

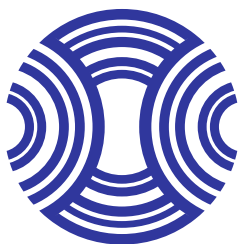
# COMMUNICATOR

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## ABOUT THE JOURNAL

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# FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR'S DESK




**Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi**  
Director General,  
Indian Institute of  
Mass Communication

It gives me an immense pleasure in presenting the 55th volume of the Communicator, a flagship journal of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). Started in the August 1966 on yearly basis, this journal has completed a journey of 55 years, and since October-December 2016 issue onwards, it is being published on quarterly basis. Several special issues were brought out during this period. The journal has witnessed many aesthetical changes in its format, masthead, print space and the quality ever since. With the formation of the new Editorial Board in the year 2020, this volume has been embedded with many modifications like; size of journal, font and its size, overall formatting pattern etc. These changes have enhanced the visibility of the journal in terms of visually appealing design with standardization of each component that has not only saved the print space but also provided an opportunity to accommodate more quality papers in the volume.

Detailed author's guidelines have also been formulated and included in the present volume. These guidelines will provide clear-cut direction to our esteemed authors to present their research articles for Communicator. Now, the entire details of the journal such as, journal name, volume number, number of pages in an article, period and ISSN have appeared on the top side of title page of each paper. This would help the authors to retrieve their papers for the wider dissemination.

One visible change that has been incorporated is the designing of the new masthead, which is not only appealing and giving fresh look but also different from the routine font applied design. This journal is now being indexed in the Indian Citation Index (ICI), a beginning of a new chapter and a positive move towards improving yet redefining the visibility of the journal globally as well as help in creating impact factor in the future.

To give a brief insight into our latest edition of the 55th Volume, this journal covers recent scenarios that have taken place nationally and internationally. With a thumb-rule of imparting the best of communication, this time Communicator is featuring detailed standpoints on the subjects like the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian television advertising and social media engagement of Bollywood actors.



This issue of 'Communicator' comprises significant research papers on numerous themes and concerns. Due to the pandemic situation around the globe, the discipline of mass communication and journalism have experienced a notable amelioration in the process of information dissemination and generating awareness. Constructive use of the internet and social media proliferated as an alternative medium for educating society. This issue enfolds various dimensions of media studies ranging from the role of cinema to the use of artificial intelligence in human communication.

Starting from a descriptive paper on understanding the role of Indian cinema in igniting the spirit of 'Swa' across the nation during our freedom struggle, this issue includes research studies on health communication addressing the concern of hygiene management, cancer awareness, sanitization etc. Research papers have also captured the change in the narratives of advertising including, but not limited to, Public Service Advertising and its retention by the audience. The evolution of artificial intelligence for human communication through smart devices is also encapsulated in this issue along with the portrayal of women on different media platforms. This issue is a collection of diverse research papers catering to the demand for knowledge expansion in the discipline of mass communication. With a continuous expanse of digital and social space in the current times, dissemination of knowledge among all sections of our society is the prime objective of 'Communicator'.

Finally, I congratulate the entire team of Communicator for giving a new look to the journal and I am sure these inputs will prove to be the milestone for Communicator.

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi







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## Role of Indian Cinema in Igniting the Spirit of 'Swa' during Freedom Movement

PRAMOD KUMAR<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

India is preparing to commemorate 75 years of political independence attained on 15 August 1947. As per the news reports, the country will launch a year-long celebration programme on 15 August 2021 with a bunch of activities planned in different forms. Along with government agencies, different private institutions have also planned various activities to rejoice this landmark moment in Indian history. The role and contribution of different organizations, movements, agitations, activities, individuals, incidents, etc. in the freedom movement will be remembered as part of the celebration. This landmark moment offers an opportunity to revisit the role of the artistic world which is otherwise less discussed. Similar to the folk and print media, Indian cinema also played a significant role in stirring the countrymen to join the decisive phase of the freedom movement. The present study concludes that the entire Indian freedom struggle was for re-establishing the expression of 'Swa'(self) while renegotiating with the colonial and imposed modernity. It is a plain fact that 'Swaraj' was the guiding force in the struggle not just against the British but from the time of Greek and Islamic aggressions. Indian filmmakers produced patriotic movies even while facing unbearable onslaughts from the British government. Visionaries like Dada Saheb Phalke had to sell their household items to produce movies in India. Right from the first indigenous full-length movie, 'Raja Harishchandra'(1913), the dialogues, songs and actions of the countless movies produced in different Indian languages throughout the freedom movement championed the cause of freedom and enthused the countrymen to achieve 'Swaraj'. Seventy-fifth anniversary of the Independence is the time to revisit that journey of Indian cinema so that the young generation could be aware of the sacrifices made by the filmmakers of different Indian languages. Each aspect of the Indian cinema-dialogues, visuals, story idea, titles, characters, songs, singers, song composers, musicians, camerapersons, crew members, financiers, technocrats and even film posters-needs to be revisited and discussed. Overall, this study attempts to connect threads on Indian cinema and its contribution to the freedom movement.

**Keywords:** Swadeshi cinema, Silent era, Talkie era, Dada Saheb Phalke, Hindi cinema, Freedom movement.

### Introduction:

The history of cinema in India begins with the exhibitions of six small documentaries by Lumiere Brothers of France at Watson's Hotel of Bombay on 7 July, 1896 (*Times of India, Bombay, 7 July, 1896*). 'The Times of India Advertisement', described the event as 'the marvel of the century' and 'the wonder of the world'. The show received an unprecedented response from the public. The six films exhibited that day were 'Entry of Cinematographe', 'Arrival of a Train', 'The Sea Bath', 'A Demolition', 'Leaving the Factory' & 'Ladies and Soldiers on Wheels'. The second film exhibition by Lumiere Brothers took place on 14 July, 1896, at Novelty Theatre of Bombay.

Alternating between these two venues, the shows culminated on 15 August 1896. The experiment had such a magical influence on the public psyche that Novelty Theater of Bombay, after 14 July 1896, permanently stopped evening live plays and started exhibiting only motion pictures from 6.00 PM onwards. People paid one rupee for a ticket in

those days to watch the 'living photographic pictures' (*Ankur, 1994*). From 1895 to 1905, Lumiere Brothers dominated the world's film market. Later, the film production was joined by various Indians who made it their life mission. The freedom struggle in India was re-establishing 'Swa'(self) while renegotiating with the colonial and imposed modernity. It was also for 'Swaraj' that was a guiding force behind the freedom struggle not just against Britishers but right from the time of Greek and Islamic aggressions. How we should see this entire struggle is a critical question that the Indians need to ask themselves while celebrating the landmark moment this year.

'The Wrestlers' (1899) by Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar popularly known as Sawe Dada, showing a wrestling match at Hanging Gardens in Bombay was the first Indian documentary film shot by an Indian. In 1901, Sawe Dada produced another documentary that depicted the arrival of an Indian student Paranjape who had scored the highest marks in mathematics at the Cambridge University at Bombay Ports. Later, 'Shree Pundalik', a silent

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film in Marathi, was released by Dadasaheb Torne on 18 May 1912 at Coronation Cinematograph, Bombay. But the first full-length motion picture, '*Raja Harishchandra*' in India was produced by Dada Saheb Phalke in 1913. It was a silent movie in Marathi. The force behind the production of this movie was the generation of the spirit of '*Swa*' in the mind of Phalke. On 15 April, 1911, he watched the movie '*The Life of Christ*' in Bombay. While watching the movie on the screen, he envisioned Hindu deities Shri Krishna and Shri Ram instead and decided to start the business of 'moving pictures'. Dada Saheb Phalke narrates this moment thus: "While '*The Life of Christ*' was rolling fast before my physical eyes, I was mentally visualising the Gods, Shri Krishna, Shri Ramachandra, Gokul and Ayodhya. I was gripped by a strange spell. I bought another ticket and saw the film again. This time, I felt my imagination taking shape on the screen. Could this happen? Could we, the sons of India, ever be able to see the Indian images on the screen?" (Dharap, 1985).

In some articles published in '*Navyug*' magazine in 1917-18, Phalke explained his restlessness to produce a movie rooted in Indian ethos thus: "The coming two months were so much restless for me that I could not sit silently until I watched all the movies being screened in all cinema halls of Bombay. I visualised all those movies and thought whether our Indian movies can also be screened in a similar manner" (Chaddha, 1990). The production of '*Raja Harishchandra*' was the outcome of that restlessness and firm determination of Phalke in 1913. It premiered at Olympia Theatre of Bombay on 21 April, 1913. This movie heralded a parallel to the philosophy of Satyagraha—enduring suffering with faith in the ultimate victory of good over evil. The young generation today is not aware of the fact that Dada Saheb Phalke had to sell most of the valuable items of his house and even lost his vision due to continuous watching movies (Chaddha, 1990).

Renowned freedom fighter and a staunch proponent of Swadeshi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, supported Phalke in his efforts to produce Swadeshi movie. Tilak was the first in Marathi media to publish the film reviews in his daily newspaper '*Kesari*'. After the success of '*Raja Harishchandra*', Phalke received many lucrative offers from England, but he refused them and decided to carry on his efforts to produce Swadeshi movies. The Swadeshi movement was at its peak in those days and Phalke was not untouched by it. Writing in '*Kesari*' Phalke commented: "It is enough if I can stop the import of foreign goods in a very

small way." His other movies including '*Shrikrishna Janma*' (1917) and '*Kaliya Mardan*' (1919) also had the element of '*Swa*'. The daring experimenter, as Phalke was known, successfully infused the notion of Swadeshi into the films (National Film Archives of India, 2012).

### Methodology

The objective of the study is to understand how the Indian cinema ignited the spirit of '*Swa*' among the countrymen during the freedom struggle and how it addressed different social issues that the nation faced in those days. The study is historical research and secondary data have been obtained mostly from books, newspapers, and the records of National Film Archives of India.

### From silent to talkie

The success of '*Raja Harishchandra*' motivated R. Nataraja Mudaliar in 1916 to produce '*Keechaka Vadham*' in Tamil. It is the first movie made in South India. It was based on the '*Virata Parva*' of '*Mahabharata*'. Gradually, many young producers started incorporating elements of Indian social life and culture into the cinema. '*Alam Ara*', the first Indian talkie, was released by Ardeshir Irani on 14 March 1931. Irani also later produced the first South Indian talkie film '*Kalidas*' in October 1931 (Narayanan, 2008). Gradually, cinema became an effective medium to educate and stir the people about the freedom struggle. As expected, the British Government observed this trend and started tightening its grip. When R.S.D. Choudhury produced '*Wrath*' in 1930, the British Government banned it for the depiction of Indian actors as leaders during the freedom movement. Similarly, '*Rythu Bidda*', produced in 1938 by Gudavalli Ramabrahmam, was also banned for depicting the farmers' uprising among the Zamindars. Equally, when Baburao Painter pioneered '*Shivaji*' and created an epoch of proto-historical about the great Maratha Emperor, his films were ruthlessly censored, as they contained the defiant imagery which the British Government found seditious. '*Kalyan Khajina*' (1924), '*Shahala Shah*' (1925), '*Savkari Pash*' (1925) and '*Baji Prabhu Deshpande*' (1919) were some of the patriotic movies by Baburao Painter, which stirred the masses into revolt against Britishers. In 1931, on seeing the word '*Swaraj*' in the title of Shantaram's film '*Svarajyache Toran*' (Thunder of the Hills) and the poster of the film depicting Chhatrapati Shivaji hoisting a flag, the British Government banned the film. It was only after the film was retitled as

'*Udaykaal*', a few scenes were modified and the flag hoisting in the climax scene was entirely deleted, the film was allowed to be released. In those days, films witnessed a lot of patriotic fervour in their titles also—'*Vir Bharat*' (1934), '*Azadi*' (1935), '*Desh Dasi*' (1935), '*Desh Deepak*' (1935), '*Hind Kesari*' (1935), '*Industrial India*' (1938), '*Mother India*' (1938), '*Azaad*' (1940), etc. These films mocked the British Censor Board. Critical comments on the British rule found effective expression in the dialogues of the movies produced by Sohrab Modi—'*Pukar*' (1939), '*Sikander*' (1941), '*Prithvi Vallabh*' (1943). Some of these movies were released just before the Quit India Movement. Thus, the cinema influenced the public psyche to a large extent in revolting against the British misrule during the freedom struggle (National Film Archives of India, 2012).

The stunt movies, particularly produced by JBH Wadia with 'Fearless Nadia' (the popular stuntwoman of Australian origin, real name Mary Ann Evans) in the lead, had defiant dialogues as well as stunts which thrilled the audience and instilled a sense of confidence in them. Under the garb of entertainment, the stunt movies had deeper nationalist undertones. The attires of the characters were suggestive of the oppressive ruling class and the suffering Indians. In the climactic scenes, the dialogues spoke of the denial of people's rights, democracy, good governance, justice and freedom. Movies, in those days, also reflected the prevalent political thinking. After the death of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, when Mahatma Gandhi was in the lead role, Seth Dwarkadas Naraindas Samapt produced '*Bhakt Vidur*' in 1921. It was made in the wake of the anti-Rowlett Act of 1919. The silent movie used events from the *Mahabharata*, like the downfall of the Kaurava Empire to symbolise the ruin of the British Raj. The British Government immediately banned it. It was released in 1922 under the new title '*Dharam Vijay*'. Each show of this movie was heralded by live singing of nationalist songs in praise of the freedom symbols particularly the Charkha (National Film Archives of India, 2012). About two dozen movies were released between 1921 and 1947 that, either directly or indirectly depicted the British as villains. The British censors made every possible attempt to throttle such messages but failed. To counter such movies, the Britishers also released an English movie '*The Drum*' in 1938, which showcased Indians as untrustworthy and scheming against their British masters. Bombay in those days rose in revolt against the screening

of this film and the Frontier Gandhi Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan demanded the ban on it.

### **Social reforms and reinforcement of national Pride**

While re-establishing the spirit of 'Swa' the filmmakers subsequently raised a strong voice against the prevailing social ills, superstitions and defunct traditions. The movie, '*Duniyana Mane*' (1936), raised a voice against unfair marriages and advocated widow remarriage. Apart from it, '*Indira MA*' (1934) and '*Ratan*' (1944) stirred the people on child marriage, problems of unwed mothers, dowry issues, etc. Equally, a bilingual comedy by Master Vinayak '*Brandy ki Botal*' (1939) criticized liquor consumption and '*Ghar ki Rani*' (1940) displayed the dire consequences of aping western traditions.

These efforts of filmmakers received the support of the then nationalist leaders. The movie '*Brandy Ki Botal*' had an introduction by Sardar Patel. Equally, '*Achhut*' (1940), directed by Chandulal Shah had the blessings of both Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. Prabhat's '*Dharmatma*' (1935), '*Achhut Kanya*' (1936), Telugu film '*Mala Pilla*' (1938), and '*Mahatma Phule*' (1944) effectively exposed untouchability and caste discrimination. Mahatma Gandhi's agenda for social revolution was to remove untouchability, discourage child marriage, promote widow remarriage and encourage the public role for women, and the films realised his dreams in movies. The legacy of '*bhakti*' transcended caste barriers and sought to unite the society pleading the cause of humanism. Dada Saheb Phalke is the high priest of this '*bhakti*' movement in Indian cinema as out of total 102 movies produced by him, 97 were based on the Indian history and devotional themes of the saints' reformers. These movies shifted the focus from God to nationhood. Meanwhile, the mother cult, the worship of the female as a personification of the Ultimate Creative Power (Shakti) became central to Indian nationalism.

Renowned Bengali novelist and poet, Bankim Chandra composed popular song '*Bande Mataram*', which strengthened the concept of one India. As the movies were watched in groups and the themes of the movies were approved by the elders of the family, women were allowed to go to watch the cinema. Congress leader Sarojini Naidu and Sister Nivedita in those days emerged as role models. At the same time, the films also promoted Indian values and mocked the Western lifestyle. Dhiren Ganguly's '*England Returned*' in 1921 ridiculed the

Indians who blindly imitated the western lifestyle. At the same time, V. Shantaram's '*Padosi*' (1941), '*Ekta*' (1942) and '*Hum Ek Hain*' (1946) promoted national integration. The exploitation of farmers by some Zamindars and private money lenders were echoed through Baburao Painter's '*Savkari Pash*' (1925). Later, Bengali film '*Desher Mati*' (1938), Telugu film '*RythuBidda*' (1940), Hindi movie '*Aurat*' (1940), '*Doctor*' (1941) and '*Dhartike Lal*' (1946) also depicted the plight of farmers.

Some filmmakers also addressed the issues of unemployment in urban areas, trade unionism, rich-poor divide, socio-economic inequalities, poverty through '*Mazdoor*' (1934), '*President*' (1937), '*Vande Mataram*' (1939), '*Roti*' (1942), '*Neecha Nagar*' (1946), to name a few. (National Film Archives of India, 2012).

### The teasing taglines and cinema posters

How the movies generated the spirit of '*Swa*' was also evident from the teasing taglines used by some filmmakers during the screening of their films. 'Bringing Light to a Vexed Nation' was the tagline of '*Chal Chal Re Naujawan*' in 1944, while 'Turn East—and Hear India Speak! Is Today's Tip to the West' was the tagline of Prabhat's '*Hum Ek Hain*' in 1946. '*Ek Kadam*' in 1947 went to the extent of showing Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in one of its posters (Vittal, 2018). Taking advantage of the British's unfamiliarity with Hindi, '*Apna Ghar*' (1942), '*Naya Tarana*' (1943), '*Prem Sangeet*' and '*Amar Jyoti*' (1936) featured lyrics that the British would have termed inflammatory, had they understood them. '*Charkha Chalao Behno*' (Spin the wheel) in '*Aaj ka Hindustan*' (1940) and Kavi Pradeep's fiery '*Chal Chal re Naujawan*' from '*Bandhan*' (1940) and '*Door Hato ae Duniya Walon Hindustan Hamara Hai*' from '*Kismet*' (1943) directly stirred the Indian masses. Following the '*Kismet*' song, arrest warrants were issued against Kavi Pradeep and composer Anil Biswas and they had to go underground to escape arrest for several months (Vittal, 2018).

The poster of '*Kalyan Khajina*' (1924) is perhaps one of the earliest to have survived. It was designed and painted by the director Baburao Painter himself (Dwyer and Patel, 2002). Posters were usually hand-painted on canvas and then used as the design source for printing on low-cost paper. Since print publicity was the most important form of publicity, booklets of film songs and stories, handbills and posters flourished in the studio era with the poster becoming the most significant and dominant form (Mazumdar, 2020). Regional

Archives Office in Prayagraj Division in Uttar Pradesh has some rare posters, including film posters (about nine decades old) in police files of freedom fighters. These were confiscated by the British at the time of the arrest of freedom fighters and submitted in court as evidence against them. Such posters are still in the record rooms of different District Collectorates in Uttar Pradesh, including Prayagraj, Hamirpur, Pratapgarh, Jaunpur, etc. (John, 2019).

### Awakening through patriotic songs

Apart from the titles, themes and dialogues, movie songs also generated huge patriotic fervour. Movies like '*Bandhan*' (1940), '*Kismet*' (1943) and '*Jeevan Yatra*' (1946) had stirring songs—'*Chal Chal Re Naujawan*', '*Door Hato Ae Duniya Walon Hindustan Hamara Hai*' and '*Aao Aazadi ke Geet Gaate Chalein*'. These songs were composed by nationalist poets including Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Kavi Pradeep and Subramanian Bharati. In those days, some movies were accompanied by song booklets containing the lyrics of the songs with inspiring images on the booklet cover. Gramophone Records and Song Booklets contributed hugely in mobilising the people against Britishers. Released during World War II in 1943, '*Kismet*' was not a patriotic film. It was an out-and-out thriller, which included the song, '*Door Hato Ae Duniya walo, Hindustan Hamara Hai*', to pack a patriotic punch while dishing out entertainment. This song particularly addressed the Germans and the Japanese with whom Britain was at war. Some lines in the song '*Shuru Hua Hai Jang Tumhara, jaag utho Hindustani, tum na kisi ke aage jhukna, Jarman ho ya Jaapaani, aaj sabhi ke liye hamara yahi qauminaara hai*' was the stratagem so that the song could pass the British censors. But the countrymen knew the real message better. That is why, at screenings of '*Kismet*', the reels would be rewound and the song played multiple times on public demand. The audiences sitting in the cinema halls were no different from the charged-up audience shown in the song. Such was this song's impact. Many films used metaphor, innuendo, symbolism, oblique reference to slip under the radar of the ever-vigilant censors to convey the true message to a public that was discerning enough to be aware of the film's or the song's real message (Mankotia, 2020).

### 'Azaadi ke Taraane'

Sohrab Modi's '*Sikandar*' that hit the screens in 1941 had a song '*Jeete Desh Hamara, Bharat Hai Ghar Baar Humara, Bharat Hai Sansar Humara*'.



Even though this song in the movie was a prayer for victory against the forces of Alexander, it fueled the patriotic sentiment in Indians. People knew it well who the 'victory' was to be wrested from. Surely the songs and films of the pre-Independence era inspired the freedom movement, added fuel to the nationalist fire, invoked feelings of love for the country and roused patriotic fervour, but their contribution was not adequately acknowledged. Their reach extended to every household, much more than any other platform, even political mobilisation. The pen, the song, the composer, the singer were no less powerful in inspiring the people's fight for freedom as the non-violent political movement. From the mid-1940s, with freedom in the air, the British censors' grip slackened, and films and songs became more direct and bolder.

When '*Bandhan*' was screened in Delhi in 1940, its song '*Chal Chal Re Naujawan, Kehna Mera Maan*' by Kavi Pradeep thrilled the audience so much that they repeatedly wanted the song to be shown again. In many shows, it was played again after the film was over. Since it is an inspirational song for children, it was included in Hindi textbooks also of those times. The song sung by child star Suresh was admired the most. The impact of this song was so strong that when S. Mukherjee, Ashok Kumar, Kavi Pradeep and others, left Bombay Talkies and established Filmistan Studios, their first film in 1944 was titled '*Chal Chal Re Naujawan*'. This film too had an inspirational song '*Jai Bharat Desh, Teri Jai, Bharat Ke Naujawanon Chalo Ek Raah Par, Ae Hindu Musalmanon Chalo Ek Raah Par*' sung by Ashok Kumar. Ghulam Haider composed another song in '*Bhai*' (1944) – '*Hindu Muslim Sikh Issai, Aapas Mein Hain Bhai-Bhai*' sung by Shyam Sunder. Before that, he composed another song '*Hey Mata Ab Jaag Uthe Hain Hum*' for '*Poonji*' (1943). It was sung by Shamshad Begum. In 1944, Mohammed Rafi sang a song '*Hindustan Ke Hum Hain, Hindustan Hamara, Hindu Muslim Dono Ki, Aankhon Ka Tara*' for '*Pehle Aap*'. Noor Jahan also sang a patriotic song in '*Hamjoli*' (1946)–'*Yeh Desh Hamara Pyara, Hindustan Jahaan Se Pyaara*' composed by Hafiz Khan. Noor Jahan also acted in '*Badi Maa*' (1945), which set against the backdrop of World War II, which had two patriotic songs sung by Lata Mangeshkar—'*Mata, Tere Charnon Mein Guzar Jaye Umariya*' and '*Janani Janambhoomi...Tum Ho Maa, Badi Maa*'. Lata with Asha Bhosle also acted in this film. In '*Sona Chandi*' (1946) Lata sang another song '*Pyare Bapuke Charnon Ki Le Lo Kasam, Pyaare*

*Pyaare Tirange Ki Le Lo Kasam*'. Dev Anand's very first film '*Hum Ek Hain*' (1946) also had a song '*Hum Jaag Uthe Hain So Kar*' composed by Husnlal Bhagatram. Master Mohammed and Sarita Devi sang a song '*Jug Jug Chamke Hind Ka Tara, Jhanda Ooncha Rahe Hamara*' in '*Lutaru Lalna*' in 1938. Master Mohammed had earlier composed songs for '*Veer Bharat*' (1934) and '*Jai Bharat*' (1936) also. '*Janmabhoomi*' (1936) starring Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani had '*Mata Ne Hai Janam Diya, Jeene Ke Liye*' sung by Devika Rani. It had another song—'*Jai Jai Janani Janmabhoomi*' sung by Ashok Kumar. '*Anjaan*' (1941) starring Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani had a song '*Kheecho Kamaan Kheecho, O Bharat Ma Ke Naujawan*' sung by Ashok Kumar. '*Hamrahi*' (1945) included Rabindranath Tagore's '*Jana Gana Mana*', even before it became the national anthem of India. The song has more verses than the national anthem today. There was another song in the film—'*Badhe Chalo, Badhe Chalo, Badhe Chalo Jawano*' composed by Rai Chand Boral. '*Ek Kadam*' (1947) even showed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on its poster (Mankotia, 2020).

The list of the songs that infused renewed vigour and zeal in the freedom movement is very long. The songs like '*Bharat Mata Jay JayJay*' (*Jay Bharat*, 1936), '*Hum Watan Ke Watan Hamara, Hey Dhanya Tu Bharat Nari, Mahima Hai Teri Nyaari*' (*Bharat Ki Beti*, 1936), '*Hamara Pyara Hindustan, Pyara Hindustan*' (*Amar Prem*, 1936), '*Jaago Jaago Bharatwasi, Ek Din Tum the Jagat Guru*' (*Samaj Patan*, 1937) recharged the patriots. Songs including '*Bharat Hai Sukh Chain Hamara, Apna Watan Hai Subko Pyara*' (*His Highness*, 1937), '*Saare Deshon Se Nyaari, Pyaari Bharat Mata Hamari*' (*Karma Veer*, 1938), '*Chalo Sipahi, Karo Safai, Haath Dharo Jhaadoo*' (*Brahmachari*, 1938), '*Dharti Mata Baalak Tere Charnon Mein Sheesh Nawaain*' (*Toofan Express*, 1938), '*Hind Mata Ki Tum Santaan Ho, Naujawanon Tum Watan Ki Shaan Ho*' (*Wasiyat*, 1940), '*Jaago Jawano, Jaago Jawano, Navjug Aaya Re*' (*Amrit*, 1941), '*Ai Hind Ke Sapooton, Jaago, Hua Savera, Hindu Hon Ya Musalman, Hum Sab Hain Bhai Bhai*' and '*Hindustan Walon, Hindustan Walon*' (*Koshish*, 1943) stirred the people throughout the country.

The other songs that played a key role in awakening the countrymen included: '*Mata Mata, Meri Mata, Bharat Mata*' (*Taqdeer*, 1943), '*Bharat Desh Hamara, Hara Bhara Hariyara*' (*Muskarahat*, 1943), '*Watan Se Chala Hai Watan Ka Sipahi*' (*Chand*, 1944), '*Doobte Bharat Ko Bachao, Mere Kartaar*' (*Parinde*, 1945), '*Hum Panchhi Hai*

*Azaad, Humme Koi Pinjare Main Kyun Daale'* (Naseeb, 1945), *'Ai Watan Mere Watan, Tum Pey Meri JaanNisar'* (Ghulami, 1945), *'Desh Hamara, Desh Hamara, Desh Hamara Swarg Se Sunder, Desh Hamara'* (Swayam Se Sunder Desh Hamara, 1945), *'Chale Musafir, Khaak Watan Ki Lekar, Desh Parai'* (Pannabai, 1945), *'Jai Hind Jai Hind, Hind Ki Kahaniyan, Yeh Hind Ki Kahaniyan'* (Mansarovar, 1946), *'Naach Rahi Thi Bharat Mata, AzadikeBaangan Mein'* (Zanjeer, 1947) *'Sadiyon Se Hai Ghulam, Janmabhumi Hamari'*; *'Azaad Hai Hum Aaj Se, Jailon Ke Taaley Tod Do, Angrezon Bharat Chhod Do'* (Ahinsa, 1947). These songs are from Hindi movies.

The movies in other Indian languages also had their role in igniting the spirit of patriotism. *'Marthanda Varma'*, produced in 1933 and directed by P.V. Rao depicted the adventures of the crown Prince, Marthanda Varma in Malayalam. It was the first film based on Malayalam literature and the next film in the Malayalam film industry after *'Vigathakumaran'*. The origins of Assamese cinema dates back to 1935 when noted freedom fighter Jyotiprasad Agarwala produced the first Assamese Film *'Joymati'*. The language-associated film industry in Gujarat dates back to 1932, when the first Gujarati talkie, *'Narsinh Mehta'*, was released. The film making history in Odisha started from 1936 when the first Odia film *'Sita Bibaha'* was made by Mohan Sundar Deb Goswami. The first Telugu film with audible dialogue, *'Bhakta Prahlada'*, was produced by H.M. Reddy, who directed the first bilingual (Telugu and Tamil) talkie *'Kalidas'* in 1931. Subsequently, films were produced in other Indian languages also across the country. But the Hindi movies had a greater impact on the freedom movement across the country.

## Conclusion

Cinema has played a disguised role in awakening the sense of 'Swa' during the freedom movement. Movies produced in different local languages along with Hindi were a driving force to motivate Indians to participate in the freedom struggle. Filmmakers have sensibly used picturization, dialogues, scenes, and the inclusion of patriotic songs prepared the ground for the people to join the freedom movement. Over the last century, Cinema has become an integral part of Indian life, expression and culture. Its impact can be understood from the fact that about 15 million people see films in India every day. Today, India also has the unique distinction of producing the largest number of movies in the world in different languages. The Indian

film industry has a huge annual turnover and Indian films and filmmakers have been admired all over the world for the aesthetic quality and novelty of films.

The Government of India, in 2019, established the National Museum of Indian Cinema in South Mumbai to commemorate the centenary of the first feature film *'Raja Harishchandra'* made by Dadasaheb Phalke in 1913. Spread over two buildings, in the historic Gulshan Mahal and the New Museum Building, in the Films Division campus of Mumbai, the Museum takes the visitors through an absorbing journey of a century of Indian Cinema in a storytelling mode with the help of visuals and graphics, films, publicity materials, artifacts, interactive exhibits and multimedia and many more. This museum acquaints the visitors of the history of Indian Cinema but not much work has been done to understand the role of cinema in generating the spirit of 'Swa'(self) among the countrymen during the freedom struggle.

The cinema not only inspired the Indians to fight for freedom with renewed fervour but also stirred them to speak against the social evils weakening the society and plan for national reconstruction. Movies perfectly displayed the message that freedom meant not only throwing off the yoke of British subjugation but also the yoke of regressive facets of the society that the national leaders were fighting against. The national leaders always desired freedom from ignorance, from poverty, from disease, from an unequal society. It is still a challenge before India. Seventy-fifth anniversary of the Independence is the occasion when we need to revisit each aspect of the Indian cinema— dialogues, visuals, story idea, titles, characters, songs, singers, song composers, musicians, camerapersons, crew members, financiers, technocrats, etc. Cinema is not the medium of entertainment alone; it has been a time-tested medium of stirring the people for change. It was perfectly realised during the freedom movement. Many unsung contributors in this journey can be identified and remembered in this year.

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# The Espousal of Hand Hygiene in the State of Mizoram: Role of Social Media and Public Address System

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## ABSTRACT

At a time when the practice of handwashing is considered a ‘vanguard’ to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and when regular handwashing with soap or the use alcohol-based hand-sanitizer is a crucial component of basic preventive measures, a ground-level study on the practice of handwashing is a relevant health communication topic given the pandemic situation prevailing across the country. Because of its relevance, this study aims to establish and assess the effectiveness of handwashing by combining an unpublished study that the researcher had carried out a few years ago on handwashing practice in rural Mizoram and assessment on the practice of handwashing to prevent COVID-19 infection among residents of Mizoram in recent days. For this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used to unravel habits and responses to preventive measures prescribed for the public. While the study substantiated the effectiveness of social media interactions and interpersonal communication in promoting proper hand washing practice, it also revealed that the practice of handwashing gives a sense of safety and peace of mind. The study also supported that the widespread adoption of handwashing began after Government and health experts avowed the practice as a preventive measure for COVID-19.

**Keywords:** Handwashing, Mizoram, Social media, COVID-19, Local level task force

## Introduction

Hand hygiene is the practice of hand cleansing, washing hands with soap and water or rubbing hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or sanitizer to remove bacteria/viruses and other microorganisms, dirt and unwanted and other harmful substances in the hands. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is regarded as the best method of hand hygiene to reduce the risk of contracting an infection through hand contact. The scope of hand hygiene in this study is deliberately limited to washing hands with soap and water for convenience and also keeping in mind the objective.

Studies by World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that by washing hands properly with soap and water rubbing at least for 20 seconds can cut down stomach-related illnesses by 50% and respiratory illnesses- such as the common cold and flu- by a third. Experts, activists, educators and workers involved in the public health sector are tirelessly campaigning to influence people to adopt handwashing at critical times as a cost-effective intervention to prevent deadly diseases. The WHO has compiled and disseminated Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care: a Summary and the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other Stakeholder organizations are also campaigning for handwashing. With more and more studies

substantiating the effectiveness of hand hygiene in preventing certain diseases, Global Handwashing Day was initiated by the Global Handwashing Partnership (GHP) at the annual World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2008. Then, the UN General Assembly officially appointed 15 October as the day when the world will mark Global Handwashing Day. The motto was to reduce childhood mortality rates and related respiratory and diarrhoeal diseases by introducing simple behavioural changes, such as handwashing with soap (Bhatia, 2019).

The urgency of hand hygiene takes a centre stage in the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic situation which is sweeping across our country and the world. As there is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19, only two measures have so far proved their worth in containing and breaking the chain of transmission – physical distancing and hand hygiene on the one hand and testing and quarantine procedures on the other hand. These two measures have an immediacy that is irrefutable in the present scenario. While washing hands is useful in preventing oneself from getting infected, some studies indicated that it can also help in slowing the spread or ‘flattening the curve’. It is, however, noted that handwashing can help prevent infection via hand contact and that it cannot fully eliminate the risk of infection, nonetheless, it is a sensible and powerful safety measure.

The Research, previously, in her capacity as

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Consultant (IEC), Communication and Capacity Development Unit, Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Mizoram, a few years ago had carried out an unpublished Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) study on hygiene and sanitation practices among the Mizo community. As the subject of handwashing is a crucial component of this study, it has been considered and incorporated in the present study in the form of quantitative insight. By combining this KAP study with current hand hygiene measures in the time of COVID-19 pandemic, the study explores the response to handwashing among the Mizo community and conceptualizes its implications on Public Health.

Since the inception of Global Handwashing Day, the celebration of the event has been devotedly organised every year under the initiative of the nodal agency, Public Health Engineering Department and other stakeholder organisations like Environmental Information System (ENVIS) engaging schools and students as participants. Due to the continuous efforts taken by the nodal agency and stakeholder organizations, awareness on proper handwashing techniques and cognition of its effectiveness has always been there among the close-knit Mizo society. With the current COVID-19 situation, compliance with proper health hygiene is a core part of preventing the spread. This is a welcoming actuation given the possible realism of hand hygiene becoming habitual for the overall improvement of personal hygiene in time to come.

Relevant questions which persist about hand hygiene are- as to what extent people understand the connection between hand hygiene and health? How effective is information disseminated through social media and social reinforcement? How realistic is the chance of hand hygiene becoming habitual in Post-Covid19?

### Objective of the study

Because of the above questions, the study aims at exploring the historical perspective of handwashing practice through literature reviews, thereby divulging how the ritual practice transitioned itself to become an important routine in medical setting and hygiene habits among the public. It attempts at examining handwashing practice among the Mizos to ascertain the health implications as well as to understand the level of awareness in the community. It also aims at finding out the effectiveness of hand-hygiene awareness efforts through Media and more specifically through Social Media platforms in times of COVID-19 pandemic. An attempt was also made to

establish the relevance of Social Cognitive theory, an adaptation of Social Learning Theory propounded by Albert Bandura which emphasis on social influence and social reinforcement.

### Historical perspective: Rituals, symbolism and reality

It was Ignaz Semmelweis, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian physician who first advanced the idea of “hand hygiene” in medical settings by making the connection between dirty hands and infections. When he ascertained that chloride solution could rid objects of their odours, Semmelweis mandated handwashing across his obstetrics department at Vienna General Hospital. Beginning from May 1847, washing hands in a bowl of chloride solution became mandatory for anyone entering the Division. It was later observed that the incidence of puerperal fever or Postpartum infections and death subsequently dropped sharply by the end of the year (Leighton, 2020).

In ancient times, the practice of handwashing was largely faith-based. The Old Testament, the Talmud and the Quran all mention handwashing in the context of ritual cleanliness (Leighton, 2020).

While the Israelites were wandering in the desert, they were commended through Moses to practice ritual handwashing as a symbol of purification appeared in the book of Exodus, Old Testament.

*Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. (Exodus 30:18)*

For Aaron and his sons (the priestly class) to wash their hands and their feet before entering the tabernacle of the congregation.

*or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn offerings made by fire unto the Lord: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations. (Exodus 30:21)*

With the passage of time, the dining table in private homes came to represent the Temple altar after the Jewish moved and settled in different places transforming Judaism to become a portable faith. The washing of hands before a meal came to signify the ritual ablutions that occurred in Jerusalem in preparation for animal sacrifices (Chein *et al.*, 2017). “Reference to the ritual washing of hands before a meal *netilat yadayim* found in the Bible is elaborated upon in the Mishnah and the Talmud. It is also a custom to wash hands again at the conclusion of a meal, referred to as *mayim achronim*” explained

Chein.

An excerpt from the book of Leviticus disclosed specific instructions for the Israelites as and when they encountered diseases:

*“And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean.”* Leviticus 15:13 (Bible)

As evident from the book of Psalm, the Jews also practice handwashing before offering prayers. *“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart”* (Psalm 24). Clean hands came to symbolize purity and innocence. The connection between clean hands and guiltlessness has endured, from (William Shakespeare’s tragedy *Macbeth*) Lady Macbeth’s compulsive washing to our expression “My hands are clean” (Ashenburg, 2020).

In her article, Ashenburg wrote, “The eighth-century BC Greeks in Homer’s *Odyssey* washed their hands frequently – before praying and offering sacrifice, before and after travelling.” It was also customary to offer water to wash hands immediately to an arriving guest at the door. It was done out of politeness. People also washed hands after eating meals with their hands (Ashenburg, 2020).

In a similar manner, Islamic law requires a person of Muslim faith to perform a ritual washing before praying to get rid of minor impurities such as urinating, defecating and sleeping, among other practices. This ritual washing *Wudu* is to be performed... “as was done by the Prophet Muhammad, in a specific order before praying, which takes place five times a day. Before each prayer, Muslims are expected to wash themselves in a certain order – first hands, then mouth, nose, face, hair and ears, and finally their ankles and feet” said Aslan (Aslan, 2020).

The Black Death which caused widespread disease and suffering throughout the known world, resulting in the loss of tens of millions of lives was an important event of the Middle Ages. During the period attempts to contain epidemic disease were sometimes successful, and the careful development of quarantine measures can be considered to be one of the few advances in public health. The event was a horrific nightmare for the public health community (Warren, 2001). A significant feature during the Black Death was the public health implications of ritual hand-washing. Some studies theorized that the Jews of Europe had a distinctly lower rate of death than others and researchers believed that hand-washing prescribed by their religion probably served as

protection during the epidemic (Leighton, 2020).

Ritual handwashing, hand use and specific gestures also take on considerable significance in certain other religions and cultures.

### **Reappraisal of relevant studies on handwashing in the contemporary scope**

Handwashing is one of the most widely studied public health subject. Many studies relating to handwashing are available for access. The topic can be looked at from different perspectives and settings.

Among such research, a study to ascertain the practice of Hand Hygiene among Medical Students in the Commonwealth of Dominica suggested that handwashing has a positive effect on the wellness of University students. The outcomes of improved hand-hygiene habits by students resulted in reduced health care costs since fewer students may need to utilize health centre resources. The study supported that impact of an improved hand hygiene should be considered within the context of general health behaviors (Opeyemi Oluwabukola Afolabi et.al, 2016).

Comparative studies on handwashing with soap and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers revealed that handwashing with soap proved to be more reliable and effective. To support this, Catherine Roberts, a Science Journalist in her article pointed out that new research published in journal *mSphere* indicated that researchers found handwashing removed the flu virus from hands more quickly and more effectively than using a dab of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (Roberts, 2019).

In a random based study among women to assess the effectiveness of hand hygiene education in Mauritius, Ubheeram and Biranjia-Hurdoyal found that hand hygiene awareness had a very important role among women and younger participants were more knowledgeable on the matter. It can be inferred that younger participants watched television or listened to the radio for a longer period of time and have more exposure to the hand-hygiene campaigns than the elderly group (Ubheeram & Biranjia-Hurdoyal, 2017). A study by Sally F. Bloomfield published in *American Journal of Infection Control* indicated that positive outcomes from hand-hygiene promotion could be better achieved when people would practice hand hygiene not only more frequently but also at the right time. It further propounded that hand-hygiene effectiveness within a given community can be increased by using products and procedures, either alone or in sequence, that maximize the log reduction of both bacteria and viruses on hands. The study also



concluded that hand hygiene is a key component of good hygiene practice both at home and community and that it can produce significant benefits in terms of reducing the incidence of infection, most particularly gastrointestinal infections and also respiratory tract and skin infections (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2007).

Certain studies also substantiated how exposure to media contents can promote hand-hygiene practice and the significant roles that Media can play in educating the public to adopt the healthy practice. Among such studies, a report from Singapore indicated that the lack of hygienic behaviours among adults (32 to 52 year) could be because of their busy lifestyle, false sense of health security due to high standard of water or sanitary facilities and incorrect belief that infectious diseases such as diarrhoea affected mostly children (Pang *et al.*, 2015).

### Research methods: A critical appraisal

A combination of research methods were used to gather empirical data in support of the discussion in this study. These qualitative and quantitative methods helped to arrive at a better understanding of the status of hand-hygiene awareness and the resultant adoption among members of the community. Qualitative methods helped to unravel the circumstantial reasons which prompted individuals to practice hand hygiene and other implications. They also provided insights into the effectiveness of Social Media interactions and reinforcements. Quantitative methods provided additional statistical information that supplemented these insights. However, the selected research methods have their limitations in spite of the advantages.

The survey data were collected from all the districts included in the study at the time when the District level workshop was organized at each location. The main research site was, however, Aizawl. It must be noted that the study largely relied on online interactions and correspondences given the COVID-19 pandemic situation prevailing across the state and recurrent imposition of lockdown.

### Research sample

The quantitative survey was relatively large scale which included three or four respondents from villages across Mizoram who participated in the District Level Workshop on Village Water and Sanitation Committee organised by Communication and Capacity Building Unit, Public Health Engineering Department, Government Of Mizoram over a span of two years. For qualitative insight, research samples were generated through a combination of random, opportunistic and informal means. The qualitative assessment

is fairly comprehensive in terms of demographic representation. However, it has not taken into account non-internet users considering the focus and objectives of the study. Overall, the quantitative study undertaken is useful for substantiating qualitative claims and it also enriched discussions in the study.

### Surveys: Knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) study

The study used survey and specifically KAP survey and other methods to understand the level of hand-hygiene awareness and the reason for adopting the habit. The KAP method with its predefined questions provided access to both quantitative and qualitative information. The main purpose of this KAP study was to explore Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of the community on Sanitation and Hygiene. This study provided information for valuation of hand hygiene in the community. It revealed a level of knowledge, changes in attitudes towards hand hygiene after the outbreaks of COVID-19, as well as changes in the kinds of practices that are followed regarding hand hygiene.

Health communication researches have used quantitative surveys to determine the extent to which exposure to the media affects collective and individual behaviour. Surveys have also been used to demonstrate how the media can influence public opinion about a particular political, social, economic or cultural issue including health. In Spite of the advantages, the tendency to generalize from restricted samples has been highlighted in criticisms of the survey method. In the words of Hasan, “the representative claim of a sample can often be compromised when there is a discrepancy between the values of the sample and those of the population. Again, a sample may be inherently biased giving disproportionate emphasis to some aspects of the population at the expense of others”. She further mentioned that the problem of non-response is significant as well in the sense that within a randomly selected sample there is no way of guaranteeing that respondents who did not answer questions had the same views as those who did (Hasan, 2007: 35). Unlike other survey studies, problem of non-response was not encountered in questionnaires administered among respondents. However, respondents had to fill up the questionnaire during the hectic Workshop schedule which posed itself as the main constraint.

Two sets of KAP surveys were conducted to study handwashing practice. For the first KAP survey which was done mainly for quantitative

information, questionnaires were administered to all participants of a 3-day District level Workshop on village water and sanitation committee organized in all seven districts of Mizoram. In each workshop, there were approximately 150 to 200 participants which ensured that the sample size is sufficiently large but not too diverse in terms of age group and occupation wise which is the main drawback. Respondents were mainly village council members and representatives from civil society. The second KAP survey is used primarily for qualitative information and care has been taken to make sure that sample was sufficiently diverse in terms of educational and professional profile. Respondents included 15 men and 15 women from the 18 to 70 years age group. Thus respondents ranged from those who had completed only the secondary level of education to those who were post-graduates, and from housewives to academics. Questionnaires, consisting mostly of open-ended questions, were sent to respondents via Social Media and Emails for conveniences so as to maintain physical distance due to COVID-19 pandemic. This internet-assisted study was easy and proved handy but at the sametime, it was also the main drawback.

### Interviews

Interviews allow respondents to provide 'oral testimonies', in their own language and hence are more detailed than the survey (Jensen, 2000). Despite the benefits of an interview which is capable of providing in-depth and detailed insights, there are a number of problems associated with the use of interviews as a research tool. Firstly, people may not be willing to reveal their real feelings about a topic or they may not be too concerned about the topic to have an idea about it (Jensen, 2002). Secondly, use of recorders may intimidate or make respondents more self conscious (May, 1997). Thirdly, interviewees may feel obliged to impress or feel compelled to agree with the interviewer or conform to social standards or simply give their account of the 'truth'. Sources always have differing levels of experience and knowledge, a fact which has to be kept in mind while deciding what sort of value to place on their evidence (Deacon *et al.*, 1999). Lastly, the biases of the researcher (and of the respondent) remain an inescapable part of the interview process (Hasan, 2007).

In-depth online interviews were conducted with 10 individuals. Some of these individuals were identified through WhatsApp group discussions. The respondents were selected on the basis of their

willingness to further articulate their views and experiences that they had briefly put forth in the Whatsapp group discussion.

### Focus group discussion: Whatsapp group discussion

The interaction within the group is considered crucial for the generation of information about audience behaviour since it is the 'conversation' that encourages people to express opinions that they might not otherwise do (Morgan 1988 in Hansen *et al.*, 1998). The focus groups bring together a small number of people to discuss a question or series of questions formulated by the researcher (Deacon *et al.*, 1999). However, the relatively smaller size of the sample in group discussions has led to the charge that they are not representative of the general population. Focus groups have also been criticized for being 'controlled experiments' that affect the responses of participants (Gunter, 2000). Critics have drawn attention to the inequalities that can arise within group interaction (Hasan, 2007). In this study, group discussion was conducted through WhatsApp group consisting of 30 members on broad issues relating to hand hygiene. Outcomes of discussion proved to be more informal and discussants expressed their opinions as they might do while conversing among themselves. Valuable information was extracted from the discussion which to a large extent enriched the qualitative interpretation of the study.

### Handwashing behaviour: Interpretation of quantitative data

It is universally accepted that appropriate handwashing at critical times following proper washing technique could prevent hand to oral and faecal to oral disease transmissions. In line with this, a study on handwashing practices before preparation of food and after defecation was carried out among village leaders across the state of Mizoram. At least 1,000 responses received through KAP study have been taken into consideration. Respondents consisted of individuals who participated in the 'Institutionalisation of Village Water and Sanitation Committee' workshop as delegates representing different villages in the state. The workshop was organized by CCDU, Public Health Engineering Department, Government of Mizoram. Respondents were asked their handwashing behaviour at two critical times of after defecation and before preparation of food. This study, in fact, present limitations given that it did not include other 'critical times' for handwashing relevant to COVID-19 pandemic such as before eating food, Before and

after caring for the sick, After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, After touching garbage and others. Nevertheless, the two factors can still be indicative of the overall handwashing habits. Analysis of the data is tabulated as:

**Table 1** Means of hand washing after defecation by district-wise

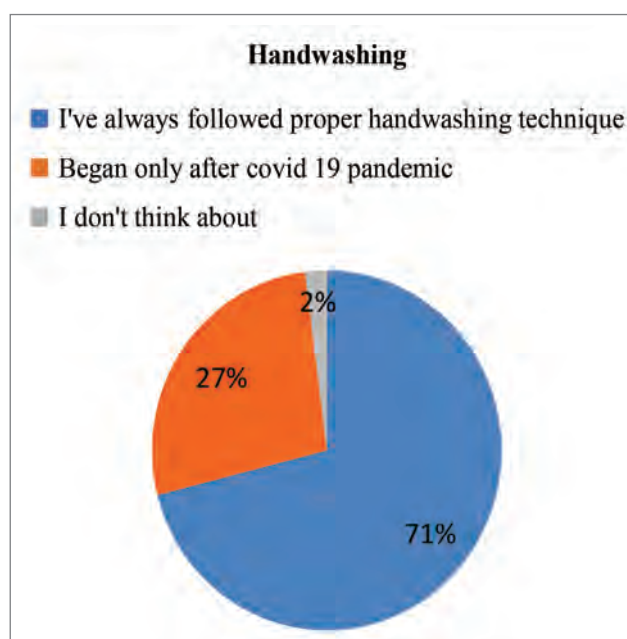
District	Only with water %	With soap and water %	With ash or sand %	No response %
Serchhip	42	58	0	0
Kolasib	41	57	2	0
Aizawl	37	59	0	4
Mamit	35	59	0	6
Saiha	31	65	0	4
Lawngtlai	48	39	0	13
Lunglei	43	47	0	10
Champhai	39	56	0	5

As evident from the Table 1, the state average of handwashing after defecation is 91 per cent. Atleast, 5 per cent never wash or consider washing hands after defecation unnecessary. For handwashing after defecation, 40% use only water, 55 per cent wash with water and soap and 0.25 per cent use ash or sand to clean their hands. A total of 73 per cent of rural respondents practice hand washing before preparing food, while 19 per cent of respondents either do not practice it or consider it unnecessary to wash hands before preparing food. The other 7 per cent have no response in this matter. Handwashing after defecation and before preparing food is almost similar in all the districts. Though overall, the respondents moderately fared well in the practice of handwashing at these two critical times, large numbers of them still do not follow proper technique. There is a need for hygiene promotion focusing on timing and method of hand washing.

### Changes in patterns of handwashing before and during COVID-19 pandemic

In the absence of a cure or vaccine for COVID-19 pandemic, frequent handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds is widely advised as a preventive measure to reduce potential risk of infection. And given the importance of hand hygiene in the fight against the spread of COVID-19, respondents were asked to state whether or not there has been changes in patterns of handwashing before and during COVID-19 Pandemic.

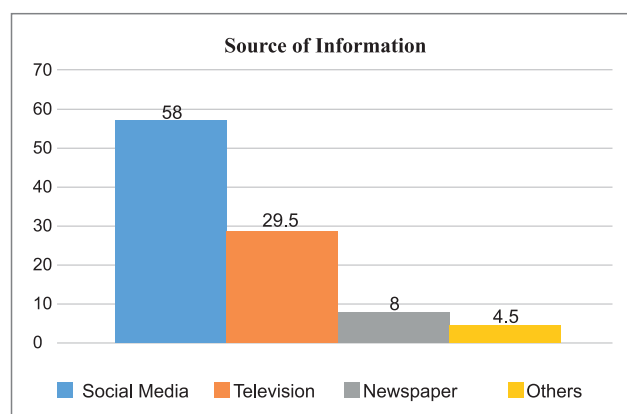
Majority of people in the community have prior knowledge about hand hygiene and they have



**Fig. 1** Changes in patterns of handwashing before and during Covid-19 pandemic

always followed proper handwashing technique (Fig. 1). Based on this evidence, it can be inferred that personal hygiene and more specifically hand-hygiene awareness is satisfactorily high even before large volume of information and messages urging the public to practice frequent handwashing is being disseminated during the pandemic. Twenty-seven percent disclosed that they began to follow proper handwashing technique only after Covid-19 pandemic following awareness campaigns put out through media platforms.

### Handwashing practice in times of COVID-19 pandemic



**Fig. 2** Source of information for handwashing

Hand hygiene is one of the key COVID 19 appropriate behaviours and attempts to instil proper handwashing technique is extensively disseminated through all forms of media. In view of this, respondents



were asked about the source of information which prompted them to practice hand hygiene and which messages helped in reinforcing their preconceived knowledge and practice of handwashing.

Posters, brochures, public service announcements on proper handwashing techniques and timing of handwashing endorsed by both Government and stakeholders are being widely disseminated across all forms of media. Total 58 per cent of respondents claimed that their source of handwashing campaign was Social Media. Among this group of people, the largest number of them said that WhatsApp was the main source followed by Facebook. Muankimi, a 35-year-old teacher said, “before the outbreak of COVID-19, I always wash my hands at critical times but I have never really give any serious thought into the possible link between dirty hands and diseases, this pandemic is a wake up call for me and the information I came across online and social media interaction with my peers is reinforcing my belief.” A number of other respondents gave similar testimonies.

The Mizos as a community which has a strong handwashing culture, as evident from the interpretation of quantitative data with the state average of hand washing after defecation at 91 per cent. Most of the respondents revealed that they have always washed their hands with soaps for 20 seconds at critical times and after coming back from public places and gatherings even before the COVID-19 pandemic. “When you are out on the streets or in public places, you can not really avoid high-touch surfaces like handrails, ATM screens, elevator buttons, public faucets, doorknobs, shopping carts and many otherwise mundane objects and we know how coronavirus can be contracted by touching surfaces, proper handwashing is a critical protection against infections” explained Ruata Pachuau, a 33-year-old clerk at the District Court.

“You can not avoid seeing or reading handwashing messages, its literally everywhere on social media” said Mahruaii, a 29-year-old women from Aizawl. While most respondents agreed that messages disseminated through media platforms and social media interaction on prevention measures like hand washing after Covid-19 outbreaks help in reinforcing their habits of handwashing; others said that they began practicing proper handwashing as prescribed only after coming across huge amount of information disseminated via Social Media on daily basis. Avala Renthlei, a 43-year-old resident of Zotlang in Aizawl said, “I think that handwashing has psychological effect, when I wash my hands after touching public surfaces and at other critical times,

it gives me a sense of safety” while clarifying his reason for adopting proper handwashing technique. Thiangi Khawlhing from Electric Veng, Aizawl, explained how her interactions via WhatsApp group led to behavioural change in personal hygiene and practice said, “Previously, I often clean my mobile handset so as to make them look clean but now I realized it too can harbour bacteria, viruses, and other germs and I no longer touch my handset unless I clean my hand first.”

Based on sufficient evidence obtained, the study to a large extent supported the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) originally propounded as Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura. This SCT posited that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior (LaMorte, 2019). It emphasizes on social influence and also on external and internal social reinforcement. It also takes into account a person’s past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur (LaMorte, 2019).

In Mizoram, Local Level Task Forces were created with manpower and administered from the local councils/ village councils and the Young Mizo Association (YMA) to bolster the manpower of the state administration. Each local task force has jurisdiction within its own local area and created manned posts in various places. Each locality has its own YMA information centre in the form of a public address system (PAS), a chain of loudspeakers placed in various vantage points within the locality with one control room. The PAS is used as information centres for announcement of death in the locality, availability of goods in the local PDS centres as well as for disseminating government instructions and important information. With the imposition of lockdown, information centres are used for enforcing the lockdown, giving information about COVID-19 with preventive measures like maintaining social distancing and handwashing as regular content, and for general information as everybody has stayed indoor. During the national lockdown and in the subsequent months, alongside the PAS, community organisations and Local Level Task Force (LLTF) assigned with responsibilities of Covid-19 management at the local level and a backbone of the State’s response team are connected to all the households within their local domain through WhatsApp groups. These WhatsApp groups served as a platform for disseminating important information along with the public address system and residents are well informed as a result. Machungnunga, member of Ramhlun Venglai LLTF said, “There is a likely chance that some people may



miss out information we posted on WhatsApp groups, we also need to share important message through public address system, in a way the PA system is very much part of our culture, without it somehow it feels incomplete.”

On the prospect of handwashing become habitual, Dr. Rebecca Renthlei, a dentist belonging to Ramhlun Vengthar, elucidated her aspiration of proper handwashing becoming a way of life and she said, “As we see at present, it is possible to quickly influence individual hygiene behaviour in the short term, but changing handwashing culture might be more difficult task. However, being a close knit society, if their friends and neighbours do it, they are likely to follow their footsteps”.

## Conclusion

In Mizoram, where community engagement is tremendously strong in the fight against COVID-19, can this exemplary efforts and responses to the pandemic be attributed to the community involvements and participations? Such questions arise from this study and evidently, this study is opening up venues for further and more in-depth study which would generate valuable and interesting findings and outcomes. As of October 2020, the total number of cases reported is 2,212 with a recovery rate of 94.62% and it is the only State in India which is yet to report fatality. As it happens, the majority of reported cases in the state is asymptomatic and the number of patients who need critical care is also low. As of 17 August only one patient was in the ICU, according to Dr H.C. Laldina, medical superintendent, Zoram Medical College.

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# Public Service Advertising in India: Recall, Recognition and Perception of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao's Television Public Service Ad Campaign

ARADHANA KUMARI SINGH<sup>1</sup> and MANUKONDA RABINDRANATH<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Public Service Advertisement (PSA) aims to raise awareness about issues that go unnoticed and are meant for public welfare. To promote and encourage girl's education, Government of India launched 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)' campaign in 2015. To make this campaign successful, public service advertisements named as 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' were disseminated through mass media. For the success of any public service advertisement campaign, it must reach its target audience and the message is interpreted in the same manner as it was intended to. Perception of the audience also plays a crucial role. Therefore the present study aims to find out the recall, recognition and perceptions of BBBP's television public service advertisement.

**Keywords:** Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Television, Public Service Advertisement, Perception, Recognition, Recall

## Introduction

Advertising plays a very significant role in bringing about social and economic development in today's world (Naveen, 2016). Advertising that promotes commercial products, goods and services can even be used for non-commercial purposes such as informing and educating the public about social, health and environmental issues, for example, HIV/AIDS, women education, political ideology, conservation of water, planting trees, etc. (Kumar, 1987). Public Service Advertisements (PSA) are messages of public interest disseminated in the form of advertising communication and are readily apprehensible and persuasive in promoting behavioural changes of the target audience to a social problem (Atkin, 2001). "Advertising, in its non-commercial guise, is a powerful educational tool capable of reaching and motivating large audiences. Advertising justifies its existence when used in the public interest- it is too a powerful tool to use solely for commercial purposes" (Ogilvy, 1984).

Public service advertisement can be defined as the messages aimed for public interest issue that is spread by media at a free cost (DiClemente, 2006). The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) defines PSA as a message for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state or local governments (e.g. recruiting and selling war bonds) or the programs, activities, or services of non-profit organizations (e.g. United Way and the American Red Cross) and other announcements

regarded as serving community interests excluding time signals, routine weather announcements and promotional announcements. Lynn (1974) defined PSA as a pervasive, yet a highly specialized form of communication utilized to disseminate information on public issues to the masses. The purpose of PSA is to encourage individual response to social problems.

Social advertising, non-commercial advertising, public communication campaign, public interest advertising, cause marketing, and social marketing are the synonyms words used for public service advertising (Moriarty *et al.*, 2014). Social marketing is defined as "the application of tradition of traditional marketing principles toward the promotion of health behaviour change" (Quinn *et al.*, 2010). The social marketing strategy has been applied to disseminate messages on various health topics such as blood donation, smoking prevention etc. (Gorden *et al.*, 2006). In the USA, Public service advertising on television is also called as Public Service Announcements (PSAs) (Ganz *et al.*, 2008). Public service announcements promotes programs and services of government and voluntary agencies without paying to the stations while Public service advertising buys media time and space, it is a paid advertising (Broom *et al.*, 2013). Public service advertising makes use of commercial advertising techniques for non-commercial purposes (Srinivasan and Suresh, 2008). From a very long time in foreign countries, public service announcements (PSAs) are promoting healthy behaviours and focusing on preventing drug use among youth, which targets both young people and their parents (Atkin, 2001).

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The PSAs are of two types. The first type targets people who need help (e.g. alcoholics) or people who are at risk due to some health problems or other problems (e.g. women with breast cancer, young people affected by drug addiction) (Park, 2005). The other type of target public at large to help others for example blood donation. These kinds of advertising are disseminated on the behalf of good cause and of public interest issues which may be related to social change, political ideologies, or development and economic policies (Srinivasan and Suresh, 2008). The goal of public service ads is to educate and create awareness among people on burning social issues and to bring social change by developing consciousness in the mindsets of the people about the social issue that is targeted (Wallack, 1981). The first step in PSA is to design an effective and appealing message for the target audiences (Perse *et al.*, 1996). The second step is to select the media having wide coverage and mass appealing (Clarke, 1999). The third step is to select the target audience based on a different segment like sex, gender, class, race etc. (Hammond *et al.*, 1987). The fourth and the last step is to consider the expenses as per the budget allocated by the government (Austin and Pinkleton, 2015).

### **Emergence and role of public service advertisements campaign in addressing social, environmental and health issues in India**

The liberalization and privatization stage began in the 1990s and the policy decentralization began during this moment. In addition to this, India experienced a revolution in the field of information and communication technologies, paving the way for the dissemination of social messages in the country's rural and urban areas (Srinivasan and Suresh, 2008). During that moment, the newspapers were used as a significant instrument against the British and the colonial rule to fight for independence and were under the control of private organizations. But the government had control over radio and television after independence for a long time. After that, many private channels emerged, but 'Doordarshan' which is a government-owned channel still plays a crucial role that contributes to nation-building that will allow the country's socio-economic growth (Srinivasan and Suresh, 2008). Television viewing in India also began to peak with the start of major television series or otherwise known as soap operas such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. As a result, there was increased in the revenues generated from television advertising. By taking advantage of this era, many notable publicity campaigns on pulse polio, safe pregnancy and family

welfare have been promoted. Different government-owned departments dealing with health, social welfare, environment, tourism, and education, public bodies such as Municipal Corporations and NGOs are engaged in public service advertising in India. In the Indian government, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is a significant department that carries out the developmental ideas and numerous government-related schemes through different media. The Directorate of Public Relations and Department of Audio-Visual Publicity are its corresponding wings, which carry the messages through the formulation of different approaches.

Until 1977 the Indian government did not make use of the advertising services. In the same year, however, the World Health Organization proclaimed 1977 to be the International Children's Year and declared children's immunization against communicable disease. The advertising club of Bombay (now Mumbai) nominated its representatives in the press. Free hoardings were provided by outdoor advertisers. By the end of that year, 65 per cent of the target population of 2 million unprotected kids were anticipated to be protected through this initiative, which proved to be an efficient use of advertising to increase awareness that was more common in poor illiterate persons. Rural and urban Indians received relevant development messages intended by the Indian government, NGOs, international development agencies and other social organizations through appropriate communication strategies. The communication strategies were carefully evaluated and checked, and adequate care was taken before any fresh campaigns were launched to prevent the faults that the past campaigns had experienced. For instance, birth-control devices such as copper loop were used to show in India's rural areas to encourage family planning and to make them aware of the use of contraceptives. Initially, rural women were appalled by the concept and rejected the idea of using birth-control equipment. Other television campaign went after a few days and that was about using male contraceptive, i.e. condom. The advertisement featured an inquisitive mother-in-law asking her daughter-in-law whether his son used condoms or not. If the two cases are compared, the first case is an instance of framing texts without taking into account the rates of literacy and women's exposure in rural India, the latter case is against the awareness which was largely avoided in the early 19s. Although the messages were intentionally scheduled and drafted, the family planning campaigns in India during the early 20s were not so effective, and the primary reason



behind this was the lack of infrastructure and absence of the experts to meet the training requirements. The researchers conducted extensive studies on rural people's lifestyle in India, and then appropriate measures were taken while the discourses were being drafted. The villagers, for example, gather at a specific location, i.e. either at the village administration office or under a tree, to discuss the issues that influence their daily lives and the village affairs.

To enhance the credibility of the development messages propagated through public service advertisements, the target audience's time, space, and communication style were given importance and it was ensured that these factors were taken into account. Thus, to reach the target audience at the grass-root level, especially rural regions, folk media such as street theatres, puppetry shows, traditional songs and dance types, which are regarded to be the main source of entertainment, have been efficiently used to communicate the development messages to make them aware of the various social problems in society. It is necessary to make use of active participation and involvement through demonstrations to make sure that the messages have reached the rural people in a way that is understandable and can be implemented.

Famous filmmaker, Shyam Benegal made many short films on mother and child welfare for the Family Welfare Division, the Government of India. He ensured to combine the films with the Indian folk theatre and the local and classical Indian drama techniques with the folk drama techniques containing farces and pageantry. Along with this, the theatrical techniques and the language were accurately decided that could cater the interests and accommodate Indian diversity and rural sensibilities. The messages were delivered using dialects and colloquial languages to make them more efficient than using jargons or scholarly language. Celebrities from films, sports world, teachers, religious leaders, opinion leaders had been used to encourage national public service advertising campaigns that have catalyzed bringing about changes in the lives of both urban and rural Indians. The pulse polio programme, which started in India by the Government of India, was a huge success in Indian history because of its consistent campaigning. In the year 2014, the World Health Organization declared India polio-free.

This success can be attributed to the vigorous campaigns and they used some eminent film personalities of India like Amitabh Bachchan and Sharukh Khan who are still remembered as the iconic faces of polio campaign. Bula-di (elder sister in Bengali) became a renowned puppet character

who is a fearless, saree clad woman with large and big eyes in West Bengal. She educates and aware the public in West Bengal by communicating the developmental messages through storytelling methods and discussion especially on HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention. Bula-di appears on billboards, advertisements, television and radio commercials, and posters throughout the city. Just like that Meena, was a children television series telecast on Doordarshan. Meena was a cartoon character who created awareness on issues of gender, health, and social inequality.

Some of the other public service advertising in the 21st century were the Narmada Bachao Andolan, which was a fight against the construction of a dam on the river Narmada, HIVAIDS, Save the Tiger, Incredible India, Atithi Devo Bhawa, Jaago Re, Ring the Bell, Hum Do Humare Do, Kuposhan Bhagao, Sahi time pe Sahi Tikakaran, Mile Sur Mera Tumhara, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Chota Parivar Sukhi Parivar, Swach Bharat Abhiyan, Do Boond Zindagi Ki, Jawaan Ho Naadan Nahi, Condom Ko Ha Aids Ko Na, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Jago Grahak Jago, Dhumrapan Padega Mehnga, Jaha Soch Waha Souchalaya, TB Harega Desh Jeetega, Karke Dekho Acha Lagta Hai, Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha.

### **Girl's education in India and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao public service ad campaign**

Several indicators such as literacy, enrollment, and years in school indicate that the level of female education is low in the developing countries, with just a handful of exceptions, and by any measure, the gender gap is largest in these countries (King and Hill, 1993). In India, girl's education faced many challenges such as the negative attitude of parents, economical condition, involvement in household works and lack of infrastructure in the school, lack of security, lack of female teachers, child marriage, long distance of the school and lack of effective implementation of government educational schemes and programmes (Indian Institute of Education, 2004; Kumar, 2013; Ahamad and Narayan, 2015; Rana and Rani, 2015; Sahoo, 2016). These are some of the causes due to which enrolment of girls in school is low and drop-out and absence rate is high (Das, 2010; Rana and Rani, 2015; Jyothsna 2016). Though many programmes have launched to promote girl's education, they are unable to provide quality school education for many reasons (Kumar, 2013). Right to Education which is the key to the access of almost all rights has been denied to girls for education (Vati, 2016).

Despite the slow progress in many areas, the lack of education for girls is a social issue with a



known cure (Herz and Sperling, 2004). Countries must implement policies that create a school environment which encourages girls' learning, and a social environment that values educated girls and women (Department for International Development, 2005). Countries should promote girls' education by implementing anti-discrimination laws, improving water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, gender-sensitive early childhood programmes, and measures to reduce violence, exploitation and sexual abuse against children (UNICEF, 2004). Policies and programmes need to be implemented and enforced in these four areas, viz making schooling for girls more affordable, providing safe schools nearby, making schools more girl-friendly and providing good, quality education (Herz and Sperling, 2004). Research indicates to implement seven groups of interventions that, help make schools affordable, help girls overcome health barriers, reduce the time and distance to get to school, make schools more girl-friendly, improve school quality, increase community engagement, and sustain girls' education during emergencies for supporting girl's education (Sperling *et al.*, 2016).

In 2015, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi started Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign through a joint initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development with the goals of promoting gender equality and education for girls (Government of India, 2019). At the national level, the media campaign is undertaken to change the mindset of the people, to bring positive changes in CSR and to empower girl's education (Government of India, 2019). The campaign withholds the message that a girl's education is of equal importance (Government of India, 2019). Print Media, Electronic Media and Social Media are immensely used to promote Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign. Social networking sites such as MyGov platform, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Vikaspedia, G+, Google Hangout, WhatsApp etc. are being used to create awareness about the importance of girl's education and to change the pessimistic attitude of society towards girls. The audio-video cell of the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting conducts the advertising and publicity campaign for government schemes and programmes in various mass media through radio and video sponsored programmes, jingles and audio-video spots on AIR, Doordarshan, and private satellite television and radio channels (Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, 2010).

### **Importance of audience research for success of public service advertisements campaign**

The success of any public service advertising campaigns will depend on thorough audience research, i.e. to know who is the target audience, modes of communication, choice of the right type of media for disseminating the messages, pre- and post-testing comprehension and simplicity and instinctive appeal form the integral parts of the messages. Mass media campaigns use public service advertising to make the public aware and educate them on an issue to change attitudes and eventually motivate for behavioural change (Atkin, 2001). For making PSAs effective it is important to identify the target audience, study about their attitude and behaviour related to target issues and then pilot testing responses to preliminary versions of the message (Bator and Claidini, 2000). To make the PSAs effective, it should be designed with two major objectives, firstly, it should evoke desirable emotions and secondly, the message should arouse the sense of personal relevance (Chang and Chang, 2013). "Emotional responses to the PSAs played an important role in how individuals evaluated those specific PSAs in terms of perceived effectiveness, which, in turn, influence attitudes towards the more general social issue" (Dillard and Peck, 2000).

There are many elements in the psychology of the advertising for example message, visual appeal but perception is most important of them and underrated ("How Important is Perception in Advertising?," 2016). A specific message from PSAs could be less appropriate if it is not viewed as being individually important or compatible with previous values or actions of individuals (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Duck & Mullin, 1995; Snyder & Rouse, 1992). For the success of a PSA campaign, target audiences must perceive the message as it was intended to (Bigsby *et al.*, 2012). Therefore the present study looks into the recall, recognition and public perception of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao television public service advertisement campaign.

### **Review of literature**

#### **Public service advertising research in India:**

In India, public service advertising is widely used by the government to inform citizens about various social, environmental, health issues. However, if we go through literature, we can see that this type of advertising is not so popular among scholars for research studies. Singh and Singh (2017) in their study analyzed the research studies done on public service

advertising through available literature. They found that research on public service advertisement is either experimental and questionnaire survey-based. In India research on public service advertisements are very few. Researchers do not pay much attention to public service advertisements. Even there are no studies on the effectiveness of PSAs and other related variables. The poor explanation of the concept, history, detailed enlisting of PSAs in India and incomplete summary and recommendations is a big hindrance in processing the higher studies. There is a need to explore the issues related to PSAs which are unexplored. Evans (1978) in his paper states that public service advertisement is one that “is designed to give unbiased information on some public problem and is in the public interest.” Though there is an increase in the number of public service advertising, very few studies have been conducted on the subject. As Lynn says “we know little, if anything, about behavioural or attitudinal responses to PSA (public service advertising) or the effects of PSA message content or appeal.”

**Recall and recognition of public service advertisements:** Advertisements recall and recognition methods are widely used by market research to measure advertising effectiveness. Both methods dredge the consumer’s memory for traces of awareness of an advertisement or brand. Generally, advertisements recall has been measured by showing consumers ads and asking them questions about those advertisements later. Recognition is an emotional task, and recall is a logical task. Few researchers have tried to find out recall and recognition of public service ads in India by including print advertisements or an image of a scene of audio-visual advertisements on television in the questionnaire. Ghosh (2016) in her research examined the responses of the audience towards social communication campaign initiated by DAVP, Government of India. Social communication campaigns of DAVP about selecting social issues lack an appeal from the audiences. The study found that few respondents seem to remember selected social ads. Furthermore, the central idea of some campaign is not recognized by even those who saw it. Naveen (2016) in his study examined the impact of public service advertisement in the rural development of Karnataka. Awareness on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme was high among rural people. However, they were not familiar with the public service advertisement about Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.

**Perceptions of public service advertisements:** A perception is an important tool in advertising, it states

how consumers or audiences feel or think about an idea, brand, product or services. Sachdeva (2015) in his study explored the audience’s perceptions of social ads in radio and television. Respondents had a view that advertising is an effective tool for transmitting messages that benefit society. Regarding the impact of social advertisements, it was found that most of the respondents agreed that social advertisement creates awareness and motivate people to take action. Social advertising has come up with new ways of helping the social cause, as it provides with a better understanding of social issues. It developed social responsibilities among the respondents. Successful PSA campaigns encourage government, NGOs and advertising agencies to create more advertising on social issues. Singh (2014) in his study examined the impact of social advertisements. He found that the majority of the respondents have an opinion that social messages are best conveyed by social advertisements. It is the best tool to create knowledge and awareness of society. The author suggested that the government should give preference to social issues. There is a need to change the content of social advertisements to draw more attention from the target audience. Yadav and Shrivastava (2015) in their research examined the impact of polio eradication awareness campaign from India. The findings of the study showed that the respondent found these campaigns as an excellent effort. The PSAs on Polio awareness through mass media was strong in educating the people about the disease.

### Objectives of the study

- To find out the recognition and recall of the BBBP public service advertisement among the respondents
- To find out the perception of the BBBP public service advertisement among the respondents.

### Material and methods

**Study design and study area:** Survey research was conducted to achieve the objectives. The study is conducted in Kashi VidyaPeeth block of Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. Five villages were selected randomly. Multi-stage sampling method was used to select the samples for the study.

**Study Participants:** As the study is based on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao which targets girl’s education, and parents and girl child are the target audiences so 50 families were selected, 10 families from each village comprising a father, a mother and a girl child

aged 13 to 18 years. From each village ( $10 \times 3 = 30$ ) samples were selected which made the total sample to ( $30 \times 5 = 150$ ), 50 fathers, 50 mothers and 50 girl children.

**Data collecting tool:** For collecting the survey data, a questionnaire was distributed to the study participants. As Varanasi is a Hindi Belt region, the language of the questionnaire was kept in Hindi. The researchers properly explained the questions to the participants to

clear their doubts. A pilot study was conducted using a total of 30 samples to know the feasibility of the study and accordingly questions were prepared and modified.

## Findings

**Demographic profiles and media usage of the respondents:** Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents (parents and their girl

Factors	Respondents	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Father	31 to 40 years	18	36
		41 years and above	32	64
		Total	50	100
	Mother	25 to 30 years	4	8
		31 to 40 years	30	60
		41 years and above	16	32
		Total	50	100
	Girl Child	13 years	3	6
		14 years	10	20
		15 years	20	40
		16 years	8	16
		17 years	7	14
		18 years	2	4
		Total	50	100
Education Qualification	Father	Post-Graduate	10	20
		Graduate	13	26
		HSC (12th)	17	34
		Matriculation (10th)	5	10
		Upper Primary (6 to 8)	1	2
		Primary (1 to 5)	4	8
		Total	50	100
	Mother	Post-Graduate	3	6
		Graduate	5	10
		HSC 12th	20	40
		Matriculation 10th	18	36
		Upper Primary (6 to 8)	2	4
		Primary (1 to 5)	2	4
		Total	50	100
	Girl Child	Higher Secondary (11 to 12)	21	42
		Secondary (9 to 10)	29	58
		Total	50	100
Occupation	Father	Small Business	11	22
		Shopkeeper (General Store)	5	10
		Teacher	2	4
		Farmer	26	52
		Government Job (Railway Employee)	6	12
		Total	50	100
	Mother	Housewife	50	100
		Total	50	100
Income	Father	20000 above	15	30
		10000 to 20000	26	52
		less than 5000	9	18
		Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

**Table 1** Demographic profile of the respondents

child. Among mass media, the use of Television is high among the respondents (see Table 2). Cha (2016) in his study referred to uses and gratifications (U&G) theory, to understand why people use and choose television in an environment where other video platforms are available. The U&G theory aims to explain how individuals use a medium to gratify their specific needs (Katz *et al.*, 1974). Cha (2016) found that the motives for watching video content on television when other video platforms are available are “less disruptive nature, companionship, quality, convenience, co-viewing, relaxation, familiarity, nostalgia, flow, and live television programs”. Several studies have examined the motivations and functions of television viewing (Bantz, 1982; Rubin, 1983; 1981). Bantz (1982) found “surveillance, entertainment, companionship encompassing boredom relief, voyeurism, and social resource” as the motivations for television viewing. Similar motives for watching TV have been discovered by Rubin (1981) but she added other motives like “relaxation, boring relief, information, escape excitement, accompaniment, desiring to watch certain contents of programming, and social interaction”. For both father and mother, newspaper and social media hold the second and third rank, respectively, in terms of usage after Television whereas for girl child social media holds the second rank and newspaper holds the third rank. It shows that social media is quite popular and widely used by teenagers. Social communications were the most important motivations for using social media platforms (Kujath, 2011). Teenagers mostly use social media for communication with friends and families (Ali *et al.*, 2016). Internet is the most preferred media to television among youth, but they spend more time watching television than surfing the internet, television is the most popular media (Mann, 2010). The sixth rank of the magazine shows that the popularity and use of magazine are low among the respondents.

**Recall of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao public service advertisement:** To promote girl’s education several ads were shown on Television under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao public service ad campaign. Randomly one ad was selected (see Fig. 1) and an image of one of the

scenes of the ad was included in the questionnaire and based on that questions were asked. The findings of the study state that 43% (65) of respondents have seen BBBP public service advertisement on Television and 57% (85) have not seen it.



Fig 1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao ad

**Recognition of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao public service advertisement:** Out of 65 respondents who have seen the BBBP public service ad, among them 37% (28) of the respondents have remembered the story that was shown in the ad and 63% (37) did not remember it.

**Perceptions of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao public service ad**

**Understand and agree with the message of the BBBP ad:** All (28) respondents have understood the message that was conveyed in the BBBP ad. Majority of those (18) are agreed with the message conveyed in BBBP public service ad while 6 respondents are strongly agreed with the message and 4 respondents are neither agree nor disagree with the message. Respondents were asked

**Felt connected to message/slogans/theme/appeal of the BBBP ad:** Ten respondents felt connected with the message, 9 respondents felt connected with the slogan, 4 respondents felt connected with the theme, 3 respondents felt connected with appeal and 2 respondents felt connected with the overall setting of the ad.

**Find BBBP ad impactful/relevant/entertaining/unique/informative/lively:** Majority of respondents

Respondents	1	2	3	4	5	6
Father	Television	Newspaper	Social Media	Internet	Radio	Magazine
Mother	Television	Newspaper	Social Media	Radio	Internet	Magazine
Girl Child	Television	Social Media	Newspaper	Internet	Radio	Magazine

Source: Primary data

Table 2. Ranking of mass media by the respondents according to its usage



(9) find BBBP advertisement impactful, 7 respondents find it relevant, 5 respondents find it entertaining, 4 respondents find it unique, 2 respondents find it informative and 1 respondent finds it lively.

**BBBP ad fulfil its purpose:** Out of 28 respondents who have remembered the story that was featured in the advertisement, 11 respondents found the advertisement fulfilled its purpose to some extent, 8 respondents found that the advertisement has fulfilled its purpose to a great extent, 6 respondents thought that the advertisement has fulfilled its purpose completely and 2 respondents choose can not say option.

**Ranking of the ad between (1 to 5) scales where 5 is the highest and 1 is the lowest:** Respondents who have seen the BBBP advertisement and remembered the story ranked the advertisement at the highest scale between (5 to 3) based on following parameters: story, actors chosen, dialogues, background music, acting of actors, duration of the advertisement and direction (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Ranking of BBBP advertisement by the respondents between (5-1) scale

Parameters	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Based on story	18	6	4	0	0	28
Based on actors chosen	11	12	5	0	0	28
Based on dialogues	6	11	11	0	0	28
Based on background music	6	9	12	1	0	28
Based on acting of actors	8	13	7	0	0	28
Based on duration of the ad	9	13	6	0	0	28
Based on direction	9	15	5	0	0	28

Source: Primary data

## Discussion

By employing survey research this research article explores the recognition, recall and perceptions of parents and their girl child of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao public service advertisement. Public service advertisement are created to raise awareness of social issues that go unnoticed or of public relevance (Gupta, 2012). The objective is to reinforce people to take desirable actions for their benefit, to trigger emotions and to develop positive attitudes (Bagozzi and Morre 1994). They serve as a means to influence the opinion

of the general public. So the developer of PSAs utilizes various media so that the advertisement will hit the target audiences. The data indicate that the majority of respondents have not seen the BBBP advertisement on Television that was selected for the research. The possible reason is either respondent did not notice the advertisement or the frequency of the advertisement is less on Television. Few researchers have conducted studies on public service advertising in India. Major findings in these research that has come out (i) people prefer to watch commercial advertisements more than public service advertisements and (ii) the airtime donated to public service advertisement is less than commercial ads (Gangadharan and Nagarajan, 2013; Gangadharan, 2013; Ghosh, 2016). Therefore the government should increase the frequency of these advertisement on television so that it can reach the maximum number of people (Ghosh, 2016). The frequent repetition of messages and publics attentive to PSA may be aware of the issues and enhanced cognitive attitudes towards various social issues (Lordan and Kwon, 1995).

To draw the attention of the target audiences, creativity and presentation and delivering of message play a crucial role. The social communication campaigns initiated by the DAVP about selecting social issues lack an audience appeal (Gosh, 2016). Lack of creativity in the designing of the message, colourless presentation of the message, quality of visuals, less appeal, lengthiness of message, lack of interesting story content are some of the drawbacks of public service advertisement delivered by the government (Manickavelan, 2013). There is a need to change the content of social advertisements to draw more attention from the target audience (Singh, 2014).

Respondents who have seen the advertisement and remembered the story featured in it opined that the advertisement is impactful in promoting girl's education. Public service advertising has come up with new ways of helping the social cause as it provides a better understanding of social issues (Sachdeva, 2015). These advertisements just not only promote the message but also helps to change the mindset of society in eradicating social evils (Arora, 2019).

## Conclusion and suggestion

Public service advertising can act as an important tool for the government to communicate with the masses about the relevant issue and to raise social consciousness among them. The success of the pulse polio campaign in India underscores the strength of what public service advertising can do if it is effectively disseminated. Interventions and awareness

programmes are of course equally important at national, state, district, and community level. The frequency of these kinds of advertisement should be increased on mass media especially on broadcast media so that it can receive more attention from the target audience and more work should be done at a creative level. Below are a few suggestions to do so.

**Use of animation:** The use of animation can create good narration in advertising. It contributes to relaxing and engaging information consumption. The cartoon-like videos can make the audience less tense and hence they easily perceive new information.

**Use of real stories and experiences:** This type of approach is also a great way of generating talkability. "It's human nature to be interested in other people, their stories and experiences. According to Mark Hopkins, Head of Marketing, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, using real-life customers gives you the chance to offer your audience an authentic taste of what you and your brand have to. A message that is conveyed with real emotion can be more persuasive.

**Endorsement of celebrity:** In both the advertisement, the celebrity factor was missing. Endorsing celebrity to promote the idea will have more influence. Using Amitabh Bachchan as the brand ambassador was also one of the reasons for the success of the pulse polio campaign.

**Increase in advertisement frequency:** The advertisement frequency is an important part of any successful advertising campaign. The airtime of these ads should be increased, so that they can be noticed by the target audiences.

**Reduce the impact of clutter:** It has been observed that "a more cluttered environment reduces ad viewing (Webb and Ray, 1979), increases avoidance (Speck and Elliott, 1998), impairs advertising memories (Cobb 1985; Webb and Ray, 1979), inhibits the ability of audiences to correctly identify the brand (Zhao, 1997) and has an undesirable impact on emotional responses to advertising (Mord and Gilson, 1985; Zhao, 1997)". By dedicating a special break between television programmes that are fully dedicated to BBBP advertisement. This will help to prevent the chance of BBBP advertisement losing in the clutter of commercial advertisements.

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# Storytellers and Listeners: Role of Audience Participation in Internet-based Stories

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## ABSTRACT

Stories are reflective of the human experience. With the evolution of technology, the process of storytelling also changes in its form and content. So, with the arrival of the internet, newer avenues and opportunities open up for telling stories. This study is an attempt to understand the relationship between storytellers and the audience in an internet-driven media ecology. It uses examples from transmedia web series, and tries to argue that contemporary digital technologies, particularly the internet, allow the audience to move away from a passive role into participatory action in the storytelling process. Linking the concept of Web 2.0 on the one hand, and Walter Benjamin's conception of the storyteller on the other, the paper argues that the internet using audience of the contemporary world is, both a producer and a consumer of tales; at the same time, a storylistener as well as a storyteller.

**Keywords:** Storytelling, Internet, Web 2.0, Transmedia, Audience, Participation

## Introduction

As social beings, storytelling has always been a major human activity. Whether in the form of cave paintings or folklore, theatre or cinema, novels or comic books, radio or television – people have told stories throughout human history, in different ways. With evolution in technology, the ways and means of narrating stories have evolved. Human beings have made use of available technology of the day, and sometimes even helped bring about new technology, in order to tell stories. For example, print technology led to the popularity of the novel, the invention of video led to the cinema and a plethora of audio-visual media, animation technology is constantly invented and reinvented to make the narrative more visually appealing. Thus, technology and stories have always shared a close relationship, and at the intersection of this relationship, lies the human experience of the storytelling process.

This research tries to understand the relationship between the internet and storytelling, and between the storytellers and story-listeners in the backdrop of the ever-changing and ever-expanding internet technology. It argues that the Internet is a potent platform for storytelling which elevates the audience from passive consumers of stories, to active participants in the storytelling process itself.

Methodologically, the paper draws from original ethnographic and digital ethnographic research on webseries and internet fandoms, as well as from social and cultural theories on technology and on storytelling.

In particular, the attempt is to look at transmedia web series as a form of digital storytelling where new innovations and the nature of contemporary media make the audience co-creators of the stories they are listening to.

## Internet and storytelling

In the past few decades, digital media and the internet have pervaded almost all aspects of our lives. Smart phones, lower data prices, and easy to use technology has had an impact on all social spheres – whether it is communication systems, medicine, defence and military practices, scientific research, business and industries, marketing and consumer society, arts or entertainment. Digital media plays an increasingly major role in not only how people interact with each other, but how institutions carry out economic, social, political, governance, religious and other affairs. Hence, it should come as no surprise that the internet and related digital technologies have a huge impact on stories and the process of storytelling as well.

Today, most traditionally 'analogue' forms of stories are being delivered and experienced through digital forums – e.g. books being converted to eBook formats and being read on digital devices, music being listened to in MP3 format, and television and cinema being seen on online streaming platforms—legally and illegally. In addition to these there are a variety of narratives existing on the Internet, including, but not limited to, blogs, Twitter and Facebook narratives and microblogs, wikis, podcasts and many others. Of

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these, one of the most popular types of storytelling is ‘web-video’ or ‘web series’ on streaming platforms such as YouTube, Amazon Prime, Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar and many others.

Internet narratives are of different types and forms – some long, some short; some produced on big budgets and some with hardly any; some consistent in duration and style and some random and chaotic. The characteristics of a story on the Internet is often a product of the website or the platform, the availability of budget and infrastructure, and the creative vision of the storyteller, but it also gets majorly impacted by the response and reaction of those watching the show and other programmes like it. Thus, they “both embody and extend the kind of narrative principles we’ve seen at play in other social media” (Alexander, 2011). Stories on the Internet both build upon the existing notions of storytelling in some ways, as well as defy them in others.

One of the key scholarly works on storytelling from the field of social and cultural theory is that of Walter Benjamin. Benjamin in his essay ‘*The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov*’ (1936/2006) wrote about how with the coming of the ‘novel’, the art of storytelling was dying. He suggested that stories have three main characteristics – collectivity of experience, sensory in nature and continuity of the storytelling process. Only in a face-to-face meeting of the storyteller and listeners, where the storyteller would orally narrate their story, could storytelling occur. The listener, through his reaction and response, was an integral presence in the storytelling process. Such a story, therefore, is not finite – it is always in a continuum. The listeners grasp different parts of it, at different points of entry.

All this, according to Benjamin, was not possible in the novel as it involved an isolated reader, removed from the author and the place-time when the text was written. The arrival of the modern text silenced the voice of the storyteller, and therefore the reaction it evoked in the listeners. Information was now relayed from a distance, in an impersonal relation. Stories were finite and the readers had no role to play besides consuming them. However, the Internet technology challenges such conceptions in a major way. With the proliferation of Internet technology, it becomes possible for the audience to be in close proximity to the storyteller, even when in physically different places, thereby allowing them to participate in the storytelling process in many interesting ways.

Until the 1900s, the major form of mass media for the general public was the print, where information could be passed on to a large number of people. With

the evolution of technology, many new media forms were introduced, but the model of communication remained more or less the same – one message to the masses (Kalogeras, 2014). Radio and television both while offering more immediacy and facts in information provision, kept the same overarching mode of information distribution. Information could now reach a wider audience, and in much less time, but it was still communicated by a few people (sometimes only one, the State) to many. The arrival of the Internet disrupted this pattern and in many ways for the first time allowed the masses to have a voice.

The Internet in its present form, often referred to as Web 2.0, allows the viewers ability to respond and engage with the content they are watching in an immediate and intimate manner. The term Web 2.0 is used to indicate a difference between the Internet in its earlier form, and the Internet that exists today. At the core of this is “an apparent shift to web users as creators (rather than consumers) of content” (Page *et al.*, 2014). That is to say, with evolution of technology users of the Internet, whether software developers and end-users began to make use of the internet differently from what had been earlier – not as platform where a single user creates and publishes content, but as a space where content can be created and modified by all users and participants in collaborative manner.

With Web 2.0, there has been a shift in the focus of the Internet technologies. The primary task of computers is no longer storage and archiving of information, but to produce and create new content. It has changed from the cataloguing and chronicling of individual experiences, and has moved on to generating and producing collective experiences and connections between different people (Hansen, 2010). The focus today is not so much on making available various products using the Internet as a platform for distribution and exchange. Rather, spotlight has shifted to ‘User Generated Content’ or content that is available openly and produced by the end-users themselves and not by manufacturing companies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

This creates what has been referred to as a ‘participatory culture’ in the media. Jenkins (2008) writes that the notion of participatory media is different from the earlier existing idea of ‘passive media spectatorship’ (p-3). Here, producers and consumers are not seen as entirely different entities with clearly distinct roles. Rather they are all seen as participants in the new media environment who react to and interact with one another. The focus on the Internet as a platform of distribution and exchange has altered and so has the mindset of the user – from

a logic of consumption to the logic of ‘dialogical production’ (Deumert, 2014).

Web 2.0 enables the users to express their opinions and reactions regarding the stories they watch with an immediacy and directness which was not possible in the earlier media forms. For example, social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube and many others, allow people from different classes in society to interact, breaking traditional barriers of stratification, as long as they have access to the Internet. Most of us today, in using the Internet, are simultaneously the creators and receivers of media. And given the pervasiveness of the Internet and social media in the contemporary world, most audiences as well as filmmakers, actors, writers, directors, and other creators, are present on social media platforms. Some may participate actively and others only cursorily or not at all, but almost everyone is aware of the platforms and the discussions on them.

On the Internet the users can interact with each other, and reach out to the creators of the stories they watch without any lag in time or distance. Social media implies a ‘global immediacy’[i] and a time-space compression where the audience members can talk about their likes, dislikes, reactions and opinions on the shows among each other as well as to the producers and creators. Social Networking Sites such as YouTube, Facebook or Vine, allow people to broadcast themselves online. Participation through texts and audiovisual material has significantly thinned the traditional divide between media professionals and the general audience. By providing a certain ease in way stories are told, the Internet allows for many to become part of the storytelling process, besides the original content creators. The idea of ‘participation’, not just ‘reaction’ is one of the major characteristics of stories told on the Internet platform. This questions the usage of the terms ‘audience’ and ‘creators’, ‘experts’ and ‘ordinary people’ (Thornborrow, 2015) – or broadly put the distinction between ‘storytellers’ and ‘story listeners’.

### **Audience participation**

When audience members write a comment or post a meme on the Internet, in a way, they add to the layers of the stories in ways that the creators of the stories do not always foresee. For example, a comment on a YouTube episode of a web series remains embedded next to the video for other viewers to see. This sparks further reactions and responses, debates and discussions, and influences the others’ experiences of the story as well. Many viewers say that reading comments becomes an automatic process

for them and it leads them to think about the stories in newer ways. Some enjoy this and actively engage with the discussions, while others do not. Yet everyone becomes exposed to it – it becomes a part of the story experience.

Besides the comments on the streaming platform themselves, in many cases, the discussions also occur on many other platforms as well in the form of fan pages, blogs, discussion forums, hashtags and trends etc., all of which are accessible in a few clicks. The more active fans often follow particular pages dedicated to shows—some just to discuss the shows, some with fan-arts and creations, some humorous, some dedicated to particular members of the cast, crew or even particular characters, and some holding serious discussions regarding themes and technicalities of the shows.

It is important to note that such interaction and reaction is not limited only to the content exclusively produced to be viewed on the internet. In the current media ecology, where ultimately all media-forms make use of the Internet platforms all forms of stories (films, TV shows, novels, radio, and many others) are now discussed and promoted on the Internet. However, audience participation with internet narratives differs in some key ways. In a very basic way, to have the content and the viewer engagement on the same platform provides a kind of simultaneity and presence to the audience reaction that is not possible for other stories on other media types. For example, in a web series, the audience comments and reactions are in the same place as the story, or only a single click away. This allows the audience to be closer to the actual storytelling process both in space and time.

Active audience participation and interaction have two important dimensions— first, they often inspire creativity and activity regarding the shows which acquire a life of their own beyond the original narrative intended by the creators, and the second, they are often used and encouraged by the producers to advertise and create hype about their stories, and to get feedback. Jenkins and Deuze (2008) write that the ‘democratisation’ of media on the one hand allows a large number of people from grassroots and marginalised sections the opportunity to tell their stories and listen to stories being told by others, to debate and discuss and share information with people across the globe. On the other hand, it allows media companies to try and co-opt for themselves all of these spaces for themselves. For example, YouTube gives space to smaller creators with little to no budget to create and broadcast their stories which can become huge hits. At the same time, it also provides space

to dominant media organisations and companies and allows them to expand even further.

For producers, fan engagement and activity is an easy way of promotion and advertising their products. It also helps get audience feedback and orient the stories accordingly. Streaming platforms such as Netflix have active social media accounts where they not only promote new shows by posting updates and information, but also run polls, answer questions, post pictures and videos to generate audience's interest and engage them. Films, television shows, even books and novels are now all promoted on the Internet. Today, big budget films have main actors collaborate with popular YouTube channels and Instagram pages. The accessibility of these platforms provide a wide reach to the films. Not only content creators on the web, but producers on television and radio too encourage interactive audience participation through texting, emails and internet forums blending the Internet into the existing formats such as Television debates and phone-in programmes on the radio.

Benjamin pointed out that a story is a non-linear and unbroken process, without any fixed beginning or end. He equated the story with a fairytale, which may have multiple starting points, different sub-plots and characters, all of which constitute an overarching single story. The Internet allows for signs and symbols to be re-articulated into different contexts and travel from one point to another in such a way that no story can actually be seen as finite. Motifs, themes, symbols and references are constantly borrowed from one context to another, making the storytelling process a continuum. Fan-art, memes, fan-fiction, etc. all are ways in which stories on the Internet are constantly being added to even if the original number of episodes may be limited. Memes allow for a certain moment within a story to be rearticulated in entirely new contexts, acquiring meanings of their own. Similarly, fan-art and videos or fan-fiction borrow elements from the original text, but go on to build new story-worlds of their own.

Sometimes, these are acknowledged by the creators through their social media accounts through 'likes' or 'shares'. In most cases, however, even without the blessings of the producers, fan-made content acquires a life of its own among the fan communities and audiences. Sometimes, they manage to garner a huge support and significance among the fan communities that they become a significant part of the stories for a lot of people. For example, *A Very Potter Musical* (2009)[ii], a parody musical or *Potter Puppet Pals: The Mysterious Ticking Noise* (2007) [iii], a comedy music video created using puppets

have acquired such popularity in the *Harry Potter* fan-community that they become quoted in the fan discussions often, and sometimes are even referred to in official events. Thus, the web, through its ever-sprawling system of networks and hyperlinks, allows stories to continue beyond the finite episodes or texts of the original.

To further show how the audience of an Internet story can become a part of the storytelling process, we shall examine in detail what has popularly come to be known as transmedia or multiplatform storytelling.

### **Transmedia webseries and audience participation**

The popular BBC show *Sherlock*, an adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective novels Sherlock Holmes set in current day London, is shown to be armed with not only brilliant deductive powers as in the original novels, but also with the digital tools that modern technology affords. He makes use of smartphones and the internet, online data-bases and search filters. Stein and Busse (2010) say that this dependence on internet protocols and search engines in a way "digital logics become cultural logics become personal logics" (p-11). Not only are various digital tools integrated into the show itself, both Sherlock and Watson are given actual blogs on the Internet, where articles were posted by the characters of a very different nature and on which audience members could comment and interact.[iv] This kind of storytelling, where multiple platforms are being used in the performance of a single continual story, is known as transmedia storytelling.

The term 'transmedia storytelling' was first introduced by Henry Jenkins in 2003, and in very simple terms refers to stories that make use of multiple media platforms. Scholari (2009) defines transmedia storytelling as "a particular narrative structure that expands through both different languages (verbal, iconic, etc.) and media (cinema, comics, television, video games, etc.)" (p-587)). It is not merely the adaptation of one form into another. Rather "the different media and languages participate and contribute to the construction of the transmedia narrative world" (Scholari, 2009). Many similar terms are also used to indicate this phenomenon – cross-media, multimedia, multimodality, intertextual commodities etc.

This interflow and circulation of content in various media platforms and systems, competing and cooperating with each other, across economic, political and national borders depends on the active participation of the consumers (Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins



speaks of a convergent media which brings about changes in patterns of media ownership, the logic and principles of operation of the media industries, the roles and activities of producers and consumers. It implies a move away from “medium specific content towards content that flows across multiple media channels, towards the increased interdependence of communications systems, towards multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture”(p-243).

Transmedia storytelling emerges as a style of stories told on the Internet in this backdrop of a culture of media convergence. To define very loosely, transmedia is anything that transcends a single media platform. As discussed above, almost all forms of storytelling make use of the multiple Internet platforms in some way or the other. Thus, people define transmedia differently, and consider many different kinds of web series as transmedia web series.

Kalogeras (2014) points out five ways in which media convergence encourages transmedia storytelling. Firstly, the new media ecology encourages the digitisation of content not only on the Internet, but all kinds of media formats. This allows the content to flow across different platforms easily. This is the technological influence of convergence culture that helps transmedia storytelling. Secondly, the economic influence is that media convergence allows for integration of different elements of the entertainment industry in a horizontal manner, instead of the hierarchical domination of one part over others. For example, as discussed in the examples above, YouTube and the film industry can exist in a symbiotic relationship, instead of domination of one over the other. Thirdly it allows the consumers to multitask and interact across various platforms. This Kalogeras says in the social influence of convergence. Fourthly, its cultural impact is that it allows for the growth of a participatory culture which supports technological tools and the ability to recreate and rearticulate content. Finally, at a global level media convergence enables a wide circulation of content and through that promotes the flow and intermixing of cultural categories as well.

Different shows make use of transmedia in different manners to support their stories, and different people understand transmedia in different ways. For some, promoting the show and informing regarding the release of new episodes available on one platform, say Netflix or Amazon Prime, on other platforms such as Twitter or Facebook constituted transmedia. For others providing information regarding the ‘behind

the scenes’ activities, interviews with the cast and crew, information regarding the thought process or making of the show, is part of transmedia. Some people consider the availability of the same shows on various platforms as transmedia, where the same product can be seen on two different platforms. Yet others find specific kinds of stories, where the same story is told partially on one platform, and partially on another platform as transmedia. An example of the last type is *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

*The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a web series produced by US based production company Pemberley Digital and first posted on YouTube in 2012[v]. It is a ‘vlog’-style adaptation of Jane Austen’s popular novel *Pride and Prejudice* in a web series. A vlog or a Video-Blog is where people talk about themselves, their lives, interests, opinions etc. on the internet. Like a blog where people write about their lives and opinions and then post on the internet for others to read, comment and discuss, a vlog has people post videos of themselves talking to the people on the internet, their audience. The series is presented as a vlog created by Lizzie Bennet, the protagonist. The show follows her making videos talking about her life to the camera (and the audience) and putting out those videos on her YouTube channel. The story plays out on these videos, where she is joined by friends and family members, talking about major events in their lives that unravel the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*.

What made LBD different from the several other adaptations and spin-offs of the novel was that the story was told not only through the YouTube videos, but also using social media platforms. All main characters in the show were given social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook, through which the characters interacted with each other as well as with the viewers. A substantial part of the story was told through these interactions, which allowed the audience to get a deeper insight into the characters and take a look at the story from multiple perspectives.

For example, the webseries gives the character Lydia a much wider arc than the novel. The character had her vlogs on a separate YouTube channel, twitter and facebook accounts. Here, the character presented her point of view which was contradictory to the protagonist’s. She interacted frequently with the audience members, which encouraged more and more people to comment and engage on the social media platforms. The audience actively offered advice and opinions to the character, sometimes criticised the actions and sometimes justified them. Sometimes, they used their knowledge of the novel to make predictions and forewarn the characters about certain

events and characters. During a particular story arc where Lizzie and Lydia were not talking to each other in the story, the audience would try to let them know of the other's perspectives and get them to talk again. The audience support for the character was so much that the makers had to change the character's storyline from that in the novel and give her a happier ending.

The makers of the show in many places have acknowledged that the audience had a role to play in many changes in the story. Bernie Su, one of the creators of the show said in an interview spoke about how they would often change the dialogues based on something they would see in a comment or tweet. Su said –

Sometimes I would just sit there on a Saturday, not doing anything and watch the tweets go out, and become paranoid. I would sometimes jump in and pull out the script. Sometimes turn it into a reply to an audience member... I did that a lot. Or change the text, or change the script a little bit, or change the timings [vi].

Su and other makers of the show have in many interviews indicated how social media engagement meant a continuously changing and evolving script based on audience reaction and interaction. Interestingly, the characters would also acknowledge the comments by the audience not only on social media, but in the videos themselves, thereby integrating the different platforms completely in the storytelling process. The characters would also do 'question and answer' videos in which they would answer questions from the audience and try to integrate the questions within the storyline. Kate Rorick, the one of the writers of the show said that one of her favourite episodes to write for was the episode in which the character Mary was introduced as a character because she was introduced as a fan and that allowed them to bring in the perspective of the audience into the show and address opinions and questions that were frequently asked among the audience members [vii].

*The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is one of many examples of web series that inspired huge fan activity and engagement. The show went on to win the Emmy Award for 'Outstanding Creative Achievement In Interactive Media – Original Interactive Program' (2013). The show had a huge impact on Internet-based storytelling and led to many similar shows where classics of English literature were adapted into vlog style shows – for example, *Emma Approved* (adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*), *Nothing Much to Do* (adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Much*

*Ado About Nothing*), *Frankenstein MD* (adaptation of Marry Shelly's *Frankenstein*), *Green Gables Fables* (adaptable of L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gable's* series) and many others. *Green Gables Fables* interestingly adapted the entire second book of the series as Twitter and Instagram posts and comments, while the first and the later books were adapted into vlog style videos combined with social media engagement.

All of these stories used similar formats – they were modern day adaptations of classic stories, which had one or more of the primary characters vlogging on YouTube and thereby, directly speaking to the camera and audience. An illusion of reality was created by giving the characters social media accounts, which were used to address parts of the story which were not brought out on the vlog. Bernie Su in his interview said they had to give the characters such detailed online presence to make the story world look much more real, so that the audience is more invested in the story. "YouTubers are not only present on YouTube, they are on Twitter, Facebook, everything"[viii].

In most cases, the audience was aware that this was a story being told and not a real tale. However, interestingly, they enjoy playing along the story and maintaining the illusion of the story. The most common response, received from fans of such web series regarding what they like the most about the transmedia elements, is that they enjoyed talking to the characters. While in the increasingly socio-digitised world, creators and actors in all forms of media are present on social media and can interact with fans, transmedia tales of this kind are the only ones where the character is directly accessible to the fans.

Fans of the shows speak about how an interaction with a character "feels like you are interacting with real people and getting to enjoy their stories in real time". Many say that this adds to the depth of the story and makes it appear more "realistic". In most cases they willingly suspend the disbelief and participate in the illusion through comments, tweets, posts, advice, etc. thereby helping create the "fictional truth"[ix]. The audience in this case is the listener of the story, but also the storytellers in that they add to the story-world and narrative itself through their creative faculties. As one of the fans puts it –

It feels like you are part of the story. You are the audience, but you are also a part of the creative team. You are an actor who is playing a part, a character in the story. Watching a story in this manner becomes a creative process.

Web 2.0 allows the audience to become part of the storytelling process. At the heart of Web 2.0 lay the idea of the users who are participants in the production process, rather than simply consumers (O' Reilly, 2012). While audience participation and engagement on the Internet occurs for all types of storytelling from cinema to radio, to television, to novels as discussed above, the direct impact of the audience on storytelling becomes most obvious in webseries, particularly transmedia web series. A very interesting example of this was the transmedia experiment done by the *Shipwrecked Comedy* in their series *Kissing in The Rain* (2014)[x].

The webseries was a total of twelve episodes with four primary characters, who were film actors in the story. Each episode was partially a scene from a movie they were supposed to be filming and partially an interaction between the actors when the scene is cut. The transmedia experiment allowed the fans of the story to write in their stories or fan-fiction about what they thought would happen among the characters outside of the episodes – in a way filling in the missing details in the story. Yulin Kuang, the director and show-runner of the web series announced in a blog post on Tumblr that the creators would be reposting some of the works created by the fans in the form of stories, fan-mixes etc. with the hashtags '#kitr' and '#shipstersftw'. Posts that were re-posted by the team would be considered as 'canon' or part of the original story. Kuang wrote –

Together, we created our own headcanon that worked within our larger story arc. Which brings me to the point of this post - I think we can continue this collaboratively written headcanon over the course of the series, integrating fanfiction and fan-created content in a way that hasn't quite been done before [xi].

Being reposted by the creators gave legitimacy to their work and authorship in the story. This sense of ownership over the story allowed the audience to feel part of the storytelling process and encouraged audience engagement and participation in the show tremendously. Participation in the storytelling process, and that being recognised by the creators, or even a section of the fan-community can be empowering. Audience members speak about how it feels like they have a say in the story being told, that they could make a change if needed. Whether this actually be the case or not, this notion of the Internet giving a voice to the previously voiceless users is a common feeling among the audience.

Audience becoming part of the storytelling

process meant that the relationship between the audience and the creators changes substantially. Such experiments in some areas, the ability of fans to reach to creators via social media, the easy access to creative tools on the Internet means that even in cases where active participation is not sought by the makers, there is always a potential for it. It means that the audiences continue to follow the shows, but not simply as consumers, rather from the position of a possible collaborator. It also means that the story continues to unravel much beyond what was being actually presented by the creators.

Such experiments and activities help the producers increase interest in the show and garner more attention, at very little cost. It helps build a steady fan-base with audience members who become invested in not only the storylines, but the storytelling process itself. The audience experiences the story, not by consuming a complete product, but in the process of participating in the various parts of the process. Thus, the experiences of all audiences are also not the same depending on which parts of the story they have access to and experience. Some viewers actively engage with shows creating fan-fictions and art, some limit themselves to comments and discussions, some prefer only following the content without personally adding to it, and yet others do not even follow all the different elements of the story and prefer to look at only parts of it. For example, some of the respondents complain that they are not able to follow all the transmedia elements, as following all of the content in different platforms was difficult to keep tab on. Or when they are not active on one of the social media platforms that are used in the story, they might tend to miss out on parts of the story.

To address these issues, the producers often try to give links to all the different platforms at the same place. However, it depends from user to user whether they want to follow the additional links or not. Some are happy to simply follow the video stories, and not engage with the social media elements. When the audience gets the choice to participate, they get the autonomy to not participate as well. Wyatt (2015) talks about how non-users also matter in understanding the mood and temperament of the audience as they raise questions regarding inequality and deprivation, but also regarding voluntary rejection of technology.

Therefore, not only does web series allow for different points of views in the characters, but different members of the audience can have different experiences because they view a part of the show, which is also a whole in itself. The story is like an ever-expanding entity, growing in all directions. The

audiences can only get access to one segment at a time, some more than others, but none the complete thing. And depending on the parts they access their experience of the story and the storytelling process differs.

Thus, we can see that the introduction of transmedia brings into view very clearly how stories on the Internet are also a continual and never-ending process as had been described by Walter Benjamin for oral face to face storytelling. It allows for exploring subplots and parallel tracks simultaneously and in a continuum with the story in video format through transmedia elements such as blog posts, use of social media etc. It helps break the monopoly of only face-to-face oral conversations as storytelling. In doing all of this, it not only questions a narrow definition of stories as put forward by Benjamin, but it also begins to re-imagine the concept of storytelling itself as a process which is collaborative and participatory.

### **Story-listeners as storytellers**

If we come to redefine storytelling as a participatory process, we begin to look at the category of creator and audience in a new light as well. Many scholars of new media argue that the term ‘audience’ does not do justice to the participating user in this new media scenario. Rossen (2012) refers to them as ‘the people formerly known as the audience’. He says –

The people formerly known as the audience are those who were on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another—and who today are not in a situation like that at all (Rossen, 2012).

This group of people who watch and engage with stories are not passive consumers. To use Toffler’s term, they are ‘prosumers’ – they are invested with a creative and productive power (Toffler, 1980). It is a complex mix of viewers and commenters, creators and participants from all across the world, cutting across various professional and amateur roles, belonging to different social, economic, and political categories – all having different positions, access and experience of the stories, and thereby all reacting differently (Alexander, 2011).

The engagement and participation from such an active audience influences the production creation of the story itself, where in its form or content. Like listeners and their feedback impacts a storyteller telling a story orally, similarly, on the digital platform

as well reactions and responses of the audiences has an impact on the story being told. However, here, the impact extends much further than simply feedback. The response and reaction becomes part of the story and the storytelling process itself.

While in transmedia web series this participation becomes the most obvious, in all other forms of storytelling the audience members increasingly get an access to become part of the storytelling process through their engagement with the stories, with the creators, and with other audiences online. The audience members write comments, trend hashtags, make fan videos and podcasts, write stories about missing gaps and alternative universes. The producers in their turn give differential value to the responses of the audience members. In some cases, the creators engage heavily with the viewers, individually responding and interacting. In other cases they engage only sporadically, keeping an eye out for general reactions on storylines, technicalities, etc. In other cases, they engage actively, interacting with the viewers, responding to queries, reposting pictures and memes, sometimes even granting authorship.

Benjamin had argued that the shared experiences of the storytellers and listeners were fundamental to the process of storytelling. What he did not realise that there could be ways of sharing experiences even if the storytellers and listeners were not in the same room. If storytelling is to be seen as a basic human activity, where people make and share meanings with each other, the engagement of the listener becomes essential to the process. In such an understanding of storytelling, the listener is an essential part of the storytelling process. In the process of storytelling, the “audience is a crucial definitional component, simply because what makes a story for one group might fail utterly for another” (Alexander, 2011).

The Internet as a medium has not only impacted the way people participate and interact in their interpersonal communications, but has also had a significant impact on the relationship between the content creators, broadcasters and the audiences. Digital technology impacts the process of production of stories, as well as their consumption – altering storytelling from a unidirectional process to an interactive one. Storytelling on Web 2.0 is no longer one monopolised by few, to be transmitted to many. It is now a process in which several people participate and engage in. The audience is no longer simply listeners or consumers of the stories. They are co-creators and collaborators.



## Endnotes

- [i] John Tomilson (2008) gave the concept of ‘global immediacy’, suggesting that the Internet enables a simultaneity of action across the globe, without lags in space and time. On the one hand, they allow for rapid transfer of information, goods and services, thereby leading to quickening the speed of everyday life of people or a ‘culture of instantaneity’. At the same time, it also provides modes of direct and more intimate communication between people, bridging geographical and physical distance, seemingly squeezing space – that is, a ‘culture of proximity’. The immediacy of the digital age has become the accepted norm in the communication practices in everyday social life.
- [ii] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmm\\_AKeMck&list=PLC76BE906C9D83A3A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmm_AKeMck&list=PLC76BE906C9D83A3A)
- [iii] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxIXIm6q4r4>
- [iv] <http://www.johnwatsonblog.co.uk/>
- [v] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KisuGP2lcPs&list=PL\\_ePodU-b3xcDyyzeR5NjxeLEElSqYzn1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KisuGP2lcPs&list=PL_ePodU-b3xcDyyzeR5NjxeLEElSqYzn1)
- [vi] <https://thepemberleypodcast.wordpress.com/2018/07/18/episode-eighty-six-an-interview-with-bernie-su/>
- [vii] <https://thepemberleypodcast.podbean.com/e/54-an-interview-with-kate-rorick/>
- [viii] <https://thepemberleypodcast.wordpress.com/2018/07/18/episode-eighty-six-an-interview-with-bernie-su/>
- [ix] The concept of ‘fictional truth’ indicates that while fiction by its very definition is not real, it has to be close to reality to a certain extent for it to become interesting to the readers. Michael Riffaterre writes that fiction is not an accurate representation of any actual facts or events that may have taken place. Nor does the interest or quality of fiction depend on whether it is a true depiction of reality. ‘Rather, truth in fiction rests on verisimilitude, a system of representations that seems to reflect a reality external to the text, but only because it conforms to a grammar’ (Riffaterre 1990: xiii–xiv).
- [x] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Pf36pfaA9k&list=PLs2T\\_dNZ-W7q7eqkRL1VXBiyAC\\_5VXRW](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Pf36pfaA9k&list=PLs2T_dNZ-W7q7eqkRL1VXBiyAC_5VXRW)
- [xi] <https://shipwreckedcomedy.tumblr.com/post/73377778916/kissing-in-the-rain-inverse-fanfiction-and-an>

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# Changing Narrative of Indian Television Advertising during COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

Worldwide known as COVID-19, the novel coronavirus has given rise to unprecedented economic and public health issues which are likely to change the way advertising industry works in the future. Both audiences and brands are adapting to a new normal, and this has significantly been reflected in television advertisement themes. As a result of proactive messaging regarding precautions for COVID-19 prevention, the number of advertisements categories around the subject has also increased. This study aims to explore how brands can help consumers focus on their health and wellness issues. To analyze the changing narrative of creative advertising strategies to address health-communication issues during pandemic, the researchers have analyzed the content of Indian television commercials which have modified their messages to spread awareness about the pandemic.

**Key Words:** Health communication, COVID-19, Television advertising, Pandemic, Advertising narratives, Community health.

## Introduction

As the world prepares to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, many countries and companies prepare to discourage crowded gathering by encouraging people to do work-from-home. It is unavoidable that these measures are having a noticeable effect on the narrative of advertising. COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease-2019), new and novel disease spread from Wuhan, China, through recent coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Huang *et al.*, 2020). COVID-19 has been declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Human beings are the main source of SARS CoV 2 transmission through human-to-human interactions and if any infected person with mild or no symptoms comes into contact with a healthy person (Kratzel *et al.*, 2020). Due to this outbreak, the WHO has recommended preventive steps and a balanced lifestyle with an effective immune system to battle and remain safe from COVID-19 in the current scenario. This study attempts to analyze how the narrative of advertising has changed during the pandemic period. The advertisements of these brands have a two-fold advantage which includes bringing awareness about the pandemic and the brand connects with the present situation.

This has led to unprecedented economic and public-health concerns, which will likely transform business operations, and how they will sustain and grow their brand as well as the customer base. Further, central to this concern is how businesses

attract consumers and promote their products and services.

By keeping COVID-19 in mind, business advertising, marketing campaigns and promotional practices will be a core focus of their ability to thrive in the future. About 81% of major multinationals are postponing their respective planned campaigns and more than half (57%) are cutting spend (World Federation of Advertisers, 2020). Although the sudden economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 crisis has pushed companies and institutions to rethink their strategies and budgets, the literature shows that marketing and advertising are an important part of crisis communication (Ritchie *et al.*, 2004). If there is one thing the COVID-19 outbreak has shown us, it is that markets are dynamic in nature (Jaworski *et al.*, 2000).

At present, there are only a few pieces of research that exhibit the role of advertising during the pandemics like COVID-19. These researches will be instrumental in shedding light on the essence of the existing COVID-19-related awareness advertising campaign, as well as these will be helpful in directing future research on what information should be used and how the advertisement should convey it.

Researchers believe that mass media's primary function in health problems is to raise awareness of health issues among the public. According to them, no other communication tool has similar mass media credibility in bringing crucial information to the masses more effectively than the television advertisements.

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Global pandemic coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has contributed to shifts in advertisement, marketing, promotion and media spending, forcing companies and brands to re-evaluate their thinking about current and potential advertising and considering the same marketing campaigns to maintain a stable revenue stream.

It is challenging for the advertising agencies to face the challenge of navigating through creative practices in the new normal. To brands, this means engaging with market shifts due to the economic effect on all sectors of industry; facing intensified competition despite the new normal of customers and society; addressing sustainability; evaluating organizational opportunities and followed by the challenges raised by strategic planning in an atmosphere of uncertainty; examining brand image issues and finding possible new products and services.

As the COVID-19 pandemic occurs, brands must be tactful, engage in careful marketing and behave empathically towards the suffering of customers. Brands must understand the crisis while continuously representing positive values to keep the customers coming back for more. This can be achieved by modifying marketing campaigns and content of the message, reviewing the vocabulary and imagery used in the advertisements and marketing materials. The study will be significant in examining how the brands may tackle customer safety and well-being issues. Both audiences and brands are adjusting to the new normal, and that is reflected in the themes of television advertisements. The number of categories of ads around the subject has also risen as a result of proactive messaging regarding precautions for COVID-19 prevention.

Pre-pandemic campaigns prepared may no longer be sufficient, as customers are clamouring for information on how to tackle the outbreak and at the same time how to remain healthy. This includes details about how brands react to COVID-19. Brands which continued to advertise throughout the pandemic shall be worried about their commercials appearing against coronavirus.

The present study attempts to analyze the changing narrative of creative advertising strategies to address health-communication issues during the pandemic through case study methodology. The researchers have analyzed the content of Indian television commercials which have modified their messages to spread awareness about the pandemic.

### **Pandemic and products**

In the current times, advertising demand is

decreasing, according to industry analysts, except for categories such as wellness, safety and hygiene. Although ads are next to zero for travel agencies, hotels and restaurants, these essential commodities have taken over TV screens, newspapers and magazines. Some corporations are cutting their spending on ads while some brands are doubling it to highlight their response to COVID-19 along with their products.

Our lives, as human beings in a modern world, seem to be more focused on comfort than on thinking about what could happen in the future. Growing sales of cleaning goods have also taken place, and more waste is being recycled. This is an indicator that what is happening to us and our habits are becoming complexed, and it will be important to research such phenomenon further. People have also modified their eating patterns, hygiene practices, and their overall well-being, as they spend more time in homes. Hence, industries that are doing well are those related to healthcare and well-being.

Coronavirus pandemic has brought a shortage of hand sanitizers all around the world (Suthivarakom, 2020). Ever since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, the number of scientists, doctors and government have advised people about the importance of best hygiene practices and protect them from the risk of COVID-19 by using hand sanitizers (Morgan, 2020). Demand for sanitizers, Nielsen said, surged to 87% during 10-14 April from 58% between 17 and 19 March. The category is expected to grow at an annual rate of 10-15% over the next five years (Dsouza, 2020).

Sanitizers, disinfectants, health and well-being products have an immense role to play at times when most businesses and brand experts say that they can hold the hysteria down and, of course, make some business profits in the process at the same time.

The current pandemic has seriously affected health and well-being of each and every person. Loss of life was associated with loss of livelihoods – all of which were devastating in their way. These both have crippling health and morale impact. Evidence and experience from the beginning indicate that epidemics frequently trigger negative psychological responses in humans.

Building immunity is one of the major focuses of wellness products offerings. One of the key defenses against COVID-19 is getting patients to develop a good level of immunity so it may help battle the infection. In the quest to strengthen the body against infections and invasions, many home remedies, many magic formulae, many wonder foods may be

tried out. COVID-19 and social distancing compelled customers about rethinking their wellness patterns and it has reflected in their purchasing preferences. Hence, buying immune supplements seen a noticeable upsurge. In difficult times like these, beginning the right conversation with their customers has become incredibly important for wellness brands. Similar trends can be seen in the immunity booster products which claim to provide wholesome wellness to the customers.

In recent campaigns by most health and hygiene brands, dissemination of the right information has become the point of communication.

### Pandemic and brands

Several brands in hygiene and wellness product categories have seen a surge in their advertising with messages focusing on providing protection against the COVID-19. The health emergency has determined the big and small brands to put aside the traditional purpose of selling in their advertising and replaced it with the awareness and support in the fight against COVID-19 particularly in more emotional and appealing way. Some have adapted their conventional logo to the emergency showcasing the brand's stand against COVID-19 (Palau, 2020).

The pandemic has tremendously changed the consumer behaviour and needs. There is an exponential increase in demand for health and hygiene brands. Consumers are looking for both safety and supply assurance. With lockdown coming into effect in the last week of March, April-June period saw the entry of new brands in the TV advertisement space as well as an increase in advertisement volumes by 12 brands out of 87. For instance, ad volume of Rin Detergent Cake grew by 53% in April-June 2020 as compared to January-March 2020. Similarly, Lifebuoy range registered 55% growth in ad volumes for the same period. Meanwhile, Lifebuoy Hand Sanitizer, Vaseline Skin Care Products, Domex, to name a few, advertised during the April-June 2020 period, while these brands were absent in January-March 2020 period. ("Hindustan Unilever emerged as the biggest spender during April-June 2020" 2020).

Lifebuoy was one of the first brands to start a campaign around coronavirus. The brand released a public service announcement with a clear guideline in most dailies in January 2020. One of the ads read: "This is not an ad. This is a public service message". It then went on to describe the different ways to kill the coronavirus and finished with advertising the brand's hand sanitizer. Hindustan Unilever's (HUL)

hygiene brand Lifebuoy has been encouraging the use of hand sanitizers to stay away from possible virus threats. HUL first released a public service print advertisement reminding people to regularly wash their hands with soap, to use alcohol-based sanitizers, gloves and masks. It was lauded widely for its influential messaging as it mentioned in the campaign about its key competitors like Lux, Dettol, Santoor and Godrej No. 1 and asked people to buy whatever soap they had access to.

As the world is grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, Dettol has launched a new campaign to raise awareness about the value of handwashing. Pee Safe also launched a sub-brand named Raho Safe, another hygienic brand. Among other items, Pee Safe put out personal care products such as hand sanitizers and multi-surface preservatives.

The Surf Excel #DaagGharPeRahenge campaign by Unilever created using stills and seven-year-old Grishma Mohan's narration that motivated children to stay at home with a message they that can grasp: "The slide, the ride, the playground can wait for us- if we're just staying home for a few days".

Reckitt Benckiser also made commercials for items such as Moov- "working from home could give you aches", the company promoted the use of Moov along with yoga and meditation.

Main healthcare brands like Dabur Chyawanprash, ImmunoDab and Giloy Ghanwati have been conducting informative campaigns to raise awareness about staying safe against these diseases. They also organized a Q&A session, particularly for mothers, with ayurvedic physicians on digital media platforms to answer their Coronavirus concerns and how to protect their families from it.

Popular Indian dairy brand, Amul released a series of messages that urged people to wash their hands, greet others using the *namaste*, promoting no-contact practices and work-from-home. Hence, from the above narratives it can be summarized that the television advertising scenario in India is witnessing the change in giving awareness about protecting oneself from COVID-19.

### Objectives

1. To study how brands are addressing consumer concerns about health, wellness, community as well as personal fulfilment and its meaning.
2. To find out how brands promote a product or service during the COVID-19 crisis in a way that resonates with consumers.



3. To examine the change in narratives of the advertising content of brands in addressing the fear of pandemic.

### Review of literature

Different studies have been carried out which highlight the role of advertising during the pandemic and the appeals which have been used in the advertising message. Behavioural changes related to the pandemic outbreaks seemed to be connected with personal protection (Funk *et al.*, 2009), such as the use of face masks, rather than general behaviour changes.

It is important to adapt to personal hygiene where one of the WHO's best advices is to regularly wash or sanitize hands with soap or > 60% alcoholic hand sanitizer. The WHO has proposed alcohol-based formulations for hand hygiene in healthcare to sanitize the hands and minimize coronavirus spread and infection (WHO, 2020).

A new study by Berlin Cameron/Perksy states that many young consumers think that advertisers will play a constructive role in the COVID-19 crisis (Taylor, 2020). It is common to note that the CSR focused more on promotional appeals during the pandemic; research on the efficacy of different forms of appeal (e.g. public health, employee welfare, first responders honouring, charity donations) can be carried out using proven theoretical frameworks (Schaefer *et al.*, 2020).

It is also interesting to analyze various factors including company/message match, confidence in the advertiser and authenticity (Bergkvist & Taylor, 2016; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2019). In the wake of the pandemic, the emphasis on advertising using emotional appeals is likely to be greater. Research into the role of emotion in advertising production and the effectiveness of emotional appeals is therefore warranted. It may also be possible to evaluate artificial intelligence systems in a digital environment that can be used to programme a variety of messages based on user characteristics and behaviours (Cardona, 2018).

### Research methodology

The present study aims to analyze how advertising narratives have changed addressing the big drift in lifestyle that happened during this pandemic crisis. Consumers have become more serious about personal and social hygiene in their lives and their well-being. The case study has been used to study the changes in advertising narrative of two product categories: hygiene products and well-being products. The Dettol brand has been studied under hygiene products and Dabur Chyawanprash under wellness products. The

qualitative case study is a research methodology that encourages the investigation of a phenomenon using a variety of data sources within its context. It means that the problem is not explored through one lens, but rather through several lenses that make it possible to expose and appreciate various dimensions of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). To examine whether the viewers were able to observe the change in the advertising messages during COVID-19, Focus Group Interview techniques were used. The purpose was to understand how viewers comprehended the changes in the advertising messages.

### Case study

Qualitative research is useful in an emerging empirical context (Wittel *et al.*, 2020). The case study methodology is used which is an important qualitative research method to critically analyze how COVID-19 has brought about the change in the narrative of television advertising. The case study of two leading brands in the product categories of hygiene and wellness has been conducted. According to Bandura (1977), your social environment influences your choices. The pandemic has a massive impact on our social environment and its visible impact can be seen on the brand preference of the consumers. Dettol has been critically analyzed under the hygiene brand category and Dabur Chyawanprash has been examined under the wellness category providing immunity to customers to fight against coronavirus.

### Case study I: Dettol television commercial

Washing hands with soap has become even more relevant and necessary as we deal with a coronavirus pandemic. The need for hand hygiene is emphasized by the doctors, leading health experts and medical associations across the world. Nielsen's data showed that among the growth in various FMCG categories, the most prominent one has been for the hand sanitizer from 11% in the period between November 2019 and January 2020 to 53% in February 2020 (Nair & Bapna, 2020). As the global COVID-19 pandemic is getting severe in India, Dettol has leveraged the issue and launched the campaign on the platform that has a significant number of users. The doctors, leading health experts and medical associations, the world over, are stressing on the need for hand hygiene (Brand Equity, 2020).

Dettol is a popular brand which produces antiseptic and disinfectant products. The company was founded in 1933 and the business was operated by a British-Dutch corporation named Reckitt-Benckiser. The Dettol was developed in the earlier times to clean the skin cuts and

wounds to avoid infection. For almost the first 50 years, Dettol was present as an antiseptic liquid. Although it was being used in hospitals and nursing homes for first aid and disinfectant uses like cleaning wards, washing linen, etc., consumers were also using it for bathing, mopping, shaving and other secondary purposes. While it started its journey as the 'cuts and wounds' brand in the country, over the years, it had taken over the role of 'protector from germs' in every situation. Now it has a wide range of products such as soap, hand washing, sanitizers, gels, and shaving cream. Reckitt Benckiser's Dettol is a household product, with immense value for recall and goodwill.

The outbreak of COVID-19 shifted the people's mindset in such a way that they believe they are only using sanitizers to avoid COVID-19 virus and stay healthier. As compared to pre-COVID-19 times, the use of Dettol and other products has increased. The company's old face still has a disinfectant and antiseptic solution but now the company is also changing its approach.

There are many brands available in the current market such as Savlon, Lifebuoy, and even Asian paints has also begun producing sanitizers, these brands are newly introduced, but the Dettol brand sales are not affected. Reckitt Benckiser registered the highest advertising volumes post-lockdown in week 16 (12 to 28 April, 2020) with 562 hours of advertisement volumes. Similarly, week 24 (7 to 13 June, 2020) recorded more than three-fold growth in ad volumes, as the brands increased its ad insertions from 149 hours in week 23 to 491 hours in week 24 ("Hindustan Unilever emerged as the biggest spender during April-June 2020", 2020).

Before the pandemic, Dettol's campaign focused on launching Dettol co-created with Moms, a range of bathing soaps and hand washings designed to keep consumer preferences in mind. With this announcement, Dettol has developed an entirely new space, with a range of products that have mom-approved ingredients.

### **Advertising narrative by Dettol during COVID-19**

To convey the importance of personal hygiene to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the germ protection brand Dettol launched a new ad film. It used simple illustrative graphics on how washing hands with soap keeps the germs away during the lockdown and talks about maintaining precautions like social distancing. The advertisement film was made by McCann India. Gaurav Jain, SVP, RB Health South Asia, comments, "In a difficult environment, Dettol as India's trusted germ protection brand, has to shape the right personal

hygiene habits. Handwashing with any soap is an easily accessible and highly effective method to prevent the spread of the germs and viruses. Towards this, Prasoon and McCann India did a great job by shooting this innovatively and responsibly-keeping the thought of "social distancing" front and centre". I extend my heartfelt thanks to them to be able to get this important message out in this time of need" (Campaign India, 2020).

According to Athukorala (2012), what makes Dettol brand unique is its advertisements that show how Dettol attacks the germs which ordinarily the naked eye won't see. The Dettol's tagline "be 100% confident" gives the consumer a safe feeling, and the company has assured that Dettol will continue to fight COVID-19 virus. Dettol is the inexpensive brand for the consumers and it is very easy to use.

With three milestones, Dettol has launched the initiative. The first was to encourage people to use soap or hand sanitizer to clean their hands. Second, show the right way to wash your hands, and third, show the appropriate time, that is, 20 seconds. With these goals in mind, several advertisements are made through collaboration with Bollywood celebrities. Lara Dutta, Shikhar Dhawan and Neha Dhupia were some of the stars who had been washing their hands with Dettol soap. The celebrities themselves shared their images and edited their videos together to make a commercial, thus ensuring that social distancing and other instructions for lockdown were followed. Dettol had also launched social media challenges on TikTok, a video-sharing social networking mobile app to raise awareness about washing hands for 20 seconds- a preventive measure recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Hence, we can say that the narrative of Dettol advertisement has been changed in the COVID-19 scenario. Its advertisements are communicating health issues effectively and at the same time successfully boosting their sales. The Dettol's growth trend had been steady over the years. During the pandemic, there had been an acceleration in its growth, and with the right strategies in place, it could leverage the growth momentum it had built in the recent past. The brand can look forward to various advertising strategies and initiatives that will help it to increase hygiene awareness amongst its consumers.

### **Case study II: Dabur Chyawanprash television advertisement**

Homegrown FMCG Dabur registered a seven-

fold rise in its Chyawanprash portfolio as demand for products for immunity boosting has seen a dramatic spike during the coronavirus pandemic. Following the self-care guidelines and recommendations issued by the AYUSH Ministry as the preventive health measures to boost immunity, Chyawanprash and various immunity-boosting energy drinks dominate the television advertising platform.

Dabur Chyawanprash is a time-tested immunity booster, which has been manufactured following the traditional methods for more than 60 years. There are several preclinical as well as clinical observations documented over the last 50 years mostly on the immunity benefits of Dabur Chyawanprash (Sastry, *et al.*, 2014). Chyawanprash strengthens immunity and facilitates the healing process (Sur *et al.*, 2004). There are many Chyawanprash brands in the Indian market, such as Dabur, Emami Group, Himalaya, Bajaj, and Baidyanath; however, the leading brand is Dabur, with a market share of 70%. Apart from introducing new and exciting variants of Chyawanprash, organizations have backed their marketing campaigns with well-known stars. To entice the younger generation, Indian movie stars and sportsmen such as Akshay Kumar, Shahrukh Khan, Ravi Kishan, Virat Kohli, Saina Nehwal, Sachin Tendulkar and M. S. Dhoni have been featured in Chyawanprash advertisements and other promotional activities (“SRK, Dhoni, Ravi Kishan Do Wonders for Chyawanprash”, 2018).

In 1949, Dabur took the task of combining the 2,500-year-old Ayurvedic formula with its brand intention and gave birth to the first-ever branded Chyawanprash of India. Before pandemic, to consolidate its presence in a stagnating Chyawanprash market in the country, Dabur had launched its new advertising campaign for the product. The advertisements, featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Vivek Oberoi, appeared in electronic and print media.

### **Advertising narrative of Dabur Chyawanprash during COVID-19**

Consumers around the world are showing an increased interest in safeguarding their health and boosting their immunity. Companies such as Dabur India Limited and The Himalaya Drug Company are witnessing high demand for traditional products like Chyawanprash (a cooked mixture containing Indian gooseberry or *amla*, honey, sugar, *ghee*, herbs and spices) and proprietary supplements like Septilin, which combines the Ayurvedic ingredients including licorice and guduchi (Biswas, 2020). The AYUSH ministry had recommended the use of Chyawanprash, apart from other herbal products to

boost immunity during the lockdown. Since then, these products have been in high demand, while other products have suffered. Sales for some like Chyawanprash- have shot up by 40-50%. Dabur, the consumer goods giant, also increased the production of its existing immunity-building products such as Chyawanprash to ensure uninterrupted supply in the phase of rising consumer demand. Mohit Malhotra, CEO, Dabur India comments, “The demand for Ayurvedic products has been on the rise for a few years now, but the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharper growth in consumer interest,” adding that the January-March quarter witnessed a 400% surge in demand for Chyawanprash, while the first quarter of FY 2020-21, saw nearly seven-fold growth in demand (“Hindustan Unilever emerged as the biggest spender during April-June”, 2020). Dabur has indicated that its flagship product, Chyawanprash, maybe a preventive remedy for the disease. The company has, according to the reports, already begun funding trials to prove the claim. The study, titled “Clinical study on Dabur Chyawanprash as a preventive remedy in the pandemic of COVID-19”, divides healthy participants into two groups, one group will eat 500 gm of Chyawanprash for over 45 days, while the other will drink a glass of milk every day for 90 days. Over time, the study seeks to prove that the famed ayurvedic mixture can boost our immunity enough to prevent viruses from attacking the body (Arre, 2020). Dabur has always been referred to as one of the ‘think leaders’ in the advertising industry with its campaigns sending out a clear and direct message about “how to lead a healthier lifestyle and why it is important to take care of yourself, even more so now”.

Dabur is also in the stretch of the brand to address more contemporary problems like general well-being, diabetes and stress. The Dabur Chyawanprash variants Chyawan Shakti and Dabur Chyawan Prakash are sugar-free versions, which are expected to make the brand’s place that everyone wants. Today, consumers are increasingly going online to seek information about various products and also for making purchases. Dabur also uses the internet and various emerging social media platforms to communicate frequently and directly with its customers.

Dabur Chyawanprash has been a proven Ayurvedic formula with a past of over 70 years as a treatment for respiratory problems and weak immunity. Dabur advertisements have tactfully focused on promoting itself as an immunity booster which will help in providing a protective shield to its customers. Over the period of time, its advertisement’s narrative has



been modified to cater to the need of advocating health issues and positioning itself as one of the effective wellness brands.

### Focus Group Interview

To examine whether viewers could observe changes in the advertising message of the advertisements during pandemic, focus group interview was conducted on eight housewives in the age group of 35-45, residing in Delhi. They played a major role in the monthly household purchases. Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the on-going social issues. The method aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population (Nyumba *et al.*, 2018). Although, it is generally accepted that between six and eight participants are sufficient (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Advertisements of both Dettol and Dabur Chawayanprash were shown to the interviewees and they were asked to answer the questions related to what they feel about the advertisements shown.

The interviewees were aware of the changes happening in advertising messages as many brands were talking about the safety measures to be followed to safeguard family against the COVID-19. They thought that advertisements they watched during lockdown helped them to know about the basic precautions like washing hands frequently, boosting the immunity of family members and maintaining social distancing. They agreed that it was because of the advertisements that they were able to know about new terms like social distancing. They believed the purchase of products like the sanitizers, masks, Chyawanprash, floor cleaners etc. increased during the lockdown. Majority of the interviewees opined that advertisements made them aware of the health benefits of immunity boosters and hygiene. However, few said that they did not believe in the claims of the advertisements and did not find the information to be true like it can kill the germs or it can increase your immunity. They also suggested that there should be more laws to govern these misleading advertisements. They were able to recall many brands which they think have changed their advertising message because of pandemic like Dettol, Lizol, Lifebuoy, Dabur, and Amul to name a few.

### Discussion

The case study of Dettol and Dabur reveals that the advertising narrative has evolved during COVID-19

times. The world has seen an extraordinary change in the way people work, communicate and carry out their everyday lives over the last couple of months ever since the outbreak of COVID-19. The transition was rapid, and hence the situation is compounded by the lack of clarity as to the period or duration of this crisis. It has become very difficult for advertisers to communicate, considering the unpredictability and pace at which the situation was evolving. Both Dettol and Dabur's advertisements have stayed relevant and maintained the top of mind recall as reflected in the surge in their market sales. It can be noted that both the brands have tweaked their advertising narrative quickly to convey what the current situation requires. They emerged as an effective tool for health communication during tough times. Further, COVID-19 has helped speed up the frequency and adoption of products such as soaps and hand washes. Dettol advertisement effectively made people aware of the benefits of handwashing and the shield it provides against the deadly virus.

Focus Group Interviews also highlighted that the viewers were able to observe the changes in advertising messages during the lockdown. Majority of the interviewees believed the advertisements helped in spreading awareness about the measures to protect themselves against the virus. They said that the purchase of the hygiene-related products in their household increased because of these advertisements.

Similarly, consumers sought solace in immunity-boosting products when the pandemic caught the people. Immunity became the popular keyword for combating the invisible virus. Brands began beaming with the notion of natural remedies and immunity creators in no time. And eventually ayurveda was discovered as the winner in the war against the pandemic. Dabur Chyawanprash was a leader in the immunity-booster category. The message was effectively incorporated in the advertisement. This study highlights that both the brands played a pivotal role in the effective health communication by making people aware of the protective measures against the spread of the virus.

### Conclusion

The COVID-19 outbreak poses a unique opportunity to study how markets are created and how advertising practices adapt to the changing market environment. While the world is suffering from pandemic COVID-19, the brands must be tactful, in using strategic messaging and be more empathetic to the plight of customers. To mitigate the cut-throat competition, the brands must focus on the health-related needs of their consumers. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a slight shift in the paradigm



of what we consider to be essentials; hygiene products have entered into this category, whereas industries like apparel have shifted to discretionary. The pandemic has contributed to a shift in consumer's habits, with a growing emphasis on the preventive treatments in health care. Day-by-day the demand for immune-positioned supplements, including the ayurvedic medicines and products, has been growing as customers are seeking various ways of battling the virus. Changing the narrative of television advertisements during the COVID-19 highlights the fact that television advertisements are an effective tool for health communication which can bring awareness about the health scenario to the masses.

It can be achieved by modifying the marketing plans and planned content schedules, reviewing the vocabulary and imagery used in advertisements and marketing materials, and at this point, awareness of the heightened anxiety of customers. The brands must also ensure compliance with the relevant regulatory structure before launching new slogans, trademarks, or any other intellectual property.

Despite the openness of consumers, advertisers are still expected to be careful. As with other tactics of social or mission-based advertising, businesses can still get the COVID-19 messaging wrong. The brands which are perceived to take advantage of the situation or not to, take it seriously hence can later on face backlash. Further research in analyzing the content of advertisements will help in formulating effective health communication messages.

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# Portrayal of Women on OTT Platforms: An Indian Case

ANINDITA CHATTOPADHYAY<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Digital media is rapidly increasing in India. Online video streaming is a technology that has completely changed the entertainment industry as well as the consumption patterns of the audience. With this swift, an important area that comes into the limelight is the content of these streaming series and their storytelling patterns. Representation of female characters is experiencing a huge change, more web series having women-centric plots are getting launched in the entertainment industry. Also, the expansion of the digital medium in India is opening a doorway for women to chalk out their career graph. Not only is the web series promoting the long forgotten and under-utilized female talent, but the technical aspects of the web series making are also being covered. In every department the involvement of women is increasing with more female writers, cinematographers, producers, editors and directors venturing into the medium. But still, a question remains intact that while breaking previous stereotypes, are these web series giving birth to a new stereotypical representation of a female character? This study will be an attempt to analyse the contents, emerging trends and factors affecting the story-telling patterns, concepts of the web series having women-centric plots, their position and the representation of female characters in the Indian web series.

**Keywords:** OTT Platforms, Web series, Women-centric plots, Stereotypical, Patriarchy

## Introduction

The Indian entertainment market is booming with online media content since the past few years and the digital media consumption has shown tremendous growth. More media consumption is happening on digital media, and people are spending more time on digital gadgets like laptops and smartphones. This increase can be credited to the development in the field of digital technology and the fast internet connectivity, which has provided the viewers with the option of accessing digital media content on the go. If we talk about the streaming services market in India, the last couple of years have witnessed a massive explosion in the number of video streaming services, both domestic and from the overseas. Having a global outlook and distribution pattern these online streaming platforms easily breaks the domestic boundaries and reach at the international level. Online video streaming is a technology that has completely changed the entertainment industry as well as the consumption pattern of the audience. With this swift, an important area that comes to limelight is the content of these streaming services and their story-telling patterns. The representation of female characters is going through a huge roller coaster ride, all thanks to the online streaming platform in India. Web series having women-centric plots

are getting launched in the entertainment market. These women centric series are having a whole new approach and orientation than their television and film counterparts. The online series do not have to go through the strict scanning of the Censor Board like the Indian television soaps and films, so it can be said that they do have more freedom in terms of expression and presentation of ideas and concepts.

## Purpose of research

Over-the-top (OTT) platforms are an emerging force in the Indian media and entertainment market, in a way that they produce, consume and distribute media contents online.

The main objective of this study is to understand the evolving trends in the representation of women in Indian web series and web movies as OTT platforms are becoming one of the most important wings of entertainment industry. So it is important to study how these OTT platforms are breaking stereotypes or reinforcing stereotypes in the representation of women characters and what are the changing patterns of such representation.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the contents and concepts of the web series having women-centric plots, their position in the industry and the portrayal of female characters. Here attempts will also be made to understand the emerging trends in the development of content of the online series, their advantage,

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positive and negative side, their future and the recent technological advancement.

### Research questions

1. What is the evolving direction of the contents of the Indian web series having women-centric plots? What are the factors affecting and deciding the storytelling patterns of these web series?
2. What is the pattern of representation of women in these series? Are they breaking the regressive stereotypically representation of women as reflected in the Indian television and films or are they creating a new style of stereotypical presentation of women?
3. What are the issues relating to censorship regarding the contents of the online web series?
4. What can be anticipated about the future of these web series and online streaming platforms and how they can be used as a positive platform for healthy entertainment?

### Research methodology

To conduct the research and reach a conclusion, an empirical approach was followed. The web series and web movies have been chosen using the purposive sampling method. One web movie and eight Indian web series were chosen having a women-centric plot using a gendered plot from the period 2015 to 2020.

### Theoretical framework

To conduct this research study, it is important to understand what the OTT platforms are providing to the audiences in terms of representation of women in the web series and web movies. What can be the probable effects of such content on audience, both psychologically and socially. References were drawn from the Feminist Media Theory to understand how media plays a vital role in creating an image of a female. Feminist Media Theory also focuses on how involvement of women in the field of media can help to change and alter their representation. Focus on the representation of women in films has been addressed by theorists like Claire Johnston (1973), Laura Mulvey (1975), Annette Kuhn (1994), E. Ann Kaplan (1997) amongst others. Both Johnston and Mulvey have explored “myths constructed by patriarchal ideology” and “the intimate connection among the male gaze” which have indeed been seminal and groundbreaking works. This study follows the premise proposed by Kaplan and is to a certain extent covered further by Johnston and Mulvey. Though they mainly discussed the representation of women in the world of films, the context remains the same.

### Review of literature

The OTT platforms have redefined the role and model of the traditional way of watching serials and also the story-telling patterns as well as representation of female characters. Many researchers highlight that convenience of the audiences and their choice in selecting content are given priority by streaming series. This is mainly in urge to impress the audiences and capture more and more market space to earn more profit. “Video on demand, or the Netflix effect, is ushering in a mediated culture of instant gratification, infinite entertainment choices, and immersive experiences in televisual fantasies that combine drama and realism in irresistibly fascinating and spectacular ways” (Matrix, 2014).

Traditional television networks primarily serve the domestic market, while on the other hand, OTT platform is a global phenomenon. “Going beyond the convenience of viewer choice and control, internet TV is believed to encourage new types of entertainment, education, and games that incorporate the internet’s interactive capabilities” (Gerbarg & Noam, 2004). An important area of focus in terms of storytelling pattern in web series is that traditional television programs are typically commissioned, created, and distributed at the episode level, while web series are commissioned, created, and distributed at the season level. There are always new opportunities and chances of bringing creativity in different web series but the area that remains mostly untouched is how their presentation of female characters are changing and evolving with these web series. It’s All About the Content: immersive, inspiring, commercial-free TV binges. When young people lose themselves in make-believe TV worlds, part of the escapist pleasure is about inspiration and in some cases, aspirational maturity. According to the Stage of Life researchers, the sample of teens they interviewed widely reported that “[t]hey learned to be themselves, follow their dreams, and set new and interesting goals to achieve” by watching their favourite teen dramas. Beyond teen dramas, there is ample evidence online that younger viewers are watching adult programs to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, for the sexually mature content, and to enjoy the high production values. Netflix is also winning the original content wars, producing cinematically interesting, with complex narratives, compelling characters, and enough cliffhangers to keep audiences hooked, episode after episode, season after season” (Matrix, 2014).

Contents of web series allow for non-linear narrative structures that converge at the end of each episode, prompting viewers to watch the next episode



to resolve narrative complexities, and this had given birth to the habit of binge-watching among the audiences. With the rising demand of viewership of web series among youths especially, several problems are also cropping up, relating with their lifestyle, and often affecting their health, family life and even the society as a whole.

“One new disorder is arriving in Youth Internet addiction Disorder. The analysis shows that the majority of youth are psychologically affected through web series. Web series are not only changing their behaviour toward aggressive but also changing their language which is the most important part of any culture. Smoking, drinking habits are fast increasing in youth. More use of web series as a source of entertainment than the other physical activities. Obesity, depression, eyes disorders are commonly seen in youths. Findings show that youth perceive the content of the web series shows is very against the ethics, culture and value of society” (Koravi, 2019).

It is being highlighted by the researchers that contents of OTT platforms have the power to influence the thinking process and can bring about a behavioural change among the audiences who are exposed to such contents— this effect can be positive or negative depending on the nature of the content and the level of exposure of the audience to these contents of OTT platforms. “Such behaviour of binge-watching shows the addiction of viewers to virtual content that often leads to disturbances in their personal life whether it is displaying anti-social behaviours, increased emotional sensitivity or disrupted sleep-cycles leading to various health issues amongst the bingers, usually youth” (Dhanuka & Bohra, 2019).

According to Redkar (2019),

“Indian web-series are getting bigger and better with each passing day and we have already seen the kind of success recent shows such as *Sacred Games*, *Made in Heaven* etc have met with. It a challenging task to get the audiences hooked in a series format but content creators have been happy with the kind of liberation they get with these platforms when it comes to covering challenging themes and topics. A major change that has been observed in the content presented on the digital medium has also been a refreshing one when it comes to female characters. As opposed to the ‘women-centric’ stuff that is

pushed forward by not only bollywood but also hollywood with substandard storylines that merely have women in lead, the web-series have been making a difference at a smaller level but in an impactful manner”.

### Digital streaming market in India

The spread of digital media is rapidly increasing in India. Now there is greater scope for independent filmmakers with limited resources to make short films and release them (upload them) directly on the OTT platforms for net viewers, and also to make web series and launch them on the digital platforms. Besides international streaming giants like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Indian streaming platforms are also capturing the market at a fast speed like ALT Balaji, HotStar, Voot and few others. Online platforms are interactive unlike their television counterparts, where viewers are mostly passive. As the OTT space is getting competitive, there is much to look out in their offerings and promotional campaigns on social media.

In an interview with Deadline, co-creator of “Master of None”, Aziz Ansari explained that he specifically sought out the type of creative control offered by Netflix: “We didn’t even pitch this to any traditional networks. I kind of refused to do it.” In another interview, Ansari reiterated, “Netflix is the place to go if you want that level of creative freedom.” The clash between Internet streaming companies and traditional cable companies are raising tensions about shifting audience practices.

“On a larger scale, as the media environment expands with digital and interactive technology, media users must decide which technology best meets their needs. With new media, technology adoption comes a change in audience motivation to use or disregard older forms of media” (Steinkamp, 2010). “New” media technologies can be thought of as “renewable media”, with “old” media always-already a part of any “new” media iteration” (Peters, 2009).

Anticipating the future scope of OTT platforms in India, all the big media giants have tried their best since the last five years to gain a strong foothold in this category like Star entered the digital market with Hot Star, Viacom 18 entered with Voot, Zee with Zee 5, Sony with Sony LIV and Alt Balaji. Instead of the typical “Saasbahu” sagas, the contents of the web series under ALT Balaji are themed about headstrong women characters, represented in a much progressive manner for a change. Beside these Indian

OTT channels, there are big international players of this field having established a strong base like Netflix and Amazon Prime, providing the audiences with the much needed fresh and innovative contents and concepts.

The main source the of revenue of these OTT platforms are the subscription fees received from the audiences and revenue earned through advertisements. Other than that the producers pay the OTT channels to launch their web series or movies on this platform.

### **Case study of contents of women centric Indian web series**

Indian streaming platforms are now inclined towards making web series based on strong women characters and having women-centric plots. To understand the emerging trends of representation and portrayal of women in Indian web series, one web movie and eight Indian web series are being studied.

#### **I Web series**

*The Test Case (2017):* One of the pioneer in the field of women-centric web series released on ALT Balaji in 2017, this web series revolves around protagonist Captain Shikha Sharma, the only woman in a group of Indian Army officers training to join the special forces. Chosen as a “test case” to check if women are competent enough to be a special force Officer, she had challenges to face in the academy besides the tough physical and mental training and at the same time, facing sexiest comments, and even sexual assault by a fellow officer. Her inspiring journey of overcoming challenges at home to biases by her colleagues despite being an intelligent and a highly motivated individual gives the web series a strong base.

This web series gave the audiences the much needed progressive portrayal of a strong woman, with no nonsense attitude. The myth is broken that women are delicate and cannot match up with boys in tough situations. A girl can fight alone and seek justice for herself. The gender-based discriminated work distribution pattern and the concept of femininity and muscularity enforced in our patriarchal society are being questioned in this web series, where the lead female character successfully breaks such stereotypically created boundaries.

*Ghoul (2018):* Based on the Arab folklore monster ghoul, this series gave a whole new dimension to the concept development and storytelling pattern to the Indian web series.

The story is set in India in a dystopian future

where fascism is at its top, and the story’s main plot revolves around Nida Rahim, a strong-headed girl and newly recruited military officer, appointed at a covert military detention centre to interrogate Ali Saeed, a terrorist. Fiercely loyal to the authoritarian regime, She is ready to go to any limit to prove her faith in the existing system, even to the extent of getting her father arrested for showing dissent towards the existing rule, and is dedicated to cleaning the society for a better future. During the interrogation Saeed turns the tables on his interrogators, exposing their most shameful secrets and ignites a series of horrifying and supernatural events in the aftermath. A powerful change in Nida comes when she realizes the truth about the true colour of the authoritarian rule that she was so loyal to and also comes to the conclusion that Saeed is not from this world and is possessed by some supernatural entity, called to take revenge by her father who was killed at this same detention camp. The web series ends with showing the strong side of Nida as she turns to seek revenge.

This series is a powerful one, boldly highlighting the socio, religious-political condition under an authoritarian rule, where freedom of speech and expression exist and people live in fear. This series also presented a strong woman, who never gives up. The myth that girls are not capable of fighting against violence is proven to be wrong in this series.

*Four More Shots Please (Season 1: 2019 and Season 2: 2020).* Four More Shots Please is a path breaker in a way it portrayed four lead female characters in both the Seasons. The series follows the story of four unapologetically flawed yet powerful women as they live, fall in love, make mistakes, fight to build successful careers while balancing personal problems and responsibilities. Their strong friendship starts in a pub in Mumbai. Damini Rizvi Roy, the fierce and intelligent journalist having relationship issues Umang Singh, a small-town girl, now a gym trainer who proudly announces about her bisexual orientation and gets into a relationship with a famous actress; Anjana Menon, a successful lawyer fighting gender discrimination at work while managing her role as a single divorced mother, getting involved in relations but is not ready for any commitment and Siddhi Patel, the pampered rich girl, facing body shaming daily and is under constant pressure from her mother to get married were the main characters of this series.

As per the records, the first season was one of the top three most-watched Amazon original series in India in 2019, and Season 2 was the most-watched Indian show on the Indian digital platform as of May

2020. This record highlights that the preferences of the audience are changing, no longer the lead female characters have to be the demure and ever sacrificing self. Rather they are bold, never shying away from showing their desires and feelings, have an active sex life, they are ambitious, they love to have fun just like their male counterparts and have a voice of their own. They do make wrong choices and makes wrong decisions at times, but they never give up on life and come back stronger, like a fighter, every time. The girl bonding is the unique selling proposition of this series. The focus on same-sex relationships is handled with much maturity. The maximum screen time is allotted to the female characters, male characters playing side roles.

But one of the negative aspects of this web series in both seasons was the excessive use of the skin show and sex scenes. The web series failed to break idea that skin shows and sex sells more in India. However, an interesting thing to be noticed is that unlike other mediums where skin show and objectification of only the female body takes place, objectification of male body also took place equally in this series.

*Liela (2019)*: Set in a dystopian future, Leila follows the story of Shalini, who tries to find her missing daughter in a totalitarian regime Aryavarta, in the late 2040s, governed by Dr. Joshi, where there is no freedom of speech and expression or even lifestyle or movement and any sign of dissent is silenced ruthlessly. The nation is divided into communities separated by high walls and is subject to strict segregation, where inter-caste marriages are prohibited and children born out of such marriages are taken away to some hidden place and among the couple, the men are killed and women are sent to “re-education centre” to live with several other women who are accused of “sinning” or being somehow defiled like Shalini. Treated as slaves and all dressed in red, they are also drugged daily. There are labour camps for the sinners who fail the ‘purity test’. Poor people live outside the cities in shanties and are treated as untouchables. Water and clean air are rare. In such a state the plot revolves around the never-dying spirit and courage of a mother, as she fights and struggles against all odds to find her daughter. The web series stays true to its presentation and never follows the ever so relatable path of melodrama.

This web series not only successfully portraits a mother’s strength and courage, the strong will of a woman but also laments on the socio-political-economic oppression. Mis-en-scene plays a vital role in this series. The victim turns to be a fighter, rather than accepting her fate silently. This can be

considered to be a very progressive stand taken in the representation of a female character in web series.

*Delhi Crime (2019)*: This series is set in the aftermath of the 2012 Delhi gang rape. The series follows the story of how Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vartika Chaturvedi, who is tasked to find the culprits responsible for the assaults and death of the female victim. She takes it upon herself to bring justice to the raped girl facing tough situations boldly-handling the department, seniors media and also the sole witness who turns hostile. She also has to take care of her teenage daughter back at home while performing her official duties.

The strength and weakness of being a woman, the dilemma of being a mother, facing gender discrimination at workplace and home equally, the poor condition of the safety of girls in our country – this series tried to highlight all efficiently. The audiences were given a chance to relate with the helplessness, fear, pathos, shock that they get to see in the character of Niti Singh, the recruit of the department working the case. The web series tries to highlight the security problems that women suffer daily in India in a much realistic manner. This web series is a slice of life experience for every female audience watching it as they can easily relate with the characters and situations shown in this web series.

*She (2020)*: She follows the story of a female constable Bhumika, who has to go undercover to bust an underworld gang, help arrest a wanted criminal Shassha who is a major drug lord. Bhumika has to dress and act like a prostitute to do her job. Awkward and unwilling at the beginning, Bhumika is at the mercy of her male seniors who dominated her. Fighting a divorce case with an abusive husband and having a troubled childhood of being sexually abused, she finally discovers her hidden inner strength and turns the table round to everyone who once took her for granted or abused her.

This series also highlights the point that a woman should never be taken for granted. This concept of using the female body as a deadly weapon for seeking revenge in itself is new in India.

*Maarzi (2020)*: In the age of #MeToo, Maarzi, highlighted the serious topic that a “No”, means “No” and non-consensual sex, even between partners dating each other is rape. Anurag, a doctor and Sameera, a school teacher goes on a date-a night that changes her life forever. Sameera claims that she was drugged by Anurag and raped by him, while Anurag claims it was a consensual sex. Question is raised on Sameera’s character and her mental stability. When both have



completely different versions of the night, the truth is tested and the lies are revealed finally. This web series is an edge-of-the-seat thriller and the secrets shocks the audiences.

This web series gave the audience women with different shades yet they cannot be judged. Sameera being the vulnerable yet strong girl fighting her battle and seeking for justice, on the other hand, is her elder sister, a successful doctor, loving and caring wife, mother and sister, still goes ahead to have an extramarital affair with her own younger sister's boyfriend out of boredom in her marriage. Another strong character of this series is a police officer Rashmi, who is pregnant and lives alone, helps Sameera get justice. This web series does try to motivate the audiences to raise their voice against any sort of gender-based violence committed or discrimination happening around us.

*Aarya (2020)*: The plot revolves around Aarya Sareen, a stunning and happy mother of three, with a loving husband and lavish lifestyle. But the world turns upside down for her when her husband is suddenly killed and her brother is sent to jail for heroin smuggling charges. After initial reluctance, she is forced to join her illegal family business of which she had no idea how to run but slowly she takes charge, growing in confidence, facing down one challenge after another, when she has no one to trust even from her own family. Moreover she has also to play the role of a single mother back at home.

Aarya is a one "woman" show of a simple upper-class housewife and her transformation into an underworld business-woman to save her family. The hidden power of a lady, her intellect and strength when she goes out to become an avenger rather than sit back and cry at the twist and turn of her fate becomes the strong point of the web series. Though melodramatic at times, still this web series highlights the inner strength of a woman and what she can do if she decides to protect her family. The fighting spirit of a woman rather than playing the victim card is the most important essence of the concept of this web series.

## II Web movie

*The Lust Stories (2018)*: Lust Stories released in 2018 on Netflix is a web movie, consisting of four short segments directed by renowned directors – Anurag Kashyap, Zoya Akhtar, Dibakar Banerjee and Karan Johar.

Kalindi, a college professor, gets engaged in a one night stand with a student of hers. The morning

after, she reassures herself that it was only a one-time occurrence but later stresses over the power dynamic of a student-teacher relationship. Multiple scenes are woven throughout the segment which depicts Kalindi speaking to someone off-screen, like an interview is a whole new style of presentation. During these cuts, she reveals about her marriage to a 12 years older man who lives in a different state, dating her colleague Neeraj and her dilemma. The desires of a woman, her inner turmoil, her insecurities and her jealousy are highlighted in this story.

Sudha is the maid of Ajit and they are secretly in a passionate sexual relationship. One day, along with Ajit's parents, a family arrives with their daughter for a marriage proposal and Sudha is silently heartbroken as Ajit completely ignores her and her place in the house. Sudha realizing the hard reality resumes her normal routine, moves on and is shown to leave the apartment after yet another day of work. In this segment not only the one-sided silent love of a girl is shown but also the class division of our society is reflected. But no melodrama, no drama of sacrifice, no self-pitting is embedded in this section through the character of Sudha.

Reena, a banker, is in an extra-marital affair with her husband's close friend Sudhir. Having maintained secrecy about their relationship for three years, Reena wants to reveal about this affair to her husband Salman. But it's love for Reena but not for Sudhir. Reena is disheartened at Sudhir's reaction. Reena has the guts and reveals to Salman about her affair and that she is unhappy in their marriage, and feels that Salman only needs a mother for his children, not a wife. Alongside Reena takes a tough decision and tells Sudhir that she cannot meet him again as he does not respect her.

The sense of self-worth and dignity of a woman is the main theme of this segment. One of the most important aspects is that a woman who is in an unhappy marriage has full right to get divorced and restart her life as she wants, which is still a taboo in our Indian society. A woman does not need to gain fulfilment in life by just being a mother, as it is most of the time reflected by the Indian media, where female characters are "good" only when they are dutiful, obedient wife and ever sacrificing mother figure.

Megha a young, soft spoken and shy school teacher gets married to Paras, an office worker and after their marriage, Megha discovers that while Paras is continuously pleased during sex, he is not aware of her dissatisfaction. His family pushes her to bear children, as they believe this is the only pleasure that a woman desires. Megha witnessing her colleague Rekha using a sex toy for sexual pleasure in the



school library, does the same but under unfavourable circumstances, her in-laws discover all about this and enraged. Paras's mother demands a divorce as she considers Megha to be a girl of low character. One month later, Paras meets Megha and tells her that he does not wish to divorce her just because she made a mistake. But Megha has transformed into a headstrong lady now, firmly says that she made no mistake and that a woman has more desires than just having children.

Through the character of Megha, the web audiences are introduced to this young generation of women who are strong enough to voice about their needs, speak about their desires and physical satisfaction openly. Through the characters of Megha and her mother-in-law, the difference in mentality of two women from two generations are reflected, one following the patriarchal social norms, another, the younger one trying to break such regression norms.

This web movie highlighted the often suppressed needs and desires of women, which are still considered to be a taboo in India. The strong dialogue delivery, the engaging plots gave a strong foothold to the movie. As the French writer and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir highlighted in her classic, "The Second Sex" (1949), the foundations for a feminist analysis of gender, that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman", emphasizing the social character of womanhood as distinct from biological femaleness.

## Conclusion

Today digital media is one of the most powerful wings of mass media, and mass media being an integral part of the public sphere can contribute a lot in highlighting different important issues of our society. But this may go horribly wrong with severe consequences if mass media act differently by reflecting realities of society with misrepresentation, understatement or even overstatement. Due to the deep-set patriarchal mindset which is embedded into the consciousness of the people that have been inherited down the ages, sometimes we get to see that though digital platform is relatively new in the field of mass media, still the contents of the web series sometimes portray women in a stereotyped manner to satisfy male gaze and earn rapid popularity and profit in the highly competitive market. But at the same time new approaches are also detected in the field of digital platforms to represent today's women, their lives, their struggle, their needs, their insecurities and desires in a much dignified and progressive manner. They are successfully breaking stereotypes and creating

images of women of substance, who can fight for their dignity and rights and have a voice of their own. These female characters have depths, have layers and different shades. These shows are having a huge fan base and popularity, which implies that the mindset of the young audiences of the digital platforms are changing. They prefer quality concepts and contents. This can be considered as a positive change and such web series and web movies with strong female centric themes should be encouraged more.

