspaper	TV	Internet	Radio	Newspaper & TV	Newspaper & Radio	Other
Male	19	17	4	0	12	0	3
Female	16	21	0	3	19	4	2

The age group 43-55 years represented 55 men and 61 women. Out of this, about 63.6% men are from the General category, 18% are OBC and 18% are SC. Among women about 68.8% are from the General category, 19.67% are OBC and 11.47% are SC. Therefore the predominant population is the General Category Hindu with equal percentage of OBC and SC respondents. Among women the OBC category is more than the SC. Interestingly, the number of Muslim candidates in SC category is null. About 16% men interviewed were illiterate, and 20% were Graduates and 18% were PG/ PhDs and 18% were professionals. Therefore 36% were either employed or eligible for employment. Among women about 19.67% were Graduates and the total of employed are eligible for employment were 18%. In the age group of 43-55 years, about 34.54% men consumed newspapers, 30.90 consumed TV and 21.81% consumed both. This is the only age group that shows TV as a lesser popular media than newspaper. Or we can conclude that the middle aged men rely more on newspaper than TV for their source of information. Only 7.27% men rely on internet and none were listening to radio or using radio and newspaper combination for information. But there were 5.45% men who were relying on personal relationship for political information. Amongst women, 26.22% women were consuming newspaper and 34.42% were consuming TV. Interestingly none of the women in this category were using internet. Both TV and print were being used by 31.14% women. In this segment, unlike men, women were using radio. About 4.91% were using only radio and 6.55% were using a combination of radio and newspaper for political information. Here also there were 3.27% women who were using mutual relation instead of media to gather political information.

TABLE 10

Sex	Religion	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
Male	Hindu	50	12	5	0	0	67
	Muslim	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Buddhist	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	55	12	6	0	0	73
Female	Hindu	30	3	0	0	0	33
	Muslim	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Sikh	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	32	5	0	0	0	37

TABLE 11

Sex	Qualification	Categories					Total
		Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Other	
Male	illiterate	6	1	1	0	0	8
	upto 9 th	3	3	2	0	0	8
	High School	3	3	0	0	0	6
	Intermediate	8	1	2	0	0	11
	Graduate	9	0	1	0	0	10
	PG and Ph.D.	12	3	0	0	0	15
	Professional	14	1	0	0	0	15
Total		55	12	6	0	0	73
Female	illiterate	4	5	0	0	0	9
	upto 9 th	4	0	0	0	0	4
	High School	3	0	0	0	0	3
	Intermediate	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Graduate	5	0	0	0	0	5
	PG and Ph.D.	8	0	0	0	0	8
	Professional	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total		32	5	0	0	0	37

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

TABLE 12

	Newspaper	TV	Radio	Internet			other
	a	b	c	d	a+b	a+b+c	e
Male	73	19	2	1	6	1	10
Female	44	6	0	1	6	0	5

Finally in the 56+ category there were a total of 110 respondents in which 73 were men and 37 were women. About 16.4% men are OBC, 75.3% are from the General category and 8% are SC. About 20.54% men were PG/PhD or eligible for employment and 20.54% were employed. Among the women 86.4% were from the General category and 13.5% OBC. About 29.7% women are PG/ PhD and professional. In the 56+ category, about 20.54% were newspaper consumers, 23.28% were TV consumers and 50.68% were consumers of both media. Among women 13.51% were consumers of newspapers and 45.94% were using TV for information. Thus, a larger number of women were using TV in this segment. About 5.40% women were internet users and 13.51% women were using radio for political information.

In the youngest segment, it is a relief to find that newspaper remains the favourite of 65.17% men and 16.96% consumed TV and a combination of both was relied upon by 5.35%. 1.78% claimed that radio was their source of information whereas just a single individual claimed that all the three media, print, TV and radio were the source of information also a single respondent was using net for such information. About 8.92% had other sources that gave them information about political parties and candidates. Amongst women about 70.96% read newspapers and 9.67% relied on TV for information, a combination of both 9.67% was claimed by a few. None heard radio and used all three media and only a single individual used internet for political information. About 8.06% women relied on other sources for information.

