



ROLE OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN POLITICS- A STUDY

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Abstract

Media and communication technologies have become important components of contemporary political life, influencing political communication, public opinion, political awareness, electoral behaviour, and democratic participation. The present study examines the role of media and communication technologies in politics, with particular focus on the dissemination of political information, political awareness, voting behaviour, and democratic governance. The study adopted a descriptive research design and was conducted among 50 respondents in Siddipet town using simple random sampling. Both primary and secondary data were used, and the primary data were collected directly from the respondents. The findings reveal that social media is the major source of political information for 40.0 percent of respondents, followed by television at 30.0 percent. About 56.0 percent access political news daily, while 76.0 percent use social media for political information. Furthermore, 80.0 percent of respondents consider media influential in enhancing political awareness, and 70.0 percent acknowledge its influence on voting behaviour. Similarly, 80.0 percent recognize the importance of media in strengthening democratic governance. The study concludes that media and communication technologies have become significant tools for political information, citizen engagement, electoral participation, and democratic governance. However, issues such as misinformation, political bias, polarization, and the digital divide need to be addressed to ensure responsible and inclusive political communication.

Keywords: Media, Communication Technologies, Politics, Political Awareness, Social Media, Voting Behaviour, Democratic Governance.



Introduction

The twenty-first century has emerged as an era of unprecedented growth in media and communication technologies, fundamentally reshaping the nature of politics, governance, and democratic participation across the globe. Media has evolved from a mere source of information into a powerful political institution capable of influencing public opinion, setting political agendas, mobilizing citizens, and holding governments accountable. Through newspapers, radio, television, and increasingly through digital platforms such as the internet and social media, political information now reaches citizens with remarkable speed and efficiency. These technological advancements have transformed the relationship between political leaders and the public, enabling greater interaction, participation, and engagement in political processes.

Media serves as a vital bridge between the state and society by facilitating the flow of information, ideas, and political discourse. It educates citizens about public policies, electoral processes, governance issues, and national developments, thereby strengthening democratic values and informed citizenship. The rapid expansion of communication technologies has also created new opportunities for political campaigns, social movements, public debates, and citizen activism. In modern democracies, media is widely recognized as the "fourth pillar of democracy" because of its critical role in promoting transparency, accountability, political awareness, and public participation. Consequently, the growing influence of media and communication technologies has become one of the most significant forces shaping contemporary political life and democratic governance.

Media and Political Communication

Political communication constitutes the foundation of democratic governance, facilitating the exchange of political information, ideas, values, and opinions among governments, political leaders, media institutions, and citizens. It enables political actors to communicate policies, programmes, and ideological positions while allowing citizens to evaluate governmental performance and participate in political decision-making. Effective political



communication promotes transparency, accountability, and informed public participation, all of which are essential for the functioning of democratic societies.

Traditionally, newspapers, radio, and television have been the principal channels of political communication. Newspapers provide in-depth coverage and critical analysis of political events, legislative developments, and public policies. Radio has historically played a significant role in reaching rural and marginalized populations, serving as an accessible medium for political information and civic education. Television revolutionized political communication by combining visual and audio elements, enabling citizens to directly observe political leaders, electoral campaigns, parliamentary debates, and policy discussions. Through news broadcasts, interviews, documentaries, and public debates, traditional media has contributed significantly to political awareness and democratic engagement.

Growth of Communication Technologies

The rapid advancement of communication technologies has fundamentally transformed the production, dissemination, and consumption of political information. The emergence of the internet, mobile communication, and digital media has created unprecedented opportunities for political interaction and citizen participation. Information that once required days or weeks to circulate can now be transmitted instantly across geographical boundaries. India experienced remarkable growth in communication technologies during the period 2010–2016. According to Internet Live Stats, the number of internet users increased from approximately 92.3 million in 2010 to 462.1 million in 2016, making India the second-largest internet market in the world. Internet penetration also increased from 7.5 percent in 2010 to 34.8 percent in 2016. This rapid expansion significantly enhanced citizens' access to political information and facilitated greater engagement in democratic processes.



Growth of Internet Users in India (2010-2016)

Year	Internet Users (Millions)	Percentage
2010	92.3	7.5
2011	121.0	9.9
2012	159.0	12.6
2013	213.2	16.9
2014	233.2	18.0
2015	354.1	27.0
2016	462.1	34.8

Source: Internet Stats.

The widespread adoption of smartphones and mobile communication technologies further accelerated political communication. By 2016, India had more than 1.1 billion mobile subscribers, enabling political parties, government institutions, and civil society organizations to communicate directly with citizens through mobile applications, text messages, and online platforms.

Media as an Agent of Political Socialization

Media is one of the most influential agents of political socialization, shaping the political attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours of individuals. Political socialization refers to the process through which citizens acquire knowledge about political systems, institutions, ideologies, and civic responsibilities. Through newspapers, television programmes, radio broadcasts, and online platforms, citizens become aware of political events, government policies, and democratic values. