

Communicator

Volume LIII (1), January–March 2018

Contents

1. Surviving the Digital Communication Wave: Issues in Writing Skills of Young Adults 03
Virendra Singh Nirban & Priyanka Kumari
2. Addressing Taboos through Social Media: An Analysis of Online Advocacy Campaign 27
Kulveen Trehan
3. Print and Online Newspapers: An Analysis of the News Content and Consumption Patterns of Readers 53
Pawan Koundal & Raghvendra Mishra
4. Internet Meme and Political Propaganda: An Analysis 73
Rajashree Goswami & Gyan Prakash Pandey

SURVIVING THE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION WAVE



ISSUES IN WRITING SKILLS OF YOUNG ADULTS



VIRENDRA SINGH NIRBAN¹ &
PRIYANKA KUMARI²

1 Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Science, BITS Pilani, Rajasthan, India.

2 Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Science, BITS Pilani, Rajasthan, India.

Email: kumaripriyanka51@gmail.com

[Corresponding Author]

Abstract

The last two decades have witnessed the world going through a transformation not only in terms of what we do but also how we do it. What is being witnessed in today's information age is the birth of a global culture and hence an evolution of a global language affecting language skill acquisition amongst young adults. This study focuses on how digital communication wave is affecting their writing skills.

Keywords

Digital communication, Writing skills, Digital natives, Digital immigrants, Email

The last two decades have witnessed the world going through a transition which has been multi-dimensional and decisive. From business to personal life, education to training, information exchange, communication, beliefs and culture – almost everything has witnessed some kind of transformation – not only in terms of what we do but also how we do it. What is being witnessed in today’s information age is the birth of a global culture and hence an evolution of a global language. Language is an integral part of any culture, and it evolves with the culture. English has changed substantially in the last 1500 years or so, reflecting patterns of contact with other languages and the changing communication needs of people.

Most of the popular online communication systems use English as the primary medium of instruction. Everywhere, English is at the leading edge of information dissemination – be it technological and scientific development, new thinking in economics and management or new literatures and entertainment genres. This predominance of English language has given rise to new vocabularies, grammatical forms, and new ways of speaking and writing. The effect of this expansion of English into new domains cannot be seen anywhere as clearly as in communication on the Internet and the development of ‘net English’. At the same time, English as a language is also at a critical point in its global evolution. According to Graddol (1997), within a decade or so, the number of people who speak English as a second language will exceed the number of native speakers (p.2). He opines that the implications of this will possibly be far reaching. Graddol (1997) argues: “the centre of authority regarding the language will shift away from native speakers as they become minority stakeholders in the global resource. Their literature and television may no longer provide the focal point of a global English language culture, their teachers no longer form the unchallenged authoritative models for learners” (pp. 2-3).

This study presents the finding of online communication discourse analysis focusing on the deviations in language usage by users. The online media taken into consideration includes emails. The text was collected through voluntary contribution. The text was marked for presence and absence of various aspects of English Language usage. The data was compiled in excel sheets and has been presented in table and graphs for analytical purpose.

Literature review

Halliday defines languages as a “social (shared by community) semiotics (conveys meaning about culture)”. He observes that language usage always takes place in a “context”, it is influenced by the context and that all situations and functions exert an “influence on the language choices” (Quoted by Butt,

Fahey, Spinks, & Yallop, 1995, pp. 11, 13). Language has also been studied as “a system in which choices of linguistic structure is motivated by the purpose for which it is used” (Butt et.al., 1995, p. 17).

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) offers special opportunities for examining language and communication theory, in that online discourse is immune to many nonverbal communication elements that may confound language effects in speech (Walther, 2004, pp. 384-396).

With its diverse forms such as email, websites, discussion forums and other online communities, CMC, through the written language and, to a lesser extent, through the oral language, has turned into a tool that makes it possible to construct a new type of social interaction beyond space barriers. As a general phenomenon, these new forms of communication also make it possible to throw light on some features of language functioning. There are several forms of CMC and, each, with its own peculiarities, makes it possible to reconsider some features appearing in the traditional forms and ways of communication.

Cumming (1995, pp. 3-8) points out that English is the dominant language on the internet for various reasons. Firstly the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII), the word processing system used on the internet, allows only for Roman characters. An ASCII code is basically a numerical representation of a character; since computers understand only numbers, characters are numerically represented using this code to facilitate exchange of information among computers. As ASCII allows the use of Roman characters only, English continues to be a dominant language on the internet. Secondly, English is the dominant language in international interaction in general. Cumming (1995) also says that with an increasing number of non-professionals, non-English-speaking users, this dominance of English can be expected to diminish to some extent. CMC has features of written and spoken language and it cannot clearly be attributed to either one or the other. But CMC has also some features of its own. The most well-known is probably the current use of abbreviations. Yates (1996) observes that people who are not familiar with chatting on the computer might have problems to understand the many abbreviations the chat language uses there (pp. 29-46). Abbreviations and emoticons are really helpful in writing an informal e-mail, while chatting or lately, in writing text messages on mobile phones. Both features express something one wants to say or an emotion one wants to submit in a minimum of characters. This way, one can save time, space and even money, if one thinks of the extremely limited characters that can be used in one text message (Saskia, 2004, p. 103). Also, there are

effects to imitate sounds or laughter, for example *ding dong* or *hahaha*. It is also not unusual to use the effect of gesture, for example when chat partners are simulating they would shake each others' hands or hugging each other by adding *shakes hands* or *hugs* to their messages (Herring, 1996, pp. 56-60).

Burton (1994) addresses certain important issues related to e-mail as a medium for communication beyond the mere description of systems and what one can do with them. He points out that E-mail is not simply a forum for "short, factual, numerical communications" but can be used for extensive, in-depth discussion (p. 101). Maynor (1994) discusses e-mail discourse as having its own style. Among the features distinctive to electronic writing are: lack of capital letters, simplified spellings, clippings and icons. These features she writes (with the exception of clippings) are not parts of speech, but they seem to exist to make e-mail similar to speech (pp. 48-54). For example, since capital letters cannot be seen in speech they are left out of e-mail. On the other hand, sometimes words are written in all capital letters to represent "screaming". Other elements such as varied punctuation (more exclamation points and trailing dots) or the lack of personal pronouns also imitate speech. E-mail does have its own lexicon, and many of the expressions are shorter than standard written expressions ("via, re, btw"). However, other typical e-mail expressions are not shorter ("nope" instead of "no"). The same can be said about punctuation – there is in fact more of it than in standard written English. Maynor (1994) hypothesizes that the use of these particular lexical items, in the case where they are shorter is coincidental – they are simply "associated with computer communication". The effort to add punctuation and use longer words taken from spoken English seems to be an effort on the part of e-mail users to imitate the more informal medium of spoken language. She does emphasize however that she has not "collected enough data to make definitive statements about e-style". Her essay is merely "intended as a suggestion that perhaps the language of e-mail is worthy of our attention as linguists".

Campbell and Bunz (2002) assessed whether certain discourse fragments in email messages consistently conveyed certain tones when situated in certain contexts. One hundred fifty-five subjects were asked to match message fragments to provided adjectives (affirming, appreciative, assertive, bold, caring, enthusiastic, formal, friendly, happy, personal, polite, respectful, strong, warm) (p. 2). The message fragments were situated in three contexts: business, friendship, and family interactions. Results showed that certain message fragments were perceived to be significantly formal, friendly, personal, caring, happy, and polite in the context of their use.

Burton (1994) addresses certain important issues related to e-mail as a medium for communication beyond the mere description of systems and what one can do with them. He points out that E-mail is not simply a forum for "short, factual, numerical communications" but can be used for extensive, in-depth discussion.

Results also showed that, in some cases, demographic factors played a role in perceptions of discursive fragments.

Hancock, Curry, Goorha and Woodworth (2005, p. 22) investigated changes in both the sender's and the target's linguistic style across truthful and deceptive dyadic communication in a synchronous text-based setting. A computer-based analysis of 242 transcripts revealed that senders produced more words overall, decreased their use of self-oriented pronouns but increased other-oriented pronouns, and used more sense-based descriptions (e.g., seeing, touching) when lying than when telling the truth. In addition, motivated senders avoided causal terms during deception, while unmotivated senders relied more heavily on simple negations. Receivers used more words when being deceived, but they also asked more questions and used shorter sentences when being lied to than when being told the truth, especially when the sender was unmotivated. These findings are discussed in terms of their implications for linguistic style matching and interpersonal deception theory.

Mallon and Oppenheim (2002) reviewed the textual features that seem to be exclusive to email messages in an attempt to come up with a list of 'e-mailisms'. They define emailisms as those features 'associated with e-mail' which may or may not appear in other forms of communication (p. 9). Mallon and Oppenheim conclude that the most common emailism in their data was contracted forms, "appearing 142 times in 100 emails" (p. 16), followed by spelling mistakes (57 times per 100 emails) (p. 15). The third most common emailism was quoted text which was used by 30% of writers in their sample (p. 15).

The various parameters used in the study focus on the grammar, syntax, vocabulary, structural aspects of language and some unique features of the channel itself. These include Use of Verbs, Conjunctions and Prepositions, Spellings and Fragmented Sentences, Use of Punctuation, Use of Compressed words and Abbreviations, Use of Capitalization, Use of Typographic Extremes, Use of Emoticons and Use of Transliteration.

All these parameters have been studied in the 'context' of formal and informal communication. The relationship that we share in a general/personal or professional environment is the key factor considered to categorize an email as Informal, and Formal. The data was compiled using questionnaires administered on two hundred subjects and personal observation of two hundred emails and is presented in form of descriptive statistics to reflect the patterns and degree of use of parameters in 'Perception' and in 'Practice'.

A computer-based analysis of 242 transcripts revealed that senders produced more words overall, decreased their use of self-oriented pronouns but increased other-oriented pronouns, and used more sense-based descriptions (e.g., seeing, touching) when lying than when telling the truth.

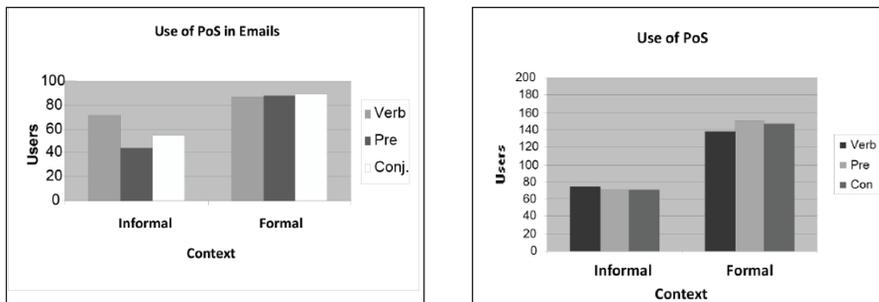
Analysis

Verbs, Conjunctions and Prepositions

Action description, connectivity of content and relationship between different entities in the text are essential features of effective writing. To achieve this, it is important to understand and use the three parts of speech namely verbs, conjunctions and prepositions. The informal context, as in communication with a friend or a relative, provides flexibility to mutate the use of the Parts of Speech (PoS). The reasons can be many, for example, we are not conscious of language correctness; we have less concern for receivers' skills; we have no fear of unwanted criticism; our casual approach; and of course, the change in lifestyle (mobile revolution). All these reasons are taken care of in formal contexts like communication with a colleague or a superior, a business partner or the stakeholders.

Intensity of use of PoS in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal, is shown in figures 1(a) and 1 (b). Figure1(a) shows the actual use of the PoS in Emails and figure1(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they make use of these PoS while writing email in different contexts.

Figure 1 (a) and Figure1(b)



The number of subjects making appropriate use of PoS increases as we move from informal context to a formal context in both actual email and questionnaire responses.

Punctuation and capitalization

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" demonstrates that even the smallest punctuation mark signals a stylistic decision, distinguishing one writer from another and enabling an author to move an audience (Quoted by Gardner, Undated).

Zhou and Zhang (2005) report that punctuation plays an important role in representing the rhythm of the communication content and facilitating sentence processing during communication (p. 394). John Olsson (2006) says:

The role of punctuation is not merely rhythmic but also syntactic. It is not simply ornamental. Comma, for example, performs so many syntactic functions: it divides clauses - whether main clauses or dependent clauses - it separates noun phrases, it signals a break before a conjunction or after a conjunction, and so on (p. 1).

Punctuation marks are signals to the readers. In speaking, the speaker can pause, stop, or change the tone of voice. In writing, it can be achieved by using the punctuation marks to emphasize and clarify the meaning. Using punctuation appropriately may help the message to flow much more smoothly, generally creating a more “intelligent” appearance. Punctuation serves to indicate the structure and organization of writing. Punctuations help intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud. In English, punctuation is vital to disambiguate the meaning of sentences.

A wrong punctuation creates a poor impression and may lead to ambiguity. Consider the examples (a) and (b) given below. They present diametrically opposite meanings. Both have the same words in the same order, but the punctuation marks are different.

(a) I would like to tell you that I love you. I can't stop thinking that you are one of the prettiest women on earth.

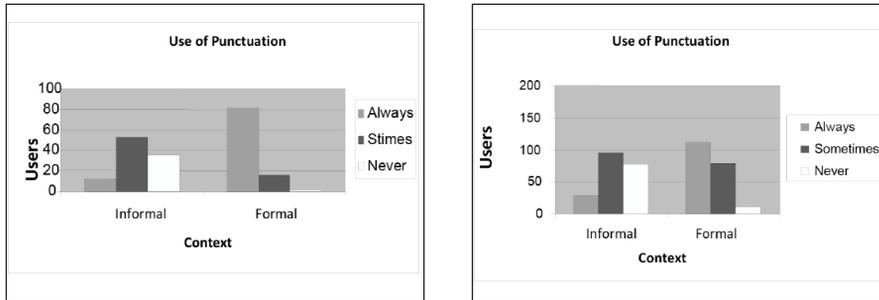
(b) I would like to tell you that I love you. I can't. Stop thinking that you are one of the prettiest women on earth.

A clear understanding of the uses of the important marks of punctuation is essential for effective written communication. If we desire to be understood with clarity, punctuation marks have to be correctly used. Punctuation aids the readers' understanding. It ensures proper flow.

One may think that a sentence ends only with the full stop (period). But there are two other punctuation marks as well to end a sentence — the question mark and the exclamation mark. The period has one more function — indicating an abbreviation. But often the periods are omitted as in ‘PM’ for Prime Minister.

In the analysis of emails for punctuation use, three scales were used: *Always* (when the user always used punctuation marks as desired), *Sometimes* (when the user applied punctuation marks occasionally), and *Never* (when the user never used punctuation marks).

Figure 2(a) and Figure 2(b)



The use of punctuation (*Always*, *Sometimes*, *Never*) in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 2(a) and 2(b). Figure 2(a) shows the actual use of punctuation in Emails and figure 2(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they use punctuation while writing email in different contexts.

The number of subjects using punctuation *always* increases, while the number of subjects using punctuation *sometimes* and *never* decreases as we move from informal to formal context in both actual emails studied and questionnaire responses analysed.

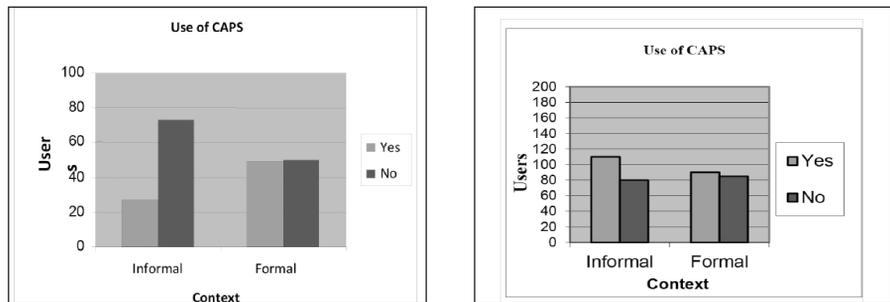
Capitalization is an important aspect of language usage. According to Poser (2005):

Capitalization is part of the social convention for writing English. Like the alphabet, it isn't something that the writing system makes available for manipulation by individual users... and the way a language is written is governed by socially accepted conventions. Just as a name must conform to the phonological system of the language, so the way it is written must conform to the orthographic conventions of the language.

Callos (2008) opines that how we are perceived depends on whether our message, request or point of view will be taken seriously. A primary example is making just a little effort by pressing *shift* key to capitalize the start of the sentences. Doing so can make all the difference in the world as to whether we will be perceived as someone who is a true professional.

Capitalization is used to start a new sentence, name specific objects and ideas, direct quotes etc. and the orthography of each language has its own rules of using capitalization. Irrelevant capitalization renders the message poorly. In addition, *all caps message* and *all caps words* within the email is a characteristic of email mode of CMC. One of the biggest mistakes people make is to type with their caps lock on. All-caps might look good visually, but experienced users will write off the author as an amateur. All-caps can be used for headings and/or titles in the messages, or even to EMPHASIZE certain words, but anything beyond that is equivalent to screaming at someone. Regardless of their intention, people will react as if the writers meant to be aggressive. Emails normally do not give importance to capitalization. Capitalization can communicate excitement, emphasis and special interest for a place, object or person. It is difficult to convey emotions or irony or sarcasm in most electronic communications and hence many mailers use all capitals to express anger or other strong emotions.

Figure 3(a) and Figure 3(b)



The use of capitalization in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 3(a) and 3(b). Figure 3(a) show the actual use of capitalization in Emails and figure 3(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they use capitalization while writing email in different contexts.

In case of actual emails, the number of subjects using capitalization increases as we move from informal to formal context. In case of questionnaire responses, the number of subjects using capitalization decreases as we move from informal to formal context. This observation can be explained in terms of appropriateness and need of the use of this parameter.

Spellings are one of most ignored aspects of Computer Mediated Communication (Zhang, 2015, p. 187). It may appear a very trivial issue to discuss the significance of spellings but is also one of the first things that the

One of the biggest mistakes people make is to type with their caps lock on. All-caps might look good visually, but experienced users will write off the author as an amateur.

reader will notice in the message. Even if the writing is good but contains a lot of spelling errors, the impression made is negative. On the contrary, if the writing is not very good but with fewer spelling errors, that is a good first step. Spelling errors convey the notion that the writer is dumb, careless or just ignorant, which may have further consequences. The reader may feel, ‘If he (or she) doesn’t care, why should I?’ Eliminating spelling and grammatical errors become more important when we write for an academic or professional qualification, or if we are sending a report, presentation, or e-mail to a receiver who is a professional.

It is tempting in a world of e-mails, instant messaging, and text messaging to believe that grammar and spelling are unimportant. In professional correspondence (such as that between a student and a professor), it is important not only to be clear and concise about what we are saying, but also to be grammatically correct in how we say it. It is important to work hard to minimize these errors because failing to do so says something about us and our attitude. As we practice more and more of email communication, our dependence on technology increases. ‘Spell check’ is one utility to minimize spelling errors but this itself is error prone. Here’s a partial list of the errors that spell check will not catch:

<i>to, two, too</i>	<i>their, there</i>	<i>you’re, your</i>	<i>weight, wait</i>
<i>advise, advice</i>	<i>principle, principal</i>	<i>effect, affect</i>	<i>lose, loose</i>

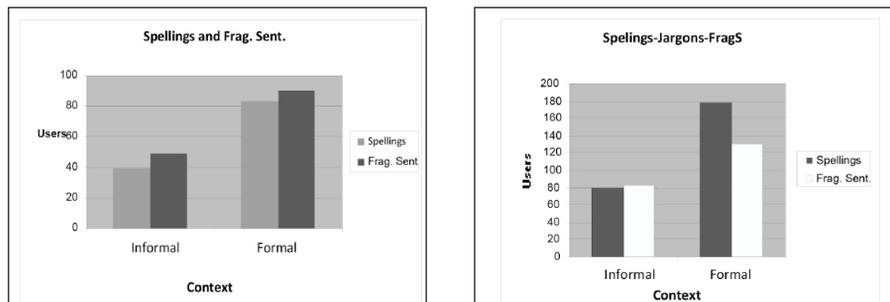
In each of these cases the writers might be using the wrong word. Unfortunately, because they are real words, spell check will not tell this to the writers, nor would grammar checks. It can’t be said that the audience does not care. This is simply untrue in most cases. Also, it is dangerous to assume that readers don’t care in cases where the writers don’t know them at all. It is also incorrect to say that grammar and spelling don’t matter because everyone will understand the writers anyway. There may be examples like the following:

cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn’t mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!

It is inappropriate to conclude from this that it doesn't matter how the messages are written as long as they are understandable. It is necessary to think whether the messages written like this will be understood by the readers.

The use of correct spellings and avoiding fragmented sentences in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 4(a) and 4(b). Figure 4(a) shows the actual use of the correct spellings in Emails and figure 4(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they take care of spellings and fragmented sentences while writing email in different contexts.

Figure 4(a) and Figure 4(b)



The number of subjects taking care of spellings and fragmented sentences increases as we move from informal to formal contexts in both actual email and questionnaire responses.

Other features

Linguistic compression is one of the unique features of online communication, particularly emails and instant messaging. Language compression may occur in many forms. However, it was observed that there are certain categories where they appear more frequently. Some of the categories are discussed below.

Users may delete the vowel in a word to compress it without significantly impeding the intelligibility of the word as in –

- square becomes sqre
- circle becomes crcle
- keyboard becomes kybrd
- tolerance becomes tlrnce
- school becomes schl

- forgotten becomes frgtn
- becomes becomes bcms
- honesty becomes hnsty
- pardon becomes prdn

Since word recognition relies heavily on the first and the last letters in a word, the opening vowel in words that have leading vowel/vowel groups need retaining. Examples:

- aware becomes awre
- equality becomes eqlyt
- employed becomes emplyd
- intelligent becomes intlgt
- observant becomes obsrvnt
- the observer is the observed becomes t obsrvr i t obsrvd
- understanding becomes undrstndg
- aural awareness is important becomes aurl awrnss i imprnt

Omission of opening vowels in words results in obscure forms:

Examples: ‘pnn’ (for opinion), ‘sy’ (for easy), ‘ngle’ (for angle) and ‘phld’ (for uphold).

When we use English (or any other language), part of the definition of the overall form that permits comprehension arises from the use of elements such as articles, pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions that provide significant contextual clues as to what is going on. Examples:

- b - be (abbreviation/phonetic)
- c - see (phonetic)
- g - go/get/good/ (abbreviation; context determines meaning)
- i - i/is/it/its/it's//if/in (abbreviation/consonant cut off; context determines meaning)
- m - me (abbreviation)
- n - and (phonetic as in ‘Rock ‘n Roll’) also abbreviation of ‘no’; context determines meaning)
- o - on/of/off (abbreviation/consonant cut off; context determines meaning)
- r - are (phonetic as in: ‘Toys r Us’)
- t - the (abbreviation/as in NW England t’ abbreviation)
- u - you (phonetic)
- v - very (abbreviation)

- y - why (phonetic) also abbreviation of ‘yes’; context determines meaning

Many of the true ‘dictionary’ forms of English words contain archaic letter groupings which can be significantly compressed by means of their phonetic equivalents. Often, if the other rules of compression given here are applied, the use of phonetic forms may be unnecessary, but sometimes they are useful. For example:

- replace the letter group ‘ght’ by ‘t’ or ‘te’ (tonight = tonite OR 2nte/2nt)
- replace ‘ph’ by ‘f’ (phone = fone OR fne)
- replace ‘cs’ by ‘x’ (phonetics =fonetix OR fntx)
- replace ‘ck’ by ‘k’ (clock = clk)

The numerical forms 1, (won) 2, (to/too) 4, (for), 6 (six/six) and 8 (eight) can also be useful provided they are easier/faster to access at the keypad/keyboard. For example:

- 1drfl (wonderful)
- 2mrrw (tomorrow)
- 2sdy (Tuesday)
- 4tne (fortune)
- e6 grl (Essex girl)
- w8 lfr (weight lifter)
- w8 4 m (wait for me)
- 1 2 1 dscsn

Use of standard abbreviations is in vogue in modern email communication, and it is not considered offensive. But we need to take care that it shouldn’t be over used. Writers can use legitimate abbreviations to shorten e-mail messages only if the readers – intended and hidden – will recognise and understand them. For example:

I received your message an hr ago and intend to act on it ASAP. I am curious, however. Did you cc the manager of the office as well?

An uncommon abbreviation needs to be clarified on the first reference by writing it out and citing the same in parentheses. Then the abbreviation can be used throughout the rest of the document. Example:

The findings of the Electronic Messaging Association (EMA) indicate

phenomenal growth for e-mail.

Generally, a period is omitted within abbreviations. It can be placed after abbreviations with all lowercase letters (for example, ave.). A period is not required after abbreviations with all uppercase letters (RSPCA; PS). Electronic acronyms and other abbreviations have found their way into e-mail messages. If the writers have any doubt as to whether their intended readers will understand an acronym, they may avoid using it. Table1 shows some examples of popular electronic acronyms and abbreviations:

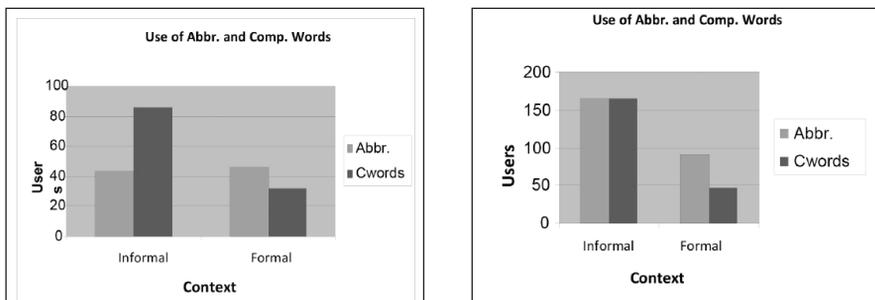
Table 1: Some examples of popular electronic acronyms and abbreviations

BRB -- be right back	FYA -- for your amusement
BTW -- by the way	FYEO -- for your eyes only
CUL -- see you later	GMTA -- great minds think alike
F2F -- face to face	HHOK -- ha-ha, only kidding
FAQ -- frequently asked question	IMHO -- in my humble opinion
FOAF -- friend of a friend	LOL -- laughing out louder

Originally intended to facilitate the shorthand transcription of conversations onto paper, abbreviations are now used as a way to save time and money (on typing) while communicating through emails in informal context. Some of the abbreviations are natural and agreed upon while others are forced and sender-oriented. Use of abbreviated language may have practical use in rapid text messaging but this is restricted only to informal written conversations. As we move into the formal context, only agreed upon abbreviations are used and that too, only when required.

Compression of words to gain text economy is a new thing that email communication has offered to its users. For all communication instances except professional, users tend to forcibly compress words and mutate their structure.

Figure 5(a) and Figure 5(b)

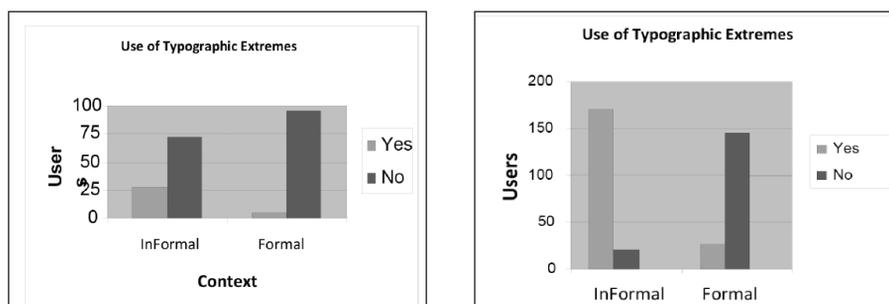


The use of compressed words and abbreviations in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 5(a) and 5(b). Figure 5(a) shows the actual use of compressed words and abbreviations in Emails and figure 5(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they use compressed words and abbreviations while writing email in different contexts.

In case of actual emails, the number of subjects using abbreviations increases marginally whereas the number of subjects using compressed words decreases significantly when we move from informal to formal context. In case of questionnaire responses, the number of subjects using abbreviations and compressed words decreases significantly as we move from informal to formal context.

Typographic extremes are mutated verbal expressions like ‘toooo’ and ‘whaaat’. In informal situations, people tend to vent out their reactions without inhibitions via stretching, pausing etc., while in formal setting they tend to exercise restraint. Typographic mutations include Multiple punctuation (Type back soon!!!!!!), Eccentric Spelling (Type back soooooooooo), Capital letters (I’M REALLY ANGRY AT YOU!), Asterisks for emphasis (I’m really *angry* at you.), Written out laughter (hehehe, hahahaha), Smiley icons (:-),;-):-(-) and Verbal/visual puns (A t D h V a A n N k C s E, for advance thanks). In this section, only eccentric spellings and multiple punctuations are considered. These are the most commonly occurring typographic mutations, if the trailing dots can be ignored for a while.

Figure 6(a) and Figure 6(b)



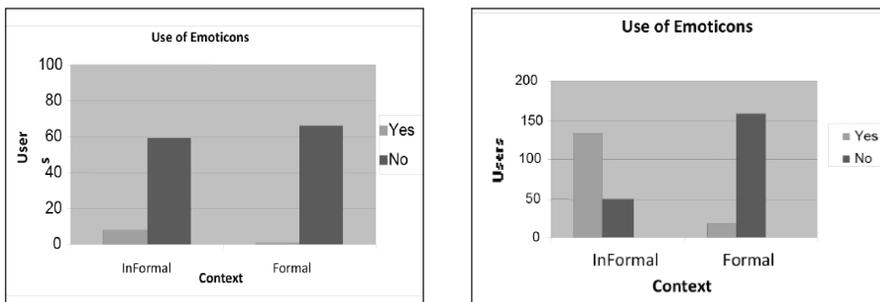
The use of typographic extremes in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 6(a) and 6(b). Figure 6(a) shows the actual use of typographic extremes in Emails and figure 6(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they use typographic extremes while writing email in different contexts.

In case of actual emails, the number of subjects using typographic extremes decreases as we move from informal to formal context while the number of those not using them, increases significantly. In case of questionnaire responses, a similar observation has been made.

All of the nonverbal communication cues are missing when a person communicates with someone using emails. The information encoded in the tone, mimics and gestures is lost. In contrast to a phone call or talking in person, e-mails can be emotionally impoverished when it comes to nonverbal messages that add nuance and value to the spoken words. The typed words are denuded of the rich emotional context people convey in person or over the phone. Users of the email exploit emoticons to convey subtle non-verbal messages.

One of the most important and unique characteristics of the Computer Mediated Communication is emoticons. Emoticons are emotional graphics--visual ways created out of symbols of typography to express the way readers feel when the senders think words alone just aren't enough. Without the emoticon, readers may also not otherwise know how to decipher the meaning of the e-mail from the words contained in the message, at times. Various emotions such as anger, love, frustration, anxiety, etc., are conveyed through animated facial expressions in informal oral communication. Sometimes in informal written communication, this effect can be achieved by using harsh words and typographic extremes. But in case of formal contexts, people tend to take more care with their choice of words and are careful in conveying anger, dissatisfaction and anxiety.

Figure 7(a) and Figure 7(b)



The use of emoticons in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 7(a) and 7(b). Figure 7(a) shows the actual use of emoticons in Emails and figure 7(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they use emoticons while writing emails in different contexts.

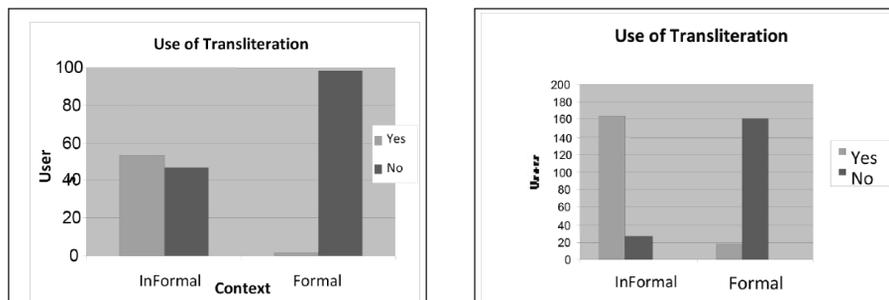
In case of actual emails, the number of subjects using emoticons decreases as we move from informal to formal context while the number of those not using increases significantly. In case of questionnaire responses, a similar observation can be made.

Transliteration is the practice of transcribing a word or text written in one writing system into another writing system. Users find it easy to switch to another language and use the writing system of the tool language to convey messages. Some mailers use transliterated words and phrases while others write complete paragraphs. One reason can be that of getting away with vocabulary requirement. They need not scout for appropriate word all the time and can easily get away by using a familiar word in the first language. Another reason can be confidentiality. If the user wants the message to be read and understood by an intended reader who is well versed with the first language, he/she can use transliteration to maintain some level of confidentiality. And of course, time, speed and frequency of communication also have vital roles to play.

Sometimes transliteration is natural while at other times people don't find the correct word to use, so they switch to other language to continue transmitting the message. Transliteration is more prominent in synchronous mode of communication but is also creeping in asynchronous form such as emails where both parties are comfortable with the languages used.

The use of transliteration in the two contexts, namely Informal and Formal is shown in figures 8(a) and 8(b). Figure 8(a) shows the actual use of transliteration in Emails and figure 8(b) shows the responses of subjects when they were asked whether they use transliteration while writing email in different contexts.

Figure 8(a) and Figure 8(b)



In case of actual emails, the number of subjects using transliteration

decreases as we move from informal to formal context while the number of those not using increases significantly. In case of questionnaire responses, a similar observation can be made.

Discussion

The main observations from the analysis are:

- In perception, the new medium is seen as a flexible medium to communicate and as having negative impact, but in practice users follow the language dictum; and the influence is minimal.
- The formal context emails are characterized by features resembling to business letter style to a great extent.
- The emails in the informal context are characterized by features of an emergent style similar to conversation style.

It would be erroneous to ignore the flexibility of the new medium. Although the new medium invites informality even in business or formal contexts, it would be a misnomer to attribute too much to the effect of technology as such. Rather, it can be said that the new technology is strengthening, or converging with, a general cultural trend, which is already in place. Biber and Finegan (1989), in their work *Historical Drift in Three English Genres*, documented “historical drift” in a number of genres of English, including personal and professional letters. Analyzing samples of texts on six dimensions of linguistic variation, they found that over the last three centuries, these genres have been moving in an “oral” direction.

Another development was the Plain Language movement, which flourished in the United States and Britain in the late 1970s. This movement called for the reform of legal and bureaucratic language to make it more comprehensible to lay persons. Although language reformers did not expressly set out to make documents more like speech, this was, in fact, the effect of the changes they introduced. In revisions of bureaucratic and legal forms, they preferred active to passive verbs, and verbs with first and second person pronouns instead of nominalisations. The electronic media are also having an impact. Long years of exposure to films and television have partially re-instated the prominence of speech that characterized oral cultures.

The younger people, especially students, having grown up in a relatively informal cultural climate in which informal speech patterns had been influencing uses of writing even before computers, and who have had relatively little experience with writing generally, may therefore

use a speech-like style. Older generation, on the other hand, with much experience with the business letter template and style, undoubtedly brings this experience to their letters. For them, previous experience with the template may take precedence over exposure to an increasingly informal cultural climate.

Conclusion

The new channel of communication, Emails, has been used in Formal and Informal context differently. It is interesting to see that the impact is more in Informal context than in Formal Context. Also, there is a marked difference in perception of the new channel and its practice. The difference possibly emanates from the fact that users tend to have an impression that email is largely a medium of communication for personal use and equate it with day to day personal communication – mostly conversational communication. But in fact, when they use it in Formal context, they abide by the academic style of communication.