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# Revisiting Artificial Intelligence and Human Communication: A Health Communication Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

This study advocates for a significant re-examination of the concept of communication as offered by intelligent machines and smart devices through artificial systems, i.e. Artificial Intelligence (AI) designed for health communication. The role of computers has so far been seen as a medium for seamless communication, generally interpersonal communication. The recent developments in the field of Human-Machine Communication (HMC) calls for a paradigm shift in the way communication through machines is seen and understood in health communication systems. It is also argued that the old paradigm of communication studies where the receiver and sender were humans have lost its significance now. This study within the framework of Artificial Intelligence focuses on communication between the doctor and the patient. This argues that the existing communication paradigm needs to be redefined in the emerging context of AI and Human-Machine Communication (HMC). The role of human beings as social actors and agents of communication will become even more important in health communication systems.

**Keywords:** Health communication, Artificial intelligence, Computers, Algorithm, Human-Machine communication

## Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is understood as a computer system which can perform various tasks which normally requires human intelligence (Diakopoulos, 2019). Artificial intelligence is a discipline related to computer science and social science which is used to create machines and codes which behave, think and act like humans. The AI and its related areas like Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL) use algorithms to do different tasks (Campestrato, 2020). An algorithm is a series of codes written to be executed in a specified order to solve a particular problem or to get the desired result. AI is not just about robots, it is also about creating a mechanical mind that can think like a human.

Low-cost and efficient healthcare in India is a distant dream for the common man as the cost of good healthcare is too high and the availability of the health infrastructure, manpower is lacking in public hospitals. Every citizen expects immediate and effective health care, moreover, the government of India has made the right to health a fundamental right. Hospitals are now under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act and have to ensure that patients get effective treatment on time. India ranks at 145<sup>th</sup> position among 195 countries in terms of healthcare (Fullman *et al.*, 2018).

The ongoing pandemic Covid-19 which has claimed more than one lakh lives in India has given

us many reasons to rethink about the existing health-care systems, especially the communication aspect between the patient and the doctor for personalized care. Apart from the weak infrastructure, inadequate dissemination of information about the pandemic, precautions, treatment, health centres, guidelines were also the reasons because of which many people lost lives. One of the problems faced by the healthcare industry was the shortage of medical and paramedical staff in hospitals and health centres. India has achieved the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended doctor to population ratio of 1:1,000 (Kumar & Pal, 2018). To make things better, the government has taken measures to improve the healthcare industry in the country. ₹ 35,000 crore have been allotted for the nutrition-related programmes in the union budget 2020-21 besides plans to increase healthcare spending to 3% of the GDP (gross domestic product) by 2022.

The AI and communication overcome the problem of shortage of manpower to some extent and can also expedite diagnosis and treatment in common diseases and health-related issues. By using AI-driven effective communication technologies patients can get personalized advice about their line of treatment, schedule of following check-ups, reports and medicines in minimum time. Among the various dimensions of AI and Human-Machine Communication, the scope of this study is to look at the communication aspect between the user and the health practitioner through technology.

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This study proclaims that the human communication between the health practitioner and their patients is a vital component which will co-exist and hybrid systems of AI and humans can make the existing health communication systems in India faster, robust and accurate.

### AI and HMC perspective

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is the usage of computers in offices, institutions, government organizations etc. to maintain a continuous exchange of messages and information (Gunkel, 2012). Taylor and Licklider (1968) introduced this term in their popular essay “The Computer as a Communications Device”. It is seen as a technology to maintain relationships in virtual settings and takes the user from physical space to virtual space while doing communication. Scholars have also defined CMC as human communication with the help of computers.

One of the early communication models which can be considered as CMC, although not strictly CMC but uses technology as the medium, was the famous Shanon and Weaver Model (Al-Fedaghi, 2012) which has a medium and a channel. In the model, the scholars demonstrated the working using a telephone. So it can be argued that CMC in a way is derived out of the communication theory and HMC has gone one step ahead by using machine driven AI algorithms as senders of the message. Reporting in a different way, CMC looks at how different digital technologies can act as channels in the communication process. The HMC, on the other hand, investigates how these technologies can act as communicators. Looking from the communication theory perspective HMC analyses how AI-driven technology can act as communicators that are senders as studied in the traditional models of communication.

The AI and HMC include virtual assistants, social bots, chat bots, automated writing software and devices like Amazon’s Alexa and Apple’s Siri. These use Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Natural Language Generation (NLG) which enable the machines to make sense of messages written and communicated in human language (Dorr, 2015). Through NLP (Allen, 2003) the machine interprets the message and replies in the language understood by the humans. Chat bots or virtual assistants use NLP in health systems for early diagnosis, counseling and interacting with healthcare professionals (Palanica *et al.*, 2019). These bots also help the patients by replying to their queries regarding diagnosis treatment, medicines and other listings of health services (Nadarzynski *et al.*, 2019). The AI-based applications

allow patients to upload their medical reports, images and other vital statistics which can be interpreted with the help of deep learning algorithms.

The question is what level of intelligence will a non-human sender have in case of HMC?, who will create the message?, on what basis will be the message created? and who will verify the relevance, of the messages in that interaction? This study of communication concerning the healthcare industry within the HMC perspective needs to be looked through human communication lens. The HMC phenomenon within the AI perspective is derived from technological aspects of the algorithms, data and the human component which makes the learning process of algorithms better and with each training of datasets they approach human intelligence and not human emotions.

AI-based healthcare systems are designed to receive information in different formats and pass it to the humans in the language which they can easily understand. The AI-based systems take information in video, text, audio, graphics, images and any combination. These formats are designed to bring about planned behavioural change by engaging people for longer durations. Many AI applications have information which is represented in the form of logical formulae, production rules and knowledge borrowed from social science, psychology and linguistics. AI systems based on symbolic information like logical formulae and rules enhance interaction by using static or dynamic user models (Scott *et al.*, 2013). Static models use pre-recorded information about the receivers, whereas dynamic models update their inferences about the users based on their interaction with the system. This sort of learning comes with its drawbacks as one tries to understand the similarities between machine intelligence and human intelligence (Ekbia, 2008).

### Applications in healthcare

Popular chat bots used in healthcare include Forksy, which gives information about food intake and calorie counts. Web MD (webmd.com) gives information about medical conditions, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and list of doctors. Skin Vision (skinvision.com) maintains (Wood & Schulman, 2019) skin health and the users can upload the photograph of their skin to get information about any skin-related health problem. Some of the applications of machine learning in e-healthcare particularly medicine are disease diagnosis, personalised treatment based on patients data, smart health records, weekly health reports on radiology and chats with virtual assistants.



E-health is the broader term that is used to define the emerging information and communication technology to improve health care. It is an overlapping field that includes medical information, telemedicine, public health information that uses communication, interaction and participation.

Irvine (2004) used video modeling vignettes and testimonials to engage users to start healthy eating habits. Interaction in most of the AI-based health communication systems is done with the help of a virtual *avatar* called the Embodied Conversational Agent (ECA), who engages in conversation with the patient (Ferrara *et al.*, 2016). This algorithm uses NLP to converse with the patient and each line or query by the patient gets added in the dataset and updates the algorithm and improves its accuracy further. Bissett *et al.* (2013) showed the use of ECA by making the users hear the risks of excessive drinking. Hudlicka (2013) demonstrated ECA in mindful meditation, Bickmore *et al.* (2013) talked about ECA in promoting healthy eating habits.

Google is developing “Google Deep Mind health” which will look at the macular classification in ageing eyes (Powles & Hodson, 2017). The internet giant is also working on machine learning algorithms to develop cancer tissues and healthy tissues to improve radiotherapy treatment. Some of the Indian companies using AI in healthcare are ten3T, Touchkin, Predible Health and Niramai Health Analytix (Saxena, 2019). Ten3T makes wearable devices which have multiple sensors to monitor patient health. The patients use these devices at home and office and the health data is transferred through cloud and servers to the health application where the algorithm analyses the data and interprets the results (Airon & Jhunjunwala, 2020). This pursuit of AI and communication using mobile applications can cut across borders and may reach the rural areas making healthcare easily accessible.

### Importance of human communication

To make health communication effective it has to be a two-way communication and not one way as is generally practiced in public health centres and hospitals. Health communication systems designed for higher user engagement have more chances of being adopted faster and may bring about desired behavioural change. It has been recorded that people are reluctant to adapt to health intervention that brings about a behavioural change. Mere communication of risk of a disease or health condition does not usually engage people to change their behaviour (Freimuth, 1992). The communication by AI-driven systems ignores psychosocial motives and lacks affection

and social approval (Freimuth *et al.*, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2001). On the other hand interpersonal communication by the human agents evokes sympathy and other emotions to motivate people and patients to follow the instructions of medical practitioners and accept a behavioural change.

From the communication perspective, dominant models that have shown promise to influence ‘important others’ are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Diffusion of Innovations (Rogers, 1995; Weinstein, 1993). These models do not specify how and why people make changes and cannot predict their behaviour (Weinstein, 1993), as there are other mediating variables which get affected by social-cultural influences. The TRA assumes that humans process available information, behave sensibly and their actions are determined by their intentions (Ajzen, 2014). Further, the information of individuals about things around them is based on their beliefs. Thus by changing the information, it is possible to change the belief and possibly the behaviour.

Natale and Ballatore (2017) argue that it is the person involved in the communication process who decides the communicator and the channel. They further argue the role of social actors and their relevance in social communication where computers and machines play social roles in different situations (Appadurai, 1986; Turkle, 2007) in which people attribute their personality, agency and even gender to machines. Natale and Ballatore (2017) further inquired about the role of the computers as social actors. Since the social actors are driven by algorithms, their behaviour in health communication can raise questions in healthcare systems.

Proponents of AI argue that machines do not get tired and they don't make mistakes. Once an algorithm has been trained and its accuracy of the results is acceptable it is ready to use. The algorithm continues to train itself with the addition of new data and human response to approximate human intelligence. There can be errors in the algorithm being used to diagnose the patient and the health data of the patient may itself be incorrect. The problem may lie in the method of data collection of the machines used to collect the parameters of the patient. This may lead to incorrect diagnosis resulting in the communication of incorrect information to the patient. In such cases, HMC with machines as communicators and interlocutors will negatively affect AI and communication framework.

Some of the tools used for communication of information are: Automated text messages online portals, chat bots, tele-calls and emails.

Kreps and Neuhauser (2013) have argued that many e-health communication systems have failed to engage their target users properly. One of the reasons is the lack of immediacy and hybrid systems with human intervention at appropriate stages. AI-based systems are designed to be accurate, support interactivity, process information in different formats, support collaboration and update their software when required. Research also indicates that health-communication interventions have to relate to user experiences and social life contexts (Kreps & Neuhauser, 2003) to get accepted and influence the behaviour of the users. The ECA clients and AI-based virtual assistants become effective when they include cultural factors, community practices and family context in their conversations. All these health systems for communications have to be interactive to become effective. Only when the system is interactive the user can 'internalize the message to bring about a change (Cassell *et al.*, 1998). These systems become personalized and customized for each user by looking at the data of each person from the database. After becoming personalized and customized for each user the engagement time increases and communication becomes more productive. The algorithm used for personalization analyses the specific needs of each patient and customizes messages which are designed to suit the individual's perceptions and beliefs. This is when the user experiences learning (Dede & Fontana, 1995; O'Keefe, 1990) and persuades; himself to follow the instructions given by the health system.

In a survey done among 100 physicians in the United States (Palanica *et al.*, 2019) it was found that 62% of the physicians agreed that chat bots have administrative and organizational benefits like scheduling doctor appointments, locating health clinics or doctors, diagnostic labs, providing treatment instructions, and answering commonly asked questions regarding medication and dosage. A majority of doctors (72%) also reported that the chat bots cannot effectively understand the personal needs of the patients, and cannot clarify their doubts as they lack the ability to assess human emotions and feelings. Quite a few (60%) agreed that the use of chat bot in emergencies may increase risk and by indulging in excessive self-assessment of health diagnosis the patient may experience other health related issues.

Guzman (2019) argues that in HMC it is the humans who are responsible for deciding the final message given by the machine and making sense of the message. This is extremely important in

healthcare systems where the algorithm can give basic health and vital statistics for a patient but it will take an experienced doctor or health practitioner to make sense of that data. The algorithms can identify, prescribe and predict the health of the patients based on their data and history. Human intervention will be needed in the communication process involving healthcare systems to make sense of the data as argued by Guzman and Lewis (2019). The authors argued that though AI and HMC perspective indicates that communication happens with and through machines this will not replace human communication in the healthcare systems. Although algorithms update at the regular intervals based on new data just like our phones and after updating standardized tests, prescriptions, treatments and medicines, the importance of human communication in AI-based health communication systems will continue to play a key role.

## Conclusion

Technologies like AI, big data, cloud computing, machine learning, deep, learning, wearables and virtual reality are the future of healthcare but this technology needs to be used with discretion. AI is being used to design communication systems with the help of simulation of human capabilities like reasoning, language production and comprehension to match human intelligence and emotions. The mobile and computer-based apps designed for healthcare are personalized and regularly updated from the server to pass the right information to that patient only who has registered with the health app. Both analysis and communication have to be done with care so that the patient understands the health condition clearly and feels that she/he has been given sufficient time and care. This is where the role of communication becomes important. It is not only the interpretation using NLP but also the communication which will be done with the help of AI. This sought of AI communication reduces the workload of doctors to interpreting the results and confirming the diagnosis for finalising the line of treatment. It is not only the analysis of patients data which needs to be analyzed for prediction but also the communication of these findings to the patient, doctors, researchers and other medical practitioners by human agents so that the patient holistically gets good care. These systems are still being improvised and will take time but will eventually automate the process of health care both preventive and curative to some extent.

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# Dynamics of Mobile Apps for Communication: A Study of University Students

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## ABSTRACT

Mobile internet users in India are increasing each day passing. University students in the country today, in particular, use smartphones extensively for information and entertainment. This study aims to find out that how often the mobile internet is accessed, with whom and what are the appropriate and preferred mobile applications for communication among university students. A survey was conducted with a sample size of 100 university students with stratified random sampling. The study showed that most of the students access the internet on mobile phones as it provides mobility and interactivity. The finding indicates that most of the youths are using WhatsApp for text and video calls among their peer groups and family members. Preference for long text messages and forwarding other messages is not popular among students.

**Keywords:** Mobile communication, Mobile applications, Information sharing, WhatsApp, Instagram

## Introduction

A mobile phone has penetrated across a broad range of sectors and categories, creating advanced opportunities for communication. A mobile application can be found for almost anything now, for example – Amazon/Flipkart for shopping, Paytm for payments, Ola for rides, Netflix for watching shows and movies and Oyo for booking hotel rooms. The use of these applications has made tasks easier. In his book, Goggin (2006) stated that cell phone gave a new virtual culture. It is an important part of today's human life.

The Internet has provided us with the facility of accessing any web address, and mobile phones have given this access from anywhere and at any time. This has led to a revolution in communication. Entire businesses are now based and operating around applications related to communication technology. Social messaging and networking applications Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp help in the exchange of information among large number of people. It is also possible for the users to share their views on any topic and important events of their lives through text, photos and videos. YouTube has opened up a new world for vloggers, film editors, videographers, singers, comedians and the like who can share their talent with the world and inspire as well as teach people from all around the globe. Lu *et al.* (2005) stated that wireless mobile technology has its powerful social influences and personal innovativeness.

During the end of the twentieth century, apps were providing basic functions like calendars, calculators, ringtone editors, small arcade

games etc. The evolution of mobile content and applications happened at the beginning of the new millennium as the rapid development of new and updated operating systems (like Android, Mac iOS, Windows Mobile etc.) and software for mobile phones. The mobile phones nowadays differ drastically from the first-generation mobile phones not only in look but also in features. With time, the demand for these features grew and is increasing day by day, as mobile phone users' desire better technology and new features. According to McNaughton and Light (2013) iPad and other new mobile technologies give an impactful advancement to the communication process.

Most of the mobile applications of today are user-friendly and can be customized by the people themselves according to their convenience. This has increased the scope for development of mobile applications for communication.

## Objectives of the study

- To know about the usage of mobile internet among university students in Haryana.
- To analyse the utilisation of mobile apps for communication.
- To explore the effectiveness of mobile apps for communication among youth.

## Review of literature

This part of the study contains a review of literature related to trends of mobile apps and its uses. In a research work 'Branded mobile application

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adoption and customer engagement behaviour', Wang (2020) examines the use of the apps and their audience behaviour. Results indicate that apps and PCs are very widely used digital platforms. These are very commonly used for customer relationship management.

Paglialonga *et al.* (2019) analyzed the evolution of mobile apps for target users. The result indicates that mobile apps are very widely used in health care. These are the major toll of information for professionals, researchers, developers, and stakeholders.

Kumar (2017) examines the use of internet in the university library of Haryana, India. It concluded that students use the internet for a specific purpose and Google is one of the most searchable websites.

Adekunmisi *et al.* (2013) examines the use of the internet among graduate students of Olabisi Onabanjo University in Nigeria. The result indicates that Information and Communication Technology made information sharing easy and quick.

Thanuskodi (2013) examines how information is shared in society in an analytical study. The results indicate that the internet now becomes a major toll of information sharing, to exchange opinions and many more.

Plaza *et al.* (2011) analyzed how trends in mobile technology, especially in mobile apps, are changing day by day. The result indicates that the mobile app is used to create a cohesive and inclusive intergenerational society. Mobile apps are being developed as per the need of the users.

Kumar (2004) overviewed the present scenario of the mobile-communication industry. The result indicates that technology in mobile communication is increasing each day. The researcher pointed out that mobile phones, satellites, and other handheld devices are commonly used in wireless computing and m-commerce.

## Method and material

This part of the study contains research questions, research objectives, research design and sample design.

## Research questions

Q 1. What is the usage of mobile internet among university students in Haryana?

Q 2. What are the utilizations of mobile apps for communication?

Q 3 How effective are these mobile apps for communication among youth?

## Research design

A survey is conducted among (n=100) university students of Haryana. Cross-sectional research design has been used to conduct the survey. A closed-ended questionnaire has been used to meet the objectives.

## Sample design

All university students constitute the universe is the present study. Students of Haryana universities are the sampling unit of the research work. Stratified sampling technique was used to meet the objectives. Sampling was done through stratification of 50 students each from Under-Graduate (UG) and Post-Graduate (PG) level. Equal distribution was done in male and female respondents for the collection of primary data so it covers male and female students 25 each from UG and PG level. A questionnaire was formulated with questions related to the usage of mobile internet, mobile applications and its utilization in day-to-day life for communication. Data were analyzed with cross-tabulation according to male and female distribution with percentage.

## Data analysis and presentation

In this world of information, communication became the backbone of society. For this purpose human use various means of communication either vocal or written. Today mobile phones and smartphones are playing a vital role in spreading information. This tool of communication has also incorporated the audio-visual tool for effective dissemination of the message. It has emerged as the instant and most widely available mode of sending information. With the development of latest technologies like smartphones and artificial intelligence various tasks can be done with just a single click. Now, we can receive, send or share information, videos, data from anywhere in the world. These technologies have developed various mobile-based applications like shopping, banking, chatting, video calls, share files/data, vlogging, social networking, news bulletins, information, entertainment etc.

The smartphone is a new generation of mobile phones incorporated with the high-end software. It has almost replaced the keypad mobiles. These smartphones have provided advanced technology, which has reduced the usage of desktops and laptops because of their size and mobility.

Today, most of the people are using internet on mobile phones as it is convenient and available on the move. They have come up as an alternative to costly laptops and desktops for basic work and internet-based activities like email, messaging, video calls/

conferencing, entertainment, sharing information etc. This study tries to find out internet usage on mobile for communication and sharing of information among university students.

In the study, researchers have analyzed the mobile internet using habits of university students regarding their mobile usage. The study analyzed the student's tendency towards sharing text messages and video messages. This analysis was done with primary data collected from the survey conducted among UG and PG level students.

### Usage of mobile internet in a day by students gender wise

As indicated in Table 1, it was found that half of the female students spend more than three hours a day on mobile for the internet whereas only one-third of the male students spent time on it. In total, about 94 per cent (i.e. 29+24+41) of the students spent more than one hour daily on the internet and about 65 per cent used more than two hours daily. Very few students, about 6 per cent, use mobile internet for less than one hour a day.

**Table 1** Usage of mobile internet in a day by Students gender wise

Gender	Less than 1 hour (%)	Between 1 to 2 hours (%)	Between 2 to 3 hours (%)	More than 3 hours (%)	Total (%)
Male	2 (4.0)	16 (32.0)	14 (28.0)	18 (36.0)	50 (100)
Female	4 (8.0)	13 (26.0)	10 (20.0)	23 (46.0)	50 (100)
Total (%)	6	29	24	41	100

### Most preferred application for messaging and chatting

Table 2 indicates that Whatsapp mobile app for messaging emerges as the most frequently used application for communication among youth. It is also very interesting that more than two-thirds of female students use Whatsapp for messaging needs. Only

2 per cent of students are using Viber. About 95 per cent students use WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook messenger and only 5 per cent use other applications like Viber. It was also observed that male users of Instagram are more than double of female users. Here WhatsApp is the most popular app for messaging and chatting among university students.

**Table 2** Most preferred application for messaging and chatting by students gender-wise

Gender	Viber (%)	WhatsApp (%)	Facebook Messenger (%)	Instagram (%)	Others (%)	Total (%)
Male	1 (2.0)	27 (54.0)	8 (16.0)	13 (26.0)	1 (2.0)	50 (100)
Female	1 (2.0)	37 (74.0)	5 (10)	5 (10.0)	2 (4.0)	50 (100)
Total (%)	2	64	13	18	3	100

### Chatting with people on mobile apps

Table 3 explains that half of the male students chat with classmates or friends only, whereas 40 per cent of females chat with their peer group. Half of the total respondents represent mixed usage for

chatting which includes family, relative, officials/teachers and friends. Only 2 per cent of students exclusively chat with relatives and officials/teachers. It was also observed that male students interact 10 per cent more to their friends and classmates than female students.

**Table 3** Chatting with people by students gender wise

Gender	Family members (%)	Relatives (%)	Classmates/Friends (%)	Officials/Teachers (%)	All of the above (%)	Total (%)
Male	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	25 (50.0)	2 (4.0)	20 (40.0)	50 (100)
Female	0	0	20 (40.0)	0	30 (60.0)	50 (100)
Total (%)	1	2	45	2	50	100

### Preference for long text messages on mobile apps

Further in the study, it was also observed that sometimes students communicate through long text messages. A major point comes from Table 4 that about 35 per cent both male and female students sometimes prefer to send long text messages, whereas

about one-fourth of WAstudents never send long text messages. About 5 per cent of male students always forward long text messages to others. About 31 per cent of respondents rarely send such text messages in which male and female react almost in the same manner.

**Table 4** Preference for long text messages by students gender-wise

Gender	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total (%)
Male	5 (10.0)	0	18 (36.0)	16 (32.0)	11 (22.0)	50 (100)
Female	0	1 (2.0)	17 (34.0)	15 (30.0)	17 (34.0)	50 (100)
Total (%)	5	1	35	31	28	100

### Preference on forwarding of messages via mobile apps

These messaging apps today make most of the information viral means transmitting to a large number of people instantly. A total of 97 respondents out of 100 have responded on the preference of forwarding messages from mobile apps. There are about one-third of the participating students who do not at all forward these messages to others, whereas this belief appears

more in female students. It was also observed in Table-5 that about 12 per cent male students preferred very much to forward the message via mobile apps. About 28 per cent of the students have little choice for forwarding messages with this platform, whereas much to normal tendency of about 10 to 20 per cent. There were about 60 per cent students (i.e. 28+32) who have shown belief in creating messages despite forwarding other messages.

**Table 5** Preference on the forwarding of messages by students gender-wise

Gender	Very Much	Much	Normal	Little	Not at all	Total (%)
Male	6 (12.5)	3 (6.2)	11 (22.9)	13 (27.1)	15 (31.2)	48 (100)
Female	2 (4.1)	7 (14.3)	8 (16.3)	15 (30.6)	17 (34.7)	49 (100)
Total (%)	8 (8.2)	10 (10.3)	19 (19.6)	28 (28.9)	32 (33.0)	97 (100)

Note: Two male and one female respondents did not respond.

### Usage of message received via apps

About 46 per cent of the students feel the message received via mobile apps has neutral utilisation as indicated in Table-6 in which almost 54 per cent female and 38 per cent male students are having a normal feeling about such a message. About one-third

of the students agree and only ten per cent of students strongly agreed that these are the best way of getting information. Whereas one per cent female students strongly disagree and 8 per cent are disagreeing on messaging through mobile apps. Here it is important that half of the students show their neutral acceptance in using apps for messaging.

**Table 6** Usage of message received via apps by students gender-wise

Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total (%)
Male	7 (14)	13 (26)	19 (38)	7 (14)	4 (8)	50 (100)
Female	3 (6)	15 (30)	27 (54)	4 (8)	1 (2)	50 (100)
Total (%)	10	28	46	11	5	100

### Most appropriate mobile app used for communication

Table 7 represents appropriate mobile app usage among youth. 98 respondents out of 100 responded about the appropriate mobile app for their usage. It was observed from the survey that WhatsApp is the

most trending messenger and more than half of the students find it appropriate. Instagram is at the second position as about one-third are finding it appropriate over other messengers like Facebook messenger and Google Duo. This table also explains that 35 per cent male students find Instagram, whereas 20 per cent of females find it appropriate.

**Table 7** Most appropriate mobile app used by students gender-wise

Gender	Facebook Messenger	Instagram	WhatsApp	Google Duo	Total (%)
Male	8 (16.7)	17 (35.4)	22 (45.8)	1 (2.1)	48 (100)
Female	6 (12.0)	10 (20.0)	30 (60.0)	4 (8.0)	50 (100)
Total (%)	14 (14.3)	27 (27.6)	52 (53.1)	5 (5.1)	98 (100)

Note: Two male respondents did not respond.



## Preferred app for video chatting

Nowadays almost all mobile apps are providing a platform to do live video chat with other users. This has given a 360-degree change in communication tool. As per Table 8, more than half of the students use WhatsApp for video chatting and dominantly by

females. Google duo is also popular among youth as about 20 per cent of students preferring it. Remaining one-fourth respondents also prefer IMO, Skype and other apps together for video chatting with friends, relatives, teachers and family members etc. Though Skype is used by 14 per cent male and 12 per cent female university students.

**Table 8** Preferred App for Video Chatting by Students gender wise

Gender	Whatsapp	Google Duo	IMO	Skype	Others	Total (%)
Male	26 (52)	10 (20)	6 (12)	7 (14)	1 (2)	50 (100)
Female	29 (58)	9 (18)	5 (10)	6 (12)	1 (2)	50 (100)
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

## Findings

- Most of the university students use the internet on mobile for more than 3 hours a day. Females are using more than male respondents.
- Whatsapp is the most preferred app for chatting. About two-third of the students also prefer Instagram.
- Most of the university students do chatting on mobile apps with classmates and friends.
- One-third of the students sometimes sends long text messages to others, whereas most of the students do rarely and never forward such long text messages. Only 5 per cent of students always forward messages regardless of the length of the text message.
- WhatsApp is the more appropriate app for communication among youth and females find it more appropriate than males.
- WhatsApp has also got a preference for video chatting among youth and Google Duo is also popular among university students.

## Conclusion

Use of Internet on mobile by youth has got popularity and they are using the internet on mobile phones rather than other devices like laptops and desktops. WhatsApp is the most favourite mobile application among university students for communication. They mostly use mobile communication apps to interact with friends, classmates and family members. After WhatsApp, Instagram is also making its presence among youth. Long text messages are not popular among students and forwarding of messages is also not in trend.

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# Communication for Health and Hygiene Management among Adolescent Girls in Rural Rajasthan

RITIKA CHOUDHARY<sup>1</sup> and SUMAN KUMARI<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Lack of proper knowledge of menstrual hygiene can lead to a serious reproductive health problem due to unhygienic practices during monthly cycle in females. Menstruation in girls is a stage of puberty. Due to lack of knowledge, females use impure and poorly dried napkins that cause multiple genital infections. This study focuses on existing knowledge and awareness of menstruation and hygiene management among adolescent girls in rural Rajasthan. It to be assessed in this study whether social and behavioral change communication has had an impact on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of menstruation and menstruation-related practices among young girls. The study used a descriptive approach and survey methodology. Data were collected via questionnaires and interviews from 14 to 18-year-old government school girls in Nagaur, Rajasthan.

**Key Words:** Menstrual hygiene, Adolescent, Students, Awareness, Taboos

## Introduction

Hygiene care has always been a key issue in Health Communication, and when it comes to managing hygiene among girls it becomes even more important. Menstruation is the initial phase of puberty in girls, lack of knowledge and poor hygiene practices can damage their reproductive system. Menstruation is a natural process a female body goes through, it is associated with the human reproductive system. After a certain age (which can be considered pubertal growth and is called menarche) a female's body prepares itself for pregnancy and it makes them bleed if they are not pregnant, this becomes a cycle of every month till they reach the age of menopause. In a female body, estrogen and progesterone are the hormones which are responsible for this cycle. Every month these hormones make eggs in female ovaries, and if the egg does not get fertilized, the body needs to pass it out from the uterus through vagina. This becomes the menstruation cycle, in which blood, nutrients and tissues flow out for 3 to 7 days every month. Since it is related to the human reproductive system it becomes even more necessary to care about hygiene during the menstruation cycle.

Even after being a natural body process, the menstruation cycle and the associated care has always been one of the least talked topics. People hesitate to talk about menstruation and hygiene

care during menstruation. In ancient times women used to make use of Rag (old cloth or fabric), leaves, cow dung, ashes etc. as their menstruation absorbents, which is still in practice in some areas in India. After the introduction of sanitary napkins, such practices have decreased but still not on a satisfactory level, thus many women face several hygiene issues which lead to damage to their reproductive systems. In recent news report of *Dainik Bhaskar* published on 10 September 2019 titled as 'Uff! Bacchedani khone ka yah dard bahut bhayavah hai... gande kapde par chipki chintiyone kar di kokh khali', it was detected that 10 out of 1,000 women lose their fertility because of ill-practices of hygiene. Since adolescent girls are the upcoming generation of women, they need to remain fully aware about hygiene management and health care, this study aimed to examine the hygiene practices among adolescent girls in Rajasthan, and it was also intended to evaluate their state of knowledge about hygiene practices (Choudhary, 2019). The Government of Rajasthan introduced a scheme named *Menstrual Hygiene Scheme* for the welfare of women. Under this scheme sanitary pads are being distributed to all women between the age group of 15 to 45, with the help of schools, colleges, primary healthcare centres, anganwadis etc. The study also helps in knowing the effectiveness of communication made to spread awareness about hygiene care and management.

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## Review of literature

Menstruation and menstruation hygiene management is a subject that is least talked about but has been better studied; there are several studies exploring the different aspects of menstruation, menstruation myths and menstruation hygiene management. This study not only talks about the need for menstruation hygiene management but also assesses the effectiveness of the communication. It also studies the responsiveness and adoption of a scheme that talks and provides products for menstruation hygiene management.

In a study by Upashe *et al.* (2015) done among the high school girls in Western Ethiopia concluded that educational status about menstruation is still on a lower stage, and there is a need for awareness raising programmes about menstrual hygiene practices.

A cross-sectional study which was carried out in urban slum areas by Deshpande *et al.* (2018), states that menstrual hygiene was unsatisfactory among adolescent girls. In urban slum areas, there were improper perceptions and myths about menstruation which harm adolescent girls' health not physically but also psychologically. The results explain that there is a crucial need for awareness and education about menstruation and hygiene practices.

According to Mathiyalagen *et al.* (2017), menstruation is a milestone event in a girl's life and it is a beginning of her reproductive life. Their study explains that the awareness about menstruation hygiene practices in urban areas are present due to massive campaigning and awareness programmes and adolescent girls have satisfactory knowledge about menstruation before menarche.

Devi and Ramaiah (1994), explained in their study that there is lack of awareness and knowledge about menstruation and hygiene practices, adolescent girls have some myths related to menstruation such as considering it a curse of god. It was a study carried out with 65 females and only 50% knew that menstruation happens because of hormonal changes.

Paria *et al.* (1994), explained that the girls from urban areas are more aware about hygiene practices during menstruation cycle than the girls of rural areas. The study was conducted in two girls' schools and 541 girls were selected as the sample of the study. Researchers found hygiene practices unsatisfactory in the rural area as compared to the urban area.

Belayneh and Mekuriaw (2019) states that there is a strong need to design adequate awareness programmes and advocacy schemes to promote and improve hygiene practices of adolescent girls. They believe that such programmes can be really helpful in spreading awareness about such health concerning issues. As per the results shown in the study out of 791 adolescent girls, 68.3% of them had pitiable knowledge of menstruation and hygiene practices during menstruation.

In a study conducted in Puducherry (India) by Priya *et al.* (2017), revealed that although majority of girls (approximately 89.2%) were using sanitary pads but still unhygienic practices were noticed and there is a need to spread awareness about other hygiene practices apart from the use of sanitary pads.

In a study conducted in Jhansi (India) by Windsor (2017), explained that the attitude of women about menstruation is quite good, they do not consider it bad thing instead they understand that it is their reproductive system. It was an exploratory research in which researcher herself spent more than four months in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, to collect the data with the help of an employed translator. The researcher conducted focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews to gather information about the perceptions and practices of menstruation. The study concluded that many plans can be designed to improve the wash facilities or formal health education also might be helpful.

Ramachandra *et al.*, (2016) explains about the knowledge and practices of menstrual hygiene among urban adolescent girls. The study was conducted among 550 girls aged 13-16 years in Bangalore (India). As per the results, 69% girls were using sanitary napkins as an absorbent and 6% were using cloth and sanitary napkins both but half of the participants were not aware of the need to dry the absorbent in sunlight. The study indicates health campaigns to spread awareness about safe and hygiene practices during menstruation for a healthy reproductive life.

## Objectives

- To examine adolescent girls' state of awareness about hygiene practices during menstruation.
- To study the health and hygiene care practices of adolescent girls of Nagaur, Rajasthan.

- To understand the responsiveness of adolescent girls' towards Rajasthan government's scheme for menstruation hygiene awareness.
- To know the effectiveness and adoption of communication for menstruation hygiene.

### Research questions

- Are adolescent girls of Nagaur (Rajasthan) aware of menstruation and hygiene management?
- Are adolescent girls aware of the scheme *Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS)* launched by the Government of Rajasthan for menstruation hygiene management?
- Is communication effective for girls to adopt the scheme for menstruation hygiene?
- Are they using proper practices during menstruation for hygiene management?

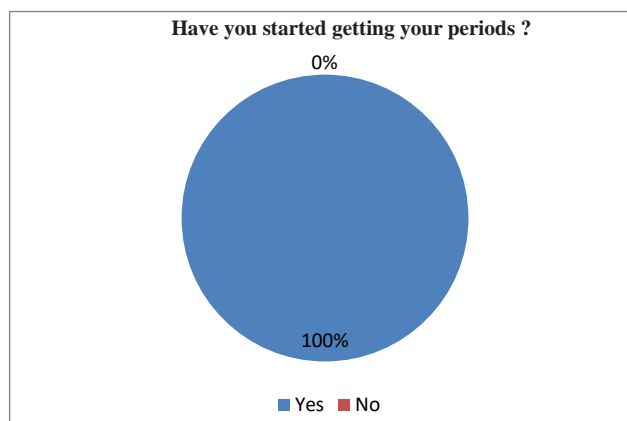
### Research methodology

This is quantitative study which explores the state of awareness of adolescent girls about menstruation, menstruation hygiene management and it also assesses adolescent girls' responsiveness towards the scheme of Rajasthan government for menstruation hygiene awareness which helps in understanding the effectiveness of the communication made for hygiene management.

**Sampling:** Simple random sampling was done to study the research population. Nagaur is a semi-urban area of Rajasthan state. Since the study is an attempt to understand the effectiveness of communication, the universe is the beneficiaries of a scheme of the Rajasthan Government for menstruation hygiene. The scheme is being implemented with the help of government schools, colleges, primary health care centres, *asha* and *anganwadi* centres. In the 35 adolescent Girls of Ostwal Menabehan Government Girls' Secondary School Deh, Nagaur (Rajasthan), who go through a monthly cycle of menstruation, were selected as samples to assess the receptivity and effectiveness of communication and to explore their understanding and state of awareness about hygiene care during menstruation.

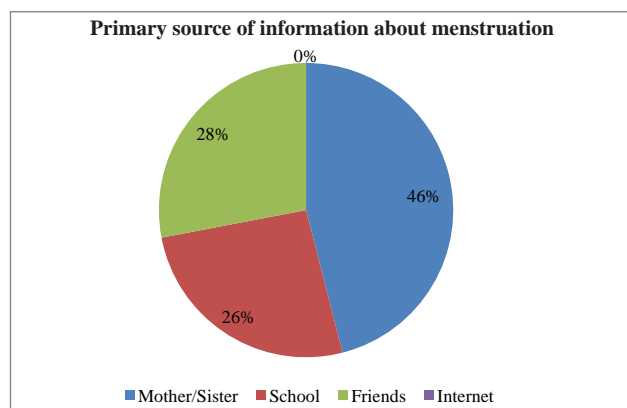
**Data collection:** The survey method was used as a tool of data collection through questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared in Hindi and English for the better understanding of the research population.

**Data analysis:** Since the study was based on quantitative mode, the data analysis was done with the help of the 'Mean' tool in which the average of the sample universe is presented in the form of percentage.



**Fig. 1** Respondents per cent about mensuration

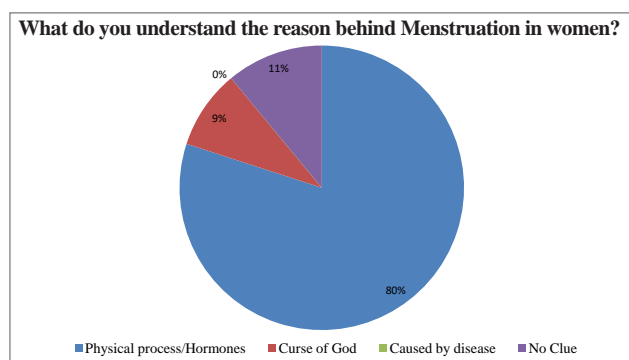
Figure 1 represents the data collected by the researchers. The sample was collected from a government school of Nagaur (Rajasthan) named Ostwal Menabehan Government Girls' Secondary School Deh, Nagaur. The researchers purposely selected only those girls who started having their periods so the better results of young adolescent girls' awareness and knowledge state about health and hygiene care during menstruation can be collected.



**Fig. 2** Respondents per cent about primary source of information about mensuration

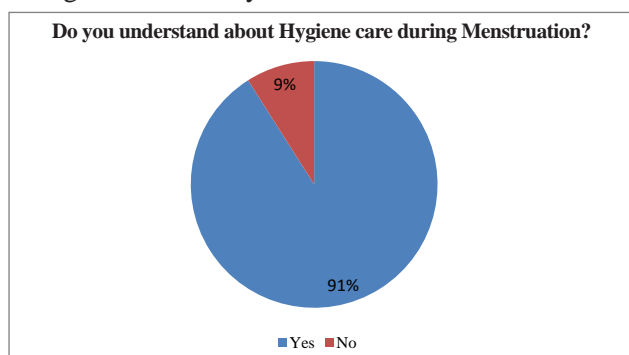
There is a saying that half knowledge can be harmful, so the primary source about health matters must be reliable. Apart from that this also indicates that even in 21<sup>st</sup> century, menstruation is still considered a taboo subject to talk about, still cannot be discussed openly. In such a scenario the discussion about hygiene care is difficult to imagine. It is good to know that 46% (Figure 2) of them received information about menstruation from their family, which is a good sign that they can discuss about menstruation in their own family (Figure 2), which increases the possibility of reliability but, on the other hand 28% of them got to know about menstruation from their friends which cannot be considered a dependable source of information.





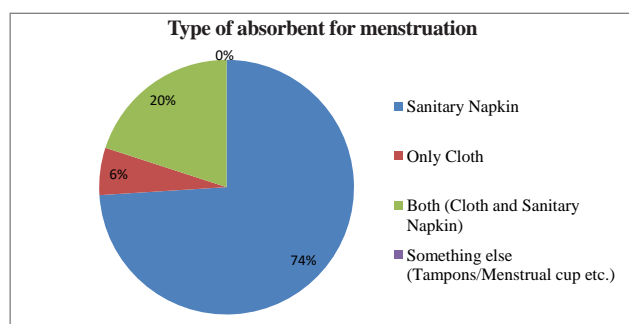
**Fig. 3** Per cent respondents for reason behind menstruation in women

Figure 3 represents the data if the girls have any sort of misconception about menstruation. It is adverse to know that 9% of the girls consider it as a curse of god and 11% of them had no clue about it but 80% of them understand that it is a natural process of their puberty and happen because of the hormonal changes in their body.