About 65.45% men get information through newspaper, 3.63% through TV and 14.54% through both. Internet is scarcely used as represented by 1.81% and though no one exclusively hears radio for information but 3.63% claim that they get information through newspapers, TV and radio. About 10.91% claim that they get information from other sources like family and friends. About 76.78% women read newspapers for information, TV gives information to 23.21% and a combination of both are consumed by 7.14%. Whereas individually none claimed to be gaining information through the radio but a combination of print, TV by 7.14% and print, TV and radio is consumed by 1.78% while 7.14% women have claimed other sources for seeking information about political parties and candidates. A small percentage of 1.78% claimed using internet in this category. Unlike what is assumed that there are very few people who rely on internet for such information and newspaper still remains a favourite of Indian across all age groups.

43-55: Total 116

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

TABLE 13

	Newspaper	TV	Radio	Internet			other
	a	b	c	d	a+b	a+b+c	e
Male	36	2	0	1	8	2	6
Female	43	13	0	1	4	1	4

Source of Information about Political Parties and Candidates

A clear lead by newspapers is seen as 70.9% men claimed in this category to be reading newspaper. About 12.72% watch TV and the same percentage also claim to be gaining information through both TV and newspaper. There were 3.63% who gave other sources as source for information. There are 54.09% women who read news for information and 16.39% use TV for information. About 4.92% use both TV and newspaper and 6.45% claim TV newspaper and radio for information. There were 21.31% women who say they rely on other sources. (i.e.

family and friends for information.)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

TABLE 14

	Newspaper	TV	Radio	Internet			other
	a	b	c	d	a+b	a+b+c	e
Male	39	7	0	0	7	0	2
Female	33	10	0	0	3	2	13

About 64.38% men get their information through the newspaper, 10.95% through TV and 1.37% through both. Internet was used by only 1.37% and family friends etc were quoted as source by 8.22%. Among women a higher percentage 67.56% claimed that newspaper was their major source of information, followed by 21.62% who watched television for information. About 2.70% used internet and 2.70% also used newspaper and TV as combination to get information. About 2.70% quoted other sources for information. Interestingly none in this age group quoted radio as a source for information.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

TABLE 15

	Newspaper	TV	Internet	Radio	Newspaper & TV	Newspaper & Radio	Other
Male	15	17	4	0	37	0	0
Female	5	17	2	5	8	0	0

About 58.03% men claim that they decide on candidates according to self, 27.67% make consultations with family while deciding on candidates. A single individual said that he consulted community for deciding the party candidates. Only about 1.78% believed the media for consultation and 4.46% had friends whom they consulted while 7.14% had others whom they consulted. Amongst women, 43.51% decided candidates by their own self while 40.32% decided candidates through their family. The others quoted community (3.2%), Media (3.2%) and an individual participant quoted friends as people whom they consulted before deciding the candidate. There are about 8.06% women who have quoted others as sources of consultation. Importantly the role of New Media is very limited in fact negligible

CONSULTATION FOR DECIDING PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 16

	Self	Family	Community	Friends	Media	other
Male	65	31	1	5	2	8
Female	27	25	2	1	2	5

There are 60% males in this age group of 31-42 who decide by self and about 9% decide after consultation with family and another 9% decide after consultation with community. There are about 5.45% who consult friends before deciding the candidate of choice while 14.54% have quoted others whom they consult for finalising the candidate. Only one individual quoted media as consultant for deciding the political candidate. Amongst women, there are 55.35% who do not consult anyone else but decide on their own the candidate of their choice. Besides 39.28% have quoted that they consult family, about 7.14% consult community while 3.57% consult friends and media. 8.9% have quoted others whom they consult for deciding the candidate.