All emails that were studied under Formal context were found to follow a pattern in terms of composition of the message. It was observed that irrespective of the subject of the correspondence, the pattern remained the same. There was appropriate greeting or introduction, containing either purpose of the message or general pleasantries, followed by the actual message. In cases where the email was a reply to an earlier email, greeting was followed by acknowledgement and then by the actual reply. On the other hand, all emails studied under Informal contexts were observed to follow no set pattern and it was up to the sender to decide what shape was to be given to the composition. Observations such as missing of greeting, informal greeting, formal greeting, or actual message in the beginning and in the end, acknowledging or no acknowledging, absence and presence of proper closing were made in the study. No recurring pattern of message composition could be found in these emails.

Formal context emails were written in simple language, occupied only one screen space, mostly used short paragraphs and appealed to the senses of the reader. It was observed that the information in these messages was complete and message chunks were properly linked through connectives and conjunctions. On the other hand, emails written in Informal context were found to be author driven. Whether it is asking for information from a friend or a colleague, inviting relatives to a party, or discussing about the picnic next week, the content was more concentrated on what one thinks, assumes or prefers. This was not only in terms of message but also in terms of language and presentation. The style

was found to be individualistic – creating one’s own compressions and abbreviations, cutting short the typography at will, using mode-specific features assuming that the receiver will also know it, disrespecting linguistic rules and engaging in all kinds of mutations. Long paragraphs, lengthy monologues, and a heap of fragmented loose sentences were observed frequently.

As far as the ‘content’ is concerned, it was observed that the emails studied in the Formal context contained tangible content. In other words, the messages were about tasks, responsibilities, accomplishments, resource and task delegation, etc. They were about something which could be measured in some way, or at least about somebody who could use that information in a meaningful manner. It could also be construed that the transactions in formal email communication met a personal or professional need. The tangibility of the content in emails was also found to attach importance to the message. The information in most cases was new to the reader and repetition was least.

References

- Biber, D., & Finegan, E. (1988). Historical drift in three English genres. *Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguistics*, 22-36.
- Butt, D., Fahey, R., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (1995). *Using Functional Grammar – An Explorer’s Guide*. Sydney: NCELTR, Macquarie University.
- Burton, P. F. (1994). Electronic mail as an academic discussion forum. *Journal of Documentation*, 50(2), 99-110.
- Callos, J. (2008). *Capitalization is so very important*. Business Email Etiquette. Retrieved from <http://www.businessemail etiquette.com/?p=7>
- Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2006). *English or Babel? Monolingual or Multilingual*. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/ling/stories/s264971.htm>
- Cumming, J. D. (1995). The internet and the English language. *English Today*, 11, 3-8.
- Gardner, T. (2006). *Every Punctuation Mark Matters: A Mini-Lesson on Semicolons*. International Reading Association. Read. Write. Think. Retrieved from: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=260

Graddol, D. (1997). *The future of English?: A guide to forecasting the popularity of English language in the 21st Century*. British Council.

Hancock, J. T., Curry, L., Goorha, S., & Woodworth, M. (2005). *Automated Linguistic Analysis of Deceptive and Truthful Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication* [Proceedings of the 38th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 3-6 January 2005]. *Washington, NY: IEEE Computer Society, 1(1)*.

Herring, S. C. (1996). Posting in a different voice: Gender and ethics in computer-mediated communication. *Philosophical perspectives on computer-mediated communication*. Ed. C. Ess. Albany: SUNY Press, 115-145.

Mallon, R., & Oppenheim, C. (2002). Style used in electronic Mail. *Aslib Proceedings*, 54(1): 8-22. MCB UP Ltd.

Maynor, N. (1994). The Language of electronic mail: written speech? *Centennial Usage Studies*. Ed. G.D. Little and M. Montgomery. Tuscaloosa: Alabama UP, 48-54.

Olsson, J. (2006). Using groups of common textual features for authorship attribution. *FLI Publications*; Wales.

Poser, B. (2008). Capitalization and Mr Cummings. Published: 15 January 2005, *Language Log*. Retrieved from <http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language-log/archives/001809.html>>

Saskia, B. (2004). eHistLing – From Manuscripts to the Internet: How Did Media Influence the English Language? *eHistLing*, 1: 90-105. *English history Linguistics*. 25 January 2005. Retrieved from <www.ehistling.meotod.de/data/papers/group_h_pub.pdf>

Campbell, S.W., & Bunz U. (2002). Analysis of Discursive Fragments, Or: Answers to the Old “What’s In a Word?” Question. 88th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, 20-24 LA, November 2002.

Walther, J. B. (2004). Language and Communication Technology. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. 23(4): 384-396.

Yates, J. (1989). The Emergence of the Memo as a Managerial Genre. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 2(4): 485-510.

Zhang, L. (2015, June). Modern CMC Technology for English Language Learning: Blessing or Nightmare. In D. Tan (Ed.), *ETEEEM 2014. Proceedings*

of the 2014 International Conference on Engineering Technology, Engineering Education and Engineering Management (pp. 185-188), Hong Kong, 15-16 November 2014, CRC Press, Taylor & Francis.

Zhou, L., & Zhang, D. (2005). A heuristic approach to establishing punctuation convention in instant messaging. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*. 48(4): 391-40

ADDRESSING TABOOS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN



KULVEEN TREHAN¹

¹ Assistant Professor, University School of Mass
Communication, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha
University, New Delhi, India.
Email : kulventrehan.ipu@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the use of online advocacy in fighting against the menstruation taboos and restrictions in India especially in the light of statements made by Prayar Gopalakrishnan, head of the Devasome Trust, Shabrimala temple in Kerala, India. The content on the internet community “HappytoBleed”, a campaign launched in response to the Shabrimala temple issue; is analysed using the dragonfly effects model of advocacy. The analysis of the *HappytoBleed* campaign shows the construction of narratives on internet communities that lead a protest campaign with the objective to mobilise support against an unfair socio-religious practice. Campaign analysis points at the scope of social media in gender advocacy, especially in resetting the agendas to drive the people and policy in creating more equitable space for women in India.

Keywords

Menstruation, Online advocacy, Taboos, Dragonfly effect, Agenda setting

An old *Stayfree* sanitary napkin jingle ‘*Chup Chup baithe ho Zaroor Koi Baat Hai*’ (since you are sitting so quietly, there must be something bothering you) befittingly describes the encoding of loneliness, pensiveness and silence while constructing advertising messages for menstrual campaigns in India. Some noted a change in menstruation communication by brands of late. Ganguly (2016) writes that “over a period of time with women exposed to global commentary around period power, brands have become frank in discussing topics that they would otherwise shy away from”. However, while menstruation in advertising today may capture wider attention, it continues to betray the conflicting positions taken by brands in India. While recent campaigns like *#iamnotdown*(Sofy) and *#don'ttouchthepickle* (Whisper) refer to a specific menstrual taboo/stereotype, much else in their brand positioning perpetuates conventional codes. *Whisper*, the name of the sanitary napkin brand reinforces the culture of silence (signified) strongly associated with spreading fear, shyness, embarrassment and seclusion vis –a-vis menses amongst the young Indians. Such contradictions call for exploring the potency of online advocacy in menstrual discourse.

Issues of health, social position and economic rights of women have been at the periphery, seeking center stage for decades now. For long, female issues relied on mass media for a positive public opinion. Gender vision within the media (Gallagher, 2001) was the aim and the effort. However, gender rights remained low in the Indian news media’s hierarchy of priorities. Joseph (2010) writes “the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has revealed that less than a quarter (24 %) of the people heard, seen or read about in mainstream broadcast and print news worldwide is female marking a paltry seven percent increase in 15 years”. At best the potential of media has been underutilized, intentionally or unintentionally for female rights.

Individual voices raised alarm time and again. Melinda Gates, Co-founder of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, India at *#SheThePeople: The Gender Debate*, on NDTV in March 2016 underlined the Indian paradox of more women achievers but less representation in workforce and policy making linking it to the inequitable distribution of domesticity explaining how ‘our homes are slipping into the stereotypes’ where ‘nobody leaves till mom leaves’.

Gender activists flagged social prejudice based on biological makeup and menstruation. Suneeta Dhar, Member, General Body of *Jagori*¹ argued that there is a lack of body literacy amongst girls and boys in India causing the ‘hush up’ and no talking about a period openly. These are fallouts of the

vicious circle of patriarchy augmented by discriminatory practices towards girls enabling men in maintaining their dominance and succession of power (Pateman, 1988).

Advocacy and women issues in India

As communication shifts locus from attention to engagement, strong case for media advocacy² can be made in communicating menstruation. Diversity embedded in advocacy can confront the strongholds of gender discrimination and exclusion. Characterized by heterogeneity, cultural pluralism and reduction of knowledge gap, new media adds intensity to advocacy communications especially in the case of gender. New media advocacy³ can be potent since online public participation focuses on creation and sustenance of dialogical loops (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

New Media Advocacy Projects (NMAP) focus upon Activities, Audiences, Main Goal, Actions, Information use for perpetual management of the issue by creating momentum through public advocacy. It builds the narrative of defense via the positive word of noise. Often advocacy defies the agenda setting theory where either the mainstream media or the spokespersons of various policy groups establish the agenda of public awareness (De Fluer & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p.169) by concentrating on the role of interest groups outside the media and policymakers. New media advocacy uses social media to seek government intervention often making the interest groups adopt outsider strategies where the motive is predominately to inform, protest and boycott (Gais & Walker, 1991).

Advocacy campaigns seem to follow the tenets of Craig's traditions of rhetoric's, semiotics and phenomenology (Craig, 1996 quoted by Littlejohn, 2002). "Make Noise-Make News - Make Change" in celebrity advocacy drives them to make contributions, lobby with public officials and attract press attention to legitimize internet public sphere as a pressure group (West & Orman, 2003).

In India several online advocacy campaigns were created against violence, for political parity, freedom to live and express for women in the last ten years. Most campaigns were started by young female students by forming online communities, filing online petitions followed by live interactions, events and group meets. Such attempts were directed at creating public advocacy on gender. Social Networking Sites⁴ became the oft explored platform to seed the intent and diffuse the message.

Table 1: Social media advocacy campaigns by young students on women issues in India

Campaign	Gender Issue	Who started it	Core communication strategies
#WhyLoiter	Freedom to go to public places at any time	News Media Women in India (NMWI)	Called for change of profile/cover picture to one of the posters shared; Sharing posters on personal Facebook page to build awareness; particularly between 16 Dec 2014 and 1 Jan 2015, updating the status on FB or tweet or share a photo via Instagram showing that you are having a good time loitering and if you like share your location too so we can create an exciting map of where women are loitering in the city; an invitation to follow @whyloiter and retweet our messages
The <i>Pink Chaddi</i> (underwear) Campaign	Protest against violent attacks by Shri Ram Sene outfit on girls in a pub	Internet Group “The Consortium of Pub Going, Loose and Forward women”	Launched on Facebook, the campaign used innovative artworks, slogans and messages with visuals of pink panties in the middle. It was later adopted by Amul, the largest milk cooperative in India
Dark is Beautiful	To fight against colour prejudice w.r.t women	Women of Worth (WOW) Chennai	Series of online, on-ground and media centric messages; Use of celebrity endorses as advocates
#Freezethe tease	To protest against street harassment	Six students at St. Andrews College in Mumbai, India : Perma Dsouza, Andrea Fernades, Digi George, Anishka Alvares, Rochelle Barrie and Valeska Reveredo	Created a Facebook page and sending SMS texts of tips on how to tackle eve-teasing with a mere subscription fee of Rs.3; signature campaign through which students would come and sign on the scroll as a pledge to freeze the tease and not stay silent anymore.

Pads Against Sexism	To promote awareness about menstruation and its taboos and to curb the idea of being humiliated by a sanitary napkin.	In India by a student group of Jamia Millia Islamia, a Central University in Delhi later identified as Mejaz, Kaainat, Mohit and Sameera	Initially a Guerilla campaign, slogans written on sanitary pads were pasted on the university campus without any identified group or ownership. Later an online community was created and viral marketing strategies used.
PinjraTod (Break the Cage)	Campaign against sexist rules in women's hostels, particularly those that disallow women from staying out late.	Students of Delhi University and Colleges.	Facebook community, e-mails, blogs and online petition; A draft report of recommendations for hostel rules (a collaborative effort with Ambedkar University and Jamia Millia Islamia)

Source: Compiled by the author from their respective Facebook community pages

Understanding the issue advocated in HappytoBleed

Menstruation Taboos: Menstruation in India in local dialect is called *Mahine Se Hona* (Bihar/Rajasthan), *Mahawari* (Punjab), *MasikPali* (Maharashtra), *Masik* (Gujarat) and *Pear Chale* (Bikaner) or *Periods* (Urban Metropolis) among others. The vitality of any discourse on menstruation lies in the fact that the monthly period of every girl/woman is enveloped in many myths and taboos effectively excluding women through socio-cultural norms and practices. Psychologically menstruation maintains the balance of body, representing health and stability (Kothari, 2010) but socio-culturally it symbolizes impurity and toxicity. Increase in dropout rate as soon as a girl starts menstruation and decline in her menstrual health are some visible effects (Kirk & Sommer, 2006).

Menstruation taboos exist in many societies. In Nepal, menstrual blood is a “strong source of pollution” and the women akin to female dogs are bad omen for males (Bennet, 1983). No one talks about it openly as it is considered to be shameful, writes Anisha Kapri (2016) in her article *Menstrual Cycle Still a Barrier to Achieve Gender Equality*. A web chat with Fitch (2017) from Arizona, USA reveals that menstruation taboo does not exist only in India, In Latin America too the issue exists. “Orthodox Jews have a prohibition against menstruating girls entering the temple, but

no one is aware of any campaign against this (Argentina has many Orthodox Jews). I know this is something that transgender people in Chile are working on..." says Prof. Fitch validating the need to analyze the campaigns on the theme. In the Enga province of Papua New Guinea it is believed that sex with menstruating women will make the man very sick and may be fatal for him (Lindenbuam, 1976). These taboos subsume in themselves the inherent threat that dictates 'specific dangers if the code is not respected' normalizing it or and even making it a necessary ritual (Douglas, 2004).

Menstruation and religion

Kaundal and Thakur (2014) noted that isolation of the menstruating women in Asia, Africa and America finds its roots invariably in religion or its interpretative texts. All major religions discriminate against menstruating women. Menstruating Hindu women view themselves as impure or ritually polluted (Chawla, 1994; Apffel, 1994). Chawla (1994) found that the current dispensation on menstruation has evolved from the '*Indra's slaying of Vritatas*' (strongly embedded in patriarchy) in the Rig Veda. Isolating the menstruating women was an age old practice especially in rural India where women used to leave the main house, and live in a small hut outside the village with no contact with either people or basic amenities like bathing or cleaning water. Menstruating girls in Rajasthan are barred from going out as they can be captured by *Bhut-Pret* (Demons) during these days (Kothari, 2010).

Das (2008) notes that in Assam, *Suwa* (menstruation) brings along several restrictions: from staying in room to not touching anything (including plants), the unmarried girls leave their hair untied and do not put *Sindoor* (red vermilion) if married to segregate her state of impurity from the puritan sanctity of marriage. Taboos include no sex with husbands for that may cause an incurable disease to the man. Ferro-Luzzi (1980) recorded various food restrictions during menstruation, including fish and meat. Faith forbade them to pray. Entry to the prayer room within home and the temple is strictly forbidden. Jewish law explicitly forbids plainly any physical contact between male and female during the days of menstruation and for a week thereafter. Isolation, separation from the spouse and eating alone are the common restrictions imposed (Orr, 2003). Conservative/traditionalist female members of the Orthodox Church observe the ancient practice of abstaining from Holy Communion during menstruation. Islam too is riddled with the menstruation paradox. While it does not consider women to be impure there is prohibition on them to practice the religious chores during the monthly period. Women are forbidden to enter religious places (Shrines & Mosques) or hold the holy

Kaundal and Thakur (2014) noted that isolation of the menstruating women in Asia, Africa and America finds its roots invariably in religion or its interpretative texts. All major religions discriminate against menstruating women.

book Quran or fast in Ramadan. Buddhism and Sikhism may denounce the taboos and consider menstruation as natural and normal but as they are born out of the Hindu way of life, a lot of menstruating women cannot meditate nor can they have contact with priests or take part in ceremonies, such as weddings (Furth & Shu-Yueh, 1992).

Review of literature

Studies on communication of menstrual taboos and myths are limited in India, though experiential narratives exist. Kothari (2010) reports that in rural Rajasthan 78% girls at menarche reacted to menstruation as “dirty” similar to responses in a study of urban slums in Delhi where menstruation was described as expulsion of *ganda khoon* (dirty blood). The strictest taboo in this community was no sex during menses (Garg, Sharma & Sahay, 2001). More recent interviews with women in Delhi too found impure, dirty, filthy, ugly and silence as concurrent images of the menstruating days (Chawla, 2006).

Neilsen’s study (2016) in the rural areas of Bihar and Jharkhand found that the mothers are shy to discuss the menstrual hygiene with daughters despite awareness. 62% girls held socio-religious code responsible for their low self confidence besides (57%) reported high restrictions in performing religious chores while 94% were so low in confidence that they could not burn the menstrual absorbent cloth for proposal disposal. Jha (2014) quotes a recent study to state that 75% of women living in Indian cities still buy their pads wrapped in a brown bag or newspaper and hardly ask a male family member to buy sanitary towels or tampons because of the shame associated with menstruation.

Wallack and Dorfman (1996) brought forth the use of advocacy by an individual through social media to lead towards public advocacy so as to influence the media agenda. Ozdemir (2012) employed the Dragonfly Effect model to conclude that online advocacy by NGO’s creates a reciprocal communication with the public, reduces the dependence on mass media, broadens the reach and stimulates participation in matters of public interest.

Karpf (2012) segregated the types of advocacy sponsors as issue generalists, issue specialists, online communities of interest, neo-federated organizations in new media advocacy campaign. Obar, Zube and Lampe (2012) found that Facebook is preferred by advocacy organizations or groups to educate the people about the important issues, to update on government deliberations and to give citizens a platform to voice their opinions.

Kothari (2010) reports that in rural Rajasthan 78% girls at menarche reacted to menstruation as “dirty” similar to responses in a study of urban slums in Delhi where menstruation was described as expulsion of *ganda khoon* (dirty blood).

