POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN INDIA AND ITS CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT:

Communication is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use mutually understood sign, symbols and semiotic rules. Communication is a Latin word which means to "to share". It is the sharing of information between different individuals. It includes the sharing of ideas, concepts, imaginations, behaviours and written content. We can simply say that transferring information from one place to another place is known as communication.

KEYWORDS:*Communication , transferring information.*

INTRODUCTION:
Hence communication is a two way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general communication is a means of connecting people or places. In business, it is a key function of management and an organization cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION:
Basically the communication is a two way process which have sender and receiver are two components. Sender is sending the message and receiver is receiving the message. In between, the speech or ideas need to be simple enough to be decoded and understood by the receiver. If the ideas are not presented properly, then decoding is improper and receiver does not understand. Based on the type of senders and receivers involved, we can define various types of communication:

1.**Verbal and Non-Verbal communication**:- verbal communication can also be called oral communication. In very simple terms, any communication that happens orally between people is known as verbal communication. Verbal communication is quick and precise then email communication. In the era of whatsapp and email still people like this communication. Body language like smiling face and other body gesture and symbol are used as non-verbal communication.

2.**Direct and Indirect Communication**:- when there is direct communication the senders and receiver is called direct communication like meeting. But when there is any medium used for communication then it is called indirect communication like email and letter.

3.**Formal and Informal Communication**:- Informal communication is where there is nothing official about the communication. It can be known as Grapevine communication. There is specific channel for informal communication. Any channel like whatsapp, SMS and Email can be used as informal communication. Informal

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communication helps the "Open Door Policy" and makes people more confident forthcoming their ideas and policies. Informal talks encourage people to share their problems. But when you communicate officially you have to communicate formally to issue order, instruction and notice etc. when you finalize policy and want to decide a course to adopt, then formal communication is more effective.

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL COMMUNICATION:-

Political communication is a sub-field of political science and communication that deals with the production, dissemination, procession and effects of information, both through media and interpersonally, within a political context. This includes all usage of Media, speeches by politicians, Opinion leaders in the community to influence the decision process and it also includes the formal and informal discussions in the general public.

According to Pippa Norris (2011), "Political communication is an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politician, the media and the public. The process operates downwards from governing institutions towards citizens and horizontally linkages among political actors and also upwards from public opinion towards authorities."

Three basic elements of Political Communication:-

- The Political Party
- The Voter
- The Medium of communication

The Political Party:-

As per the Ace Electoral Network, A political party is defined as an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office. Political parties perform key tasks in a democratic society, such as Aggregating and articulating needs and problems as identified by members and supporters

Socializing and educating voters and citizens in the functioning of the political and electoral system and the generation of general political values, Balancing opposing demands and converting them into general policies, activating and mobilizing citizens into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options channeling public opinion from citizens to government

To perform these above mentioned key tasks, the political party should be able to communicate their objective clearly to their Voters. With the increase in the number of mediums a party can use to communicate with their voter, a consistency in the communication objective should be must. Communication objective is derived from the Brand Proposition the party wants to display to the general public. Harrop (1990) perceives political marketing as being not just about political advertising, party political broadcasts and electoral speeches but covering the whole area of party positioning in the electoral market just like commercial market.

The Voter:-

The aim of any type of communication is to convince the receiver. All marketers try to convince their customers about the product. Here the marketer is the political party and the customer is the voter. But there are certain differences between mainstream marketing and political marketing with respect to the voter. Lock and Harris (1996) identify four main differences between mainstream and political marketing:

- All voters vote on the same day, everyone makes choice as per their own methods or requirements.
- There is no cost attached to casting a mandate for a particular party, therefore no cost when considered from an individual point of view but a very huge cost from a society's point of view.
- Even though you must have voted for a particular party, even though it's not elected, you will have to live with it.

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- There is no choice to vote for a different political party or different candidate, basically the voter have to choose the same political parties and same candidate. The candidate and the political party both are generally taken into consideration while making the choice.

The Medium or tools of communication:-

There are various tools and medium were used from time to time to communicate with the ruled by the rulers in India. We can look back from the ancient period to the modern period and then digital period the changing of methods and tools by the ruling class for the political communication.

A. Ancient period:-

Karandikar(2012) has discussed the political communication in India right from the ancient times of Ramayana and Mahabharata to the contemporary times. He explains that in the ancient times in India, "Ramayana and Mahabharata, two great epics of India have mentioned the code of conduct between the public and king and between the two sovereign states. The kings have to follow the code of conduct and if he ignored it then the council of minister opposes him. During the Chandragupta Maurya reign his Prime Minister Kautilya wrote extensively about administration and the political communication between public and the King. During this many times king went directly to public after wearing simple costume to hide his identity to gain the public opinion regarding administration, public needs and problems.