CONSULTATION FOR DECIDING PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 17

	Self	Family	Community	Friends	Media	Other
Male	33	5	5	3	1	8
Female	31	22	4	2	2	5

Consultation for Deciding Party/ Candidate:- There are 60% men who decide whom to vote on their own and only 9% consult family, 10.9% consult community also the interestingly among all men there are about 9% who consult media for deciding the right candidate. About 5.45% men consult friends and the same percentage has quoted others whom they consult before finalising. Amongst women, there are 47.54% who decide on their own whom to vote while 27.86% consult family and about 21.31% have quoted others whom they consult before deciding a candidate. Importantly amongst women, none consults media and only two single individuals have quoted as wanting to consult community and friends respectively.

CONSULTATION FOR DECIDING PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 18

	Self	Family	Community	Friends	Media	other
Male	33	5	6	3	5	3
Female	29	17	1	1	0	13

Among men, there are 57.5% men who consult self and 26% consult family and 8.21% consult others while only 6.84% consult community. Interestingly there are none in this category who consult friends and only one individual claims to be consulting media. Amongst women, 54% decide on their own, 32.43% consult family. Single individuals have claimed as consulting friends, media and others.

CONSULTATION FOR DECIDING PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 19

	Self	Family	Community	Friends	Media	other
Male	42	19	5	0	1	6
Female	20	12	2	1	1	1

About 28.57% men felt that political debates influence vote casting while 71.42% felt they did not. Among women, 19.35% felt that political debates did influence voting behaviour while 80.6% felt that voting behaviour was not affected by political debates. 32.14% said yes and 8.92% said no whereas 76.78% couldn't say. 31-42: Total 121

Only 21.8% felt that political debates do impact voting while a majority of 78.18% felt that it did not. In case of women also 32.14% felt that political debates affected vote casting while 85.7% felt that it did not. 43-55: Total 116

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL DEBATE ON VOTE CASTING

TABLE 20

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Male	32	80	Male	12	43
Female	12	50	Female	18	48

Influence of Political Debate on vote casting:

Only 25.45% men felt that voting behaviour was influenced by political debates while another 74.5% felt that it did not.

Women, even less about 11.47% felt that political debates impacted voting whereas 88.52% felt it did not. Influence of Political Debate on vote casting.

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL DEBATE ON VOTE CASTING

TABLE 21

	Yes	No
Male	14	41
Female	7	54

Only 28% men felt that watching political debates influences voting whereas 69.3% felt that it did not. Amongst women about 21.62% felt that political behaviour is influenced by watching debates whereas 78.37% felt that it did not affect voting.

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL DEBATE ON VOTE CASTING

TABLE 22

	Yes	No
Male	21	52
Female	8	29

In this youngest category of men, there are 48.21% men who felt that media has some role to play but 23.21% felt media has a great role to play in building the image of a political party or candidate. There are 16.98% men who felt that media has no role to play. In case of women, there were 16.12% who felt that media had no role to play whereas a majority of 50% said that media had some role to play, while 25.8% felt that there was a great role to be played by media. There are 8% who answered as can't say. 31-42: Total 121

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL DEBATE ON VOTE CASTING

TABLE 23

	No Role	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Can't say
Male	19	54	26	13
Female	10	31	16	5

There are 21.81% men who feel that media has no role to play in building the image of an individual. There is a majority of 58.18% who do feel that there is some role that media plays while 14.54% men felt that there is a great role that media plays in building the image of a political party or candidate and 5.45% men opted for the can't say category. In case of women about 76.78% felt that media played some role whereas 23.21% felt that media played an important role in building this image. Whereas 12.5% women opted for can't say category. Role of media for building climate in favour or against political party/candidate: 43-55: Total 116

ROLE OF MEDIA FOR BUILDING CLIMATE IN FAVOR OR AGAINST POLITICAL PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 24

	No Role	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Can't say
Male	12	32	8	3
Female	3	43	13	7

There are 58% men who believe that media plays a role to some extent and 18% who feel that media plays a role to a great extent whereas 12.7% feel that media plays no role at all and 10.9% refrained from answering the question. Amongst women, there are 47.5% who feel that media plays a role to some extent and 14.75% feel that media has a great role to play whereas 9.8% women also felt that media had no role to play at all besides there are 27.86% women who fall under the can't say category. Role of media for building climate in favour or against political party/candidate.