**Fig. 4** Repondents per cent regarding hygiene care during menstruation

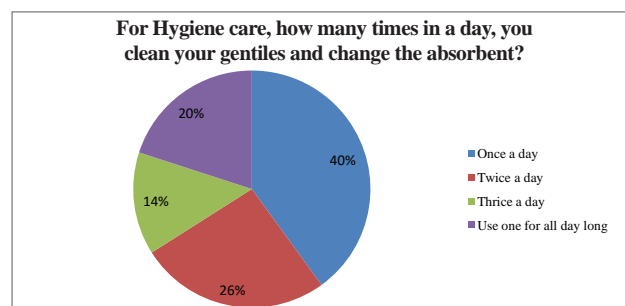
Figure 4 represents the data about girls' understanding of hygiene care during menstruation; it was an attempt to know if they know about hygiene care.



**Fig. 5** Response regarding types of absorbents for menstruation

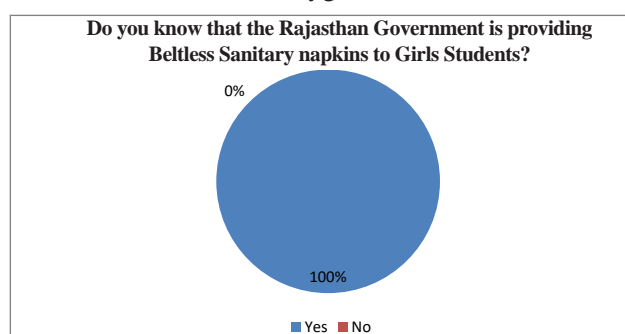
To know what kind of absorbent they use during menstruation, Figure 5 represents that 74% of them were using sanitary napkins as a absorbent during and none of them were using any other absorbents like menstrual cups or tampons. They were not aware of it or not much confident about their being trustworthy

as an absorbent. Six per cent of them were using cloth as an absorbent and rest 20% were using cloth and napkins both as per the availability. When they were asked about the cleaning of clothes with boiled water for hygiene, none of them (the cloth users) were aware of it.



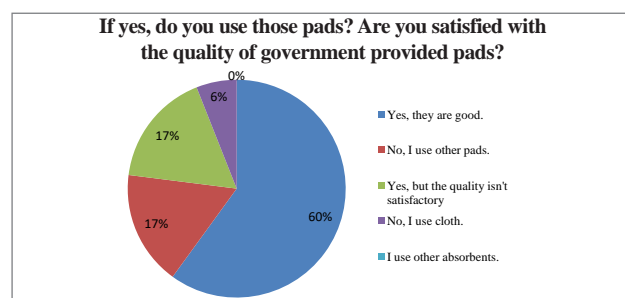
**Fig. 6** Hygiene care

When we talk about hygiene care, then apart from the use of proper absorbent it is necessary to keep the genitals clean and also changing the absorbent from time to time. Generally, it is suggested to change the absorbent after every 5 to 6 hours or at least 3 times a day. As per the collected data (Fig. 6) merely 14% of the girls were changing their absorbent thrice a day and 20% of them were using the same absorbent for the whole day long and were also not much keen about cleaning their genitals. It is alarming to understand the state of awareness of girls of Nagaur about menstruation and hygiene care.



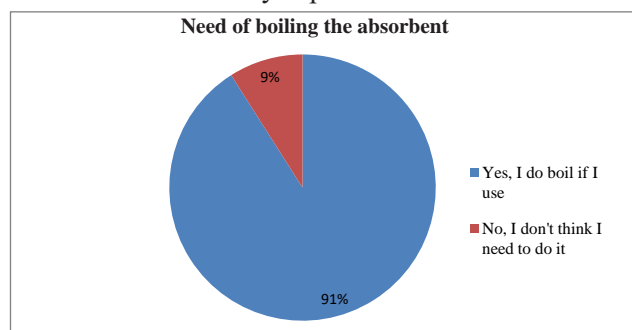
**Fig. 7** Awareness regarding government scheme

It is quite good to know that girls of Nagaur are aware of the scheme (Fig. 7) related to their menstruation hygiene. As Rajasthan government is distributing free sanitary napkins in government schools, *anganwadi* centres, and primary health centres.



**Fig. 8** Response regarding quality of pads

Figure 8 represents the data collected to know if the girls were satisfied with the quality of pads provided by the government. It is found that they were not satisfactory for the heavy bleeding during first two days of menstruation, which might have made the girls use cloth and other sanitary napkins both as the absorbents.



**Fig. 9** Boiling of absorbent

Figure 9 represents the data collected to know if the girls are aware of the need for boiling the absorbent or cleaning it with warm water if they are using cloth or napkin as an absorbent. A total of 91% responded said that they boil the absorbent after its use.

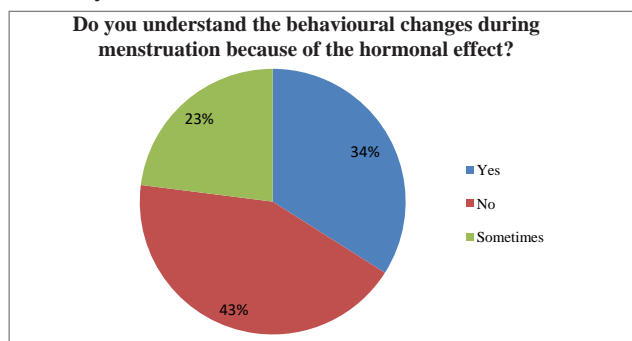
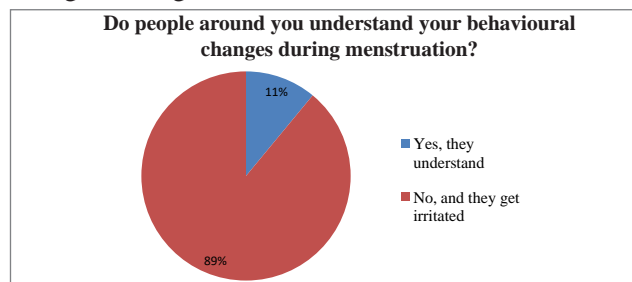
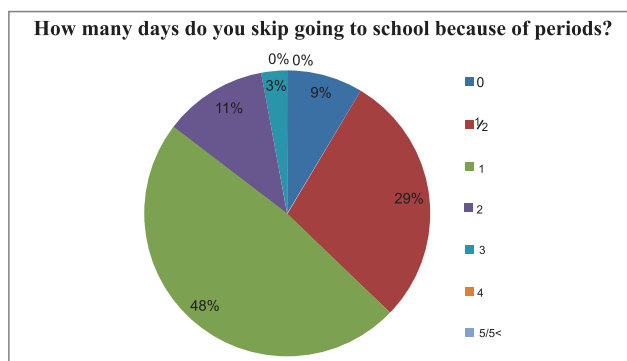


Figure 10 represents the data to know about the awareness of girls' about other hormonal changes during menstruation which might affect their behaviour during these days, 34% said yes, 43% said sometimes and 23% said that they do feel behavioural changes during menstruation.



**Fig. 11** Response regarding people's understanding about behaviour change

Figure 11 represents the data collected to understand if the people around the girls understand their behavioural changes during menstruation as it might help them to react accordingly. Only 11% of the girls agreed that people around them understand about their behavioural changes during menstruation.



**Fig. 12** Response regarding effects of menstruation

Figure 12 represents the data if the problems during menstruation affect their studies as well, and the requirement of a proper absorbent might be a major reason behind this apart from the physical pain and other possible reasons. It is evident that 49% girls skip school for one day, 29% for last day, 11% for 2 days.

## Summary

Mapping the first objective of the study in which researcher attempts to examine adolescent girls' state of awareness about hygiene care practices during menstruation. Considering the data it can be said that adolescent girls are aware of the menstruation cycle, but somewhere they are unaware of the reason behind the cycle. It can also be considered that their primary source of information about menstruation hygiene is also not a reliable one. Menstruation is still being considered as a taboo thus parents hesitate in talking about it, so many girls' primary source of information about menstruation were their friends, which cannot be considered reliable.

Mapping the second objective of the study in which researchers attempt to study the health and hygiene care practices of adolescent girls of Nagaur respondents were asked about their knowledge and practices during menstruation for hygiene management. Considering the data it can be concluded that girls are aware of the hygiene management during menstruation, about their hygiene care practices, most of them were using sanitary pads provided by the government, which is quite satisfactory that at-least they are stepping towards hygiene management during menstruation. On the other hand, when it was asked about the need for boiling or washing the cloth napkin with warm water, 9% of them were unaware of the necessity behind it. There is a strong need to spread awareness about this, as there are so many females who use cloth napkin as an absorbent during menstruation.

Mapping the third objective of the study to understand the responsiveness of adolescent

girls' towards Rajasthan government's scheme for menstruation hygiene awareness, respondents were asked about their responsiveness towards the scheme. It can be said that girls are aware of the scheme and their adoption for the scheme is also quite satisfactory at this level. Although the quality of the pads is not up to the mark but as there is a saying something is better than nothing, thus the communication for the scheme is rightly done in the manner for the better adoption and responsiveness for the hygiene management.

Mapping the fourth objective of the study to know the effectiveness and adoption of communication for menstruation hygiene, respondents were asked if they are using the sanitary pads provided under the scheme, considering the collected data 60% of them were happily using the provided pads, 17% of them were using the provided pads but were not satisfied with the quality, 17% of them were using other pads or product absorbents which is also good as the main concern is hygiene management, but 6% of them were still using the cloth as an absorbent and most of them were unaware about cleaning it with warm water or drying it in the sunlight. Considering the data it can be concluded that there is a strong need to spread awareness about menstruation hygiene management.

## Conclusion

This study revealed that knowledge and awareness about menstruation hygiene management is satisfactory at some level, although there were some myths and assumptions about menstruation among girls but an appropriate communication and awareness programmes can improve the situation. Adolescent girls in semi-urban areas have adequate knowledge about hygiene practices which is a good sign that the upcoming generation of women is a bit aware of their health and hygiene management but when it comes to rural areas, the state of awareness is still questionable. In some areas, menstruation is still considered as a taboo subject to talk about, some communication and awareness campaigns are required to make a change about it, because as long this is considered a taboo subject, it will remain least talked and discussed and that will be a barrier in increasing awareness

about hygiene during menstruation. The study not merely presents the data about the awareness about menstruation and menstruation hygiene management but also gives an idea about the responsiveness, adoption and effectiveness of a scheme made for menstruation hygiene management.

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# An Analysis of Social Media Engagement of Bollywood Male Actors during COVID-19

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## ABSTRACT

With the rising engagement of active users and the proliferation of social networking sites, Facebook has emerged as a major tool for Public Relations (PR) in recent times. Public figures across the world are making effective use of Facebook's ability to reach a broader audience. The objective of this study was to examine the social engagement of the top five Bollywood male actors during the unfurl of COVID-19 and the associated national lockdowns in India. Information on the posts shared by these actors was gathered from their official Facebook pages from 24 March to 31 May 2020. The study also examined various factors such as PR drive in social media, Bollywood Facebook connection, frequency of posts shared by selected actors to stay in the limelight, types of posts by selected actors, language used and responses and reactions to the posts shared. The collected data was segregated based on the subject matters such as work and promotions, personal, COVID-19 related and any other.

**Keywords:** Facebook, Bollywood, Celebrity PR, Lockdown, COVID-19.

## Introduction

Technology is growing at its maximum pace today and with this growth, the idea of communication and being in touch with dear ones has become something of no big deal. Everyone in the world is connected and the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan's idea of the global village has become twice as significant. Thanks to the tremendous growth in the technological arena, this acted as a catalyst in the stupendous growth of the social media platforms too. Another important impetus to be noted is the rapid growth in smartphone technology. With the ubiquity in the number of smartphone users and the low-priced availability of internet in these smart devices, social media platforms are nowadays one of the easiest and most affordable platforms opted by the public to stay in touch with the near and dear ones, get to know about the happenings around the globe, entertainment, education and whatnot.

Social media platforms are today widely used as one of the effective tools in public relations too. People are living in a connected world where anyone can post and comment anything on social networking sites. With billions of regular and active users, social networking sites have proved to play a crucial role in spreading information, public opinion,

views, comments and even private updates (Raj & Goswami, 2020). With the high-end opportunities provided by these social media platforms, informing and educating people about a product, service or even establishing a public image of a company or an individual has become an easy task. The internet helps those companies or individuals to get in touch with their existing customers and potential customers in real-time and with a rapid speed. The information shared over the internet, or to be specific the social media platforms, reach umpteen number of people within no time. Information is today available in the fingertips of the people. With the effective use of the one-to-many opportunity provided by the social media platforms, people are today informed about anything and everything that is happening around the globe. During the unfortunate situation of the rapid unfurling of the killer COVID-19 virus, all the social entertainment are today on hold. From roaming around the cities, enjoying times in shopping malls, going to museums, libraries and bars, watching movies with their loved ones, people are today forced to be confined in their homes. Everyone, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, gender, economically stable or unstable have been staying indoors due to fast-spreading COVID-19. As the film theatres are closed for an indefinite period, it is hard for celebrities

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to stay in the limelight and the minds of their audience. It is during this period the social media platforms are coming into their rescue. From sharing slices from their own lives, details of their upcoming projects, to spreading awareness about COVID-19 virus, celebrities are making use of social media platforms to a great extent nowadays. The role of social media platforms in helping the celebrities to remain in touch with their fans is thus a significant area of study.

### **Public relation drive in social media**

Public relations (PR) is defined as the “planned, deliberate and sustained effort to establish and maintain a mutual understanding and relationship between the organization and its various publics” (Rensburg *et al.*, 1995). Public relations has turned out to be one of the effective ways of remaining in the limelight for celebrities too. Celebrity is a person who is famous especially in the area of entertainment or sports. But, public relations techniques are now widely used by politicians, NGOs (Non-Government Organization) etc., too to remain connected with their public. Building and maintaining a good image among the general public is one of the aims of public relations. It is also important to note that various tools are used to create a good image, a new addition to the arsenal is the wide use of social media platforms. With its feature of spreading the word to a larger public within a short time is an effective channel for public relations today.

In today’s scenario, public relations professionals are aware of the potential of various social media platforms in offering a smooth and effective communication between the client and the various publics. Thus, it is evident that the use of these platforms for the same has increased to a great extent (Bhatti, 2015). The proliferation in web technology and social media platforms has made it trouble-free for organizations and individuals to communicate with their different publics in real-time. The concept and practice of social media removed the barrier of producing content. It enables any social media user to create and dispense any kind of content (Goswami *et al.*, 2020). Simultaneously, before the growth of social media and web technology there was a clear line differentiating between marketing and public relations, but, today with the influence of the web and social media the line has become blurrier (Seiple, 2010). The viral nature of social media platforms has made spreading information or messages through word of mouth more systematic and simpler. That is, a tweet, image, or any other content shared by an individual is shared with the entire globe and this sharing takes place with the delay

of a single click. These shared contents are not losing their credibility, as they are shared by an individual and the reach that these contents get is directly equated to various influencers and publics in the different parts of the world (Bhatti, 2015). According to Seiple (2010), the boons offered by social media in the area of public relations comprises and is not limited to particularly targeted approach, different filters to get in touch with the influencers, implanted promotional information in the shared message, novel methods to reach out various publics and other media platforms and precise assessment (Seiple, 2010). While the old-school approach of public relations relied on the mediation of press or electronic media, social media platforms let the individuals share their content to the entire globe without any mediators, which make these shared messages more credible as well as unaltered (Bhatti, 2015).

Each social media platform has its features and some of the most-used social media platforms today are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc. Though the features offered by these platforms differ, the part played by every social media platform in public relations remains more or less the same (Bhatti, 2015). The effective use of social media platforms by politicians and political parties has helped them in securing more public support in western countries. In India, during the 2014 general elections, the use of social media platforms to further strengthen the campaign strategies of different political parties was evident. The Indian general election of 2014 is considered to be one of the landmark elections in the Indian history where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came into power under the leadership of Mr Narendra Modi (Ahmed *et al.*, 2016). The Public Relations team of BJP kept no stones unturned. The social media campaigns helped in boosting the public image of Mr Narendra Modi as a people’s hero who is sharing the same emotions as the voters who are fed up with the governance of the previous governments.

While talking about politicians who make use of social media platforms, the most active as well as the most-followed Indian politician is Mr Narendra Modi (Hardaha, 2019). Virat Kohli, the Indian cricket team skipper, is the most followed Indian sportsperson in social media (Times Now News, 2020). Small and big ventures from food to electronics are also starting to understand the potential and advantages of social media marketing. They are shifting from traditional one-to-many systems administrative procedure to a one-to-one strategy, offering help whenever necessary through different social networking platforms (Cvijikj *et al.*, 2011). Not

only politics, sports, or industries but also, the film industry is one of the social media follower magnets. The film celebrities around the globe are famous on different social media platforms. The number of social media followers of film stars is increasing within seconds. During the unfortunate situation of the unfurl of COVID-19 pandemic, people are compelled to remain in their homes and they are expected to follow the social-distancing norms. This led to the closing of all the entertainment hubs including the film theatres. Film stars need to remain in the minds of the audience during this special scenario. And, the platform opted by most of the celebrities seem to be the social media platforms which are more affordable as well as user-friendly. India is a country where social media users are increasing day by day and according to the latest statistics, 50 per cent of Indians are using social works in 2020 (Keelery, 2020). So, to stay in the limelight and in the minds of the audience or fans, film stars share posts related to their personal lives, works, promotions etc., in their social media handles.

### **Bollywood Facebook connection**

Social media platforms have introduced novel ways of celebrity media engagement in comparison with traditional media. Thus, social networking sites validate a change in the equilibrium between professional and personal revelation on the brand image (Eyal *et al.*, 2020). Before the penetration of social networking sites, the options for engagement with celebrities were minimal and these celebrities were using their social media handles for marketing and promotion of their works. But today, celebrities are even sharing posts related to their personal lives with their friends and followers in social media platforms (Chung & Cho, 2017). The world is placed in a quagmire due to the rapidly spreading novel coronavirus and everybody is striving to take their lives forward. Celebrities are the ones who make a living through showbiz and it is important for them to stay in the minds of the audience.

With the film theatres closed and film making is on a pause, there are only very few options for film stars to stay retentive among their fans or followers. One of the effective, as well as affordable ways, is to stay active on social media platforms. Most of the Bollywood actors have their social media handles and most of them are active on Facebook. The Facebook usage of Bollywood celebrities conveys the idea that social media is turning out to be powerful as well as a potential tool for celebrities to share details of their personal as well as professional lives. The posts related to the works of Bollywood celebrities serve as

a succour in aggrandizing their professional life, and at the same time, posts related to personal lives help them in creating a better image among the followers by bridging the gap between the real person and the public image (Bhatti, 2015). Thus, Facebook is today widely used by Bollywood celebrities as a tool for communicating with their fans around the globe to promote their works and to build a good image in the public. Hence, it is important to study the Facebook usage of selected actors during the rapid unroll of COVID-19 and the subsequent national lockdown in India to understand how they used Facebook to remain in the minds of their fans. For the respective study, as aforesaid, the Facebook posts of Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar and Sonu Sood during the national lockdowns in India are analyzed.

### **Theoretical framework**

During the period of COVID-19, celebrities are stealing the limelight by shaping their identity through sharing posts on social media platforms. The principle of impression management is significant in the present study. By portraying the individuality of actors online, they try to impress their fans and followers because it is important for celebrities to develop and maintain social relationships. Engaging in social media platforms like Facebook can help celebrities maintain their reputation and their image even when they are unable to show up on the big screen due to COVID-19. Rosenfeld *et al.*, (1995) says that the impression management is the behaviour in which people attempt to influence the image that the other people have about them. At the time of national lockdowns and total shutdown of industries, many stars including the actors chosen for the present study kept their social media platforms, especially their Facebook handles, up to date. The selected actors were posting about the topics related to their personal life, work promotions, new announcements, their social activities, awareness about the virus etc., frequently on their Facebook pages. Therefore, it can be said that active engagement in social media has allowed actors to develop and maintain impressions with a broader audience.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) is also significant in this study. The theory proposes that human behaviour is modified by observing and imitating others. Film stars have a huge fan base in India and there are a lot of people who constantly observe their favourite celebrities online. The actors chosen for the present study engaged actively in social media during the lockdowns in India due to the spread

of COVID-19 and they took centre stage by helping the needy, raising awareness about the spread of virus etc. These activities may have inspired a lot of other people. When these actors share to the public about the activities they are doing, it reaches a significant number of people, so as postulated by the social learning theory, there is a chance of the audience getting influenced by their favourite celebrities and at least some of the audience might come forward to do good deeds. Applying the framework of Parasocial Interaction is also relevant in the study. Tsotsos (2015) stipulates that parasocial interaction is the one-sided social relationship between the media consumers and the information that they acquire from the media. It can be said that social media users have a social relationship with these actors and also their Facebook pages. The selected actors' posts were mostly related to their personal life, work and promotions, COVID-19 awareness and the philanthropic activities they have done during the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent national lockdowns. The selected actors, rather than promoting their personal lives only, maintain their relationship with the public through hashtags, mentions, re-posts via Facebook etc. The fans and the followers can respond to the activities of these actors through comments, shares and likes under the posts. This parasocial relationship might have engaged social media users to stay in touch with their favourite stars.

## Objectives

After carefully analyzing the relevant literature in the area the following objectives are set for the current study:

1. To analyze how often the selected Bollywood male actors posted on Facebook during lockdown.
2. To understand what types of posts were the selected Bollywood male actors posting during the lockdowns.
3. To examine the subjects of the posts of selected Bollywood male actors during the lockdown on their Facebook page.
4. To measure the response and reactions of the followers to the posts of selected male Bollywood actors during the lockdown.
5. To recognize the fan following trend developed for the selected male Bollywood actors during the period of study.
6. To examine the languages used on the Facebook posts by the selected male Bollywood actors.
7. To measure the relative popularity of the selected male Bollywood actors on Facebook during the national lockdowns in India.

## Research questions

The objectives set for the study and the available literature on the topic have led to the framing of the following research questions:

- RQ1* How often did the selected Bollywood male actors post on Facebook during lockdown?
- RQ2* What types of posts were the selected male Bollywood actors posting during the lockdowns?
- RQ3* What were the subjects of the Facebook posts shared by selected male Bollywood actors during the study period?
- RQ4* What were the languages used by the selected male Bollywood actors in Facebook posts during the lockdowns?
- RQ5* What were the reactions and responses of the followers?
- RQ6* What trend was formed in the fan following of selected male Bollywood actors in their respective Facebook handles during the lockdown?
- RQ7* What was the relative popularity of selected male Bollywood actors on Facebook during the period of study?

## Research methodology

The study sought to examine the involvement of selected five Bollywood male actors on Facebook during the first four national lockdowns in India. The Facebook contents of the selected male actors Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, and Sonu Sood were used for the present study. To understand how the selected male actors made use of Facebook as a tool of public relations and image management during the national lockdowns in India, their Facebook posts were analysed. The analysis was based on various factors such as frequency of the posts, types of posts, subject matters of the posts, reactions of the followers, languages used in the posts, the popularity of the posts as well as the relative popularity of the actors. Reactions such as like, love, wow, thankful and haha are categorized as positive responses and sad and angry reactions are categorized as negative responses. The collected data is also segregated based on the subject matters such as work, personal, COVID-19 related, and any other. Facebook is leading the flock of social media platforms with the most number of active users. Hence, Facebook was selected as the platform to be analysed. The afore mentioned actors are preferred for the present study based on the number of followers they had during the study period. According to the Indian Institute of Human Brands (IIHB) survey on the performance of celebrities during the lockdown, the selected actors were included in the top ten list.



Sonu Sood got a favourable rating from customers for his efforts to support migrant workers. After donating ₹ 25 crore to the PM Cares Fund, Akshay Kumar picked up the headlines. The public recognizes and acknowledges all about their beloved stars, Amitabh Bachchan, Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan, who are in the top list because of their selfless commitment to society (Narasimhan, 2020). The details of the updates shared by the aforesaid actors in the form of photos, status, native videos, Youtube videos, links, and other video contents during the four national lockdowns in India were analysed. The process used to extract the information shared by the selected male actors from 25 March 2020 to 31 May 2020, from their Facebook is through data mining. The accumulation of information through data mining during the study period helped to observe and analyse the online engagement of the selected actors.

### Data interpretation

#### **RQ1 How often did the selected Bollywood male actors post on Facebook during Lockdown?**

The fatal consequences of coronavirus pandemic echo worldwide, and it is unsurprising to see the social media engagement of celebrities. Every celebrity, national or regional, in these dark times, are away from their regularly scheduled daily activities. The main personas of film industries enclosed themselves in their spacious and comforting homes from which they post images, videos and their daily activities seeking to cheer up the masses. Millions of people are tuning into social media to find out what their favourite actors are up to. But, sometimes what these followers discover is no more extraordinary than what happens in their living rooms, because people feel close to them by seeing the posts in the celebrity pages. Generally, the young block of people was more closely attracted to actors, but, during this unfortunate situation, every population was compelled to stay home by following the new normal norms including social distancing, personal hygiene etc., that paved the way to be immersed in the virtual world out of the ordinary. Also, people tried to use social media platforms for a greater aim to stay connected with the people whom they are close to including their favourite personas. The technological connection between the public and the film personalities has been increasing immensely during this period. As the people lost their chances to see their favourite superstars stealing the show through big screens, people today tuned into the official social media handles of their favourite stars to know their quarantine activities.

Celebrities need to stay in touch with their fans or the general audience during this unfortunate situation, as it will help in making themselves retentive among the people. The country has witnessed a series of lockdowns to fight against the rapidly spreading COVID-19. All the public gathering centres including the film theatres have been closed in India as a measure to contain the spread of the virus. The shrinking of theatrical experience has made the fans, audience and the ordinary masses to depend upon their digital devices to stay in connection with their favourite actors. Hence, the attention of the audience moved towards social media platforms to know more about their favourite actors. Today, one of the efficient ways opted by the actors to stay in the limelight is to constantly communicate with their fans through social media platforms and they might also increase the frequency of posts in their respective accounts.

**Table 1.** Frequency of posts shared by selected actors during national lockdowns

Celebrity	Frequency of posts shared during Lockdowns			
	Lockdown 1	Lockdown 2	Lockdown 3	Lockdown 4
Amitabh Bachchan	49	39	36	31
Shahrukh Khan	2	4	9	3
Salman Khan	2	10	11	6
Akshay Kumar	7	5	4	7
SonuSood	16	25	31	33

Bollywood actors like Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, and Sonu Sood used Facebook to stay in touch with their audience (Table 1). On the other hand, the frequency of the posts during different lockdown periods varied for each celebrity. Amitabh Bachchan posted the most number of contents on Facebook during the first lockdown and gradually it was decreasing up to the fourth lockdown. The number of posts by Shahrukh Khan on Facebook increased during the first three lockdowns and then went down on the fourth lockdown. Salman Khan shared a minimal number of posts during the first lockdown and he shared the maximum number of posts during the third lockdown. Akshay Kumar posted the most number of Facebook posts during the first and the fourth lockdown. Sonu Sood's Facebook updates were found increasing throughout the entire lockdown.

#### **RQ2 What types of posts were the selected male Bollywood actors posting during the lockdowns?**

Despite so many Facebook users, it is tougher for every celebrity to get the attention of fans on



social media platforms. Many social media users do not even know what type of content gets better attention on Facebook. Celebrities and their PR team know that Facebook is a significant key to share and promote their ideas, thoughts and attitudes with the general public. During this period of lockdowns and social distancing, which types of content get the most attention on Facebook, which types are most likely to be viral are the essential factors to be determined. Social media engagement is such a significant factor for actors to stay in connection with their fans. Celebrities often upload posts to entertain, inform, inspire and engage the users, so that the followers get to know about the actors they admire better.

The celebrities can maintain the quality of contents while uploading their Facebook posts to determine them from other users. Posts like photos and videos perform well on Facebook in terms of reach and engagement. Sometimes short videos posted by actors gain more engagement among the users. Actors who are also engaged in Facebook are also using live videos a lot in the form of status and links. Live video streaming is an interactive process where the actors answer the questions asked by the fans. They share their work process, their experiences, and sometimes some breaking news through live streaming. The fans or the people who follow them feel like they are talking to their favourite persons more closely and they feel so much connected. So the type of posts they are uploading is significant to impress their fans and followers.

**Table 2.** Types of posts posted by selected actors

Celebrity	Types of Posts					
	Photos	Status	Native Video	Youtube	Link	Video
Amitabh Bachchan	97	18	22	12	6	0
Shahrukh Khan	12	2	4	0	0	0
Salman Khan	5	0	13	6	3	1
Akshay Kumar	10	1	9	1	1	0
SonuSood	13	0	32	11	46	3

While looking at Table 2, the type of contents posted by the selected Bollywood actors are photos, status, native videos, YouTube videos, links, and other video contents. Amitabh Bachchan posted the most number of photos during the four lockdown periods. Facebook engagement of Sharukh Khan was minimal during the lockdown period. Salman Khan posted more number of Native videos compared to his other type of posts such as photos and YouTube content, videos, and links. Akshay Kumar, on the other hand, has shared the maximum number of photos on his

Facebook page compared to other types of posts. Compared to other selected Bollywood actors, Sonu Sood shared the most number of posts after Amitabh Bachchan.

### **RQ3 What were the subjects of the Facebook posts shared by selected male Bollywood actors during the study period?**

The topics or subjects used in Facebook posts make one's Facebook page more user-friendly and it helps to build a strong relationship with the followers. The topic used or the subject matter the actors post in their Facebook accounts allow the fans and members of the virtual world to stay closer with the lives of the actors they admire the most. COVID-19-related posts, personal life, work and promotions, and any other were the actors focus subjects on their Facebook pages during the four national lockdowns.

**Table 3.** Subject of posts shared by selected actors

Celebrity	Subject of Posts			
	COVID-19 Related	Personal Life	Work & Promotions	Any Other
Amitabh Bachchan	35	39	43	38
Shahrukh Khan	7	4	1	6
Salman Khan	6	1	22	0
Akshay Kumar	12	4	6	1
Sonu Sood	83	10	2	10

Mr Amitabh Bachchan posted the most number of posts related to his works and promotions (Table 3). His posts included wishing fans on certain auspicious occasions as well as some sort of philosophical ones. While Shahrukh Khan focused more on COVID-19 related subject matter, Salman Khan gave more importance to sharing the posts related to his works and promotions. Akshay Kumar posted updates mostly on the subject COVID-19. Sonu Sood also used his Facebook page to share the most number of posts related to COVID-19. It is important to note that the philanthropic approach of Sonu Sood helped him in boosting his public image to a great extent.

### **RQ4 What were the languages used by the selected male Bollywood actors in Facebook posts during the lockdowns?**

Language is an effective tool to stay in relation with the regional, national and international audience on Facebook. Self-promotion and self-presentation are important for actors to maintain their brand image. Communication is the main aim of social media engagement. Though there are multiple language settings on Facebook, the actors or their PR team know the effective way to stay in touch with their fans and communicate with them. Usage of languages is not only

an actionable strategy by actors, it also helps to encourage the users to engage in social media discussion.

**Table 4.** Language used in posts vs. number of posts

Celebrity	The language used vs. No. of posts				
	English	Hindi	Multilingual	Any other	Nil
Amitabh Bachchan	97	16	38	1	3
Shahrukh Khan	14	0	2	0	2
Salman Khan	20	0	8	0	1
Akshay Kumar	17	1	4	0	1
Sonu Sood	32	0	4	0	69

Very often, actors tend to give captions for their posts. These captions describe the post to an extent. Different languages were used by each celebrity to give captions, out of which, English was the language mostly used by the selected actors (Table 4). They have also used multilingual languages to stay in touch with fans from every corner of the world.

#### **RQ5 What were the reactions and responses of the followers?**

Social media engagement of actors is a two-way communication and it is complete when they get responses from the users, be it fans or other people. Responses are the main factor that keeps actors to share more content to stay in connection with the users. Likes and shares are important components to encourage actors to keep their profiles updated (Table 5). So they primarily focus on posting contents that impress their fans and followers. Interactions and getting feedback from the fans and followers increase the activities of celebrities online and they engage in posting the contents that are unique and exciting. Feedbacks, most of the time may be in the form of comments under a particular post. Responses such as liking, sharing and comment weigh differently on Facebook posts. Sharing contents on Facebook, especially in the form of photos, videos, links etc, capture the attention of the followers and if they like the content these actors posted they re-share those contents. While comparing the responses liking posts have more importance in a Facebook post, because the depth of the responses are measured by the number of likes the post receives. Celebrities and their PR team are well aware that uploading quality contents on Facebook will improve the responses they receive.

According to Table 5, Salman Khan, based on the maximum number of likes received for the Facebook page, proved the most influential social media personality on Facebook during the study period. During the four lockdowns, the selected actors were actively engaged in Facebook. The number of posts uploaded by these actors differs and the responses they received for each post also varied. Eventhough the number of posts uploaded by Salman Khan as mentioned in Table 2 was comparatively low, the most number of responses such as likes for his Facebook page and likes, comments and shares for Facebook posts were very high. The responses were relevant because it gives the users a feeling of conversing with their favourite actors, and at the same time, the celebrity who posted the content gets feedback about the post.

Through Facebook's reactions feature, instead of only being able to 'Liking' a Facebook post, users can connect with their favourite person's status updates, stories, videos or photos using one of the five emotional reactions including *Love*, *Wow*, *Haha*, *Sad*, and *Angry*. Emotional reactions were different from the responses because the users were expressing the emotional side to a particular post uploaded by a celebrity (Table 6). These emotional reactions have multiple meanings because if one reacted 'Love' reaction, it means they like it so much. Likewise, if it is 'Wow', it is kind of a shock or they are impressed by that post. 'Haha' denotes that something is funny in that post. 'Sad' is something opposite to like or its kind of expressing sorrow. 'Angry' response denotes fury or disgust to the post. Hence, for the current study, *Love*, *Wow* and *Haha* were considered as positive reactions and *Sad* and *Angry* are considered as negative reactions.

As per the Table 6, more reactions related to love were received by Shahrukh Khan, followed by Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar compared to the other actors. The responses such as *wow* and *haha* were relatively higher for Sonu Sood's posts, than the other celebrity posts during the four lockdowns, which indicated that the posts uploaded by Sonu Sood were impressive, funny and acknowledged. Shahrukh Khan received the most number of reactions related to expressing sorrow. The reaction

**Table 5.** Responses

Celebrity	Likes at Posting (FB Page)		Likes (Post)		Comments		Shares	
	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
Amitabh Bachchan	29873372	29853337	409824	557	35889	83	9069	2
Shahrukh Khan	29597005	29430791	1215863	22169	63813	848	47451	136
Salman Khan	37615969	37356207	1599186	22203	78169	1621	203849	234
Akshay Kumar	26158796	25880930	1199493	20614	56126	722	146242	290
Sonu Sood	2810333	2534559	1165044	249	24253	5	164955	0

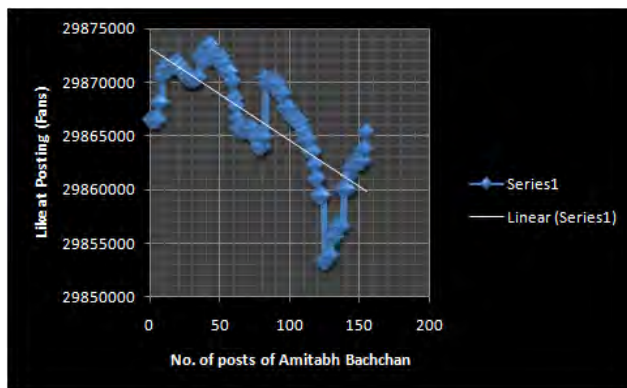
angry for the posts uploaded by each celebrity was comparatively low when compared to the reactions love, wow, *haha* and sad. Also, Shahrukh Khan received more furious reactions to his posts than other actors during the study period. Hence, altogether it can be assumed that the positive reactions were more than negative ones for all the selected actors.

#### **RQ6 What trend was formed in the fan following of selected male bollywood actors in their respective Facebook handles during the lockdown?**

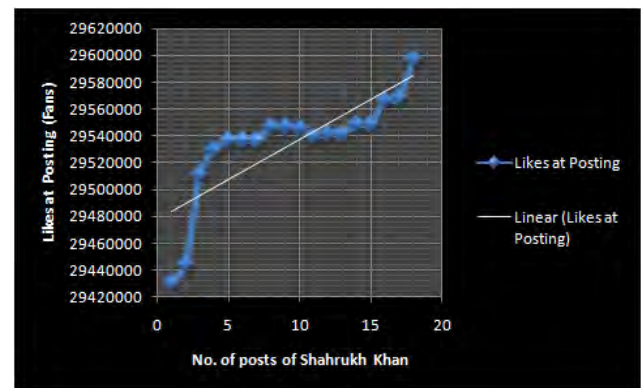
Fan following is an important factor to be analysed because it is important for a celebrity especially during this unfortunate situation to maintain a mutual relationship with the different publics. One of the effective ways for actors to stay in touch with the

**Table 6.** Reactions on the posts of celebrities

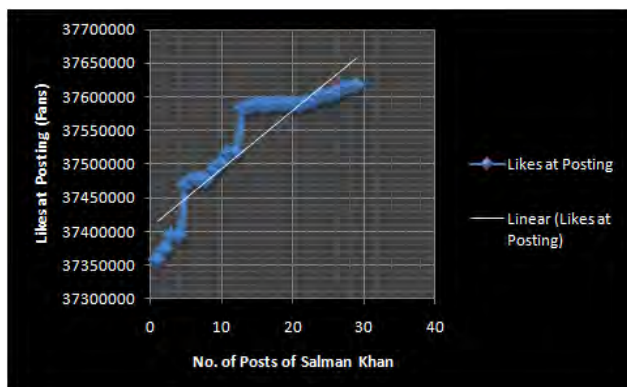
Celebrity	Love		Wow		Haha		Sad		Angry	
	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
Amitabh Bachchan	31795	68	7619	0	18284	0	55994	0	154	0
Shahrukh Khan	207503	2273	9854	41	3738	12	219603	4	432	2
Salman Khan	195106	2614	8222	130	26455	45	1005	3	349	5
Akshay Kumar	147993	1860	5632	68	3308	15	18166	1	212	3
SonuSood	65373	20	35913	0	32922	0	1640	0	157	0



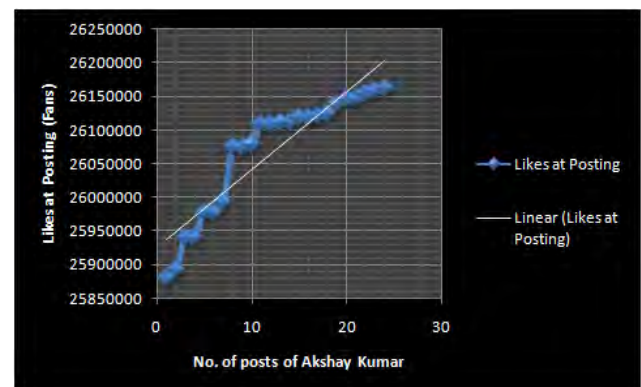
**Fig. 1**



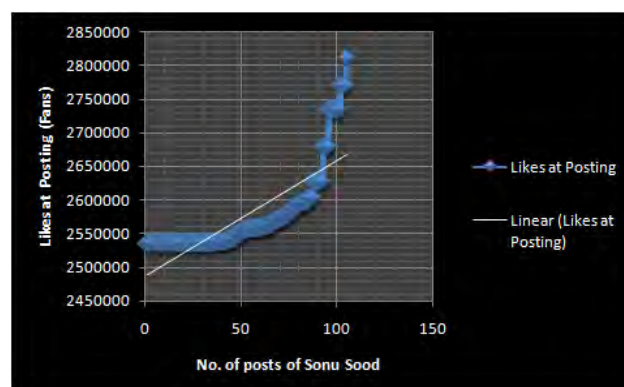
**Fig. 2**



**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**



**Fig. 5**

**Figs. 1 to 5.** Change in fan following of selected actors during lockdowns



audience is to connect with them online. Social media engagement is an effective tool to post updates about the daily lives, works etc., to touch with their fans. So it is important to connect with the people who exhibit strong admiration towards these actors. The virtual world is very competitive and to get the desired results in Facebook regarding the fan followers, actors have to post content to engage people to follow their account and share their contents to more people online. Due to COVID-19 the routines of people have been changed, most people's daily lives and professional lives shifted to online and social media became an even more significant tool to link with people around the globe. The preferences and objectives of viewers or social media users have fundamentally evolved throughout this global pandemic. There may be changes in the preference of the audience in interacting with the people whom they admire the most. People may not be interested in entertainment contents only because this global pandemic has made the people think of the values and responsibilities that every individual has and they may look up to their favourite celebrities and film stars who have inspired them the most and might follow them for the humanistic and entertaining approaches. The actors' level of online interaction with the fans and followers is an important factor determining the increase and decrease in the fan following. There may be so many reasons behind the increase or decrease of fan following because of the agreements and disagreements the followers might have on the posts updated by the actors.