Biddix (2008) has looked at how social media has been used to facilitate forms of activism on university campuses. In a survey, Breuer and Farooq (2012) found that the success of Fichtelberg's online political campaign was based on the online advocacy group AVAAZ, whose e-petition to solicit legislative support for the Fichtelberg was endorsed by more than 2 million Internet users. However there exists skepticism about new media advocacy in bringing actual change. Shulman (2009) concluded that low cost forms of online participation such as mass mailings, can eventually lead to a substantial increase of low-quality, redundant, and generally insubstantial commenting by the public.

Morozov (2009) points out the increasing 'slactivism and clicktivism' due to internet as a sphere for social movements. In a study, Badger, Morozov and Gladwell (2009) argued that social media promotes 'weak ties', that there may be millions on the face book but cannot mobilize the same to actually effect change. While analyzing content of advertising campaigns both Goddard (2002) and Stern (1994) applied literary theories to highlight the significance of the narrative point of view, or looking the idea of narrator i.e. source, author and persona in advertising on whose lines advocacy campaigns encapsulate messages. Intertextuality exposes the patterns of cross referencing in advertising messages besides power of shared memories in reception.

Research questions

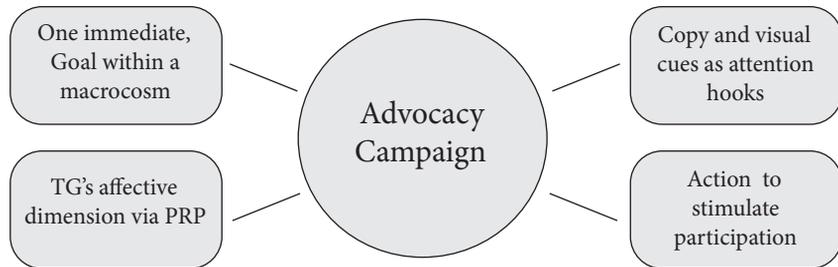
- RQ1: What is the intent and content of Happy to Bleed Campaign?
- RQ2: Who are the new media advocates, issue specialists and influencers in the campaign?
- RQ3: How is happy to bleed responding to religious norms on gender-based restrictions?
- RQ4: Can an online campaign lead to change in menstrual code, especially taboos?

Methodology

A qualitative analysis of 'Happy to Bleed' based on Aaker & Smith's Dragonfly Effect Model (2012) of Advocacy Campaign Analysis was carried out. This campaign received wide reportage in the mainstream media too (*BBC News*, 23 Nov 2015, *NDTV 24X7*, *We the people*, 29th Nov, 2015 & *Indiatimes.com*, Nov 23, 2015 etc.) making it a valid case to discuss the power of online advocacy. An interview with the campaign initiator of Happy to Bleed was done prior to analyzing the campaign. Written and visual content of 'Happy to Bleed' on Facebook was analyzed from 20th November to 31st December 2015.

Conceptual framework

All the four advocacy components of the campaign have been analyzed with the help of Smith and Aaker's Dragonfly Effect Model (2010) of campaign analysis i.e. Focus (attainable sub goals, parameters and action plan); Grab attention (message strategy, tactics and creative executions); Engage (create personal connect via compassion, empathy, social commune) and Action (empowering and enabling others to take action).



(Adapted from Smith & Aaker's four winged Dragonfly Effect Model, 2010)

Campaign analysis and discussion

Intent and content of the campaign

HappytoBleed is intended as a protest campaign against temple ban on menstruating women. The *first wing* of the dragonfly effect model (*Campaign Genesis and Goal/s*) explains the intent of the campaign. It is a protest campaign initiated when Nikita Azad, a 20-year-old student from Government College in Punjab wrote an open letter 'young bleeding women' on 20th November 2015 to statement made by Prayar Gopalakrishnan, head of Travancore Devasome Board (Incharge of the Shabrimala Temple) that "women can be allowed to enter the temple after a machine verifies that it is the right time". Body scanners will gauge whether she is menstruating and only if she is not can allowed to enter the temple; marking the beginning of an online campaign on Facebook titled "Happy To Bleed". Promptly thereafter Facebook community Feminism in India started a #happy to bleed event and hashtag on Facebook and Twitter seeding the campaign in the closed networked community in November 2015. Happy to Bleed community was formed on Facebook (789 likes in one week). It is now being spread further via FB pages: Feminism in India and Facebook page of Countercurrents.org, (social media presence of www.countercurrents.org , a news and opinion website). The campaign went viral by finding support of internet communities

such as M.A.S.E.S (Movement against Sexual Exploitation and Sexism).

Even though the immediate goal of the campaign was to protest against the temple ban and gain entry for all women other objectives were also set: to cut the silence around menstrual taboos and make people talk and to launch an attack against patriarchy sponsored sexism in the country.

According to Nikita Azad (2016), this campaign was not merely about temple entry for women but a protest against patriarchy and gender discriminatory practices prevalent in our society. She states that “Shaming menstruation is a sign of patriarchy. The hashtag #happytobleed is a sarcastic dig at the authorities that shame menstruation. We bleed. Accept it and deal with it”(Azad, 2016).

Analyzing the content through “grab attention” wing of Dragonfly Effect Model

The content of the campaign can be analysed through the *second wing* (*grab attention*) of the dragonfly effect model. It grabs the attention through personal narratives and intertextuality.

The message in the campaign is encapsulated in explicit visuals and first person copy to combat silence, impurity, isolation and dirty blood associated with menstruation. It is “tell your story” campaign to cut through the convention of silence around it. The cover photo presents the campaign name with no visual elements on it, neither a photograph nor an illustration (Fig. 1). The typography of the theme line acts a hook to direct attention towards its name as the *Locus Standi* of the campaign. The profile picture is open, candid, aggressive and revealing. The frontal mid shot of young girl standing tall and proud (chin up) with a pointed eye contact signifies the motive to actively engage in one-on-one communication with the audience as an identifiable sponsor of the campaign (Fig. 2). Close to her chest, she holds the handmade placard, Happy to Bleed with a bleeding vagina. The copy of the message is supported by an illustrative drawing of blood dripping through the vagina. The name of the campaign is bold and all caps and sans serif marking a strong purposive and “non-feminine” text. The slogan signified the personalities of the writer vis-à-vis mood, beliefs and attitudes. Narrative point of view is reflected in the slogans and posts as they present the experiential reality of girls on menstrual taboos. “*That RED spot on my white skirt is not obscene*” is a firm counter to the notions of ugliness attached with menstrual blood. Besides, the emphasis on Red colour discards the use of blue colour to depict menstrual blood in sanitary advertising.

According to Nikita Azad this campaign was not merely about temple entry for women but a protest against patriarchy and gender discriminatory practices prevalent in our society. She states that “Shaming menstruation is a sign of patriarchy.

In another message, a young woman identifies her aggressor/as “that male” : *Disgusted by the blood? It is the same blood you grew up in when you were in your mothers’ womb!!!* This woman, an online advocate for this campaign directs the anger at a man, provoking him to look within at the hypocrisy of his “horrified at the sight of menstrual blood” often emboldening her isolation or ban on sex. Born out of personal experiences of patriarchal privileges in the society, it is an expression of a gender long suffering an irrational and unjust taboo.

Rejecting silence through visuals and slogans

Visual depictions and slogans reject the silence around menstruation in the *second wing* (grab attention) of dragonfly effect in advocacy campaigns.

The drawings of vagina and menstrual blood call attention to acknowledge it as a biological process and reject that it is a source of pollution. Since there was diversity in the choice of material (cloth, paper, sanitary pads etc.) on which messages were written, it can be inferred that these messages were independent expressions of a networked society. While some chose sanitary pads as the base material to write slogans and theme lines, others drew/sketched pictorial and text messages on paper with varied choices of colour. Harmony within pluralism was evident as every campaigner/supporter/advocate posing as young Indian Girl holding the message in her hand, fearlessly staring at the audiences (Fig.2).

Intertextual references brought out the cross associations between existential realities and personification of deities in media texts. A phone video (7:28 seconds) ‘I have periods and I am not a terrorist’ made by a young girl Anwasha Nandi (Dated: November 23, 2015) was viewed by 7946 people and recorded 184 likes (December 2015 – June 30 2016). The video starts where Anwasha, a medical student as per her online identity explains the process of menstruation often using sarcasm and irreverence in speech to call out the myths associated with it.

Women are made to feel apologetic about their periods, she says. Women themselves become complicit in perpetuation of the taboo as they often appoint other women to “look at her ass” to check if there is a stain or not. Women’s support for such taboos can be understood through Douglas argument that members of a culture may not entirely understand why the avoidance of a particular pollutant, food, or touch “eliminates” the danger or risk, but they accept such claims and corresponding rituals as necessary because it is a part of their world (Thomas, 2007). She further questions the restrictions on praying even if you have ‘maths paper the next day’(laced

with sarcasm) and you need ‘Durga Ma’ to come to your rescue but you cannot since you are menstruating, as if it is a crime! The text and the phonological references of her spoken piece to Durga Ma/ God bears resemblance to a screenplay of any popular Hindi serial on television (Goddard, 2002.p.126).

Use of ‘Happy’ to reject the hegemonic propositions of sexism, purity and patriarchy

Common in the posts are blood, sexism, pure/impure, happy, I/You. It must be noted that “Happy” as the lead word in the campaign has been objected to by many online consumers, even by those who support the protest of women against the taboos.

PQR (name changed): Pleeeeeeease.... I don’t think bleeding can make anyone happy. But I can understand women. Its OK to bleed, don’t worry. We love you (FB post, dated: November 29, 2015).

Nikita Azad acknowledges the unease of many with ‘Happy’ as a copy device in this campaign, but reasons it on the cultural paradox as an appeal and using it as an oxymoron (tele Interview dated: 4th July 2016). Uses of personal pronouns reflect a sense of ownership and close ties with the campaign theme and amongst the members of the community or the online advocates (Narrative point of view, Goddard, 2002, p. 126).

I am a “woman”, I have a “Uterus”, I “Bleed” every month....
 But....I am not “Impure at all “, And not at all “Ashamed” of
 bleeding...I am #HappytoBleed
 (Sandhya Nair; <http://www.countercurrents.org/azad231115.htm>)

The creativity expressed reflects post feministic representation impressing upon personal empowerment, choice, agency and assumed freedom (McRobbie, 2004).

New media advocates and influencers

The *third wing* of the dragonfly effect model (*target audience through the affective dimension*) shows that this campaign may have been started by an individual advocate and to get support from the influencers but is in fact engaging with all, even with the opponents.

The campaign is targeted at all the carriers of patriarchy men and women as this system ingrains myths and taboos. This campaign was started by an individual advocate (Wallack & Dorfman, 1996). Later various specialists i.e. gender rights activists in their personal capacity joined. The

strength of the campaign lied in its motley of influencers who were posting and commenting from across the geographical vicinities and ethnicities. Unlike media advocacy campaigns, this online campaign generated mass conversations on social media instead of using paid advertising and news. Posts on SNS went viral, as the information cues diffused across social media platforms and web communities assuming a snowball manifestation. Beyond the site of the event, men and women from states like Tamil Nadu posted the contextual reality to combat the myths being spread on television programmes on Shabrimala Issue.

AQP (name changed): “Thathvamasi is a gender-less concept and no stone god sitting atop of lofty hills shall contest the same but alas some brick heads do. Thou born of the womb, remember - Matha, Pitha, Guru, Daivom and don’t forget that order. Is it not time to realize that the so called gods (which I do not believe in) could not be so apathetic and a male chauvinist? Women are not impure when she bleeds. If you think so, it’s your mind that is polluted”. (FB post, dated: November 26, 2015).

This campaign changed the environment of menstruation discourse on new media spilling the discussion into the traditional public sphere as well. The campaign could ensure variegated citizen participation beyond mere clicktivism (Morozov, 2009) as happy to bleed campaign spilled on ground in the form of protest marches and rallies (Fig. 3). Female members challenged their male counterparts by posting “Men... stop doing uuuuuuggg (a look of disgust) and making women apologetic about being healthy” hitting out at the menstruation discourse amongst the young men in India where boy’s don’t say periods about it and erratic behavior of a girl is related to the monthly cycle.

The campaign engages with the men as they are important to lead to public advocacy. Some male students too joined the movement, posting comments, holding placards and writing articles on social media networks (Fig.4). Sukhjeet Singh, a student of Patiala wrote an article in Youth Ki Awaaz ‘As a Man, I Support #HappyToBleed. It’s High Time We Do Away with Menstrual Taboos!’ Contrastingly the voices of opposition and negation of the issue were also loud. Lot of name-calling was found. Several posts challenged the intent of advocacy in an attempt to trash it as misleading advertising :

ABC (name changed): This is Propaganda by a Lady called “Aditigupta “ Financially backed by “Whisper “. People don’t waste time in responding to these stupid movements .’ Happy to bleed “ is a campaign by menstropedia

backed by whisper -- It is just an AD . No real news here! Everyone bleeds red mostly the soldiers on the borders. I wonder why don't i see campaigns for our real heroes who are dying there for the Nation (FB post dated: December 30, 2015).

Some other (men) were clever in wrapping their persistence to preserve sexism and gender inequity by creating a false binary of Bleeding Soldiers Vs Bleeding Woman:

XYZ(name changed): Not getting any point here for these “happy to bleed” campaigns. ... Every educated person knows about periods be it a man or woman. “Happy to bleed do not make sense, you need to change the slogan. I saw a pic saying i bleed red. Everyone bleeds red mostly the soldiers on the borders. I wonder why I don't see campaigns for our real heroes who are dying there for us (FB post, dated: December 5, 2015).

Discourse on the Happy to Bleed internet community saw fearless and active engagement with those who disagreed, criticized trolled or trashed the campaign. Azad (2016) states that “there are pessimistic people who have called us whores and prostitutes and stopped me on the street. This always [happens] when you oppose long-standing traditions, but when we do have support from people who want to change, then it doesn't matter”.

Interesting to note is the penetration of this online advocacy campaign amongst children and girls below puberty [Fig 5(a) & (b)]. It transcended the boundaries of age, caste and religion.

Table 2: Analyzing the engagement wing of The Dragon Fly Effect Model

S.No.	Effective Engagement	HappytoBleed
1.	Transparency	The identity of the campaign advocates was not hidden. It started with an open letter from Nikita Azad. Secondly, the online advocates used their “self” as the persona of the campaign. There was no hidden persuasion in this campaign.
2.	Co-creation	Encouraged all the community members to create their own messages for public education and mobilization
3.	Interactivity	Use of personal stories, experiences, and regional language. Comments, posts of pro and anti sentiments were given due space.

4.	Collaboration	The campaign did not form partnerships with gender advocacy NGO's or groups
5.	Immediacy	The Shabrimala Incident took place on 13th November and the campaign was launched on 20th November 2015
6.	Experience	Posts invited lot of comments and likes
7.	Facilitation	Social Networking Site Facebook Facilitated seeding of the issue and its spread
8.	Trust	Credibility was created by sharing status updates and posts in an overt manner

(Based on the characteristics of high engagement in online advocacy, Aaker & Smith, 2010)

Responding to religious norms on gender based restrictions

The *first wing* of dragonfly, where campaign goals have been discussed underscores that this campaign seeks to call out on the role of religion in menstruation discrimination. It was launched to make the issue of discrimination against menstruating women in India salient, by taking the opposition by religious leaders, patriarchal institutions and silence of the legislative bodies (state) head on in order to re-establish the climate of opinion about the issue.

Japleen Pasreecha (Founder & editor-in-chief of Feminism in India) states, “this isn’t about if I want to go to a temple or mosque or church or if I’m religious or not, this is about my right to walk into any building, institution, temple regardless my vagina is bleeding or not. (FB post, dated : November 23, 2015).

In the *second wing* during the analysis the visual and verbal content of the campaign, it was found that direct association of menstrual taboos with religion was made in the posts and comments. A hand written message on white placard: *Deny Your Religion; Your God ...Which denies my Purity When I menstruate!!!* crystallized the anger of a woman who now wants her biological identity against the religious diktats associated with the monthly cycle. Anwasha in her phone video ‘I have periods& I am not a terrorist’ hits out at the intermesh of restrictions and religion. Reference to Islam extends the discourse beyond Hindu practices. ‘*Why do I have to break my fast, if I suddenly start menstruating? All other 29 days were fine ... suddenly ...*’ posted a young female (seemingly a Muslim) on how religious practices like Ramadaan get affected by menstruation. The ‘actual’ and the ‘implied’ receiver in online advocacy converged often existing as separate dimensions

in traditional marketing communication campaigns (Stern, 1994).

While analyzing the *third wing* i.e. *Engagement*, it was evident that male took refuge in religion to keep the gender inequality in place. On the social media site, reinforcement of gender based restrictions was also visible as male writers underlined the sanctity of religious prescriptions in structuring the social norms. Supporters of faith and religion posted sermons in their comments to explain and justify the ban of menstruating women :

EFG (name changed): 1. Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), 2. Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). 3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, 4. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idrees (Enoch)], 5. Has taught man that which he knew not..... Fall prostrate and draw near to Allah! (FB post, dated: November 25, 2015)

HIJ (name changed): Temple is the holy place no unclean thing or person should not enter not only women but men also after having sex or if his semen comes out he is unclean until evening, similarly a drunkard is not allowed in the temple of God. Menstrual phase means a period of cleansing in women, so during these period women is not allowed in the temple ...so its not only women but men is also not allowed during his uncleanness...(FB post, dated: November 22, 2015)

Online campaign lead to change in menstrual code, especially taboos

The *fourth wing* of the dragonfly effect model [*action*] shows that happytoleed led to considerable participative action by resetting the stakeholders' agenda in many ways.

This advocacy campaign strived to frame the issue to generate enough heat through click of the mouse. Framing for content (Wallack & Dorfman, 1996; p.296) was the visible marker of this online advocacy as the new media advocates wrote slogans to declare allegiance and propel call to action. Framing to access too was vital to sustain the campaign, as Nikita and her co-advocates gave freewheeling interviews to the mainstream media. However, happytoleed was less focused on getting the attention of the journalists by becoming a news source than creating content for its target audience for public advocacy.