B. Mugal period:-

Prasad (2003) has discussed about the political communication between Kings and public by written reports. During this period Kings called public assembly and minister's assembly which were called DIWANE AAM and DIWENA KHAS. During these meetings Kings get information about running the administration and public problems and also gave decision on different cases.

C. British period and freedom movement:-

During the British period 17th and 18th century and freedom movement in India various media and non media and traditional methods were being used for the communication between mass and rulers. Tower cry was one of the traditional method was still using to give message to the public. Kailash Kr. Mishra asserts that there has been civil society in India in the form of Chaupal and it has been used a place for political communication where major political and social decisions were taken by the elders and later, Panchyat. After independence Ch. Charan Singh and Ch. Devilal have been known to use the Chaupal as political mileage. Even Mahatma Gandhi used Chaupal like atmosphere during his meetings and morning prayers. Padayatras are also used for spiritual, religious and political communication in India from 15th century onwards. We know that Guru Nanak ji, Swami Dayanand ji and Swami Vivekananda travelled in almost all over India to deliver the social and spiritual growth of Indian public. Gandji also used Padayatra as a means of political communication with public of India during freedom movement. Post independence period various leader like Chandrashekar used Padayatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir from 7 January 1983 to 25 June 1983 for political communication and social and political awareness of public.

Press played a very important role in the freedom movement in India. The new papers and magazine like Amrita Bazar Patrika, Kesri, Maratha, Young India, Pratap and Tribune have played a major role as communicator among the freedom fighters.

D. Post Independence Period up to 1990:-

In the early years of post independence period, the radio and television played their own part as political communication, although, news papers and radio and television do not provide direct approach or mode of interaction with the public by the political parties or political leaders. So, the politicians and political parties utilized other form of political communication like Rath Yatra, Cycle and Motorcycle Yatra and Tractor Yatra and public rallies, dropping election pamphlets and popularity of

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film stars like Rajesh Khana, Venod Khana, Amitab Bachan, Rekha, Jaya Bachan and Shatrughan Shinah and various sports persons etc., these are the way through which our leaders of different political parties tried to connect with people and to understand the ground realities of problems faced by public. L. K. Advani Rath Yatra from somanth to Aydohya in 1990 and 'Swaraj Abhiyan' convener professor Yogandera yadev Kisan Yatra in Maharashtra and Punjab are the latest padayatra known in Indian politics of communication. Most part of political communication in India happens during the time of election hence election campaign are the strongest manner of political communication in India. So door to door campaign, road show, public meeting and press conference by politicians to get in touch with electorate during this period are very crucial part of communication.

E.   The new digital , Internet and social media technology after 1990:-

After 1990's the liberalization of the Indian economy has changed the way of communication from cable television to telecommunication and then bringing on to online platform. Earlier the communication during elections used to take place in rallies and depended a lot on politicians interpersonal skills. But the political parties are soon realizing the importance of this Digital Era to connect with the youth of the country. The Political parties know that the youth are going in the transformation from Digital Migrants to Digital Natives. They are present with their true identities on the Digital platform. This requires the political parties of India to adopt methods which have been never adopted before. In the latest fought Lok Sabha Elections of 2014, all major political parties of India had hired Ad and Media Agencies to manage their Brand Image. The PR companies invented an innovative slogan for BJP like ACHE DIN ANE WALE HEIN in 2014 lok sabha election. Like this the introduction of new social media and digital technology provided the politicians and political parties a new platform much more interactive and personalized than any other media to interact with the electorate and gain their trust and finally their votes. Today the digital as a medium of political communication cannot be ignored by any political party. Blogs, Social media, websites, email, viral marketing and websites itself has brought about a paradigm shift in ways political parties could present itself to the voter.

The print and television mediums are generally active only during election campaigns but the digital medium is generally active all through the year. Secondly the digital way of communication is very much suitable and relevant to the fragmented, polarized and personalized society. Personal Emails or SMSs might be tailor made to suit every individual needs. They can be content differentiation also, as different mailers could be sent to different individuals based on their likes and dislikes.