The analysis of the collected data from Facebook revealed that fan following of Amitabh Bachchan, even though he has posted the most number of updates during the lockdown period compared to all other selected actors, decreased linearly. At the same time, the fan following of other Bollywood actors such as Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, and Sonu Sood was increasing at a linear pace. The fan following of Sonu Sood has increased tremendously during lockdown. This increasing trend of fan following of Sonu Sood may be correlated with the humanitarian activities such as helping the stranded migrant workers across the country and extending help towards the neediest people, during the lockdowns in the country.

**RQ7: What was the relative popularity of selected male Bollywood actors on Facebook during the period of study?**

The popularity of actors is dependent on their performance during the lockdown. The number of public services made by the selected actors, promotion

for the public good, humanitarian works done by them, the subject matter of the contents posted by them and their support for the public are the factors for measuring the popularity. The users at large observe and register everything about their favourite stars on Facebook. Most actors were involved in social media engagements and brand activities during this time.

**Table 7.** Relative popularity of selected actors during national lockdowns

Celebrity	Relative Popularity
Amitabh Bachchan	50827.12
Shahrukh Khan	240966.5
Salman Khan	216208.75
Akshay Kumar	256666.52
Sonu Sood	26540.8

In addition to finding the relative popularity of each celebrity, the relative popularity obtained for each post was determined and the total sum of all individual relative popularity values is shown in the Table 7. Akshay Kumar was the most popular celebrity, followed by Shahrukh Khan and Salman Khan. The main reason behind Akshay Kumar's popularity may be his contribution of ₹ 25 crores and ₹ 3 crore for the COVID-19 relief activities to the PM Care Fund and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) respectively. With these donations, Akshay Kumar, as a Canadian citizen, has become a centre of attraction for Facebook users. While cross-checking the massive number of news articles about Sonu Sood's philanthropy, he was expected to be the most famous celebrity on social media. It is to be noted that Sonu Sood also opened up his Juhu hotel to accommodate medical workers, provided meals to the underprivileged in Mumbai and most importantly his 'Ghar Bhejo initiative' which aimed at sending migrants back to their homelands. The reason behind the low relative popularity of Sonu Sood can be the huge difference in the fan following of Sonu Sood compared to other actors. For example, Akshay Kumar, the most popular celebrity on Facebook during the period of study, has almost 26 million Facebook fans and Sonu Sood has about 3.2 million Facebook fans.

**Conclusion**

The study aimed at discussing the Facebook engagement of five leading male Bollywood actors during the abrupt and rapid unroll of COVID-19 and the subsequent national lockdowns in India. From the study, it can be concluded that Facebook has turned out to be one of the most effective and efficient tools of public relations and celebrity image management.



The selected five male Bollywood actors were staying in touch with the audience almost all the time virtually through Facebook. They were sharing their daily activities, details of their upcoming movies, future ventures and also important information about COVID-19. The viral nature of social media platforms such as Facebook can be equated to the vast number of active users across the globe. This feature makes it possible for celebrities to share content to a wider public within a short period. The actors and their PR teams are focusing more on the potential of Facebook in building a good image among the general public. Each post of these actors is thoroughly checked before posting it on social media platforms. Thanks to the affordable smartphones and the low-cost availability of internet, the old-school notions of public relations which used print and electronic media are today facing a huge step-back with the proliferation of web technology and social networking sites. Active participation in social media has helped actors to build and retain impressions with a wider audience. Hence, it can be said that the Impression Management Theory is manifested in the present study. Social Learning Theory (SLT) is also substantiated in this study as these personalities spoke with the public by updating their activities through Facebook posts, and it impacted a large number of people to come forward to help. Fans and followers reacted to the activities of these actors through comments, shares and likes in the posts. This parasocial relationship has enabled social media users to keep in touch with their favourite stars, hence it verifies the importance of Parasocial Interaction Theory in the present study. The respective study also may be observed with some limitations. India is a country where the film industry has got a wider acceptance and the common people in India admire celebrities irrespective of the language. Hence, future researchers may try to study the Facebook interaction of more number of celebrities that too from different languages. Another area that can be focused by the future researchers is analysing social media engagement of female actors. If done so, a completely different perspective might be evolved. Today, social media platforms are mushrooming rapidly. So, a further potential improvement that can be opted by the future researchers is analyzing the engagement of celebrities on other social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter etc. which may help them in drawing other meaningful conclusions.

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# Role of Health Communication regarding Cancer Awareness: An Analytical Study

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## ABSTRACT

Cancer has become a major concern for people's health as the cancer treatment is unpredictable and uncertain. It is evident that research on carcinogenic agents' markers is important in today's world, as it improves the probability of survival which is around 56%, if detected early. Health communication is the practice of transferring and communicating health awareness between patient and doctor. This study aims to analyse the role of health communication in cancer awareness. A survey was conducted among 150 people (n=150). The study used chi square and correlation to show the association and relation between the health communication and cancer awareness. It was found that despite 90 per cent of respondents having cancer awareness, they exhibit the attitude of ignorance that has been found to be a major reason for cancer, especially with regard to women.

**Keywords:** Health communication, Cervix cancer, Breast cancer, Cancer awareness, Women awareness

## Introduction

Healthcare is a complicated process, especially with the different types of rules and regulations, infrastructure and different kinds of patients coming from different countries, cultures and populations. Despite the rapid change in the healthcare system through modernization, industries all over the world are facing some serious problems that productive communication related to health can help as a relief (Alwan *et al.*, 2017). Lack of communication and wrong information may be detrimental to the communities, specifically to those who belong to the lower-income groups and education brackets.

Cancer, as a term, describes a kind of disease which causes abnormal and uncontrollable growth in cells. There are hundred kinds of diseases that have been classified as cancer. A cancer cell can overrun or evolve into other cells and develop a tumour. Though cancer can spread, it is mainly named for the particular place from where it started. According to World Health Organization (WHO), an assured one-third of all cancers can be prevented. One of the greatest reasons for cancer is tobacco (Miller *et al.*, 2018). It has links with many types of cancers like cancer in esophagus, lungs, larynx, kidney, mouth, stomach and more. Another reason for cancer is alcohol consumption. Some physical activity and a proper diet can help in reducing the risks of cancer.

## Aims and objectives

The study aims to analyze the awareness about the causes of cancer and how communication can help as a safeguarding measure. The objectives are:

1. To find out the people's level of understanding about the importance of health and health communication.
2. To find out the cancer awareness in people especially in women.
3. To find out the reasons for breast and cervix cancer in women and their awareness.
4. To find out the level of awareness of Cancer prevention measured among people.

## Research questions

**RQ1.** Why communicating about health is important and how one should do it to get some satisfactory results?

**RQ2.** Why cancer awareness is important?

**RQ3.** Why do so many women suffer from breast cancer and how can one prevent it?

**RQ4.** How to control cancer and what one should do to prevent oneself from cancer?

## Research rationale

Cancer, being a fatal disease, is growing rapidly in the world. According to doctors, by the year 2030, one out of 5 people will have cancer which will

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be a terrible picture to look at. Cancer is a deadly disease that spreads rapidly in the body cells. Even after curing the disease, there is no guarantee of not getting it back and it leaves on people with a permanent scar (Xia *et al.*, 2020).

Though most people are aware of the facts of cancer and the reasons for cancer, they tend to avoid and continue to consume tobacco and alcohol. Despite the fact that these are not the only reason for cancer, yet are the major reasons behind it.

The main purpose of this research is to know how and why health communication is important. Health communication is the only way to detect any diseases, if there are any, in its early stage (Pavani *et al.*, 2018). Sometimes the diseases crawl up on a person without any symptoms. So, to identify any issues it is important to communicate with doctors. Cancer is a disease which is growing rapidly in the world. People need to be aware of the symptoms so that if they have any of them, they can connect with their doctor and start treatment (Konduru *et al.*, 2016). Cancer can be prevented and there are some natural ways of doing it. People need to be aware of those methods, so that they can do it by themselves.

## Review of literature

Health communication is a common practice which is done by journalists, mass media and marketing sources to aware the public about different health-related information by scientifically and strategically developing the way of awareness, so that the general public can easily get to know about the health-related information. Over a period of time people have developed different bad habits such as smoking and drinking which are very common. The pollution rate of the modern world is very high due to which many diseases came into being. Cancer is a very lethal and deadly disease which originally came into being in the 460-370 BC but is still considered as a threat to every living being in the world. Its cure is painful as well as costly and sometimes the body parts which are affected by cancer are removed to prevent its growth. That is why cancer research is very essential in today's world. Successful cancer research can solve many problems like decreasing the cost, boosting its success rate and the conduction of a painless cancer treatment. According to Gileva *et al.* (2020), the main focus is going to be especially about female health and cancer. The most common cancers seen in women are breast cancer, colorectal cancer, endometrial cancer, lung cancer, cervical cancer, skin cancer and ovarian cancer.

According to Cadorin *et al.* (2020), over the last ten decades, the rate of deaths due to cancer has decreased. The researchers of the United States of America (USA) and other countries have formulated many ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and survive cancer. By far this is the greatest achievement for the researchers as the deaths due to cancer rate are getting lower. For many years people were frightened of cancer and many people died due to cancer, now the situation has become better but it is not the end. According to Mohamad and Azlan (2020), health communication became a key part of people's lives in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the corona virus as a global pandemic. From March till now, the news channels and every advertisement brand continued to inform people about do's and don'ts during the pandemic situation. The news channels are giving updates of total number of Covid cases and deaths of all the countries in the world. Without health communication, the situation during the pandemic would have been a lot worse. The death rates would have been out of control and people would not have stayed at their home. It is a saddening situation that many people are going through a great loss but without health communication, the pandemic situation would have been more lethal than what it is in the current time. On the other hand, despite being warned, many people do not follow the rules declared by the WHO to control the pandemic situation.

## Benefits of health communication and cancer research

According to Polite *et al.* (2017), cancer research is very beneficial for cancer patients as well as the economy. Cancer research is considered as important because there is no guaranteed treatment of cancer until the researchers found out some way to defeat cancer at its initial stage. Many people die because of cancer even after treatment. It was stated by the American Association of Cancer Research that cancer research saves many lives and transforms the lives of the people. Cancer researchers have the power to change the way of cancer treatments. BMC Medicine published information that cancer research benefits the economy (Anastasi & Lusher, 2019). Every pound contributed to cancer research benefits the economy of the country. On the other hand, health communication is also equally important in the modern world. People were warned about the deadly corona virus pandemic and the lives of billions of people were saved because of health communication practices.



### Issues regarding health communication and cancer research

According to Wozniak *et al.* (2018), the problem regarding cancer research is the expensive treatment. Although the early stages of cancer can be detected by using CT, MRI and PET scan, especially known as radiomics, which is very effective and the surgery process is also very effective and can even cure cancer. The new image, recognition software used by doctors or surgeons for better defining of tumours in the body as this can point out the skin melanomas. These treatments are very effective against cancer but the cost of these treatments is very high. The researchers are facing issues for finding an efficient and less-expensive way of treating cancer, as many people suffering from cancer can not afford the treatment and either they have to remove the cancer part of the body or eventually they wait for a painful death. On the other hand, the main problem regarding the health communication is that people ignore the risks and warnings that are stated by the professional health organizations and instead people follow their way of living like smoking, consuming drugs, (Yoon *et al.*, 2019). The tools of health communication, viz. news media, mass media and journalists, can only spread the ways to control the disease but many people ignore those facts and do what they like.

### Government steps regarding health communication and cancer research

The government has set up many cancer research centres. These research centres are funded by the government and the researchers get their salaries and equipment for the betterment of the research. The government knows the importance of cancer research in today's world because the terror of cancer is still intact in people's mind. The last stage of cancer is still considered as incurable and the people who are suffering from the last stage are hoped to live for a maximum of five years (Williams *et al.*, 2016). More and more cancer research can help this world by finding out the cure to last-stage cancer and even the less expensive way of treating it.

### Research methodology

The research methodology is a systematically and theoretical analysis of choosing the methods which have been applied to determine the research findings and it can help to find out the research questions and establish the research objectives (Mohajan, 2018). It is a technique to find out the specific procedures or methods which have been used to complete the research.

This research is aimed to analyze the role of health communication in cancer awareness. The researcher employed the probabilistic sampling method (Maxwell, 2012). A questionnaire was prepared and data were collected using an online survey method (Bryman, 2015). The questionnaire consisted 25 questions and 20 constructs and variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree), the rest of the 5 were demographic. The survey was conducted using Google form.

As stated in a study by Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) sample size was determined based on the pilot study done on the 50 responses and decided to be the 3 times the response of the pilot testing. The evidence for such selection was found in a study by Israel (1992).

After the determination for the sample size (150) questionnaire was sent to 200 respondents through emails and other methods of communication. As mentioned by Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) the researcher should always consider 30-40 per cent more in addition to required sample hence 200 people were asked to participate in this study. However, only 150 responses out of 200 were found useful for the analysis. These respondents were from all over India. The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### Ethical consideration

Different ethics or ethical factors were maintained while conducting the research. These ethical factors are informed consent, maintain confidentiality, anonymity, do not harm others etc. In this regard, consent has been taken from the respondent before gathering information. The selection of samples has been cleared and based upon honesty, reliability and accuracy. The confidentiality and privacy have been kept in between the researcher, higher academic authority and the samples (Rahi, 2017).

### Data analysis and interpretation

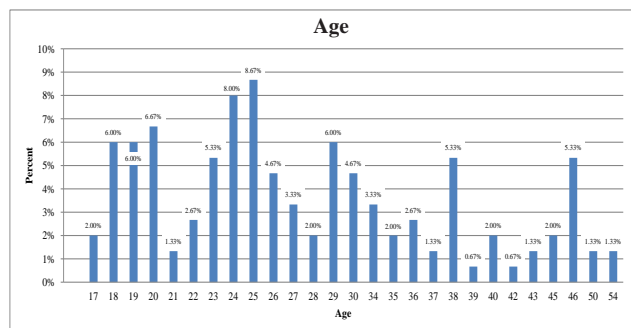
**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the demographics

Statistics				
	N		Mean	Median
	Valid	Missing		
Age	150	0	28.93	26.00
Highest Qualification	150	0	1.69	1.00
Family Income (In Years)	150	0	2.65	3.00

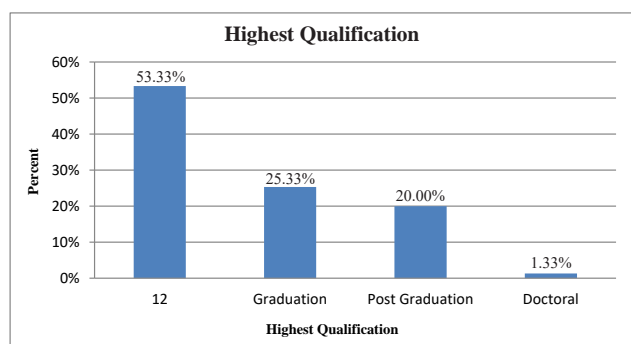
Table 1 shows that out of 150 participants' the average age of the female participant was 28.93 years, while the median indicates that the age was 26 years



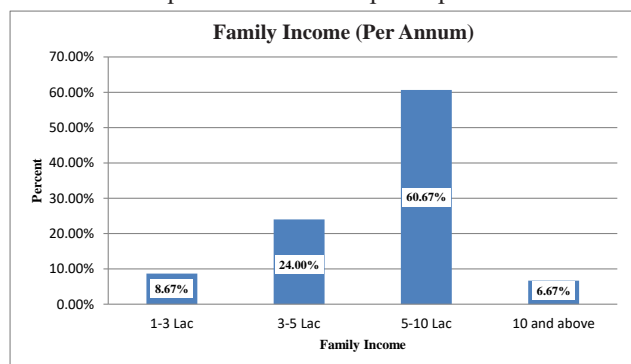
but since the age was continuous, hence we will select that the average age of the participant as 28 years. About 53.3 per cent were either in 12<sup>th</sup> standard or passed the 12<sup>th</sup> standard, followed by remaining 70 participants who were either graduated or secured higher degree of qualification. Similarly, majority of the participants i.e., 60.7 per cent were having an annual income between ₹ 5-10 lacs.



**Fig. 1.** Graphical representation showing the age distribution of the participant



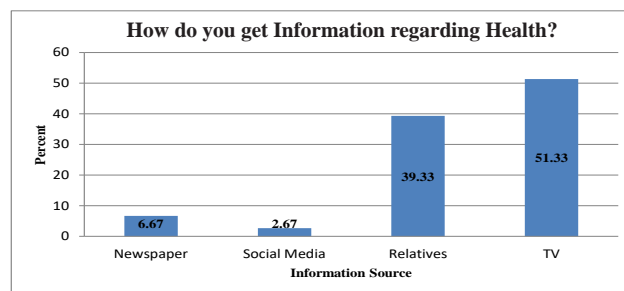
**Fig. 2.** Graphical representation showing that highest qualification of the participant



**Fig. 3.** Graphical representation of the family income of the participants

**Table 2:** Source of Information about the Cancer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Newspaper	10	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Social Media	4	2.7	2.7	9.3
	Relatives	59	39.3	39.3	48.7
	Television	77	51.3	51.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

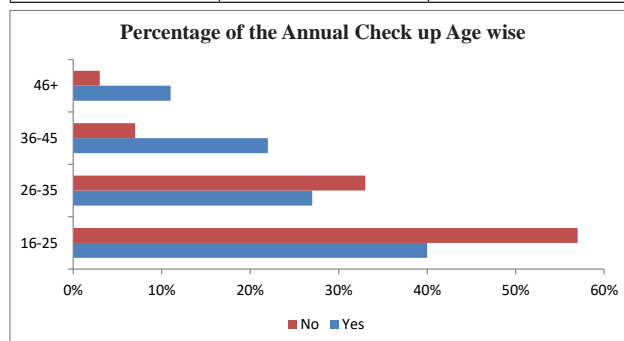


**Fig. 4.** Graphical representation of the information source

The table 2 and Fig. 4 indicate that 51.3% of the respondents confirmed that the television played an important role as a medium for the cancer information, while 39.3 per cent confirmed that the source of their information were their relatives. While remaining i.e. 9.34 per cent found other sources for information.

**Table 3.** Annual check up

Age	Annual Check Up wrt Age	
	Yes	No
16 – 25	40%	57%
26 – 35	27%	33%
36 – 45	22%	7%
46+	11%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Fig. 5.** Percentage of annual checkup of cancer for the participants

The table 3 and Fig. 5 show that majority of the participants who went for the annual full check of the body aged between 36 and 45 years, followed by respondents aged above 46 years. It is evident that the people between 16 and 25 and people between 26 to 35 years are more ignorant towards the full body checkup. This behaviour indicates that there should be counselling and awareness camps for such people to increase their knowledge about cancer.

**Table 4.** Knowledge about the cancer age wise

		Do you know what is cancer?		Total
		1	2	
Age	16 - 25	70	0	70
	26 - 35	44	0	44
	36 - 45	22	2	24
	46+	12	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>148</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>150</b>

The Table 4 reveals that 99% of the respondents were having knowledge about the cancer, but despite of the knowledge the respondents of the age group of 35 and above were more active about the full body check-up as shown in the Table 3. This simply brings to light the fact that inspite of having the knowledge about cancer, the ignorance level was too high amongst the respondents.

**Table 5.** Percentage of the cervical cancer

Knowledge of Cervical Cancer	Proportion
No	71.43%
Yes	28.57%

Table 5 shows that 71.43% respondent are not even aware about cervical cancer. It appears to be extreme lack of information and knowledge.

**Table 6.** Respondents knowledge about the treatment of cancer

Possibility of Cancer Treatment	Proportion
No	40.00%
Yes	60.00%

The Table 6 reveals that out of 150 participants, only 60 % of the respondents were aware about the availability of the cancer treatment.

**Table 7.** Respondents knowledge towards the cervical cancer vaccine

Knowledge of cervical cancer vaccine	Proportion
No	90.48%
Yes	9.52%

The table 7 shows that respondents were unaware of the cervical cancer treatment. The reason could be non-accessibility of the resources or the societal pressure especially for the young female's aged 16-25 years.

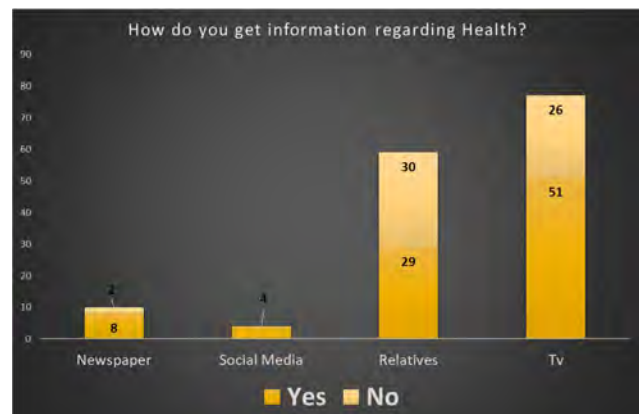
**Table 8.** Response between information source and full body check-up

Sources of health (Cancer) information	Going for annual full body check-up?		Total
	No	Yes	
Newspaper	8	2	10
Social Media	4	0	4
Relatives	29	30	59
TV	51	26	77
Total	92	58	150

Table 8 and Fig. 6 shows that the most of the people received information from the television and relatives and went for a full body check-up.

**H0: There is no significant association between Health Information Sources and Full Body Check-Up.**

**Ha: There is significant association between Health Information Sources and Full Body Check-Up.**



**Fig. 6.** Respondents stats on health information and going for full body checkup

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	8.462 <sup>a</sup>	3	.037**
Likelihood ratio	9.909	3	.019
Linear-by-linear association	.093	1	.760
No. of valid cases	150		

\*\*Significant at 0.05 level

**Table 9.** Chi square test

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Value	Approximate Significance
Phi	.238	.037
Cramer's V	.238	.037
No. of valid cases	150	

**Table 10.** Association strength as shown by Cramer's V

Table 9 reveals that there is a significant association between health information sources and full body check-up, ( $X^2 = 8.462$ ,  $df = 3$ )  $P < 0.05$ . Also, from table 10, the strength of the association is strong as Cramer's  $V = 0.238$  which is between 0.15 and 0.25. Hence, we reject null hypothesis.

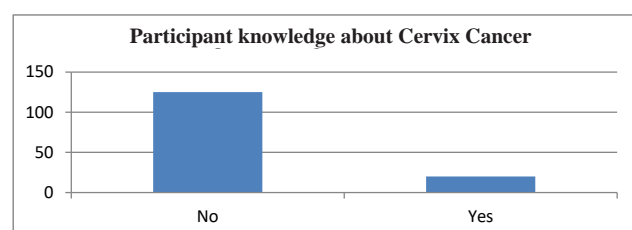
**H0: There is no significant relation between the participants knowledge on cervix cancer and participants unawareness on the availability of vaccine for the cervix cancer.**

**Ha: There is a significant relation between the participant's knowledge on cervix cancer and participants unawareness on the availability of vaccine for the cervix cancer.**

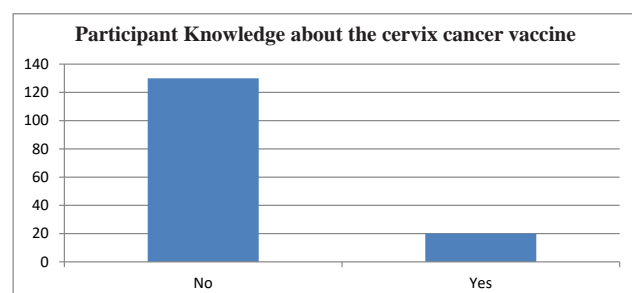
**Table 11.** Correlation between participants knowledge on cervix cancer and participants unawareness on the availability of vaccine for the cervix cancer

Correlations		Unawareness about the Vaccine for Cervix Cancer	Knowledge about the Cervix Cancer
Unawareness about the Vaccine for Cervix Cancer	Pearson Correlation	1	.281**
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.001
N		150	150
Knowledge about the Cervix Cancer	Pearson Correlation	.281**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001	
N		150	150

\*\* Correlation is significant at the P 0.01 level (2-tailed).



**Fig. 7.** Knowledge about cervix cancer



**Fig. 8.** Knowledge about cervix cancer vaccine

The above Table shows that there is positive correlation between the participants knowledge on cervix cancer and participants unawareness on the availability of vaccine for the cervix cancer. Pearson value ( $r = 0.281$ ,  $P = 0.001$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ).

This is also clear from figs. 6 and 7 and Tables 5 and 7 that the females have no or some knowledge about the cervix cancer but they are unaware about the availability of the vaccine for the cervix cancer. This simply elaborates the point that the females are not at all aware of their body and the biological problems that may arise due to careless attitude which may be the result of the surrounding and the environment in which they are residing and the social influence of the society on them.

## Findings

A survey was done with 150 participants. The findings reveals that 51.3 per cent of them claimed

that television plays a significant role when it comes to spreading awareness about cancer, 39.3 per cent claimed their source to be their relatives and 9.34 per cent found several sources. Most of the participants, aged from 36 to 45 and followed by the respondents who are above age 46, took part in the Annual full check-up of their body. In the survey, it also became prominent that people from age 16 to 35 years, are quite ignorant of their full-body check-up, and 71.43 per cent of people are still not even aware of cervical cancer portraying lack of knowledge and only 28.57 per cent had awareness. While 60 per cent people out of 150 patients were mindful about the cancer treatment and 40 per cent of them were quite ignorant of that fact too. Survey also shows that only a handful of people that 9.52 per cent are aware of the cervical cancer vaccine; on the other hand, 90.48 per cent people had not a single idea about this fact.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that health communication even though it has not been exercised as it should be, plays a significant role in everyone's life. Discussing the health issues that one faces and seeking the help of the doctor when it is needed is extremely important. The sole aim of spreading cancer awareness is for establishing and stimulating awareness in every citizen (Rafique *et al.*, 2018). It is crucial to dismiss all the myths that are associated with this fatal disease and inform them and make them aware of the symptoms and signs and make them understand the significance of screening for quick detections (Qadir & Saba, 2018). It is important specifically for women. There is a myth that goes around that young women do not get breast cancer but that is not true. Therefore, it is important not only for women but for each person to check up on their health timely.

Health communication is important for the doctors as well as the patients to keep up with the increasing number of diseases and it also helps the doctors to prevent their patients and save them from getting affected. With the amount of increasing number of patients, especially in the pandemic situation where hospitals are getting flooded with patients, to prevent people from getting affected from any diseases it is important to spread awareness of it (Alawa *et al.*, 2019). According to WHO, cancers can be prevented. There are proper ways of doing it which are already known to people. Promoting those methods through health-care campaigns will be a great way of spreading awareness among people.

## Recommendations

Cancer treatments are going up day by day and so as the number of patients. While most types of cancers are treatable, due to the high cost, many people are unable to get the proper care. Most people do not have the money to get better treatment or even the minimum necessary treatment and they die because of this (Chernyshov & Humenna, 2019). If the government takes some steps in reducing the cost of treatment, especially for poor people, the world could be a better place. People are not much open to this idea of communication and therefore, there is such a lack of identifying the disease and thereby late in treatment. Health communication is also important amongst the doctors, as it smoothen the path of treatment and adds new technologies (Mwangi & Mberia, 2016).

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# What Women Parliamentarians Think and Perceive about their Coverage in Indian media: A Study of 16th Lok Sabha

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out that the women politicians, despite their growth in political life over a period of time, still facing gender discrimination in their media coverage. To understand the gender bias in media and to find out the perception of women Member of Parliament (MP), in-depth interviews of 11 Members of Parliament of 16th Lok Sabha were conducted. These 11 MPs belonged to 9 states and 8 political parties of India. The majority of the MPs agreed that the Indian media paint stereotypical images of women politicians and is biased towards them. Media gives more attention and coverage to their class, power and glamour, instead of giving importance to their work both in parliament and constituency. Most of them believe that the media professionals need to change their mindset particularly about women politicians.

**Keywords:** Patriarchal society, Gendered politics, Women politician, Parliament, Media coverage, Gender representation

## Introduction

In New Zealand, Prime Minister Jacinda Arden, after returning from six-week maternity leave in parliament said “One day it will be perceived as normal for women to give birth while in office”. The first information about her pregnancy was accompanied with the news that she will take maternity leave and the majority of the day she will give to parenting with her husband Clarke Gayford. News media were flooded with gossips and rumours about her pregnancy. National and international news media awaited the birth breathlessly. This is the normal reaction of the media for a women politician (Trimble, 2018). Media is always stereotyped when it comes to women. It is not happening in one country, it happens all around the globe.

There have been innumerable debates about gender in the media over the years. Media has always been blamed for the stereotyping of women. The media continues to cover female politicians in gendered terms, focuses on their marital status or appearance and emphasizing stereotypically female issues like education and health care (Ryan, 2013). News media projects women as weaker sex portrays women as a commodity. This stereotype creates a challenge and also a frame for women in all areas of life. A

gender stereotype is a set of beliefs that is supposed to differentiate between male and female. Like other beliefs, it is socially built and shared (Rollero *et al.*, 2014). Gender stereotype means framing and fixing social and professional roles of each gender, power and leadership roles for men, care and relational roles for women (Eagly & Karau, 2002). There are various reasons such as illiteracy, caste system, lack of awareness, patriarchy, unequal use of resources, backward social and cultural values; media constraints work directly or indirectly behind the low level of women’s participation and representation in politics (Alam, 2015).

Media plays an important role in determining how women are perceived in politics and decision-making roles in various other areas, which are significant for society. Media is also playing an important role in shaping values, culture and beliefs. Media is an informer, educator, mediator and a critic for social change. It is a powerful tool for communication and socialization. Through media representations, the audience establishes sense about the world and the women (Govender *et al.*, 2014). Media framing of women is done through the selection of words, images, metaphors, description and visuals (Van group, 2007). Despite the changes in their societal roles in modern-day, it was found that women are

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still being portrayed in undesirable and stereotypical manners by media (Tartaglia & Rollero, 2015). Scholars have also criticized that women for the longest time have been sexualized and displayed as sexual objects. Women are frequently evaluated on their physical appearance (Arauna & Tarragona, 2013). This study examines what women's MPs think of the media, whether media coverage shifts as women Indian to the political ladder. What has been the experience of Indian Women parliamentarians with the media in their public life? Is media coverage more gendered or has it become neutral over time? As the fourth pillar of democracy, it is important to find out how the media reports the political representative of half of the country's population.

### Review of literature

Women have progressed in all areas of life. Today they are in leading positions. They are leading science to space and business to sports but despite all global progress women's representation in media and politics is very low. At the global level, women are currently making 24% of news subjects. They are under-represented in the news media and it is shocking that their points of view are rarely heard in the news media that dominates the news agenda (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015).

In 2018, the Inter Parliamentary Union conducted a study about women's representation in politics around the globe. In this study, they found that in the world national parliament women representation average is 23% and in Asia women elected representatives are only 19.5%. It shows that women representation in parliament is very low (IPU, 2018). Women are neither in the news media nor they have appropriate representation in the Parliament. Khan (1994) in his study on "Differential Coverage of Issues and Traits" found that, newspapers report more personal information like personality, attire, marital status and appearance regularly for women candidates than for the male candidates. In another study (Robinson & Jean, 1995) revealed that most of the time men are identified with their experience, profession and occupation. Carroll and Scherieber (1997) analyzed press coverage of women members of congress in America and found that American press rarely covered the congresswomen as an independent individual. Linda *et al.* (2009) found a big difference in media coverage of male and female politicians

between 1920 and 1990 in their study. Wasburn and Wasburn (2011) studied the patterns of gendered reporting that have dissuaded women from entering politics. In this study, they found five different patterns of gender discrimination. First pattern they saw that female candidates receive less coverage than male ones. Female candidates' stories are more focused on their family and appearance, women are more likely to be scrutinized and trivialized in terms of their competence. Women's issues will be in focus on women's policy positions. Heldman *et al.* (2018) in their famous book *Sex and Gender in the 2016 Presidential Election* identified five major bias in media coverage- a higher rate of negative coverage, greater questions on candidates validity, less coverage and less issue-based coverage, stereotypically coverage like as focus on their appearance, hard sexism and sexual objectification and openly gendered insults. Female candidates are criticized for not being sufficiently masculine.

Lühiste and Banducci (2016) found in their study that, male candidates appear more frequently rather than female candidates. Jhally (2011) in his study found that women in print media were found to be posing as touching themselves, hugging an object, sitting on a bed. In advertisements, they were presented like confused, weak, and dressed like a child, holding an object or a man for support, sexy and sexually available, and emphasis on her beauty and sexual appeal. Recently, British Prime Minister Theresa May and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon during talks in Glasgow with the headline "Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it!" The *Daily Mail* (28 March 2017) was sharply criticized for this story.

Rai (2011) in his special article "Electoral Participation of Women in India: Key Determinants and Barriers" mentioned that, in India there has been a marked increase in the voter turnout and election campaigning but women were continue to be under-represented in legislative bodies in India, both at the national and regional level. Ramasubramiam and Jain (2009) reported out that, India is a classical example of where male-dominated society expects that women have to follow the rules given by society. They found that Indian media portrayed women always in stereotypical roles and depicted in domestic roles. Chadda (2014) found that the goal of economic independence and empowerment of women

can be achieved only through gainful employment opportunities.

A book “*Widows and Daughters: Gender, Kinship and Power in South Asia*”, provides a closer look at the women who served as Prime Minister in South Asia region. In each case, it opens the door at a realistic analysis of what caused the patriarchal society in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to accept them as leaders (Ahmed, 2019). In another book *Women Political Leaders and the Media* analyses how the media covers women leaders and reinforces gendered evaluations of their candidature and performance (Campus, 2013). *Women, Media and Politics*, edited by Pippa Norris, and published by the Oxford University Press (1996), is another work in this regard. It discusses gender as one of the primary fault lines running through contemporary American politics and the way media covers gender politics has long been a matter of contention. In her book titled *Ms. Prime Minister: Gender, Media and Leadership*, Trimble (2018) explained that “Women politician has to fight with many problems. If they do bear children, they are questioned about their capacity to perform as leaders while caring for their families. If they choose not to reproduce, they are considered suspect for being unable or unwilling to fulfil their biological destiny”. She explained that “Canada Former Prime Minister Kim Cambell was characterized as unstable and unreliable because she divorced twice and childless, Former Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gilard was labeled and New Zealand’s Helen Calark was judged unable to relate to needs of the ordinary families because she chose not to have kids”. *Life Among the Scorpions: Memoirs of a Woman in Indian Politics*, by Jaitly (2017) presents her perspective about Indian politics. She has discussed major events of Indian politics from 1970 to 2000. She explained her experiences in politics and critically commented on how women politician were surrounded by scorpions in Indian political system.

Literature indicates that the media is biased towards women but it is improving itself in gendered coverage. Still, it is giving more coverage to their personal life rather than professional life. Media gives more importance to their appearance, lifestyle and uses a sexist frame as a lens to portray them in public life. As a result, they have to face more challenges and threats in their political career. In India, Indira Gandhi, Pratibha Patil, Sonia Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj, Mamta

Banerjee, Mayawati and many more have advanced on the political ladder.

### **Status of women in India**

India is one of the largest and oldest democracies in the world. In a democratic set up a fair representation of all groups is important. Equality is the basic principle of democracy. If gender representation in a democracy is not balanced, it reflects inequality in the society. India ranks 148th in the world United Nation Report among 190 countries as the number of women MPs in its parliament they accounted for just 64 seats in the 542-member Lower House (Shani, 2018).

Women are important stakeholders of any society. They can be the change agent and great contributor for the national development of any country. The significant indicators of standing in any society are political participation, representation and share in decision-making bodies (Khanna, 2018). As per June 2017 report, Single, Lower and Upper Houses combined, the percentages in Nordic countries was 41.7 per cent; America 28.1 per cent; Europe including Nordic countries 26.5 per cent; Sub-Saharan Africa 23.6 per cent; Asia 19.4 per cent; Arab States 17.4 per cent; and in The Pacific region only 17.4 per cent. India has a long history of women empowerment and women are always respected in Indian society. As per census 2011, women are 48.5% of total population of India as compared to 51.5% males. Today, women lead every sector in India from education to technology, to space science to the corporate sector. In various fields, they are now in leading roles. Numerous studies however, have shown that the representation of women is not satisfactory compared to their numbers.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, women members of parliamentarians were only 12.15% of its total strength. In state assemblies, this representation is only 9%. It is below the Asian average, which is 19.4%. It shows that women representation in Indian political system is very poor and it is an injustice with half of its total population.

Women are still fighting for their rights. To increase participation of women in politics, a women reservation bill was introduced, and it has been stuck since 1996.

### **Famous women politicians in India**

India continues to have influential and powerful women politicians. Indira Gandhi became the first



woman Prime Minister (PM) and Pratibha Patil the first woman President of India. India TV News Desk in June 2015 has listed 10 most powerful female politicians of contemporary India. Sonia Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dixit, Mamata Banerjee, Jayalalithaa, Mayawati, Vasundhara Raje Scindia, Ambika Soni, Supriya Sule, and Agatha Sangma. These names show that women's leaders have always been influential in Indian politics. They have played a very constructive role in developing India, but their number is no more than two-digit. Even within the political parties, they are fewer in number and are always in the minority. Women politicians have played an influential role in Indian politics though they are not truly represented in Parliaments and legislative assemblies.

The proportion of women in Lok Sabha would have been different, if the Bill on Political Reservation of Women in Parliament could be presented and passed 20 years back when it was proposed.

### Objectives

The main objectives of the study are to:

- (i) Assess the perception of women politicians about their experience with the media.
- (ii) Assess how women politicians are entering into politics and what is their window of entry into active politics.
- (iii) Evaluate their views on gendered questions asked by the media and the present status of women politicians in India.

**Design:** The study employed an interview research method to understand the women MP's perspective. Researcher has conducted in-depth interviews of 11 women MPs of the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. The interviews were conducted between December 2017 and March 2018.

**Sampling procedure:** Stratified sampling procedure was used from the target population. The current study focuses on women members of parliament. Sampling logic is very important in any study, as it can affect the results of the study. Of the 66 women MPs in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, 11 (17%) women MPs, belonging to 8 states of India, were interviewed. The sample also represent one MP each of SC, ST and Minority communities, besides unreserved sections (Table 1).

Table 1 shows that BJP MPs in the interview list are four; AITMC has two MPs; INC, NCP, CPI (M), and TRS have one each in the list; all these together make up 10. The eleventh MP was elected as YSR Congress Party and then left the party over some differences; on 24 August 2018, she launched her own party. Three MPs belong to Maharashtra, two belong to West Bengal and one each belongs to Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Asom, Kerala and Rajasthan.

**Variable of the study:** This study investigates perspective and perception of women MP's regarding Indian media. The researcher used following variables for the study:

- 1 Political profile of the MP, Entry into politics, Present scenario of women politicians, experience with media, Coverage in local and regional press, Women's portrayal in media, Gendered questions to women politicians, Needs to review media approach, Gender discrimination in media coverage women journalists covering politics.

### Data analysis

**Table 1** Political profile of the respondents

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She got an easy entry into politics being the daughter of Telangana Chief Minister.
Prof. (Dr) Mamta Sanghamita	Her families, including 4th and 5th generations, all are trained in politics.
Ms Sushmita Dev	She has always had an interest in policy making. She said, "I had the good fortune of my father being in politics".
Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	She comes from a family with a political background. "Both my parents are active in politics".
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	She is the daughter of Sharad Pawar. "Destiny has got me into politics."
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	She officially joined politics in October 2006 after her father's demise.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	An intention to serve the people has driven her to politics.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	She wanted to do something for the people.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	"I am a Bengali actress, now I have become an MP"
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	She has started organising the left student's organisation, Kerala Students Federation (KSF).
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	Her father was a poet and fought for India's independence. Joined politics for a social cause.

Table 2 Entry into politics as Member of Parliament

Sl. No.	Name	Party	State	Constituency	Date of interview
1	Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)	Telangana	Nizamabad	28 December 2017
2	Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	Elected on Yuvajana Sramika Rythu (YSR) Congress Party ticket left YSRCP in 2017; launched her own political party, the Jana Jagruti Party (JJP), in Vijayawada on 24 August 2018	Andhra Pradesh	Araku	29 December 2017
3	Mrs Neelam Sonker	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	Uttar Pradesh	Lalganj	29 December 2017
4	Prof. (Dr) Mamta Sanghamita	All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC)	West Bengal	Bardhaman-Durgapur	1 January 2018
5	Ms Sushmita Dev	Indian National Congress (INC)	Assam	Silchar	2 January 2018
6	Mrs Shatabdi Roy	AITMC	West Bengal	Birbhum	4 January 2018
7	Mrs P.K. Sreemathi Teacher	Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI (M)]	Kerala	Kannur	18 January 2018
8	Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	BJP	Maharashtra	Nandurbar	9 February 2018
9	Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)	Maharashtra	Baramati	7 March 2018
10	Mrs Poonam Mahajan	BJP	Maharashtra	Mumbai North Central	14 March 2018
11	Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	BJP	Rajasthan	Jhunjhunu	28 March 2018

The Table 2 reveals the excerpts of the respondent's on the question of their entry into active politics. A majority of respondents entered into politics by virtue of their dynasty. They hailed from political families, which made their entry easy. Besides the dynasty, one respondent comes from the student politics and one from a freedom fighter family. One of the respondents entered politics by virtue of her charisma as a film actress. It shows that women are joining politics through dynasty only.