Mobilization of the Issue Generalists: The Indian Young Lawyers Association and five women lawyers approached the Supreme Court seeking a direction to allow entry of women into the temple without age restrictions. Earlier "Happy to Bleed" campaign advocates sought the court's direction

in this regard.

Institutional/Governmental Action: The campaign led to significant responses from the executive and the judiciary. The then Kerala Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy said “Government is prepared to conduct an opinion poll on the entry of women of all age group at Shabrimala. A consensus on the issue is more important than court orders. A political decision on the matter will not help”, at a meeting of officials of various Devaswom boards at Travancore.

From Social Media to Mainstream Media: A critical measure of an advocacy campaign is whether the issue got coverage in mainstream media (Wallack & Dorfman’s “did the issue get on the media agenda?”, p.308). Significantly, as *Happy To Bleed* Campaign picked up steam, media picked up the issue and debated on prime time TV and front page news.

Special talk shows “What happens when faith and gender collides?” on NDTV and “Women and Social Experiments” on India Today have been hosted on primetime bringing the gender disparity discourse in the mainstream. All major newspapers like The Hindu, The Indian Express, Huffington Post and The Guardian etc. including the foreign media carried the stories and follow ups of the campaign. The campaign was successful in validating that new media advocacy can reframe gender issues since journalists are enmeshed in structures of power making it tough to reach either the audiences or the regulatory agencies in more than episodic way (Gibson, 2010).

Brands as advocates: Within the ambit of menstrual hygiene, sanitary care industry is a key influencer. Hence, it was noteworthy that the industry too followed the lead. A period app period tracker was launched by Whisper prompting everyone to shun whispering sanitary pads and talk about the red days as they are part of our normal life besides maintaining hygiene.

The most potent action was to empower the entire commune by not only creating behavioural change but a successful policy rollback. This new media advocacy campaign opened gates for individual and organizational response at various levels. Whisper, a leading sanitary manufacturer launched *#touch thepickle* Campaign with *Menstrupedia* in December 2015 and *#Onthose5days* on 8th March 2016 (International Woman’s Day) around the myths surrounding the monthly period. In this campaign, digital videos featuring celebrity testimonials by Ashwini Ponnappa (Ace Badminton Player), Ayesha Aziz (Youngest Indian Female Pilot), Anahita Dhondy (Youngest Female Chef) were uploaded on the social media platforms.

Limitations

This study is campaign specific hence needs to guard against generalization of arguments w.r.t. all issues of gender rights.

Conclusion

Happy to bleed online advocacy on women deals with menstruation within the broad category of gender issues. It represents quick identification of the key theme followed by creation of communication and social movement building strategies with incisive focus. It was a visible campaign even without the presence of a celebrity or a famous concentrating on the power of social media in public advocacy. The veracity of the issue and the unabashed appeal of the young advocate generated debate and discussion aiding in mobilization and community formation. Initially carried forward by online friends of the issue advocated, it closed the loop by eliciting clear responses from experts, media and government representatives. A young student emerged as the new opinion leader in an interactive loop in countries with growing social media consumption. It was an outside advocacy strategy (Gais & Walker, 1991).

Personal revelations by young women in Happy to Bleed show the deep roots of menstrual taboos and the stranglehold it continues to have over girls across regions and religions in India much in line with scholarly works by Indian anthropologists and social scientists in the last two decades. This campaign persuades through rhetoric (Craig, 1996) uses signifiers in powerful slogans and images to represent the existing problem and the position taken by the interest group. The dialogical loop in the advocacy campaign created reciprocity of communication and emphasized cross associations amongst religion, society and taboos. How social media became a platform for women to voice their protest against the unjust practices, present the role of religion in perpetuating patriarchy by conceiving a strong combative response opens up new spaces for gender struggles. Through slogans and personal videos, young women converged to form a community to underline the taboos and used imagery to define a clear position backed by insistence on action.

In a country driven by codes and rituals, online advocacy can empower not only those who have been unfairly treated but also provide opportunities to the dominant male to review their notional realities. Young females encouraged their male counterparts to co-author and post supportive comments and more importantly countered them vehemently when they resorted to abuse besides negating their attempts to find justification of menstrual taboos in religious texts forever conscious of Pateman (1988)'s notion of transference of patriarchy via male's need to preserve balance

of power. Therefore while social media has the potential to expose the instruments used by males to retain their hegemonic superiority, it also gives them opportunity to endorse and partner the process of change. In that sense social media has the potential to co-opt men to further the issue and achieve its goals. Men may never be equal participants in creation of a gender just society, but such campaigns will invite a few to question the normalization of taboos in society.

Happy to bleed shows that online advocacy campaigns on gender work by inverting the agenda setting model where public drives the media agenda to reset the policy of the government, institutions and opinion followers. It outlines the participation of citizens and communities in constructing a new social order by advocating gender sensitive laws and policies. Advocacy on gender requires unique executions. No group petition as such was initiated since the campaign was largely structured around creating a public education on menstruation framework therefore, the global group petitions (GGPs) i.e. sign on statements or join in statements (Strange, M. 2011) were not the core of the campaign unlike advocacy on political issues. In India, use of social media in gender campaigns may plug the gaps created by armchair journalism and philanthropy. Stakeholders now ‘do it themselves’ than rely on either journalists or corporate social responsibility to mobilize support for a cause.

Declaration: The names of those who posted and commented on the Facebook communities of *HAPPYTOBLEED* have been changed to protect their identity in keeping with the normative practices on social media.

Notes

- 1 Jagori Safe Delhi campaign was initiated by Jagori group to make your city safe for women. Jagori, established in 1984 has been working to awaken, deepen feminist consciousness and for women rights. See: <http://www.jagori.org/>.
- 2 Media advocacy is the process of disseminating policy-related information through the communications media, especially where the aim is to effect action, a change of policy, or to alter the public’s view of an issues. See: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/media-advocacy>.
- 3 New media advocacy: creation, distribution and monitoring of message on cyber platforms i.e. social media, weblogs, web portals, websites, online communities, online PR for a specific initiative to seek a government intervention/action.
- 4 Boyd and Ellison (2008) describe social networking sites as “Web-based services that allow individuals to: 1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; 2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and 3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”⁴¹ Boyd and Ellison also note that on social networking sites, “the nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.”
- 5 Anthropologist, Mary Douglas defined taboo as “spontaneous coding practice which sets up a vocabulary of spatial limits and physical and verbal signals to hedge around vulnerable relations. It threatens specific dangers if the code is not respected. Some of

the dangers which follow on taboo-breaking spread harm in discriminately on contact. Feared contagion extends the danger of a broken taboo to the whole community.” See: Douglas, M. (2004). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge.

- 6 HappytoBleed and #HappytoBleed have been interchangeably used.
- 7 All the pictures/photographs/videos /audio/podcasts used for analysis have been sourced from the Facebook community page of Happy to Bleed.

References

- Aaker, J. & Smith, A. (2010). *The dragonfly effect*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Aaker, J. & Smith.A. (2012). *The Dragon Fly Effect: The book in a slideshow*. Retrieved from http://dragonflyeffect.com/blog/wpcontent/uploads/2010/12/social_media_in_a_box.pdf.
- Apffel, M.F.(1994).The sacred groves. *Manushi*. 82, 22-32. Retrieved from www.manushiindia.org/pdfs_issues/.../the_sacred_groves.pdf.
- Aristotle.(1: 1932). *The Rhetoric of Aristotle (Lane Cooper, Trans.)*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood.
- Azad, N. (2016). *Personal Interview* [Email]. July, 2016.
- Badger, Gladwell & Morozov.(2009). “The Brave New World of Slacktivism;” Morozov, “From Slacktivism to Activism; Lisan Jutras, “Facebook Mobilizes Masses – But What For?” *Globe and Mail*, Dec. 7, 2009, retrieved from accessed Oct.16, 2011, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/technology/personal-tech/facebook-mobilizes-masses---but-what-for/article1390916/>.
- Biddix, J. P. & Park, W.H. (2008). Online networks of student protest: The case of the living wage campaign, *New Media and Society*, 10(6), 871–891.
- Boyd, D. M. & Ellison, N.B. (2008). Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13, 210-230.
- Breuer, A. & Farooq, B. (2012). *Online Political Participation: Slacktivism or Efficiency Increased Activism? Evidence from the Brazilian Ficha Limpa Campaign*. [Prepared for delivery at the 2012 ICA Annual Conference San Francisco, May 24 - 28.]
- Chawla, J. (2006). *Birth and birthgivers: The power behind the shame*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- Chawla, J. (1994).The mythic origins of the menstrual taboo in the RigVeda. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29(43), 2817-2827.
- Das, M. (2008). Menstruation as pollution: Taboos in Simlitola, Assam, *Indian Anthropologist*, 38(2), 29-42.

- De Fluer, M. L., & Rokeach, S. (1989). *Theories of mass communication*. New York: Longman.
- Douglas, M. (2004). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge.
- Ferro-Luzzi, G. E. (1980) Food avoidances at puberty and menstruation in Tamil Nadu: An Anthropological Study. In J. R. K. Robson (ed.), *Food, ecology and culture: Readings in the anthropology of dietary practices* (pp. 93-100). Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, New York. .
- Fitch, M. (2017). Personal Interview [Web Chat]. 2017.
- Furth, C. & Shu-Yueh, C. (1992). Chinese medicine and the anthropology of menstruation in contemporary Taiwan. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 6(1), 27-48. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/maq.1992.6.1.02a00030/abstract>.
- Gais, T. & Walker, J. Jr. (1991). Pathways to influence American Politics. In J. Walker, Jr. (Ed.), *Mobilising interest groups in America* (pp.103-121). Ann. Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Gallagher, M. (2001). *Gender actting: New agendas for media monitoring and advocacy*. LA: Zed books.
- Ganguly, S. (2016). *Period power! Are companies doing enough to step it up for women with the right product?* Retrieved from http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/53614615.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst. accessed on 19th October 2015
- Gibson, T.A. (2010). The limits of media advocacy. *Communication, and Culture, Critique*, 3, 44-65. doi: doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2009.01057.x
- Goddard, A.(2002). *The language of advertising: written texts*. London: Routledge.
- Joseph, A. (2010). Countdown to better representation of women in media. Retrieved from <http://indiatogether.org/gendrep-op-ed>.
- Kapri, A. (2016). Menstrual cycle still a barrier to achieve gender equality. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/anisha-kapri/menstrual-cycle-still-a-b_1_b_9518754.html
- Karpf, D.(2012). *The move on effect: The unexpected transformation of American political advocacy*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kaundal, M. & Thakur, B. (2014). A Dialogue on Menstrual Taboo. *Indian Journal of Community Health*, 26(2),192-195. Retrieved from <http://www.iapsmupuk.org/journal/index.php/IJCH/article/view/540>

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (1998). Building a dialogic relationship through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, 24, 321–340.

Keshet-Orr, J. (2003). Jewish women and sexuality. *Sexual and relationship therapy*. 2003; 18(2), 215-24.

Kirk, J. & Sommer, M. (2006). *Menstruation and body awareness: Linking girls' health with girls' education*. Retrieved from http://www.wsscc.org/sites/default/files/publications/kirk-2006-menstruation-kit_paper.pdf

Kothari, B.(2010), Perception around menstruation : A study of rural Jaipur, Rajasthan, *Indian Anthropologist*, 40(1), 43-54.

Littlejohn, S. W. (2002). *Theories of human communication*. USA: Wadworth/Thompson Learning.

McRobbie, A. (2004). Post-feminism and popular culture, *Feminist Media Studies*, 4(3), 531-550.

Morozov, E. (2009). *From slacktivism to activism*. Retrieved from http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/05/from_slacktivism_to_activism.

Nielson. (2016). Breaking The Menstruation Taboo. Retrieved from <http://www.nielson.com/in/en/insights/reports/2016/breaking-the-menstruation-taboo.html>.

Obar, J.A., Zube, P. & Lampe, C. (2012). Advocacy 2.0: An Analysis of How Advocacy Groups in the United States Perceive and Use Social Media as Tools for Facilitating Civic Engagement and Collective Action, *Journal of Information Policy*, 3,1-25.

Ozdemir, P. (2012). Social Media as a Tool for Online Advocacy Campaigns: Greenpeace Mediterranean's Anti Genetically Engineered Food Campaign in Turkey, *Global Media Journal-Canadian Edition*, 5(2), 255–264.

Pateman, C. (1988). *The Sexual Contract, Polity*, Cambridge: e, MA.

Jha, R.(2014). 100 Women 2014: The taboo of menstruating in India. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29727875>.

Shulman, S.W.(2009). The case against mass E-mails: Perverse Incentives and Low Quality Public Participation in US Federal Rulemaking, *Policy and Internet* 1(1).

Stern, B. (1994). A Revised Communication Model for Advertising: Multiple Dimensions of the Source, the Message, and the Recipient, *Journal of Advertising*, 23(2), 5-15.

Thomas, E. (2007). Menstruation Discrimination: The menstrual taboo as a Rhetorical function of Discourse in the national and International advances of Women's rights,

Contemporary Argumentation and Debate,(28),68-90. retrieved from [.http://www.iep.utm.edu/foucfem/ 3](http://www.iep.utm.edu/foucfem/3)

Walack, L., & Dorfman, L. (1996). Media Advocacy : A Strategy for advancing policy and promoting health. *Health Education Quarterly*, 23,293-317.

West, D.M. & Orman, J.(2003). *Celebrity politics*. Upper saddle river, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Annexures

Fig 1: Cover Page of the Facebook Community Happy to Bleed



Fig 2: Profile Photo of the Community



Figure 3: Happy to bleed going Offline in Maharashtra



Figure 4: Male students as online campaign advocates



Figure 5(a) : Small Children join the Happy to Bleed Campaign



Figure 5 (b): Young preteen girl as an advocate of Happy to Bleed



PRINT AND ONLINE NEWSPAPERS



AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS CONTENT AND
CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF READERS



PAWAN KOUNDAL¹ &
RAGHVENDRA MISHRA²

1 Assistant Editor, Department of Publications, Indian
Institute of Mass Communication, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg,
New Delhi, India.

E-mail: pawankoundal@gmail.com (*Corresponding Author*)

2 Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication,
IGNTU, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Abstract

During the last decade, the number of the Internet users worldwide has been increased substantially.

In 2017, 46.8 percent of the global population accessed the internet. This figure is projected to grow to 53.7 percent in 2021 (Statista.com). This statistic provides information on internet user penetration worldwide from 2014 to 2021. An increased utilisation of smart phones and computers has given people the opportunity to use the internet more frequently and with more convenience. The advancement of internet also influenced and developed a new way to print media. It has contributed to the emergence of a new situation where many newspapers and magazines have begun to publish their online editions which have brought the whole world on a reader's desktop/mobile. In the light of these developments, this theoretical paper aims to evaluate the consumption patterns of the readers as well as the variation in the content presented in two different versions of the same newspaper. Two relevant theories Agenda Setting Theory and Uses and Gratifications are also elaborated upon.

Keywords

Print media, Online newspapers, Consumption patterns, Agenda Setting Theory, News media

The advent of the Internet has brought many hopes and challenges to the newspaper industry. Internet has brought exciting new changes to the production and dissemination of news, but it has also challenged to take over the traditional printed newspaper. From the arrival of the penny papers, print newspapers were around for more than 100 years when in the 1930s they saw their heyday as the media most used in the US for news (Douglas, 1999). But the Internet took less than 15 years to claim that mantle when, at the end of 2010, the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism found that for the first time, more people got their news from the Internet than from newspapers (Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2011). This monumental transformation occurring in the news media landscape raises questions anew about the effect that the Web is having on newsreaders, including their engagement with the news. As newspaper move from traditional printed pages to the universe of pixels and bytes, some have criticized online newspapers for being mere content shoveled from their print counterparts, presented traditionally, without utilizing much of the potential of the Internet (Gubman & Greer, 1997.)

News online provides the opportunity to develop a whole new way to present journalism, and Jan Schaffer (2001) of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism suggested that this be done with a "much more interactive toolbox". Interactivity is one of the things that give the Internet value as a medium. Newspapers can provide in-depth stories, and television gives pictures and sounds. When providers offer these elements online, users often confront technological limitations. These technical obstacles may be overcome in a few years, but Web journalism still should be able to offer something more, something unique now. The current environment has media trying to determine whether online news is complementary or competitive for their operations (Dutta-Bergman, 2004) while journalists are trying to understand how to work in multiple media platforms (Huang, Davison, Shreve, Davis, Bettendorf & Nair, 2003).

News Media and Agenda Setting Theory

Lippmann's (1922) book *Public Opinion* set the stage for the theory of agenda setting by arguing that "the news media construct our view of the world" (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009, p.147). In McCombs's and Shaw's original work published on Agenda-Setting – "The agenda setting function of mass media" – the media is the most prominent (and arguably, the only) linkage institution between the government and the people. Therefore, McCombs and Shaw argue that it is the only contact many have with politics (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).

News media has the power to set the agenda of the nation and can focus on the public attention for the certain issues. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news – lead story on page one, other front page display, large headlines, etc. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience – the opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story, etc. These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public’s attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms (McCombs, 2003).

The agenda-setting influence of the news media is not limited to this initial step of focusing public attention on a particular topic. The media also influence the next step in the communication process, our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news (McCombs, 2003). In the article entitled “Maxwell McCombs: Agenda-setting explorer,” by Davie and Maher (2006), Agenda-Setting is established as one of the most influential and powerful theories in the field of communication studies. Before Agenda-Setting, scholarly wisdom was that the media “exerted little influence” (Davie & Maher, 2006) on the public agenda, and that the public agenda was formed by social processes rather than media messages. In 1992, McCombs described four phases of Agenda-Setting research: (a) original hypothesis, transfer of issue salience from the media to the public; (b) contingent conditions; (c) agenda of attributes, such as candidate images; and (d) investigations of who sets the media agenda (Davie & Maher, 2006).