➤   Pull and Push Strategy of Digital Communication:-

New Media are essentially social. Everything in digital format can be easily replied to by everyone. The best part of digital medium, that it can be viral. Any exciting piece of communication through the digital medium can be easily replicated and produced in the same form. There are basically two types of Digital Marketing. The first one is the pull strategy and the second is the push strategy. The pull strategy basically consists of attracting consumers/visitors to a particular website or a blog or even watching a video (YouTube). Here the initiative is on the consumer to visit the particular digital platform. The pull strategy requires a substantial marketing budget as the numbers of competitors are more. Also the pull strategy does not allow you to be personalized to the user, as the same content is viewed by all viewers. The push strategy basically consists of sending emails and SMSs to the target audiences. The push strategy could be extremely personalized, for example a political party could send in different SMSs to people of a region affected by floods and a different message to people affected by Naxalite issues.

➤   Use of Internet as a tool of Political Communication

The internet is a perfect example of customer centricity in political communication. The internet acts as a one stop platform for people to interact with politicians, discuss their problems. The primary problem in India was that people were finding it tough to connect with politicians except during elections when politicians wanted their mandate. The internet as a platform itself can act as a

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connection tool for the people with the politicians. But internet is not utilized to its true potential; internet is often seen as a tool to spread awareness about a politician or a political party. (David Meerman ,2004)

Before the internet platform emerged, it was believed that the people would go to the administration for help or issues, but the internet could give way to a system which would bring the government and political parties to the people. The focus of the internet could be to generate efficiency in the system which will indirectly benefit the government. But the important thing with the internet is that the tool works best when the consumer uses it for a dialogue and not a monologue.

➢ **Online tools:-**
There are a variety of tools available today for use of political communication. These tools are generally used by the people for entertainment or networking purposes. These tools can consist of blogs, social networking sites, news sites, video streaming and group sites. These tools can be used by have great political applicability. These tools can be used to generate public attention and also to act as points of salience. The internet is generally open systems and are accessible all public. The internet today has no dependency on computers as the internet can be accessed through mobiles. Every tool present on the web today has a specific use and can be used to target niche audiences.

However there is potential for democratic participation through digital technology, internet and other online tools like facebook and tweeter etc. hence every politically party try to use it maximum and establish a separate wing of their organization called digital war wing. Now it becomes essential for the students of social sciences have to reinvent the national politics and method of political communication, which would be suitable for the interest of isolated, fragmented and generally disillusioned society which becomes increasingly depend on the new medium and tools for political communication.

CHALLENGES FOR POLITICAL COMMUNICATION:-
1. **Lacking the knowledge of internet and digital technology**:-
Most of our public as well our leaders is not aware about this new digital as well as internet technology. Even having laptop from the government budget these leaders are not using it.

2. **Problem of free internet facility:-**
Even after 76 years after independence more than 25% public of our country leaving below poverty line. They are not in a position to buy the android technology mobile having network facility. Government is not providing the free internet facility to the citizen.

3. **Political parties have to spend crores of rupees to hire the advertizing and public relation companies:-**
In this era of digital technology the political parties have to spend millions of rupees to hire the advertizing and PR agencies for their image building and inventing the innovative slogan to win the election. Now, we are observing that the real election competition is not between the leaders of different political parties but it is between the Advertizing agencies.

4. **More chances to make fools the voters**:-
By the advertisement agency voters can be easily fools by fake slogan and wrong data. Like in 2014 Parliamentary election B.J.P. party used "ACHE DIN ANE WALE HEIN" slogan and also used "black money foreign banks". Coming 2019 parliamentary election these political parties will come with another slogan to make fools the public.

5. **Problems of negative campaign:-**
In the era of digital technology the distorted MESSAGES, SMS'S, VEDIO CLIPS, hate and communal audio &video clips are being released by the political parties to polarized the votes on the basis of caste and religion at the time of election.

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6. **Problem to control the expenses of political parties**:-

It is duty of the Election Commission to check expenses of political parties during election. But in the internet and digital campaign it is difficult to control the expenses by Election Commission. Political parties do not show the expenses done on the digital campaign.

7. **Difficult to stop election campaign before 24 hours of polling:-**

Internet and social media are being used during the election campaign; hence it cannot be controlled by the authority. The rule fixed by election commission to stop election campaign before 24 hours of election is difficult to implement now.

CONCLUSION:

Political communication is must for the development of democratic culture and democratic system in the society. The leaders of different political parties should train themselves to cop up with the recent development of new technology and new tools of political communication. The new digital technology may be used positively for solving the day to day problems of general mass related to administration and delivery system. Government play active role to aware the public about the new technology and also provide them free accessing facility if internet at every place so that the public save their time to communicate with the authority and the leaders.

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