Table 3 Present scenarios of women politicians

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She said South India is more progressive since local bodies have around 50% women's representation, crossing the minimum of 33%.
Prof. (Dr) Mamta Sanghamita	Women politicians are quite acceptable to people at large especially among the women.
Ms Sushmita Dev	Participation in governance requires more women, because women give different perspectives to politics and to governance.
Dr Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	The situation is definitely improving because now in the local bodies we have 50% reservation. This is a kind of bringing more women into politics.

Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	Women definitely need to be in Politics. And we have asked for a women reservation bill consistently and NCP has always supported it.
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	We need more women in politics, more women in electoral politics.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	Women are not taken seriously at any stage and she thinks the situation will change.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	It is difficult to survive for women in politics or in any other field without family support.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	As more women are entering politics, scenario is changing continuously.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	33% reservation for women is a must. But whosoever, be it Congress or BJP, came in power they forgot about their declaration.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	Educated women have a vision, ability to work, and they take decisions on their own. In parliament also, there are women who do better than some male members.

All respondents agreed that women have limited status in the Indian political scene; the majority considers that there is an improvement. Panchyati Raj (Table 3) helped; now there is around 50% representation of women in local bodies in the South. They expect that one day 33% reservation of seats for women in all legislatures including Parliament will be passed. Majority of the respondents are of the view that 33% reservation is must for changing the political status of women in the country.

**Table 4** Women politicians' experience with media

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She claimed that they had fought tooth and nail with the media in 10 years during Telangana movement. Media was very biased particularly for the Andhra region.
Prof. (Dr) Mamtaz Sanghamita	She gets media attention when she is usually with the masses. Less coverage is given to women politicians.
Ms Sushmita Dev	She said, I find it quite weird that the media wants women to talk on women's issues. And when it is not a women's issue, then anybody can talk; this tendency has to stop.
Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	She does not think that women politicians get equal opportunity to access people directly and through the media.
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	"I think it is a gender-equal thing. So, there is nothing different about a man or a woman. I do not think I am a woman politician, I just think I am a politician. I am very gender-equal about all this.
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	Media coverage of women politicians is mostly on women centric issues, it is not equal but I do not think I have been differentiated by the media because of my gender.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	Women politicians are not given much media coverage, except for some who have some background. Media highlighting controversies and never an equal opportunity.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	She does not get much coverage, as her constituency is a rural area. Women politicians get good media coverage now but they are fewer compared to male leaders.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	She considers the media coverage of women politicians is relatively good. But the media wants controversy.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	Women politicians get equal opportunity as men to access people directly and through the media.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	Media has never shown her in a bad light.

Majority of the respondents feel that the media is biased in reporting women and women issues. Some have bitter and some have good experience with the media, the majority said that women politicians deserved more coverage than they are actually getting. Almost all got better coverage during the election campaign but not so after elections. Some MPs think that they are general politicians, as they represent the interests of both the gender. All respondents were of the opinion that they represent their constituency not a section of society. But many times the media is not giving importance to women politicians.

**Table 5** Coverage in local/regional/vernacular media

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She felt no difference in this regard. Moreover, if you are doing a good job, the competition is more for men and less for women. It is an advantage for women.
Prof. (Dr) Mamtaz Sanghamita	She finds differences in coverage of women politicians, regional ones cover more than the national ones.
Ms Sushmita Dev	She said "media is more about business now, less about journalism. Whatever sells they will sell it. Let's just face it".
Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	Differences in coverage of women politicians. The state capital based media also does not take note of the women's participation.
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	There is no difference in coverage of women politicians in English or Hindi media. I do not think there is gender bias in the media at all.
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	She finds no differences in coverage of women politicians in local, regional media, and state capital media.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	She found a huge difference in local, national coverage of women MPs. In local media, controversial issues are telecasted, no positive news normally. In national media, no news of a south Indian lady MP is ever telecasted.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	Coverage is more in regional and Hindi media compared to National and English media.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	Being an actress, I do not feel any difference in coverage. Regional media cover more.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	Regional media covers me more than the national media. No difference.
Mrs. Santosh Ahlawat	She finds that the media is behind a few people in Delhi. It focuses on those people who used to make all kinds of statements.

Table 5 shows that local and regional media are giving more coverage to women politicians. Majority of the respondent's view is that English and national media are far away from their coverage. They unanimously agreed that local media coverage is more than English coverage. One of the respondents feels that the media in India is behind a few people in Delhi. According to one respondent there is no gender bias in media at all. One of the respondents said that media is more about business now, less about journalism.

**Table 6** Women's portrayal in media

Name of MPs	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She agreed to the point that the media painted a stereotyped image of women politicians.
Prof. (Dr) Mamta Sanghamita	She did not agree that the media has painted stereotypical images of women politicians focusing their apparel, fashion and more on externals.
Ms Sushmita Dev	She does not think that the media focuses on feminine attributes over and above the political insights of women politicians.
Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	She does not think that media proposal the feminine attributes or stereotypical image of women politicians such as their apparels, fashion.
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	"No, I never feel that ever. I mean glamour, sensation never works for me. They never called me sensational or glamorous or any such thing"
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	At some places, the media has painted stereotypical images of women politicians.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	Sometimes, the media has painted stereotypical images of women politicians such as their apparels, fashion, they being from elite class.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	She did not feel that the media highlights feminine attributes and dress. Some media persons comment as per their intelligence.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy :	She thinks the media sometimes scandalises politicians. "I don't think only women, men also, the same thing.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	People are not giving much importance to the stereotypical image of women politicians. Sometimes the media deliberately creates sensational issues.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	She denied such experience. But her advice was that the media should equally highlight their work, irrespective of their class background. It should not run behind modern dresses and celebrities, but the substance of work must be given attention and coverage.

Majority of the respondents differed on whether clout, affluence, glamour, elitism, political legacy and class background decide the nature and quantity

of coverage (Table 6). Majority of the respondents disagreed that the media puts the feminine attributes over and above political insight and policy-making experience of women, giving their male competitors an edge on them in public discourse. Same is the case with the media painting stereotypical images of women politicians such as their apparels, fashion, etc. Similarly, the media depiction of women politicians is not tantamount to sensationalizing and scandalizing them. But many told that their work, both in Parliament and constituency should have been given due attention and coverage irrespective of their class, clout and glamour.

**Table 7** Gendered questions to women politicians

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She had to face gendered questions. "I feel they are putting me in a different class. Then what will happen? You are anyway inferior, but you are better kind of inferior".
Prof. (Dr) Mamta Sanghamita	She did not have this kind of interaction with the media. In her opinion, male politicians can do whatever they want to do but women have to take care of house responsibilities as well.
Ms Sushmita Dev	She does not think the media asks gendered questions.
Ms. (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	Rightly said that such gendered questioning happens. When there is a question about women, they will ask only women.
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	Media does not ask gendered questions. No women's and men's issues in politics. There are issues only.
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	She thinks that the media generally asks gendered questions to women politicians.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	She has also faced questions like how she manages her political responsibilities along with domestic responsibilities of being a wife, mother, and daughter. She does not feel uncomfortable to face these questions.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	Never had to face such gendered questions.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	Was not sure about that.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	Media can ask because women are playing double role- housewives and the core responsibility of the family is upon the women and outside she is handling politics. Such questioning is natural.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	She reiterates that the media asks gendered questions to women politicians. Still, the mind-set of our people is to consider women as belonging to the second class.



Majority of the respondents agreed on the issue that the media is always asking gender questions (Table 7). Women MPs are invariably asked gendered questions and they powerfully exposed the media by countering them.

**Table 8** Need to review media's approach for gender sensitive training

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	Agreed with the notion that media needs to review its approach towards women politicians. There are certain positions in a nation which are gender neutral.
Prof. (Dr) Mamtaz Sanghamita	She thinks the media needs to review its approach towards women politicians.
Ms Sushmita Dev	Media needs to review their approach towards women's issues, not women politicians. She does not think that the media is not gender-sensitive.
Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	Indian media is not gender sensitive. Gender bias is a big problem in Indian media.
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	Indian media is not gender sensitive. Gender bias is a big problem in Indian media.
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	Indian media is not gender sensitive. Gender bias is a big problem in Indian media.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	Indian media is not gender sensitive. Gender bias is a big problem in Indian media.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	Never felt the need to review media's approach towards women politicians. But, gender bias is a problem in media.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	Media persons should be trained to be sensitive towards everyone. Not just for women, for everyone.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	Needs to review the way they are covering women politicians, and the angle or the way they are taking up issues of women politicians.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	Media must not be gender insensitive. Training may not be helpful to change the media persons' attitude. Mind-set should change instead.

The majority of the respondents are in favour that media persons need to review their approach towards women (Table 8). One of the MPs opinions is that the mind-set should change; training may not be helpful. The majority have suggested gender-sensitive training for media persons.

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She was very critical about the media. Hardly see woman members/MPs/panelists speaking in TV debates on the serious issues like budget, defence, and national security.
Prof. (Dr) Mamtaz Sanghamita	Women politicians are ignored in TV debates and in print media as well.
Ms Sushmita Dev	Found that women are not ignored by the media. Enough women are writing Op-eds. In TV debates it is contrary; they give more chances to women. Women make a better spokesperson.
Ms. (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	She has noticed that women politicians are ignored in TV debates and in Op-ed pieces in print media
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	She denied that women politicians are ignored.
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	Women politicians are 'little bit' ignored in TV debates and in Op-ed pages in print media. She writes op-ed, and she loves it.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	Feels women politicians are completely neglected in Op-ed pieces in print media.
Mrs Neelam Sonker	She felt that women leaders get less chances in Op-ed pages, while women are more in TV debates.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	Finds more males in panel discussions, in Op-ed, the balance should be made.
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	She said when women are in power then only the media gives coverage. In Kerala, the media calls ladies in TV Debates but sometimes women are not interested.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	She said, at the outset, women politicians can not be ignored in TV debates and in Op-ed pieces in print media.

**Table 9** Gender discrimination in media coverage

Majority of the respondent's opinion is that there is a big gender discrimination coverage in media (Table 9). Most of the MPs felt that women politicians are ignored in Op-ed pieces in print media, and among panelists in TV debates, in comparison to male writers and panelists. But some said that women are more found in TV debates, and they should try writing in print media. Some rightly said why not the media take interest in bringing up women at par with men in both these areas.

**Table 10** Women journalists covering politics

Name of MP	Response
Mrs Kalvakuntla Kavitha	She said this has not changed the way women politicians are covered. I said it should be a gender-neutral thing.
Prof. (Dr) Mamtaz Sanghamita	There should be more women among media people.

Name of MP	Response
Ms Sushmita Dev	Woman journalists would choose to cover a better person, whether male or not.
Ms (Dr) Heena Vijaykumar Gavit	Women journalists are doing a very tough job. "I have a lot of respect for women journalists."
Mrs Supriya Sadanand Sule	Yes required
Mrs Poonam Mahajan	"Why do I expect a woman journalist to cover a woman politician? Let her go and cover a male politician; I will talk to a male journalist. Again my entire agenda is all about gender equality.
Mrs Kothapalli Geetha	She could also find no change. "No different view. It is all the same."
Mrs Neelam Sonker	She said women journalists are covering better than earlier. Women leaders should be covered further in better light.
Mrs Shatabdi Roy	She favoured women journalists and said they are more or less equivalent to male journalists. "Then, they are equally good or more sensitive to women politicians."
Mrs P.K. Sreemathi	Media should be sensitive to women issues.
Mrs Santosh Ahlawat	She told that a woman journalist should have thought to attempt bringing forward some women leaders. If they have such thinking, then it is well and good.

Most of the MPs think that journalists are journalists; they are not male or female. Except for Shatabdi Roy and Dr Heena, others do not find any change as such, though Prof. (Dr) Mamta Sanghamita suggested having more women among media people (Table 10). For Sushmita Dev and Poonam Mahajan, what is covered is important, no matter if it is by men or women.

## Conclusion

As we have seen in this research, perception of majority of the respondents is that the media is biased in covering women politicians. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, women representation is only 12.2%. A woman who belonged to a political family background getting more chances to be elected to Parliament. It shows that women have limited space and scene in the Indian political system. Patriarchal influence is also present in the highest elected body of the country.

Media people are painting a stereotypical image of women politicians such as their apparels, fashion, it shows that media people are not gendered-sensitive. Newsrooms do not have appropriate training on how to report gender issues.

They said that women MPs are invariably asked gendered questions in Parliament and they have to face such questions from the media also. Most

of the MPs are in favour that media people need to review their approach in reporting gender and gender-sensitive training is required in the newsrooms. Irrelevant questions are not to be asked to women politicians. They claimed that women's politicians are also ignored in television debates and Op-ed pieces in print. Some women MPs think they are general politicians, not just women politicians, since they represent the interests of both the genders. If the male represents general interests irrespective of genders, the same logic applies equally to female politicians also. But such thinking does not prevail because of the existing male-dominant ethos, and cultural and social hegemonies. This should change through planned interventions in all fields including the politics.

They said that their work, both in Parliament and constituency, should have been given attention and coverage irrespective of their class, clout and glamour. Women leaders are not considered or portrayed as the tail of men, as it is doubted.

In view of the above discussion, media people need to be more gender sensitive. They are making the opinion and perception of the society; they should be trained in a manner they are able to report gender issues fairly and neutrally. More women journalists are required in newsrooms, so that they can work in a gender neutral-environment. Women reservation bill is also required for fair representation of women in Parliament.

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# IIMC GLIMPSES

JULY-DECEMBER 2020

## Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, New Director-General of IIMC

A renowned journalist, academician, editor, writer and media teacher, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi joined as Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi on 13 July 2020. Prior to joining as DG-IIMC, he has held the position of Vice Chancellor and Registrar at the India's premier Media University, Makhn Lal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Prof. Dwivedi has also served the University as HoD, Mass Communication Department for almost 10 years. Prof. Dwivedi held senior positions across media houses as Editor, News editor, Executive Editor, Input Head and Anchor in Dainik Bhaskar, Navbharat, Haribhumi, Swadesh, InfoIndia.Com and Zee24 Ghante Chhattisgarh.

He has authored and edited more than 25 books on media and journalism and published about 3000 articles on politics and media in the major national newspapers and magazines. Prof. Dwivedi has been honoured and awarded by many leading media institutes for his impactful as well as outstanding contributions to the field of media and communication.



## First prize awarded to IIMC on Swachhta Pakhwada 2020

The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) was received the first prize in Swachhta Pakhwada 2020, from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The MIB also honoured its various subsidiaries as a part of its annual cleanliness drive initiated by the Government of India.

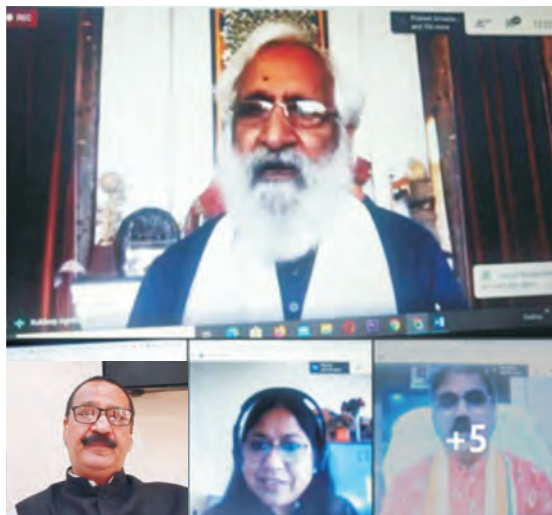
Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Amit Khare awarded this honour to the Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, in the presence of the former Director-General of IIMC, Mr. K.S Dhatwalia. Second prize went to the Doordarshan News, while third was bagged by the Press Information Bureau (PIB).



## National Webinar on National Education Policy 2020

The IIMC has organized a National Webinar on “National Education Policy 2020 – Future Direction of Journalism & Mass Communication Education in India”. Several prominent minds in the field of the media industry participated in this national webinar. On this occasion, Prof. Ehtesham Ahmed Khan of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University said The new education policy calls for focusing on regional languages.” He further added that, “There is an urge to pay attention to this issue in the field of journalism and mass communication education as well. Institutions providing media education have to prepare themselves according to advancement in communication technologies.” He also said that the IIMC should act as a guide to all media institutions on this subject.

## Hindi Pakhwada 2020



Hindi Pakhwada was organized at the IIMC during 14–28 September 2020. Webinars were conducted on different issues and topics including “*Bhartiya Bhashaon mein Antar Samwad*”, and “National Education Policy & Indian Languages” during the Pakhwada. Various competitions were also held to promote the Hindi language as the primary language for communication.

As a part of the valedictory ceremony, a webinar was organized. In the webinar, Vice-Chancellor of Himachal Pradesh Central University, Prof. Kuldeep Chandra Agnihotri was the Chief Guest. Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari, was invited as the Speaker. Mrs. Jayanti Ranganathan, the famous writer and executive editor of *Dainik Hindustan*, was also a part of the session who expressed her views as one of the keynote speakers. Another prominent speakers of the webinar, Mr. Vishwanath Sachdev, former editor of *Navbharat Times*, Mumbai, Mr. Anant Vijay, co-editor of *Dainik Jagran*, New Delhi, and Dr C. Jayashankar Babu, President of Hindi Department of Pondicherry University, also expressed their views.



## 151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi Celebrated

The IIMC, New Delhi organized a webinar on the topic “Mahatma Gandhi as a Communicator” to mark the 151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. *Swachhta Abhiyan* was also conducted on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, during which various corona warriors who have been working within the Institute were honoured. The tree plantation drive was also organized by the institution on this special occasion.

Director General, IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi chaired the webinar which was attended by Prof. Rajneesh Kumar Shukla, Vice-chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha as the Chief Guest and Smt. Indumati Katdare, Vice-chancellor, Punarutthan Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad as the keynote speaker. This webinar was organized as a tribute to the Gandhian thoughts and philosophies. These activities were the part of a two-day celebration named ‘Gandhi Parv’.



## IIMC signed an MoU with Uzbekistan University

The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Journalism and Mass Communication of Uzbekistan. The memorandum aims at promoting journalism and media education defining the associated areas of basic, educational and applied research. The Director General, IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi underlined that the agreement between the two premier media institutions will promote research in the areas related to TV, print media, digital media, public relations, media linguistics and foreign languages. He further added that this agreement is going to be significant in understanding the working practices of each other to enrich the related experiences.

Apart from this, the agreement will also encourage the exchange programmes and joint ventures related to media education and research. Prof. Dwivedi emphasized that the IIMC is earnestly working in the direction of creating a media curriculum to enhance the employability of the budding journalists in manifold. This MoU also aims to provide global exposure and bigger opportunities to its students and faculty members by expanding its cooperation with foreign educational institutions in the coming years.

## Global Media Literacy Week

The Media and Information Literacy India Network (MILIN) organized an International Panel Discussion on "Media and Information Literacy as an Intervention for Infodemic Management", as a part of the Global Media Literacy (MIL) Week 2020, along with the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Delhi and the School of Visual Communication, Kumaraguru College of Liberal Arts and Science (KCLAS), Coimbatore. This event had brought together various experts working in the field of Media and Information Literacy in India, including an amalgamation of journalists, media creators, academicians, research scholars, grassroots level practitioners, change-makers, etc.

A Virtual Oath Taking Ceremony was also taken by participants of the event to help India fight against disinformation and help make our citizens collectively the media literates. The final endeavour of the event aimed to create empowered citizens, who can make informed decisions and are resilient to propagandas, disinformation and above all fake news. The event was streamed live on the Facebook Channel of IIMC and MILIN, as well as the YouTube Channel of KCLAS.



## 145th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Celebrated

To mark the celebration of the 145th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication had organized a webinar on 'Community Radio-Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' on 2 November 2020. Leading intellectuals of our country participated and expressed their views during the webinar as a tribute to the vigorous efforts and the sublime vision of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to unite the Nation.

The Director General, IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi convened the webinar in which prominent figures of the world from radio including Mr Rajiv Tikoo, Managing Director of One World Foundation, Mrs. Pooja Oberoi Murada, Head of Radio, Alfaz-e-Mewat, Community Media Consultant, Dr. D. Rukmini Vemraju and Mr. Lokesh Sharma, Station Manager of Radio Banasthali Rajasthan, participated as the notable speakers.

**Indian Institute of Mass Communication**  
Webinar  
On the occasion of 145th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel  
Subject : Community Radio- Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas  
November 2, 2020 from 1200 noon to 1:30 pm (on Google)

**Main Speaker:** Mr. Rajiv Tikoo, Managing Director, One World Foundation

**Speakers:** Ms. Pooja Oberoi Murada, Head, Radio Alfaz-e-Mewat; Ms. D. Rukmini Vemraju, Community Media Consultant

**Keynote Speaker:** Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication

**Speaker:** Mr. Lokesh Sharma, Station Manager, Radio Banasthali, Rajasthan

**Welcome Address:** Mr. K. Satish Nambodiripad, Additional Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication

**Moderator:** Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, Head of Programme, Alpha Radio, Indian Institute of Mass Communication

**Vote of Thanks:** Mr. Narayan Kumar, Joint Director, Indian Institute of Mass Communication

**APNA RADIO, 96.9 FM**  
Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi



## First-ever Online Orientation Programme at IIMC

Hon'ble Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Shri Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the orientation programme organized through online mode for the students of the 2020-21 batch among all PG Diploma courses offered by the IIMC. Shri Javadekar advised the media students not to be trapped in sensational or TRP-centric journalism and imbibe the skills of healthy journalism ensuring that anything good happening in society should also become news. He also stressed upon the need for 'constructive journalism'.

Renowned Filmmaker, Educationist & Chairman, Mukta Arts Ltd., Shri Subhash Ghai had spoken on "Opportunities in Indian Cinema" and interacted with the students of IIMC during the orientation.

Shri Ghai said, "Whether it is a cinema or media, if you tell the story from your heart, not from the mind, it influences the audience. You can become a good communicator only if you tell your story by heart."



Hon'ble Union Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India, Shri V. Muraleedharan also addressed the IIMC students on "Paradigm Shift in Indian Foreign Policy" and shared important tips for budding journalists on reporting on matters such as diplomatic issues.



Hon'ble Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan along with eminent personalities from Media and other fields also shared their valuable experiences with the students as a part of the orientation programme.

## Minister of State for Defence addressed Military Officers

Hon'ble Minister of State for Defence, Shripad Naik addressed the valedictory function of a media communication course organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) for defence personnel. Mr. Naik said, "Now-a-days, the trend of fake news and hate news is increasing hence media literacy is necessary for everyone. In this era of new media, media literacy is not only important for communicators, but for every section of society." He further said that today, "When almost everyone has a smartphone in their hands, the possibility of misuse of media has increased manifold and it can be controlled only through media literacy."

According to the Minister of State for Defence, "Media literacy also helps us to counter the psychological warfare that we see today globally. We have to be alert from this psychological warfare being adopted as a tool by the anti-India forces. Rather, we have to learn how to use the media strength for the betterment of the country and the countrymen."



## Importance of Culture and Media in Society

Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Delhi, addressed the first 'Friday Dialogue' organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). Speaking on the subject of 'Media and Culture', Dr. Joshi said that today there is a need to change the basic character of the media. Mr. Noam Chomsky had said that the basic nature of media is negative and negative news is seen more in the media today.

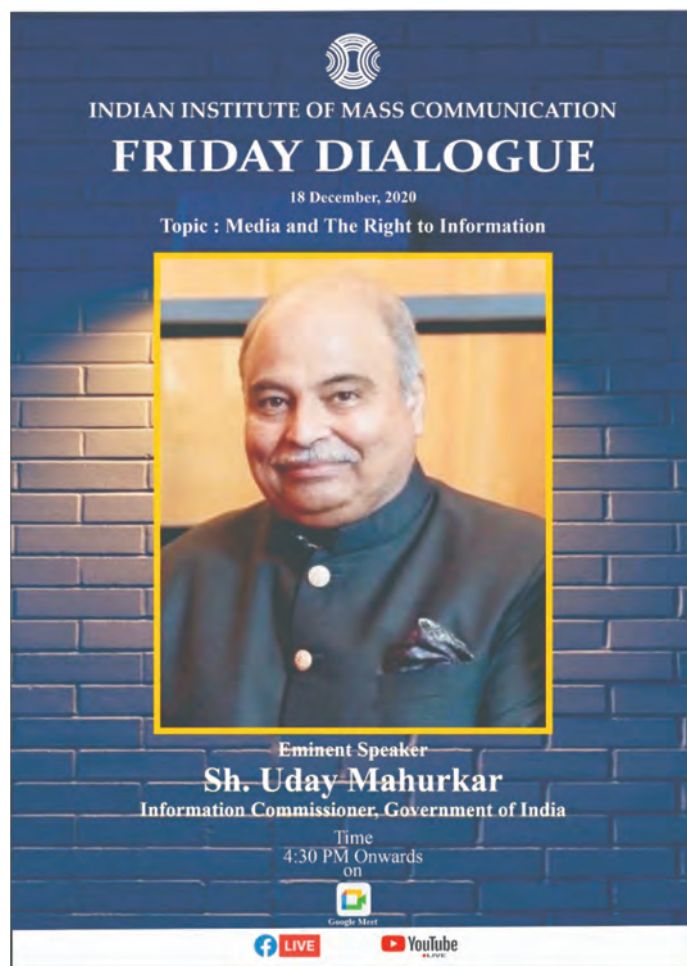


It is therefore necessary to be discussed and the credibility of the media should be brought back. Dr. Joshi said, that "India has an ancient tradition of dialogue. If we read the Natya Shastra, Veda, Gita etc., we will find that all these texts have questions and answers which are a part of dialogue. It is said in Indian culture that until the right questions arise in your mind, you do not get the right answers. And this is also the case with the media."

## Information Commissioner of Govt. of India addressed the students of IIMC

Shri Uday Mahurkar, Information Commissioner of the Government of India, addressed the 'Friday Dialogue' organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). Speaking on the subject of 'Media and The Right to Information', Shri Mahurkar said, "Bringing transparency in the process of government is the main objective of Right to Information and much success has been achieved in this direction." He added, "if journalists use it properly, then much important information can reach the public through it. Many journalists in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh have published information prominently under the Right to Information Act."

Shri Mahurkar put light on the fact that the right to access of information empowers the poor and weaker sections of society to seek and obtain information about public policies and actions, so that their welfare is possible. He also stated that the government and civic institutions should work together to strengthen the RTI Act.



## Remembering Warrior Journalists at IIMC

Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) organized a special programme titled "Remembering Warrior Journalists: Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee" on the eve of their birth anniversary. The two distinguished speakers, Shri Ram Bahadur Rai (Padma Shri), Senior Journalist and Chairman, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi and Shri Ashok Tandon, Senior Journalist and the then Media Advisor to former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee addressed the budding journalists of the Institution.

Shri Rai said Malaviyaji was not only a great freedom fighter, politician and educationist, but also a renowned social reformer. He was also instrumental in breaking the caste barriers. He said Malaviyaji popularized 'Satyamev Jayate', which later became the national motto and was inscribed below the national emblem. Recalling his association with Atalji, Shri Ashok Tandon said Atal Bihari Vajpayee was known for his political commitment. Atalji listened carefully to the public and tried to fulfill their aspirations. Shri Tandon also shared that Atalji did journalism in very difficult circumstances, he not only wrote and edited news but also distributed the newspaper himself. This shows his true commitment to journalism.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MASS COMMUNICATION

### REMEMBERING WARRIOR JOURNALISTS



**Bharat Ratna**  
**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya**



**Bharat Ratna**  
**Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee**

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Distinguished Speakers



**Shri Ram Bahadur Rai**  
Senior Journalist honoured with Padma Shri and Chairman  
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi



**Shri Ashok Tandon**  
Senior Journalist and Media Advisor to  
former Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee

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Convener  
**Prof. (Dr.) Pramod Kumar**  
Professor, Department of English Journalism  
Course Director, Urdu Journalism  
Editor, 'Sanchar Madhyam'

**Date: 24 December 2020**  
**Time: 4:00 PM**  
**on Google Meet**  
**Live on**  
**IIMC Pages on**

<https://www.facebook.com/IIMC1963/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuV4KCSAB0RgDQq7UAA>

*The sole aim of Journalism should be service.*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*



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## AUTHORS' GUIDELINES

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- Abstract (not more than 250 words)
- Keywords (indexing terms), normally 5-6 items.
- Introduction
- Review of literature
- Research objectives
- Research questions
- Research methodology
- Findings and analysis
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- References

### OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

#### 1. Images/Photographs/Line drawings

Authors are required to submit high-resolution images, preferably with the initial submission but no later than revision stage. Electronic images (figures and graphs) must be at a minimum resolution of 600 dpi. for line drawings (black and white) and 300 dpi and for colour or greyscale. Colour figures must be supplied in CMYK not RGB colours.

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4. **Figure** (clearly labeled with its figure number and caption). Send separate files for all figures and tables.
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Authors are advised to prepare the manuscript in the following sequence of order and should check that articles have all the sections listed below:

#### 1. Title

The manuscript of the paper starts with the TITLE. It should be short, specific and informative. It should be phrased to identify the content of the article and include the nature of the study, and technical approach, which is essential for key-word indexing and information retrieval. Title should be as brief as possible, and include the species involved in the research when applicable. Abbreviations are not permitted in the title.

In addition, a SHORT TITLE not exceeding 50 letters should be provided separately for running headlines.

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<sup>1</sup>Designation, Division of... (<sup>1</sup>email of first author);

<sup>2</sup>Designation, Division of... (if second author is from different division), <sup>3</sup>Designation, Division of... (if the author is from different place).

#### 2. Abstract

The ABSTRACT, written in complete sentences, should not have more than 250 words. It should contain a very brief account of the materials, methods, results, discussion and conclusion. The abstract should summarize pertinent results in a brief but understandable form. The abstract should start with a clear statement of the objectives of the study and must conclude with one or two sentences that highlight important conclusions. "An abstract is defined as an abbreviated accurate representation of the contents of a document, preferably prepared by its author(s) for publication with it. Such abstracts are also useful in access [abstracting] publications and machine-readable databases".

#### 3. Keywords

At the end of the abstract, Key-words are to be listed in five to six keywords that best describe the nature of

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the research. Because major words in the title are not used in the subject index, appropriate words from the title (or synonyms) should be listed as keywords.

#### **4. Introduction**

It should be brief and limited to the statement of the importance of the study, problem or the aim of the experiment. And may briefly justify the research and specify the hypotheses to be tested. The review of literature should be pertinent to the problem.

#### **5. Review of literature**

A literature review pertaining to the specific area of research investigation should be selected like the surveys of books, scholarly articles, newspapers, social media and any other relevant sources for a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by doing so, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works.

#### **6. Research objectives**

The research objectives are to be described concisely and should focus on what the research is trying to achieve. Objectives of the research should be in view of latest references.

#### **7. Research questions**

The questions should focus towards specific questions to be answered or predictions based on the hypotheses to be tested.

#### **8. Research methodology**

This includes experimental design, sampling and the techniques employed. All modifications of procedures must be explained. Experimental materials and statistical models should be described clearly and fully. Calculations and the validity of deductions made from them should be checked and validated.

#### **9. Findings (Results) and analysis**

Findings and Analysis should preferably be combined to avoid repetition.

Results should be presented in tabular form and graphs when feasible but not both. Mean result with the relevant standard errors should be presented rather than detailed data. The data should be so arranged that the tables would fit in the normal layout of the page.

Self-explanatory tables should be typed on separate sheets and carry appropriate titles. The tabular matter should not exceed 20% of the text. Any abbreviation used in a table must be defined in table. Paginate the tables in series with the text at

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Conclusion section should not be of more than one paragraph after the discussion and explain in general terms the implications of findings of this research. Abbreviations, acronyms, or citations should not be used. Though some speculation is permitted, this section should also caution the reader against over-extrapolation of results. For manuscripts with direct applications, this section will consist of an interpretive summary. If results have no implications, this should also be stated.

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References should conform to the stylistic guidelines of the Publication Manual of the *American Psychological Association* (APA) 6th edition (Refer: [www.apastyle.org/](http://www.apastyle.org/)).

A recent issue of the journal should be consulted for the methods of citation of References in the text as well as at the end of the article. Reference citations in the text are typed as follows: Black (2006) or (Black, 2007); Dickerson et al., (2011) or (Dickerson et al., 2015); Smith and Jones (2017) or (Smith & Jones, 2018).

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- 1) Last names of author(s), date of publication, and page number(s) are placed in brackets at the end of the sentence: (Spitz & Hunter, 2005, p. 172).
- 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: Spitz and Hunter (2005) examined how some assumptions about Napster have gained currency while others have not (p. 172).

#### • Reference list with doi

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Date of publication). Title of article in sentence case: Capitalize first word of subtitle. Title of Journal in Mixed Case and Italics, volume number in italics(issue number in brackets), first page-last page. doi:10.xxx/yyyyy

#### Example:

Reese, S. D., & Ballinger, J. (2001). The Roots of Sociology of News: Remembering Mr. Gates and Social Control in the Newsroom. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78(4), p. 641-658. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900107800402>

#### • Reference list without doi

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Date of publication). Title of article in sentence case: Capitalize first word of subtitle. Title of Journal in Mixed Case and Italics, volume number in italics(issue number in brackets), first page-last page. Retrieved from <http://www.journal.com>

#### Example:

Reese, S. D., & Ballinger, J. (2001). The Roots of a Sociology of News: Remembering Mr. Gates and Social Control in the Newsroom. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78(4), p. 641-658. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmq>

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- 2) Last name of author, year of publication, and page number(s) integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: As stated by Kaye, definitions of addiction also include "the interference" that addictive behaviour "poses for normative social obligations, particularly in relation to work and the family" (2012, p. 39).

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sentence. If there are no page numbers, refer to the paragraph number or heading within the text: (Sisler, 2014, para. 8).

- 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: Sisler (2014) reported the amount of time allowed before declaring cardiac death is considerably less in the U.S. (para. 9-11).

## REFERENCE LIST

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of article in sentence case. Title of Newspaper in Mixed Case and Italics. Page number

### Example

Constantine, Z. (2010, June 15). UAE efforts on human trafficking 'significant': US State Department removes country from watch list. *The National*. pp. 1, 5.

## NEWSPAPER ARTICLE FROM A WEBSITE

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of article in sentence case. Title of Newspaper or News Website in Mixed Case and Italics. Retrieved from <http://www.newspaper.com>

### Example

Constantine, Z. (2010, June 15). UAE efforts on human trafficking 'significant': US State Department removes country from watch list. *The National*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/uae-efforts-on-human-trafficking-significant-1.486936>

### Without Author

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- 1) A shortened version of the title (2 - 3 words) or the full title if it is short, date of publication, and page number(s) are placed in brackets at the end of the sentence. Write the shortened title in mixed case and in quotations marks. If there are no page numbers, refer to the paragraph number or heading within the text: ("Recovering America's Missing Children," 2016, para. 2).
- 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: "Recovering America's Missing Children: 20 Years of the AMBER Alert System" (2016) reported the AMBER Alert System is used in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Indian country, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and 22 other countries" (para. 2).

### Reference list

Title of article in sentence case. (Year, Month Day).  
Title of Newspaper in Mixed Case and Italics. Page number

### Example:

FB knew about malicious Russian activity in 2014. (2018, November 28). *The Hindu*. p. 12.

### Newspaper Article From a Website

Title of article in sentence case. (Year, Month Day).  
Title Newspaper in Mixed Case and Italics. Retrieved from <http://www.newspaper.com>

### Example:

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## WEBSITE REFERENCE

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- 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative. If lengthy, abbreviate the organization or group name: According to Lee (2018), when using APA style quotations that are longer than 40 words need to be "in a block quotation" (para. 3).

### Reference list

Author, A. A. (Date of publication). Title of web page in sentence case. Retrieved from <http://website.com/>

### Example:

Hern, A. (2017, April 25). Science and Technology. Retrieved from <https://www.theguard.com>

### Other relevant instructions for the authors

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Authors are advised to check the following before submission of their papers. Papers may be returned to the authors that do not adhere to these guidelines:

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## IIMC AT A GLANCE



- A premier institute of journalism and mass communication in India
- Enjoys pride of place in mass communication education, training and research
- Ranked No.1 Mass Communication Institute in the country by multiple media surveys

### THE BEGINNING

- Came into existence on August 17, 1965
- The setting up of the Institute was part of Government of India and UNESCO's plan to build mass communication training infrastructure in Developing World
- A team of UNESCO experts headed by Dr. Wilbur Schram-considered father of Communication Studies - guided with its course structure and pedagogy



### GOVERNING STRUCTURE

- IIMC is run by the IIMC Society, an autonomous body registered under the Societies Registration Act 1867.
- The Institute has a Governing Body - the 15 member Executive Council, headed by a Chairman. Director General of the Institute, representatives of the faculty, officials and eminent persons from different walks of life as members.
- Day to day activities of the Institute are looked after by the Director General, assisted by an Additional DG, Dean (Academics) and Dean (Students' Welfare).

### COURSES OFFERED

#### Mainstream Courses

- PG Diploma in Hindi Journalism
- PG Diploma in English Journalism (all 6 Campuses)
- PG Diploma in Advertising & Public Relations
- PG Diploma in Radio & TV Journalism

#### Thrust on Language Journalism

- PG Diploma in Urdu Journalism, New Delhi
- PG Diploma in Odia Journalism, Dhenkanal
- PG Diploma in Marathi Journalism, Amravati
- PG Diploma in Malayalam Journalism, Kottayam

### IIMC NETWORK

- IIMC Main Campus, New Delhi (1965)
- Dhenkanal (1993)
- Amravati (2011)
- Kottayam (2012)
- Aizawl (2011)
- Jammu (2012)

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## ABOUT 'COMMUNICATOR' JOURNAL

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Launched in 1965, *Communicator* is a peer reviewed journal of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) that publishes original research on Communications. The flagship journal of the IIMC endeavours to publish the best literature available in the field of communications and its related branches for the greater benefit of scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. It is the oldest communications journal published from India. The *Communicator* also has a book review section. In order to maintain its high standard of scholarship, *Communicator* follows a rigorous procedure of blind peer review. The main aim of *Communicator* Journal is to focus on communication theory, research, policy and practice. It is especially interested in research which is interdisciplinary and based on the experience of South Asia and other developing countries. This UGC-CARE listed Journal is published on quarterly basis. '*Communicator*' journal is now being indexed in the Indian Citation Index.

**The *Communicator* Journal includes the following category of papers for publications:**

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- **Critical Research review:** These review articles besides containing introduction, exclusive review of literature, must point out lacunae in research carried out so far and suggesting possible lines for future work.
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- Rejected

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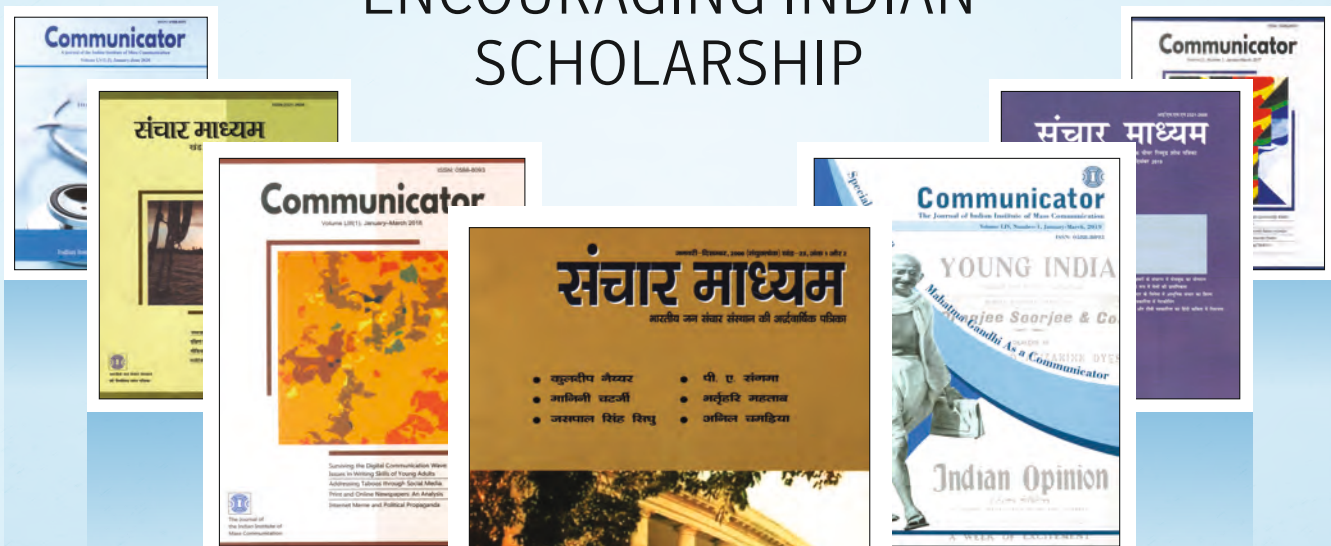




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THE 'COMMUNICATOR' JOURNAL IS INDEXED IN THE INDIAN CITATION INDEX

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