

# Proximity of Media and Political Parties: A Study of Interfaces

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## *ABSTRACT*

Historically, media has simulated many crest and troughs in Indian politics. Isolation of media from politics is never demanded. Each political party remains frightened about the media because of its own pitfalls. That is how Anna Hazare or Arvind Kejriwal gain immense popularity. The political parties become desperate to insulate such confidential decisions from the media and the professional journalists are highly obliged to accept such challenges of breaking barrier lead out so immaculately. The job of the media person is certainly to elevate facts and to destroy the camouflaging of ruling parties. Undoubtedly, today's media blessed with Technology marvels have been holistically accomplishing their jobs. The role played by television In constructing the post-modernist Indian, had influenced political parties to succumb to the temptation of using the televised space for communicating political agenda and achieving electoral success. The 'Indian shining' is a great example of how the BJP and its affiliates attempted to capture the new liberal imagery of progress through political advertisement. The validity of our claims are once more established when we look at the political advertisement, Jai Ho(Hail India) Of the Congress party. the media has been playing a significant role in the formation of political opinion and political parties often capitalize this opportunity.

**Keywords:** Liberal, Virginity, Democracy, Brainpower, opportunity, Holistically

## **Introduction:**

Historically media has modulated the vicissitudes of Political parties. Isolation of media from politics is never demanded. Each political party remains panic stricken about the media because of its own pitfalls. That is how Anna Hazare or Arvind Kejriwal gained immense popularity. The political parties become desperate to insulate such confidential decisions from the media and the professional journalists are highly obliged to accept such challenges of breaking barrier lead out so immaculately. The job of media person is certainly 2 elevate facts and to destroy the camouflaging of the political parties. Undoubtedly, today's Media blessed with technology marvels have been holistically accomplishing their jobs.

It is also true that some political leaders deliberately leak out information to their favourite journalist. It is hearsay that Money woven business world hardly mind to extend the highest level of

financial aids as some specialised news could raise their unique selling points, which are ultimately transformed to tangible monetary gains.

The close association between political leaders and media has raised acrimonious debates many times in India. Many leaders have been found to use media with vested concern to salvage the interests of people. Such intermingling relationship often aids the media to unfold even highly confidential proceedings which should have been otherwise completely forbidden.

The reshuffle (2013) In ministerial portfolios at the Centre has elevated some burning questions regarding the alleged relationship between the press and politicians. Brushing aside controversies, whether the current reshuffle may turn around the vote bank in the coming general election, it must be noted that most of the changes in the ministry have been highlighted in several newspapers and magazines are couple of days back. There had been clear evidence

about transmission of the news that Rahul Gandhi would not be involved in the government or granted any portfolio. The news of some new cabinet ministers from West Bengal had been flashed in several media.

In spite of due diligence to the caliber of professional journalists, We must not decline to accept that such vivid tally is possible only when the information oozes out from top brasses or their allies. West Bengal witnessed such an instance whereby Mamata Banerjee had for widen the use of cell phones in a meeting, at which the Trinamool Congress took a landmark stance to quit the government at Centre. Mamata was more worried as her party has only paved the way for a few journalists to the prestigious slots of MP cadre. However, all such bits and pieces had come out at a later stage so that virginity of announcement of the decision of quitting could be established.

Politics in India works within a framework of a federal parliamentary multi party system. The president of India is the former head of state and holds substantial reserve powers, while the Prime Minister of the country is the head of government enforcing executive powers. The federal legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament, While the judiciary is independent of both the executive and the legislature. The vibrant and free media in India is considered to be the fourth estate of democracy, While enjoying almost unlimited access to information and without major regulations imposed upon their operation.

Historical Perspective: In India, Internet and cable television have brought about meaningful changes to public and private spheres of life More quickly than education, industrialization or any other socio economic factor. Electronic media had no role to play for a decade after independence. Print media and radio served as the primary means of political information and mobilization. Mass media received a boost in September 1959 as a result of the introduction of television to urban India. The government controlled national television network began as a 'modest enterprise' since viewers had access to one channel,

while the bigger cities/Metropolis had access to two channels. However, the goals of state regulated electronic media were restricted to educational and entertainment based programmes(Satpathi & Roy, 2011:3).