The news not just reveals what to think about; it also discloses how to think about it. Davie & Maher (2006) opine that “both the selection of topics for the news agenda and the selection of frames for stories about those topics are powerful agenda setting roles and awesome ethical responsibilities”(pp. 20-821). With this assertion, the framing of news stories is basically the second level of Agenda-Setting. These four phases determined the need for a fifth phase – one focused on the consequences of Agenda-Setting. The theory in its entirety has expanded throughout the entire mass media realm, and although there is no overarching paradigm in mass media studies, Agenda-Setting has become one area of scholarship that has a relationship with almost any area of mass media studies (Freemen,nd.).

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) discuss agenda setting as a separate method of political communication from framing, where traditionally the

latter would be a subset of the former. Priming is also discussed as a primary means of political communication, where, “...an examination of whether and how framing, agenda setting, and priming are related and what these relationships tell theorists and researchers about the effects of mass media” is offered (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p.11). In a study conducted by Coleman and McCombs (2007) concluded that:

“despite evidence that the youngest generation is not exposed to traditional media as frequently as the older generations, and does use the Internet significantly more, there is little support for the intuitive idea that diversity of media will lead to the end of a common public agenda as we have known it. Rather, different media use among the young did not seem to influence the Agenda-Setting effect much at all” (p.503).

According to Freeman (n.d.), the idea of active audience theory is also related to this discussion. An audience cannot be seen as homogeneous because it is comprised of different users with different backgrounds, perceptions, and even uses for the media. Active audience theory challenges the idea that what the media say is vital to understanding what people think (p.7). Individuals are not simply wired to accept the media’s dominant message; they have the ability to interpret and reject and challenge the media. Active audience theory has shown the counterpoint to an audience as singular because it questions the assumption that people automatically accept the media’s message (Williams, 2003). In relation to Agenda-Setting, this theory raises the point that even if the media does succeed in creating and imparting a unified agenda, it is not necessarily going to be accepted as fact by the audience. This calls into question whether or not a media effect has truly taken place (Freeman, n.d.).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Elihu Katz first introduced the Uses and Gratification Approach, when he came up with the notion that people use the media to their benefit. The perspective emerged in the early 1970’s as Katz and his two colleagues, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch continued to expand the idea. This theory was contemporary because it contradicted older views that assumed the audience was a passive group. The Uses and Gratifications Approach views the audience as active, meaning that they actively seek out specific media and content to achieve certain results or gratifications that satisfy their personal needs (Spring, 2002).

This theory has evolved since its adaptation 42 years ago to

Active audience theory challenges the idea that what the media say is vital to understanding what people think. Individuals are not simply wired to accept the media’s dominant message; they have the ability to interpret and reject and challenge the media.

accommodate changing communications and media platforms. The uses and gratifications theory is based on the idea that media audiences are active rather than passive, meaning they do not only receive information, but also unconsciously attempt to make sense of the message in their own context (Peirce, 2007 in Turney, n.d.).

Uses and gratifications approach also postulates that the media compete with other information sources for audience's need satisfaction (Katz et al., 1974). As traditional mass media and new media continue to provide people with a wide range of media platforms and content, it is considered one of the most appropriate perspectives for investigating why audiences choose to be exposed to different media channels (Hassan, 2009). The approach emphasizes audiences' choice by assessing their reasons for using a certain media to the disregard of others, as well as the various gratifications obtained from the media, based on individual social and psychological requirements (Severin & Tankard, 1992). As a broader perspective among communication researches, it provides a framework for understanding the processes by which media participants seek information or content selectively, commensurate with their needs and interests (Katz et al. 1974). Audience members then incorporate the content to fulfill their needs or to satisfy their interests (Lowery & Deflure, 1983).

Newspapers and their online counterparts: Content and readership patterns

Newspapers have a tradition of seeking, gathering, processing, and producing news in a one-way daily delivery, but the Internet can give users the ability to make the reporting process more transparent if site visitors can see, hear, or read the sources reporters relied on (Hlongoane, n.d.). In order to get to a point where sites make full use of the online functions that make the Web unique, Lowrey (1999, in Hlongoane, n.d.) said both journalists and users must develop new schemes for processing news online instead of viewing it as a modified version of print journalism. Internet allows for user involvement. This is an advantage to the online publications. Through its low barrier to entry, it offers publishers the opportunity to develop additional revenue streams based on their core product, the collection and analysis of information. The interactivity of the medium has proven to be attractive for many, drawing the audience away from television to return to a largely text-based medium.

Newspapers appear on internet in different forms—web newspapers (websites of the newspaper), e-papers and now mobile applications

The uses and gratifications theory is based on the idea that media audiences are active rather than passive, meaning they do not only receive information, but also unconsciously attempt to make sense of the message in their own context.

(popularly known as 'mobile apps'). While e-paper gives us a feeling of holding physical paper edition of newspaper in hand, with all the layout and design, web paper and news mobile apps opens avenues for greater interactivity. Apart from content, the form of newspapers has also witnessed a metamorphosis. Color, graphics, blurbs, multicolored headlines, attractive visual make up, layout and other patterns of presentation of printed words have enhanced interactivity. We are no more a 'passive' reader of the 'exotic' and 'standardized news value based' content but we read our own day to day affairs, problems, events, situations with which we come across in our routine life. The new form has added up more involvement of the reader. Now days not only the media but the users have also changed their priority, lifestyle, need, taste etc so the media is compelled to change itself. We are entering into new participation age where the boundaries between consumer and creator are becoming increasingly blurred. This is particularly evident in media firmament, where newspapers are attempting to forge relationship with the reader which is rather active unlike in the past.

Internet brings excitement and expectations, many historians and media professionals still feel very strongly about the print newspapers, and sometime advocated that the electronic newspaper can never replace the printed newspaper. Publisher Donald Brazeal from *Digital Ink Publisher* thinks that the print product is not going to disappear anytime soon (Dineley, 1994). Media commentator Steve Outing suggests that electronic newspapers are supplemental services, with little in common to print newspapers, and that they will not replace their print cousins (Erlindson, 1995). Katz (1994) note that online papers seem to take away what is best about reading a paper and do not offer what is best about being online.

The Internet has made a deep impact on all information-related products and services. This has not spared the newspapers. The increasing user population in the Net has attracted the traditional newspapers to publish their online editions. Online Newspapers have brought the whole world on a reader's desktop/palm and make him/her aware of all subject fields. Online newspapers have bridged geographical limits and transformed the whole world literally into a global village¹. This is a great opportunity for the print media to seize and devise means and ways to sustain and flourish. The transfer of digitized information from the source to the receiver is easy and less complicated when compared to the printed matter. The internet users have also grown considerably. All these factors have contributed to the emergence of a new situation where newspapers and magazines are going online to counter their dwindling readership and thereby advertising revenue.

Research shows that printed newspapers improve their readers' knowledge of what is going on around them. In general, newspaper reading raises awareness of a greater number of public-affairs topics as compared to using other information channels, like for example television (Ferguson & Weigold, 1986; Allen & Izcaray, 1998).

Print unit circulation increased +4.9 percent globally in 2015 from a year earlier and shows a five-year growth of +21.6 percent. This is largely the result of circulation growth in India, China and elsewhere in Asia, as expanding literacy, economic growth, and low copy prices boost newspaper consumption. India and China together accounted for an astonishing 62% of global average daily print unit circulation in 2015, up from 59% in 2014 (World Press Trends Survey, 2016). More than 2.7 billion adults are reading newspapers in print globally. Digital newspaper readership is growing, and in some of the most developed economies, readership on all digital platforms has surpassed the number of readers in print. World Press Trends (2016) analysis estimates that at least 40 percent of global Internet users read newspapers online.

With the emergence of online media, however, the relevance of Agenda-Setting is being challenged. As the media becomes personalized, the agenda is diluted or not uniform and is therefore claimed to be no longer transferable. However, there are other aspects of Agenda Setting that are also called into question by the realm of new media (Berger & Freeman, 2011). Several studies have suggested that online newspapers are complementary to print editions, not competitive. People who go online to seek out information about politics, sports, business, science, international affairs, local news, and entertainment news are likely to continue to read about those niche interests in traditional media (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). Dutta-Bergman used survey data from more than 3,000 individuals and concluded that new media news is complementary to traditional media and that "content ... is the critical ingredient in media choice" (p. 58). Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) and Zaharopoulos (2003) also found that readers used both print and online editions of the same newspaper, making them complementary.

Singer (2001) found a significant difference between the percentage of metro stories in online editions and print editions. In the sample of six Colorado papers representing a variety of circulation sizes, about 45% of all stories online were metro stories, and just 31% percent of all print items were metro stories. The inclusion of photography and other artwork was another part of the Colorado study because Singer (2001) said "a photograph or infographic tells a story in its own right and is worth inclusion in any

discussion of the relative emphasis given to particular types of newspaper content". Out of more than 3,400 stories in the print sample, 48% had some form of art, whether it was a simple identifying graphic or multi-photo package. The online sample had nearly 1,400 stories, and just 18% of those had an art element either in the story, on the home page menu, or as standalone art (Singer, 2001).

Weiss (2004) found that 65% of stories added to newspapers' home pages had no contextual features added. Her content analysis of 20 newspaper Web sites looked at stories to see whether contextual features such as photos, related stories, section additions, hyperlinks, polls, forums, blogs, slideshows, video, audio, or maps had been uploaded to the site as well. Many stories are placed online with few modifications from the print version (Martin, 1998). A case study of two newspapers showed that online staff members sometimes wrote new headlines to fit their space requirements and often had to modify photographs from the print versions in order to fit the online templates, similar to Singer's (2001) findings. Martin said (1998) online staff members identified their primary job function as selecting and reformatting existing content, not creating new content or enhancing it.

Pavlik (1997) suggests that the online newspaper should not be just another delivery system for old media. It has a lot of inherent advantages that could greatly enhance the traditional functions of the newspaper. Historically, newspaper functions to provide information and news, engage the users to survey the environment they are in, correlate the events in the environment, entertain readers, and transmit social heritage from generation to generation (Wright, 1960).

Neuberger et al. (1998) said a strong orientation toward print content could be both a good and bad thing: if readers base their expectations of the online product on the print edition they are used to, then shovelware and similar organisation can benefit a site. However, too much faithfulness to the print original means that unique Web opportunities go untapped. Pavlik (2001) suggested that the Web, with its hypermedia and multimedia capabilities, presents many framing possibilities that differ from traditional media. Hypermedia, or the ability to link among online objects, provides "additional background, detail and, most importantly, context", and layering multimedia elements, such as audio and video files, can give extra content to many elements of a given story. "Perspectives" for stories might include source documents, transcripts and recordings of sources' views, links to past stories on the issues, links directly to source information online, or other such items that might have been merely a reference for the journalist's synthesis for traditional media. Several researchers have compared print and online

Historically, newspaper functions to provide information and news, engage the users to survey the environment they are in, correlate the events in the environment, entertain readers, and transmit social heritage from generation to generation (Wright, 1960).

editions to examine gatekeeping effects (Blake, 2004; Singer, 2001). Singer's sample of six Colorado newspapers showed that "despite the unlimited news hold available online, editors of Web products were whittling down the print package for online distribution"; the study found more than twice as many stories in the print editions than the papers posted online.

The "old media" have also undergone a complex metamorphosis (Fidler, 1997). Before the Internet, the newspaper industry had seen many so-called new media. In 1930, there were debates about the potential threat or promise of facsimile transmission as a new delivery medium. But despite every effort to use the facsimile to transmit news, fax services were not successful in replacing the newspaper (Fidler, 1997). All kinds of emerging technologies could profoundly change the media business. But whether the future newspaper will be published on paper or on an electronic display depends on whether it can fulfill the historical functions of newspapers such as providing news and information, allowing opinion expression, entertainment and advertising (Dennis, 1996).

The newer digital media have added to the uncertainty about which medium is good for what purpose but they have also added a new dimension according to which media can be distinguished by the degree of interactivity. The print medium interacts with readers to a certain degree, via comments, opinions and letters to editors. But the interactivity in online journalism is immediate and can be done in real-time. Readers can feedback on a bigger scale through e-mail and react quickly (Fitzgerald, 1996).

The Internet is also a multifaceted mass medium that combines many different configurations of communication. Its capacity for addressing senses far surpasses that of any other medium (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). While the print medium provides only text, photographs and graphics, the online newspaper can be a convergence of newspaper, television and radio. It can incorporate new combinations of text and photographs with multimedia elements such as audio clips, video clips and animated graphics. News stories can now be presented in many different forms so as to provide different and enriching experience for the users.

Online newspapers have the advantage over print editions because they can provide news instantaneously. There is no waiting period for a press deadline or an afternoon edition. Stories can be updated as they happen (Erlindson, 1995). Unlike online newspapers, print newspapers cannot update their news as soon as the news breaks. It is not technically viable to print another round of newspapers just to update a news story. This technical

limitation restricts the immediacy potential of the print newspapers. It was therefore not surprising that the print media cannot as immediate as the online versions. Hence the lower score of print newspapers in terms of immediacy. The derisive term “shovelware” describes print content shoveled up to dump online wholesale, without alteration. Studies have found that many newspapers post about one-quarter to just over half of the content they produce for their print editions (Neuberger et al., 1998; Saksena & Hollifield, 2002).

In an earlier study Reinking (1988) investigated differences in reader understanding of electronically-distributed texts via a computer screen and on paper. One of the findings reported is that readers of texts made available via a computer screen devote more time to reading these texts when more background information can be accessed than readers of printed texts. Reinking found no evidence of difference in readers’ personal assessments of both the electronically-delivered and print texts regarding what was learned. A study on information retrieval via the internet (Eveland & Dunwoody, 2000) reports that users spend much effort orienting themselves to the content and structure of the web, at the expense of time evaluating what is eventually found.

Online newspapers are getting popularity day by day because of many reasons. The most important reason is that they provide interactivity. Interactivity as an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions (Dudeney, 2000). Interactivity is similar to the degree of responsiveness, and is examined as a communication process in which each message is related to the previous messages exchanged, and to the relation of those messages to the messages preceding them. New media is an expanding term that encompasses all new technologies we have today. Interactivity is seen as a key association with new media as it basically sets apart the Old and New media. Old media could only offer a sit-back type interaction, whereas new media is much more engaging to their audiences. Technologies such as DVD’s and digital TV are classic examples of interactive media devices, where a user can control what they watch and when. However, the Internet has become the prime model of an interactive system. Users can become fully immersed in their experiences by viewing material, commenting it and then actively contributing to it (Chyi & Sylvie, 1998).

A random-sample telephone survey was conducted in Austin, Texas, to investigate the public’s response to local, regional, and national newspapers’

print and online editions. Print readership was strongest among readers of that same newspaper's online edition. The substantial overlap of online and print readerships for the local daily suggests the potential of a complementary product relation. The print format was preferred—even among Internet users—when compared with the online edition, other things being equal (Chyi & Lasorsa, 2002). Modern society is nearly unimaginable without the mass media: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, film, cable networks, internet, World Wide Web, etc. the mass media are contributing many things to many people and serve a variety of functions, depending upon the type and structure of political and economic system in which media function, prepare and stage of development of society, and keeping in view the interests and needs of specific individuals (Severin & Tankard, 1992). In the mass communication, uses and gratifications approach describes audience as active media users as opposed to passive receivers. In contrast to traditional media effects theories which focus on “what media do to people” it focus on “what people do with media” (Katz, 1959).

The online newspaper is not merely a potentially better delivery system for the printed newspaper. The significant issue here is whether the online newspaper continues to inform people, provides forums for public discourse, and facilitates the sharing of information and experiences that strengthens community and cultural bonds (Fidler, 1997). Many researchers have conducted qualitative studies on how the potential of the online newspaper can be fully utilized to serve the function of a mass medium. They generally agree that the online newspaper should provide value-added services that are not only useful to the users, but also differentiate it from the print newspaper (Fidler, 1997; Gubman & Greer, 1997).

Print media in India

In post globalisation era, Indian print media has gone through a drastic transformation to keep its readers intact with the printed words. Despite the advent of television and internet, moreover newspaper on internet, Indian print media has not only maintained its readership but in the course of time it has also expanded itself in terms of circulation. The phenomenal rise in literacy percentage and growing purchasing power of rural India are the two simple reasons that may be attributed for thriving of newspapers in India. Yet, newspapers have also made hard efforts to cope with changing readership scenario, the changes and challenges brought by the advent of television and internet.

In India, the growth trends in circulation and readership are especially

strong in the Indian language sectors of the press, led by Hindi. Some studies predict that, by 2040, the Indian print industry would meet the fate of the American print media industry but by then Indian media publishers should be in a position to 'get a good share of the advertising revenue' (Mathew, 2011).

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI, 2017) and market research firm IMRB in its report titled "Mobile Internet in India 2017" said that the number of mobile internet users stood at 456 million in December 2017, over 17 per cent higher than December 2016, that also identified young students as being the most prolific consumer of such services. The number mobile internet users in India is estimated to touch 478 million by June 2018, buoyed by cheaper smartphones, faster connectivity and affordable services, according to an IAMAI report (2017). Urban India witnessed an estimated 18.64 per cent year-on-year rise, while rural India witnessed an estimated growth of 15.03 per cent during the same period," it said. The report forecast that given a 59 per cent penetration, urban India is expected to witness a slowdown, while rural India with only 18 per cent mobile internet penetration would emerge as the next area of growth. It also revealed that mobile internet is predominantly used by youngsters, with 46 per cent of urban users and 57 per cent of rural users below the age of 25. "Urban India has around twice the proportion of users over the age of 45, while the age range of 25 to 44 has almost equal distribution of users in urban and rural areas," an IAMAI statement said detailing out the usage pattern across various age brackets (The Times of India, 2018).

According to Audit Bureau of Circulations² (ABC-India) press release of May 8, 2017, the growth of print media is continuing as 2.37 crore copies added in the last 10 years (ABC, 2017). India has among the highest growth rates for print in the world, according to data from ABC. Between 2013 and 2015, the circulation of Indian dailies grew 12%, while that of those in markets such as Australia, France, Germany, the US, and Japan all saw a 3-6% decline. The UK saw the highest decline of 12% in this period, according to ABC (Gupta, 2017).