ROLE OF MEDIA FOR BUILDING CLIMATE IN FAVOR OR AGAINST POLITICAL PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 25

	No Role	To Some Extend	To Great Extend	Can't say
Male	7	32	10	6
Female	6	29	9	17

ROLE OF MEDIA FOR BUILDING CLIMATE IN FAVOR OR AGAINST POLITICAL PARTY/CANDIDATE

TABLE 26

	No Role	To Some Extend	To Great Extend	Can't say
Male	9	38	21	5
Female	5	20	6	6

There are 12.3% men who think that there is no role of media and about 6.64% opted for the can't say but majority of 52% felt that there is a role to some extent whereas 28.76% felt that there is a role to a great extent that the media plays in building a climate for or against an individual. Amongst women there are 54% who felt that media helped to some extent and 16.21% who felt that media had an important role to play for creating the image of a political party or candidate. There were however 13.5% women who felt that media had no role to play whereas 16.21% refrained to answer the question.

Conclusion

The cumulative result of the above analysis shows that less than 2% of the entire population studied actually relied on internet or the New Media for information. As most of the users who were regular net users actually relied more on the mainstream media. As against the popular notion that the 18-30 age group will be heavy consumer of internet, only about 8.9% men sought their information through net. The results conclude that penetration of internet amongst both men and women is equal or there is no gender sensitivity as far as internet usage among the genders is considered. In the age group of 31-42 more women claimed to be newspaper consumers for political news. Strangely none of the women of this category were consuming internet for political information. There were 1.78% women who relied on family and friends for information. In the age group of 43-55 years, 7.27% men rely on internet. Interestingly none of the women in this category were using internet. Finally in the 56+ category there were a total of 110 respondents in which 73 were men and 37 were women. Only a single respondent in both male and female were using net for such information. Conclusively as per usage, it is pertinent to point out that New Media has not really become an adversary but has a complimenting role to play.

On the sources of information for political party and candidate, age group 18-30 and 31-42 had only a single respondents in both male and female category who depended on the internet, and none in the 43-55 and 55 age group above used internet. This reiterates the above notion that internet has not really seeped in as much for political information as is being perceived.

On the question of how much people consult media for deciding the Political party or candidate, there are 1.78% men and 3.2% women in the 18-30 category who depended on media for deciding their voting candidate. In the 31-42 category only an individual male respondent and 3.57% women respondents depended on media and in the 43-55 category about 9% men and none of the females consulted media whereas in the 55 + category only a single male and female respondent claimed to consult media. This leads one to believe that all across age groups people do admit their dependence on media though it is very limited except in the middle aged men category where the dependence was more.

The penultimate question on Influence of political debates on vote casting, all across the age groups more than 70% men and 80% women do not believe that media influences vote casting.

The last question pertaining to the role of media on building a climate in favour or against a political party or candidate, 71% males and 76% women in the first category, 73% men and 90% women in the second category and 76% men and 63% women in the third and 81% men and 70% women have asserted that media plays a role either to some extent or to a large extent in building a climate pro-against a political party. This leads one to believe that the role building power of media is accepted by the majority. There is truth to believe that media is more an information provider, a propaganda vehicle than a real vote decider.

The entire study also concluded that Noella Newmann's spiral of silence is losing its sheen in the Indian context where in answering the interview schedule people across all age group not only felt important and were cooperative but also were less hesitant in voicing whom they plan to vote into / out of power in the coming General Elections. Outside of this study as well as people have voiced their opinion on controversial issues even in group discussions and internet blogs. The third person effect is still a dominant paradigm as was evident from the reactions of most of the respondents during the course of the interview.

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