In 1991 the Indian television network was deregulated and cable-satellite network emerged for the first time. From it's modest beginning with two channels In 1990, the Indian audience got access to five hundred and fifteen cable-satellite Channels by June 2010. Moreover, there were thirty three 24 hours news channels that would constantly engage in political and economic debates and conduct opinion/Exit polls in election years(Times of India, 2010).

The number of Radio stations grew from 6 during the 1990s to 312 by the middle of the last decade. These would include the community radio system that became very successful in three states including Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttaranchal, serving as the key medium for engaging a grassroots activism, by operating independent of state and commercial control. The service providers for these stations were non-governmental organizations using radio for generating development and community education. More specifically community radio served as a tool for empowerment that allowed local citizens the opportunity to seek accountability for state action (Shaw, 2005).

The deregulation of the television network in the 1990s was accompanied by the internet revolution. from 1992 to 2010, The number of Internet users grew from none to 81,00,000. Today Internet has emerged as a new medium for information delivery. The Internet holds the promise of 'Enhancing democracy and changing traditional one way process of political communication' (Grossman, 1995:149;Oblack & Zeljam, 2007:60). The role of the Internet in providing for political information becomes relevant since majority of the Indian population is relatively young. accordingly to a recent estimate, by 2020 The average age of an Indian will be 29 years, in comparison to 37 for China and 48 for Japan (Satpathi & Roy, 2011).

In India, there have been several studies on the nature and functions of the media (Fernandez, 2000:611-28, Johnson, 2001:147-169, Prasad, 2005; Sonawalkar, 2001:505-519). In fact, much of these studies have focused on the role of the Indian media in the post liberalization the Indian media in the post liberalisation period. However, these studies mainly focus on the cultural impact of the media and the influence of television and rural India.

In the post 1991 period following de-regulation of the television network, and a growing nexus between market reforms and technological advancement, interaction between media effect on political behaviour underwent some changes. Riding high on the success of what emerged as successful alliance between neo liberalism and Hindutva in 2003 the BJP led NDA coalition Launched a nationwide television campaign with the slogan 'India Shining'. The NDA government spent an estimated \$20,000,000 of the taxpayers' money were used to aid the campaign in print and electronic media, in all languages (Zora & Woreck, 2004). The Campaign was aired 9472 times making it the second most viewed advertisement between December 2003-January 2004 (Chandran, 2004).

In print media similar successes went achieved in terms of its popularity, as it became the regional newspapers. The New York based advertisement agency, Grey Worldwide was the brain power Behind the sixty seconds media blitz, focusing on 'Feel good' propaganda that were accompanied by the economic liberalisation mantra along with images of India's industrial and agricultural development, emerged middle power by 2020 (Kohli, 2006:1251-59). The electoral campaign received further boost after The BJP decided to use the traditional campaign strategy of road rallies along with the Bharat Uday Yatra and India shining campaign, launched in print and electronic media (Wyatt, 2005:477).

Chaffee and Kahnihan's Argument that television could be more informative source than the print media under certain circumstances seems to have some relevance for India (Chaffee & Kahnihan,

1997:421-30). The proliferations of cable satellite and radio in India over the last thirty years are an indication of the emergence of television as a useful alternative of information delivery. This growing popularity of television as a primary communication medium could also be attributed to the inaccessibility of print media to certain sections of population due to the problems of illiteracy, poverty and linguistic heterogeneity. We should further argue that Indian print media over the years have come to represent an elitist subcultures As they were set up by industrial corporations and business houses and serve as their mouthpiece for small group of educated middle-class elites.