Sinha³ (in Gupta, 2017) says "the key reason we are here is to address a misconception whether print media is growing or not. If you just look at last 10 years, growth in circulation of ABC members is from 39.1 million to 62.8 million, that is 50% growth. No other market in the world with such a base has witnessed growth like this. Digital is growing but its base is very small and it is free, not paid for. We are convinced that the future is bright for print."

Conclusion

It is well recognized that the internet has opened greater avenues for the current media industry. This theoretical analysis of news content and consumption patterns of readers of online and print newspapers suggests that Internet has influenced print media industry in a big way because of rapidly growing internet users worldwide and in India as well. The advancement of the internet has influenced print media to a large extent which resulted in the emergence of a new situation where almost all the newspapers forced to be present on online platforms so that they can be read on the websites and smart phones. It can be concluded that the evolution of online newspapers may not be complete, so it is important for scholars to evaluate how news sites function, what is the difference between the content of the same newspaper on two different platforms and how people are using both versions effectively to satisfy their consumption needs. Research suggests that there is an audience for both print and web and online newspapers are competitors if their content is free shovelware from the print edition, but news online can be complementary if sites offer different information or features.

Notes

1. Marshall McLuhan was the first person to popularize the concept of a global village and to consider its social effects. His insights were revolutionary at the time, and fundamentally changed how everyone has thought about media, technology, and communications ever since. McLuhan chose the insightful phrase “global village” to highlight his observation that an electronic nervous system (the media) was rapidly integrating the planet – events in one part of the world could be experienced from other parts in real-time, which is what human experience was like when we lived in small villages (see https://livinginternet.com/i/ii_mcluhan.htm).
2. Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) is one of the several organisations of the same name operating in different parts of world. ABC founded in 1948 is a not-for-profit, voluntary organisation consisting of publishers, advertisers and advertising agencies as members. It does pioneering work in developing audit procedures to certify the circulation figures of publications which are members of ABC (see <http://www.auditbureau.org/about-what-is-abc.html>)
3. Member of Council of Management (2017-18), Audit Bureau of Circulations (see <http://www.auditbureau.org/about-council-of-management.html>)

References

- Allen, R. L., & Izcaray, F. (1988). Nominal Agenda Diversity in a Media- Rich, Less-Developed Society, *Communication Research*, 15, 29-50.
- Audit Bureau of Circulations (2017). *Print media is growing - 2.37 crore copies added in the last 10 years*. Retrieved from <http://www.auditbureau.org/news/view/53>
- Berger, L.J. & Freeman, M. (2011). The Issue of Relevance of Agenda-Setting Theory to the Online Community. *Meta-Communicate*, 1(1), pp . 2-22.
- Blake, M. (2004, August). *The transparent gate: Online and print editions at two central Florida newspapers*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Chyi, H. I. & Sylvie, G. (1998). Competing with whom? Where? And How? A structural analysis of the electronic newspaper market. *Journal of Media Economics*, 11(2), 1-18
- Chyi, H.I., & Lasorsa, D.L. (2002). An explorative study on the market relation between online and print newspapers. *Journal of Media Economics*, 15, 91-106.
- Coleman, R., & McCombs, M. (2007). The young and agenda-less? Exploring agerelated differences in agenda setting on the youngest generation, baby boomers and the civic generation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(3), 495-508. Retrieved from Communication Abstracts database
- Davie, W., & Maher, T. (2006). Maxwell McCombs: Agenda-setting explorer. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 50(2), 358-364.
- Dennis, E. E. (1996). Values and value-added for the new electronic journalism: Public debate and the democratic dialogue. *Media Asia*, 23(2), 107-110.
- Dineley, T. (1994, April). Publishing industry. *International Newspaper Financial Executives*. US.
- Dudeny, G. (2000). *The Internet and the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dutta-Bergman, M.J. (2004). Complementarity in consumption of news types across traditional and new media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 48, 41- 60. Retrieved from Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Erlindson, M. (April, 1995). *Online newspapers: The newspaper industry's dive into Cyberspace* [Paper presented at the University of Western Ontario].

Eveland, W.P. Jr, & Dunwoody, S. (2000). Examining Information Processing on the World Wide Web Using Think Aloud Protocols, *Media Psychology*, 2(3), 219-44.

Ferguson, M.A. & Weigold, M. (1986). Medium Source Diversity and Medium Reliance: In Search of Issue Diversity'. [Paper presented at the annual conference, International Communication Division, Chicago, IL, May].

Fidler, R. (1997). *Mediamorphosis: Understanding new media*. Thousand Oaks CA: Pine Forge Press.

Fitzgerald, M. (1996). The effect of the Internet on print journalism. *Editor & Publisher*, 61-72.

Freemen, M.D.J (n.d.). *The Issue of Relevance of Agenda-Setting Theory to the Online Community*. Retrieved from <https://journals.chapman.edu/ojs/index.php/mc/article/viewFile/267/587>

Gubman, J., & Greer, J. (1997, August). *An analysis of online sites produced by U.S. newspapers: Are the critics right?* [Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago].

Gupta, S. (2017). *Print circulation in India bucks global trend, grows 4.87% in past decade: ABC*. Retrieved from https://www.livemint.com/Consumer/gWR3Ca04xSqk7UHKAFYmI/Print-circulation-in-India-bucks-global-trend-grows-487-i.html?utm_source=scroll&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=scroll

Hassan (2009). *Coverage to NRO by private TV Channels and Viewers' Perception*. [Unpublished Thesis], University of Sargodha.

Hlongoane, K. (n.d.). *The effects of online newspapers on the printed version*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/6146260/THE_EFFECTS_OF_ONLINE_NEWSPAPERS_ON_THE_PRINTED_VERSION

Huang, E., Davison, K., Shreve, S., Davis, T., Bettendorf, E., & Nair, A. (2003, August). *Facing the challenges of convergence: Media professionals' concerns of working across media platforms* [Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Kansas City, MO].

Internet World Stats (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.internetworldstats.com>.

India Internet Users (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/india/>

Katz, J. (September, 1994). Online or not, newspapers still suck. *Wired*, 50.

Katz, E., Blumler, J., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the Individual, In J. G. Blumler, & E. Katz Eds., *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*, Beverly Hills & London: Sage Publications.

Lowery, S. A., & DeFleur, M. L. (1983). *Milestones in Mass Communication Research*, New York: Longman.

Martin, S.E. (1998). How news gets from paper to its online counterpart. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 19, 64-73.

McCombs, M. (2003). The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion.

McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-187.

Mathew, J. (2011). Inspiration from India: Q&A with Jacob Mathew', *WAN-IFRA Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.wan-ifra.org/articles/2011/06/28/inspiration-from-india-qa-with-jacob-mathew>.

Mobile Internet in India 2017 (2017). Report by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) & market research firm IMRB.

Newhagen, J. E., Rafaeli, S. (1996). Why communication researchers should study the Internet: A dialogue. *Journal of Communication*, 4-13.

Neuberger, C., Tonnemacher, J., Biebl, M., & Duck, A. (1998). Online: The future of newspapers? Germany's dailies on the World Wide Web. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 4.

Worldwide internet user penetration from 2014 to 2021. *Statista.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/325706/global-internet-user-penetration/>

Pavlik, J.V. (1997, July/August). The future of online journalism. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved from <http://archives.cjr.org/year/97/4/online.asp>

Pavlik, J.V. (2001). News framing and new media: digital tools to re-engage an alienated citizenry. In S.D. Reese, O.H. Gandy, & A.E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 311-322). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Peirce, K. (2007). Uses and Gratifications Theory. In *Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media* (Vol. 2, pp. 841-843). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference. Retrieved from <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3470400454&v=2.1&u=psucic&it=r&p=GURL&sw=w&asid=c5074e498be9ec0f170f115e3d9f52e5>

Reinking, D. (1988). Computer-mediated text and comprehension differences: The role of reading time, reader preference, and estimation of learning. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 484-498.

Schaffer, J. (2001, March 31). *Interactive journalism*. Keynote speech presented at the Pittsburgh SPJ Region 4 Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. Retrieved from http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/speeches/s_pittsburghspj.html.

Scheufele, D., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: the evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00326.x.

Singer, J.B. (2001). The metro wide web: Changes in newspapers' gatekeeping role online. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78, 65-80.

Severin, W.J., & Tankard, J.W. (1992). *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods and Uses in The Mass Media*. New York: Longman.

Spring, E.R. (2002). *Uses & Gratifications/Dependency Theory*. Retrieved from <http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/~johnca/spch100/7-4-uses.htm>

The Times of India (March 29, 2018). *Mobile internet users in India seen at 478 million by June: IAMAI*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/mobile-internet-users-in-india-seen-at-478-million-by-june-iamai/articleshow/63533860.cms>

Turney, S. (n.d.). *Uses and Gratifications Theory and its Connection to Public Relations*. Retrieved from <https://sites.psu.edu/sarahturney/uses-and-gratifications-theory/>

Rosenstiel, T. & Mitchell, A. (2011). The State of the News Media 2011, *Overview*. Retrieved from <http://stateofthemedias.org/2011/overview-2/>.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K., & Hanitzsch, T. (2009). *The handbook of journalism studies*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge.

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding media theory*. Great Britain, UK: Arnold.

Weiss, A.S. (2004, August). *The now what factor: the level of innovativeness among online newspapers* [Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Toronto, Ontario, Canada].

World Press Trends Survey (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.wanifra.org/articles/2016/06/12/full-highlights-of-world-press-trends-2016-survey>

Wright, C. (1960). Functional analysis and mass communication. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 24, 605-620.

Zaharopoulos, T. (2003, August). *Online versions of U.S. daily newspapers: Does size matter?* [Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Kansas City, MO].

INTERNET MEME AND POLITICAL PROPAGANDA



AN ANALYSIS



RAJASHREE GOSWAMI¹ &
GYAN PRAKASH PANDEY²

1 Research Scholar, Department of Mass Communication
Assam University, Silchar, Assam, India.
E-mail: goswamiraji15@gmail.com (*Corresponding Author*)

2 Dean & HOD, Department of Mass Communication,
Assam University, Silchar, Assam, India.

Abstract

With the advent of globalisation, the impact of new media on society is increasing noticeably. Social media, an ingredient of new media, has become a part of daily life and political parties are using it for different types of political communication including keeping in touch with voters, maintaining influence etc. Public communication through Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) in politics is crafting the shape of modern politics. People from all walks of life, from the renowned to ordinary are free to share opinions on social media. Meme has emerged as one of the most popular social media tools and is increasingly being used for political communication. This study focuses on meme as a tool of participatory communication, as also of political propaganda; the importance of meme, its satirical tone and its impact on Indian youth.

Keywords

Internet, Meme, Politics, Agenda, Youth

Over the years, media has become one of the most important parts of world politics. The domain of modern politics is increasingly shaped by media through public communication and as an outcome the success of government becomes dependent and interconnected to the effective communication ability of the government to the citizens. Publicity and promotion have become a major parts of the political planning of the parties, wherein media is also playing an active role. Within this media-centric logic, political parties are increasingly using new communication strategies and policies to 'fit- into' this new trend.

Combining with globalisation, the social impact of new media has been increasing noticeably. While new media as a concept is more contemporary, in the field of social science research it has a prolonged history and has been used since the 1960s and 1970s by researchers studying the form, uses and implications of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Social media is an important and extensive part of new media. Online networking is a stage giving space to individuals to interact where they can make, offer and trade data and thoughts in virtual groups and systems. In addition, online networking depends on virtual and electronic advancements. The thought is to make exceedingly informative portals through which people and groups can share, make, talk about and alter client-created content.

What is Internet Meme?

The person associated with the word "meme" is evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins. Dawkins described 'meme' as a natural, human, spreading, replication, and modification of ideas and culture, in his book 'Selfish Gene' in 1976 (Chen, 2012). The word meme was to be plentiful for its importance because of the comparability to the word quality. As indicated by Dawkins (2007), tunes, thoughts, regular expressions, styles of garments, methods for building bends and so forth, are the cases of images. In this discernment, images are associated with qualities or infections. According to biological metaphor, just like genes "memes" are the units of cultural information, which imitate, develop and transform. In general, memes are the primary unit of cultural communication. These are formed by processes of identical imitation and the potential of introducing innovations, allowing for derogations (Husted, 2012). This elucidation of the meaning of a meme is to be relatively general. It is not inevitably connected with the Internet communication or New Media. An internet meme is a much narrower term and can be defined as content or a concept that has the ability to quickly spread to the internet users (Bauckhage, 2011). As defined by Magdalena Kamińska¹ an internet meme is an idiomatic symbol of popular, semiotic complex idea transmitted via the Internet. It

commonly has characteristics of an Internet joke and can be additionally considered as an analogy of a hypothetical social exchange or as a pictured image itself. Aside from spreading, web image change. This is by all accounts as per the hypothesis of memetics that was specified before. This transformation of an Internet meme happens by creating new varieties of meme, by adding new words, or by adding different features. Davidson (2012) explained internet meme as a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission.

There are basically two primary characteristics of an internet meme, first, the swiftness of spreading; second, the similarity to the original version. Contrasting the printed joke, an internet meme can reach to different viewers much quickly and interestingly they remain in their original shape. Transmission of an internet meme is a critical aspect. It is claimed that ‘creating an internet meme’ does not necessarily mean ‘producing’ it. Contents like a web page, video clip or animation, which consists of a joke, a rumour, extraordinary news, a collage or an original graphics or photography, could be named internet memes (Kamińska, 2011).

With the popularity of emoticons, the history of internet memes started at the beginning of the 1980s. Though too minimal, different types of ‘smilies’ became the first Internet memes. In the late 1990s and at the beginning of 21st century, memes began to be created on the basis of digital photographs or pictures manipulated in computer programs such as Photoshop. In current times, also similar types of meme are quite popular and often used by the internet users. These memes are amalgamated with humour.

Review of Literature

The birth of New Media

The medium through which mass communication occurs is called mass media. Fundamentally, the broad communications are enhanced via media innovations that are expected to contact a substantial group of onlookers by mass correspondence. The innovation through which this correspondence happens differs. Communication media, for example, radio, recorded music, film, and TV transmit their data electronically. Print media utilise a physical medium, for example, a daily paper, book, handout or funnies. There has been a gigantic increments in the quantity of Internet client since 1995, the purported “Year of Internet”. Moderate PCs, at-rate boundless access and the fast Internet association combined with a solid economy in the late 1990s and mid-2000s fueled the Internet to sensational development in the United States. The time individuals spent surfing the web news has dramatically increased

Davidson (2012) explained internet meme as a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission.

from 1998 to 2006s (Willnat, 2009).

In investigating the qualifications and complementarities between the new media and standard broad communications, the broad communications are normally exceedingly unified, require critical venture and assets and can be intensely affected by governments through different components and types of control while the new media require low speculation, give more prominent intelligence and open cooperation and are significantly more hard to control (Banerjee, 2008). It is in this way not astounding for the new media to pick up notoriety and acknowledgement in common society. Individuals are currently free and have the chance to make their own news and also to get the opposite side of the story by getting news from the Internet, which is viewed as free from control (Rosenstiel, 2005). Anybody with a blog can be a journalist, anybody with a mobile phone can be a videographer and anybody on Facebook, Twitter can be a news proofreader, or possibly a custodian.

The Social media and its effects on the delivery of news

The social media and the online news have turned into the characteristic of current society. The presence of new media and the social media specifically, has represented a competition to the printed newspaper. More reader depends on the internet for complimentary news and data. The substitute news and data isn't just free, yet in addition is high speed. Also, the abundant measure of data and news given by the web which is refreshed at regular intervals can never be provided by the daily newspaper. One can return to same news or any snippet of information with no struggle of storing them unlike heaps of newsprint. Then again, the Internet could be utilized at whenever and anyplace without waiting.

The expansiveness of data accessible on the web and the chance to customise news as per interest, combined with having the capacity to get news, refreshed a few times each day pushes crowds online for news. Moreover, online networking enables clients to give input, which thus, is utilized to advance the client's involvement with the events. The daily papers do merit some credit, as they complete a superior occupation in covering neighbourhood stories, which are regularly ignored by the politically and broadly disapproved of online productions. Social media is the present most straightforward; drawing on an innovative type of advertising. Such advertising may impact viewpoints of youth, both negatively as-well-as positively. As indicated by a Nielsen Media Research think tank, in June 2010, just about 25 percent of studies' opportunity on the Internet is presently spent on informal communication sites (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011).

The youngsters are sensitive towards data posted via web-based

networking media, with the effect on them being twice as high as the effect on more mature individuals. Facebook alone reports that it now has 500 dynamic million clients, half of whom sign in consistently. It is expected along these lines that data posted via web-based networking media will turn out to be progressively vital to buyers later on. This development implies that associations will want to invest increasingly in new media in future. In any case, it never was an obstacle for the citizens to post their perspectives on any issues. Social media are new data system and data innovation utilizing a type of correspondence using innovative and client based content. Average online networking system administrations could be content sharing, web groups, and Internet gatherings.

Media and Politics

In present day framework, the general public requests the data, in this specific circumstance; the media assumes a significant part in educating the general population about governmental issues, about the election and decisions. The media likewise impact general society's view of the eligibility of an applicant. Pre-election prediction can extraordinarily impact how voters cast their votes.

A free and fair election isn't just about making a choice, yet additionally, about the election procedure itself, so that the voters can settle on a mature decision. The prime concern and privilege of voters should be access to full and exact data. News Agencies are qualified to utilise the media to convey the desired information to the electorate. The media has a more particular influence in formation of strong public opinion during elections, for example, by teaching the voters, by investigating election campaign, by giving a forum to the political parties, by revealing outcomes and checking vote tally.

Indian political discourses and role of media

India would not be able to describe itself as the world's largest democracy without the existence of an independent media and without free and fair elections. Ensuring free and fair elections is not only the sole responsibility of the Election Commission of India but also the different institutions of democracy. It is the duty of media to keep an eye on elections as a watchdog of democracy. The mass media in India often reflects the diversity and plurality of the country, especially when general elections take place.

