



M. P. Institute of Social Science Research

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National Seminar on Locating Democracy and Governance in Political Communication in Contemporary India (January, 10 and 11, 2019)

India, being the largest functioning democracy in the world, a continuous web of communication unfolds between the State and citizen, between the non-state actors (political parties, pressure groups, NGOs) and the citizen and among the citizen on issues of democracy, development and governance. Extremities of 'netizen' and 'citizen', 'massification of society' and 'digital divide', 'tele-politics' and actual field-level 'citizen-politician' interface, 'democratic governance' (political) and 'good governance' (technical) contextualize political communication in contemporary India.

In India during elections (national, state-level and local-level) and even between elections communication shapes on how government functions, how it relates to citizens, how it provides routine public services to them, and how public order is maintained. Interactions about social and political relationships between citizens inter se and with government functionaries constitute political communication. The proposed national seminar views political communication as a complex process where the 'agents' range from individual (citizen, politicians, leaders, journalists, political analyst) to institution (Government, Political Parties, Media Houses, NGOs) and the 'structure' range from international (neo-liberal free speech order) to national (demagogic, politicized, mediatized order) to regional (patron-client order).

The broad sense of the available literature in political communication studies zeros on the role of social media in such a proportion as if at present political communication takes place in social media space challenging the primacy of 'politics' (Brants and Voltmer, 2011). The proposed seminar interrogates such a general reasoning and tries to bring back 'politics' in the understanding of political communication. The idea is to contextualize 'agency-structure' relationship in analyzing the 'political' content of communication in India. The mainstay pathways for political communication are electoral manifestos of political parties, the language used in communicating social and political message by leaders of various political parties during and between elections, media representation of political message, policy briefs of various governmental departments and political messages through advertisements, films and theatres.

Deepening of democracy and good governance are two buzzwords in Indian politics since the late 1990s (Kohli, 2001:13, Yadav and Pulshikar, 2000; Thakur and Jain, 2001, Wigen, 2005, Chaturvedi and Sharma, 2005, Reddy, 2012). While the former is an indigenous process following the entrenchment of coalition politics and globalization process in Indian social and cultural system, the latter is a technical conceptualization based on World Bank understanding of service delivery to citizen. The content of political communication revolves mostly around two important issues – the meaning and performance of governance and democracy. While governance is measured on 'service delivery' capacity and ability of the State, 'democracy' is measured on two counts - (a) as the extent to which questions can be raised freely and regularly on the performance of the State (b) the distance between promise of the political leaders during elections and delivery of the promises between elections.

The vibrant space of civil society in India also communicates through its various organizational forums issues of social and political relevance with the State on behalf of the citizen. Debates centering on issues of tolerance-intolerance, majoritarianism-minority, nature of federalism, old party based politics - new movement based politics, [broad issues of democracy] regional disparities, state specific problems, sub-national demand for statehood, citizenship registration-deregistration, industrialization-agricultural policies, health care faculties [broad issues of governance] flares up time and again in political communication in contemporary India.

Political socialization and political participation are important issues in the analysis of political communication. While the former is the source; the latter is the manifestation. People's participation gets influenced in multivariate ways out of which political rallies and media coverage are important medium having communicative effect. The message that is designed through these medium mainly deals with the discourses on rights, development and decentralization. The available literature on political communication mixes up the 'political' (politics) with the technology (media communication) and loses the inherent complexity of the context and process of political communication in a cosmopolitan 21st century India. The differences in understanding the meaning of 'politics' and 'political' in rural and urban setting in India forces the communicators to recourse to different ways of communicating their desired message on social and political issues.

Keeping in view the significance of this topical issue, Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research, Ujjain proposes to organise a National Seminar on ***Locating Democracy and Governance in Political Communication in Contemporary India*** to discuss threadbare on the central enquiry about the result of political communication process in contemporary India - whether it is an 'agenda-setting' or an 'agenda-altering' process. The seminar will also try to understand the degree of autonomy of the 'audience-public' in understanding, analyzing and participating in political communication process. The seminar will bring together academicians, policy-analysts, media personalities and scholars working on the broad thematic area.

Themes of the Seminar

- ***Political Communication- Nature and Changing Perspectives***
- ***Political Communication and Politics- Parties, Leadership and Political Vocabulary***
- ***Political Communication and the State - Styles and Strategies of Communication of top Functionaries/Leaders (National and Regional)***
- ***Political Communication and the Non-State- Styles and Patterns of Organization Communication in Civil Society Space***
- ***Political Communication and Media- Comparing the Era of 'Broadcast' (Old Media) and 'Live Streaming' (new media with special emphasis on the use and misuse of new social media)***
- ***Political Communication and Social World- Narratives in Theatres, Films, Magazines***
- ***Political Communication and Public Opinion- Perception of People During and Between Elections***
- ***Political Communication in Administering India- Elements of 'Public'- 'Administrators' Dialogue***
- ***Political Communication in India- Comparing 20th Century and 21st Century Experiences***

Template for Writing Paper

Paper presenters are requested to follow EPW's style sheet while preparing the paper. Normally the length of paper should be between 4000 and 6000 words. The paper presenters may consider focusing on the extent to which democracy and governance agenda in contemporary India influences communication styles of important political leaders and political parties (both national and regional), electoral campaign communications, civil society communications by civil society groups, socio-cultural and political communications in media (old and new), vocabulary of films and theatres of political genres, political and social advertisements and slogans, political communication in administering India and the making of 'public political communication'.

We invite you to participate in the National Seminar on ***Locating Democracy and Governance in Political Communication in Contemporary India***. We propose to bring out an edited volume of the selected papers presented in the Seminar from a reputed publisher. MPISSR will reimburse travel cost and will arrange local hospitality for the invited delegates.

Submission of ABSTRACT: **November 16, 2018**

Submission of FULL PAPER: **December 14, 2018**

All communications may please be sent to:

Seminar Convener

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