The popularity of the cable satellite television indicates that India has now entered the era of electronic capitalism. The print media uses the trajectory of information delivery data oxalates between catering to the regional or national level. the mode of information delivery for the electronic media is more nuanced, since it starts out by claiming it niche at the national level, before reinforcing itself into the local and regional values (Rajgopal, 2004:289).

We would thus argue that the role played by television in constructing the post modernist Indian identity, had influenced political parties to succumb to the temptation of using the televised space for communicating political agenda and achieving electoral success. The India shining is a great example of how the BJP and its affiliates attempted to capture the neo liberal imagery of progress through political advertisement. The validity of our claims are once more established when we look at the political advertisement, Jai Ho (Hail India) Of the Congress Party. In March 2009 the Congress party led government acquired the copyright of Jai Ho for \$200000 to use the song as part of its political campaign for the upcoming general elections (Satpathi & Roy, 2011:14). Hence the time has come when the media have been playing a significant role in the formation of political opinion and political parties often capitalise this opportunity.

Moreover, when India voted in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019, it was the world's largest

democratic exercise, And the biggest ever test of the role of social media in an election. As the ruling BJP realised for battle with the newly energised Congress led opposition, the role of Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp became crucial in deciding the winner.

India had close to ninety voters, and an estimated 50 crore voters had access to the Internet. The country had Thirty crore Facebook users and 20 crore WhatsApp messaging service more than any other democracy. Crores used Twitter. Social media and data analytics have become the main actors in the upcoming India elections. Their use would be unprecedented as both parties now use social media. the potential for abuse was also immense, with incendiary news and videos capable of fanning violence. fake news and messages were also circulated on social media leading to serious repercussions. Social media discourse, already bitter turned bilious. Both the main parties accused each other of propagating fake news while denying they did so themselves.

Nevertheless, the battle lines between them were clearly drawn. The Congress had attacked PM Narendra Modi's economic policies and his parties Hindu nationalist ideology, while the BJP dismissed the Congress as incompetent liberals out of touch with the people.

In December 2018, the Congress won elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, and the three major states that had been the bastion of the BJP, setting the stage for tight contest in 2019. Helping the opposition party was a revamped social media strategy. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Congress was crushed by the techno savvy Modi and his array of social media weapons, including a flurry of tweets from his personal account, a BJP campaign on Facebook and holographic displays of Modi in remote villages.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi joined Twitter only in 2015. But the opposition party was catching up and the playing field had gotten a lot bigger. Still, fighting body online was not easy. With 43 million followers on Facebook and 45 million On Twitter

globally, he was among the world's most followed politicians. Rahul Gandhi still had 8.1 million followers on Twitter and 2.2 million on Facebook. This is how Mr Modi used the social media to the maximum and invent the election of 2019.

As political parties in West Bengal geared up for the 2021 assembly election, more than 30 propaganda sweeping websites and video channels had emerged, all camouflaged as news sites and channels. These websites and channels of digital media produced unverified and biased as well as fake news. Do assembly election campaign was characterised by bombarding social media with opinion polls on a regular basis impacted the psyche of the rural electorate, because most of them could not understand that what they read was false. So was social media used unscrupulously.

In 2022, much of the Punjab assembly polls were fought on new media outlets. It was another matter that these proliferating outlets rarely added value to the discourse. People were not only keeping an eye on mainstream TV and newspapers, but also monitoring the tech driven new media that, incidentally, also claimed to be an alternative media. The new Punjab media emerged recently during the farmers' movement. But with elections approaching, they have started copying mainstream channels. Instead of raising grassroots issues, their programming revolved around election rallies and candidate interviews, like mainstream TV news.

As a result of restrictions imposed by the election Commission of India on physical campaigning, the candidates and parties used social media like Twitter and Facebook in the 2022 assembly elections of Punjab with a view to connect with voters. Punjab election was thus considered largely a digital affair.

### **Conclusion:**

Social media plays a crucial role in modern elections. Fake news and propaganda have penetrated deep and are hijacking the electorate's mind. Social media has become the gobbles of today. Political parties with deep pockets can successfully run their propaganda campaign through social media.

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