The influence of media on elections, political participation and voting behaviour has been studied in the United States, but in India, it is still in premature-stage. In India, there have been several studies on the nature and functions of the media. In fact, much of these studies have focused on the

role of the Indian media in the post-liberalisation period (Fernandez, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Sonawalkar, 2001).

For Fernandez (2000) the social, as well as the cultural images emanating from the process of economic liberalisation in India, is a result of the interaction between the global and the national. Johnson (2001) centers around the impact of TV on rural India. Sonawalkar (2001) takes a gander at the imperialistic propensities of Indian TV stations in South Asia from a social setting. An outline of the Indian media writing recommends that there has been next to no examination on the effect of the media on political investment by and large and voting conduct specifically.

The mass media scene becomes pretty alive during elections in India, especially with the coming of satellite channels. Opinion polling has become a regular feature around the election time; discussions based on poll results have also become popular in media. However, serious empirical research in the field especially aimed at gauging the impact of mass media on the voting behaviour of the electorate is still at a nascent stage in India. Such research studies assume importance in a country like India- the largest democracy with over 800 million voters.

Social media and its impact in present political scenario in India

India is one of the countries in the world where the youth force is increasing noticeably. In December 2017, the number of internet users in urban area was estimated to be around 269 million, while the number was expected to reach 163 million in rural area (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/751060/number-of-internet-users-by-region-india>)

It was more than a decade when internet made its mark as a powerful medium of communication globally. However, due to technological reach and access, it was more vocal in the developed countries and developing countries like India. The world saw genuine use of the web amid the presidential race battling of the year 2000, when in the US, the web gave another intuitiveness apparatus to coordinate discussion between the competitor and voters. From that point it is ceaselessly developing by leap and bound .

Web-based social networking is certainly assuming a significant part in assessing development and also activation of masses. In India, governments have been utilizing the online networking to spread the welfare exercises and to address grievances of public. Nonetheless, post-Anna's development for Jan Lokpal, the utilization of online networking for making political cognizance and sorting out mass developments has developed significantly.

In India, there have been several studies on the nature and functions of the media. In fact, much of these studies have focused on the role of the Indian media in the post-liberalisation period.

Objectives

1. To assess meme as tool for participatory communication.
2. To study satirical communication of meme and its impact on Indian youth.

Methodology

Qualitative approach has been adopted to conduct this research in order to meet the need of the objectives. Guwahati (Assam) is selected as the study area for this research. Tools like in-depth interview and observation are used to conduct the study. Two focus group discussions were conducted among people in the age group 12 to 18 and 19 to 30. The participants for the focus group discussions were randomly selected. The members were drawn from students, teachers, media professionals, the opinion leader of a community, member of Jila Parisad, Sonitpur District, NGO worker. Each of the FGD consisted of 14 members. The FGD was conducted to study :

- Their concept of participatory communication.
- How do they perceive social media?
- Their understanding of meme.
- Meme as medium of communication.
- Meme as political propaganda.
- Perseverance of contents of meme.
- Influence of meme on youth.

Findings

The amount of Internet memes and their diversity is massive. In the focus group discussion, the participants spoke about various meme making websites like www.quickmeme.com, www.memebase.com, www.cheezburger.com, www.memecenter.com, www.memestache.com. The participants of the FGD also focused on the characteristics features of various memes. They pointed out features like stacks of vulgar expressions, grammatical and spelling mistakes, apparently made intentionally.

The participants apparently agreed that popular internet memes are created on the basis of old and popular pictures, only with a changing comment. They also agreed on a point that sometimes political memes are concerned with politically incorrect matters. Racist, chauvinistic, anti-semitic, homophobic etc. However, they also positively agreed that there are also stacks of memes that are highly polite. Traditional media often displays popular Internet memes, related to present socio-political situation.

The members described Internet memes as simple forms of entertainment available to the vast audience that can be created by ordinary people. One of the media professionals in the group has termed these memes as 'junk humour'.

In the in-depth interviews, questions were asked like, how a society can politically express itself with use of meme? It is analyzed from the interviews that in the context of political discourse, plenty of them are of criticism of the political reality. These memes are related to satire, much like satire in the stand-up comedy. They aimed to satirize or mock the social or political reality. Thus, the initiators of 'political' memes frequently refer to current public news and they try to mock either the situation or the politician responsible for it. It has a great impact on youth. Since memes are satiric in nature, youth easily get attracted to these. According to members of FGD, the meme is making the youth concerned and responsible towards things that matter for social upliftment. They are aware of the political happenings and with the help of memes, they are also voicing against the unethical doings or injustice. This is a positive sign for socio-political change.

Comparison between two FGDs

During the FGD's difference of opinions have been seen in the two groups. However, in regard to the political ideology of the group consisted members of age group 12 to 18 were holding a liberal political ideology compared to the FGD conducted among the members of age group 19 to 30. Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions about their general political attitudes regarding society and polity. There were significant differences on political self-identification among the first FGD participants i.e. members consisting age group 12 to 18, were liberal and favoured liberal policies and figures. Where the members of second FGD were holding the rigid view based on their beliefs. This group was not much enthusiastic regarding using the meme with light themes.

The result of the FGD also showed that the second age group searched for evidence to understanding or interpreting memes. However, the first FGD members relied more on the visual observation on how people perceived memes persuasiveness. One thing seems to be common in both the groups that compared to the individuals whose own political ideology matched that of the political memes they reported significantly higher message effectiveness scores than those whose ideology did not match. The result is an evidence of selective judgment at work, in which individuals are more careful to dissect information critical of their beliefs.

A specific political meme which is funny resulted in higher persuasiveness.

Also it resulted in a higher perception. It has also been observed that those who agreed that a political meme was funny, stated meme to be more persuasive. People see what they want to see in a given meme. So, political internet memes can contribute to political polarization. Apart from this these memes could also contribute to other outcomes as political learning.

The normative theory of the public sphere (Habermas, 1989) accentuates the importance of discourse to the democratic society. Internet memes come under the concern over the public sphere and public discourse. First, internet memes are an example of changing civic cultures, which are crafted by technological advancements. They are the rise of participatory media culture. Second, memes run whack into the normative debate regarding the value of certain kinds of talk and topics for democratic discourse. This dual nature of memes states to the question of the role of memes' influence on viewers. The third-person effect is another manifestation of concerns of media bias, in which people believe media content does not influence them, but instead believe that others are likely to have been influenced, perhaps due to lack of discernment or coping skills to resist persuasive messaging (Davison, 1983). These concerns also relate to normative concerns of the public sphere. In many ways, it makes sense that people believe political memes to be influential to others over themselves, in keeping with memes' reputation as "not serious" forms of media, but it is also important that participants in this study did appear to have a perception that political memes are influential in political contexts overall.

Category

Analyzing internet memes concerning politics is difficult. It has common characteristics of mocking politicians. On the other hand, the great diversity of 'political Internet memes' sometimes become objects of stabilisation concerning particular issues.

Five major categories of political meme can be taken into consideration. The first two categories are associated with whether the politician represents the ruling or opposition party. The politicians from the ruling party generally face mockery. But representatives of political opposition are also mocked. It generally happens in regard to the overall negative image of a politician or after a public disgrace.

This division is difficult in the case of respect to politicians working in local or regional authorities. So it is worth to introduce the stipulation that regardless of the level of political activity, the politician shall be classified on the basis of the membership in the ruling party. The parties also happen to be

The normative theory of the public sphere (Habermas, 1989) accentuates the importance of discourse to the democratic society. Internet memes come under the concern over the public sphere and public discourse.

mocked in internet memes. Pertaining to the reason for mocking a politician or a party through meme regarding a particular subject of the Internet. Memes can be classified into one of the following three categories:

- Regarding scandal of a politician,
- Regarding politicians in charge of public services,
- Concerning the overall negative image of a politician.

Each of these three categories again can be divided into 6 different sub-categories.

- Regarding scandal of a politician representing ruling party.
- Regarding dishonour of a politician representing opposition party.
- Regarding politicians in charge of public services representing ruling party.
- Regarding politicians in charge of public services demonstrating opposition party.
- Regarding overall pessimistic image of a politician representing ruling party.
- Regarding overall downbeat image of a politician representing opposition party.

Political meme and its impact on youth

Internet memes do have the possibility of influencing the youth of the nation. Richard Bridie said memes affect youth in three ways: by conditioning – this is when a youth sees a meme repeatedly and gradually, it starts to affect the person. Secondly, by cognitive dissonance – This happens when the mind struggles to make sense out of things that do not make sense. In this hazy situation, a mind can base its view on a meme. Lastly in the manner of a Trojan horse. Memes those are outstandingly interesting attract attention and in the process thereby sneak in some other memes along with them (Brodie, 2009). Thus the political significance of Internet memes becomes quite plausible. Thus the influence of political memes on youth is conceivable.

In the FGD the members also mentioned that youth read Internet memes, including those about politics, though they are unaware of certain topics. As a result, such people can obtain their knowledge and views concerning the area from memes instead of more plausible traditional opinion-making media. However, distortion of knowledge cannot be denied in this situation. The fact is undeniable that of the Internet meme in the political discourse is bigger than it has been perceived so far. However, there are challenges. An extensive research is needed in this field, though research would be extremely difficult to conduct. Because it would be hard to assess to what extent voting decisions

have been influenced by internet memes. Internet memes can have political significance. But at present, it is hard to consider the strength of their influence on the political discourse.

Conclusion

The Internet has created a platform where the ordinary people also can take part in the political discourse. People now-a-days use meme to comment on political events. It shows a direction that memes can actually be regarded as an example of political activity of citizens, though sometimes these expressions are more or less harsh criticisms. Memes are usually published and shared anonymously. In this way, it secures the authors from legal consequences. If Internet memes can be used positively, it can be a convenient and safe way of expressing opinions about politics by citizens. It is an extremely quick tool of shaping opinion of ordinary people on politics. Internet memes are more than simple entertainment contents. If their readers have no interest in politics, meme can create a thirst among them for knowledge. As a result, in some situations, Internet memes can be regarded as a tool of political communication, aimed to discredit political opponent. At the end, it can be concluded, that internet memes can have political significance. But at present, it is hard to assess the strength of their power on the political communication.

Note

- 1 This is the term applied by Magdalena Kamińska (Niecne memy. Dwanaście wykładów o kulturze internetu [Ignominious Memes. Twelve Lectures on Internet Culture], Poznań 2011, 65) to internet platforms whose main or exclusive purpose is providing entertainment to their users through the presentation of series of humorous images, or, as they are usually calls, “internet memes.”

References

Banerjee, I., (2008). The impact of new media on traditional mainstream mass media: A critical assessment [A series of lectures on trends & future of the Malaysian mass media]. Presented at Dewan Tunku Canselor, University of Malaya Kuala Lumpur.

Bauchhage, C.(2011). Insights into Internet Memes. [Proceedings of the Fifth International AAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media]. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/eae/cfe9501e96b78b6c6fc073d0822c9c0c7b13.pdf>

Brodie, R (2009) *Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme*, Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc. Google Scholar

Brooks, R. Chen Lu, (2011), Botnet traffic detection using hidden markov models Conference Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Workshop on Cyber Security

and Information Intelligence Research, Publisher ACM

Chen, C. (2012). The creation and meaning of internet memes in 4chan: Popular internet culture in the age of online digital reproduction, *Habitus*, Vol. III.

Davidson, P. (2012). The Language of Internet Memes. In Michael Mandiberg (Ed), *The Social Media Reader*, New York University Press, 122-134.

Dawkins, R. (2007). Samolubny Gen, *Warszawa*, p. 244.

Fernandes, L. (2000). Nationalizing 'the global': Media images, cultural politics and the middle class in India. *Media, Culture*, 22(5), 611-628.

Garrison, M. (2011). The political economy of educational restructuring: On the origin of performance pay and Obama's "Blueprint" for education, *The phenomenon of Obama and the agenda for education: Can hope audaciously trump neoliberalism*, Pages 211-226

Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere* (T. Burger with F. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Husted, U. M. (2012). A funny thing happened on the way from the forum: The life and death of internet memes..Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy, <http://hdl.handle.net/11299/137171>

Jacobsen, W. C., & Forste, R. (2011). The Wired Generation: Academic and Social Outcomes of Electronic Media Use Among University Students, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(5).

Johnson, K. (2001). Media and social change: the modernizing influences of television in rural India. *Media, Culture & Society*, 23(2), 147-169, <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344301023002001>

Rosenstiel, T. (2005). Political polling and the new media culture: A case of more being less, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 6(9), 698-715.

Sonwalkar, P. (2001). India: Makings of little cultural/Media imperialism? *International Communication Gazette*, 63(6), 505-519.

Willnat, L, & Aw, A. (2009). *Political Communication in Asia* (Routledge Communication Series). New York: Routledge.

ABSTRACTS

COMMUNICATOR VOLUME LII(4), OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2017

Impact of Behaviour Change**Communication on Non-Skeletal Fluorosis: A Case Study from Tamil Nadu****P. H. Rao, S.Srikumar, Gnanam S. & P. Prathyusha**

Fluorosis is a major public health problem caused by ingestion high concentrations of fluoride through drinking water, food, and other items, over prolonged periods. It manifests in three forms – dental, skeletal and non-skeletal. Prevention is most appropriate to mitigate fluorosis problem as there is no cure. A comprehensive approach - three pronged namely school, hospital and community was adopted in two district of Tamil Nadu under the Hogenakkal Water Supply and Fluorosis Mitigation (HWS & FM) Project. Behaviour change communication resulted in people using safe water supplied by the project; increase in consumption of food rich in micronutrient important for mitigation of fluorosis; decrease in consumption of items with high fluoride content such as black tea, areca nut etc. The base line and end line data revealed that there has been reduction in symptoms of non-skeletal fluorosis. This was associated with reduction in the level of fluorides in the urine of people affected by non-skeletal fluorosis.

Mapping the Coverage of DST in the Indian Press: An Analysis of 13 English-Language Dailies Published from Delhi**Phuldeep Kumar**

The press being the fourth pillar of democracy has been endowed with responsibility of informing, educating, entertaining, and motivating the public. It acts as bridge between government and public, and vice versa. This function of press has been examined in limited context of defence science and technology (DST) coverage by English-language dailies published from Delhi in this study. Content analysis of thirteen English-language newspapers has been done to unravel the actual state of affairs. The coverage has been found to be abysmal when we consider that close to 2.3% of GDP is being spent on defence in India.

Media Education in North Indian Central Universities : A Study of Teacher-Student Ratio and Research Journal Publication**Rajesh Kumar**

Media education has undergone sea change around the world and has witnessed comprehensive reforms. But Indian media education scenario is still in transition phase despite of its existence for more than nine and

half decades. The reason is that a long discourse on its necessity and lack of a broad policy framework for its development, which resulted in a very slow development in the first six decades from 1920 to 1980. Thereafter, it developed at a fast pace in the era of liberalisation. But the basic components of media education such as media curriculum and pedagogy, teachers availability, departmental infrastructure, research work, books and journals publication and academia-industry interface is still in nascent stage. This study primarily focuses on media education in North Indian central universities. It examines teacher-students ratio in media departments as per UGC prescribed norms. It also identifies and analyses publication of research journals by the media departments of central universities located in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Union Territory of Delhi.

Role of Interpersonal Communication in Sanitation Campaigns**Aswathi Mary Varghese & Dr. Swati Jaywant Rao Bute**

India's vast and diverse socio-cultural and economic composition ensures a heterogeneous populous living in both rural and urban settings. Considering the varied living conditions of people and their different realities, it makes it important to conceive this populous as a group with complex needs that can be met by one homogeneous communication strategy or message. Mass media communication channels are typically used in campaigns geared for wide and public audiences, but often campaigns directed to local communities with specifically identified audiences. Involving citizens in problem-solving and planning decisions that affect their everyday lives clearly outlining the importance Interpersonal Communication (IPC) activities. This study is an attempt to understand the role and functions of Interpersonal Communication approaches adopted during the Awareness Building Phase in *Swachh Bharat* (Clean India) Campaign and thereby identify related prospects and problems. To do so, the first section focuses on the theoretical prospective understanding the importance of Interpersonal Communication and strong components of community outreach activities and ground level connect. Further it studies the use of IPC activities based on triggering of community action for provision of sanitation, safe water and hygiene access as part of the above mentioned campaign in two rural villages of India.

Guidelines for Authors

Communicator focuses on a wide range of issues related to media and communication and welcomes articles that are primarily based on communications discourse and current media debates. Communicator receives articles, case studies, review articles and research papers with following specifications:

- The text format should be double-spaced, 12-point font size in Times New Roman.
- Manuscript should be submitted in word document (.doc/docx) format only; we do not accept PDF files.
- The manuscript should not be more than 7000-8000 words.
- All tables, figures, appendices and endnotes should be placed after references.
- All submissions must include a short biographical note for each author.

For research papers

- An abstract of not more than 150-200 words should be included in a separate electronic file, and indicate details about the author, contact information, institutional affiliation etc.
- Submissions must conform to the stylistic guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition).
- Research papers submitted to the journal are subject to peer review based on initial screening by Editorial Team and blind review process.

Submissions must be unpublished original manuscripts, not under review elsewhere, and should include declaration of original work. Copyright of the article and other materials published in the journal shall lie with the publisher.

Submissions should be addressed to:

The Editor, Communicator,

Email: editorcommunicator@gmail.com / communicatoriimc@gmail.com

SUBSCRIPTION/RENEWAL FORM

To
The Editor
Indian Institute of Mass Communication
Aruna Asaf Ali Marg,
New Delhi-110 067

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to subscribe to your quarterly journals:

Communicator(English) Rs. 120/- (per issue)

Sanchar Madhyam(Hindi) Rs. 120/- (per issue)

for the Calendar (Jan-Dec) I am
enclosing a demand draft No.dated.....drawn on
.....for Rs.....

The journal(s) may be sent to the following address :

Name

Address

.....

.....

Signature with date

Demand draft should be made in favour of
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MASS COMMUNICATION, payable at Delhi.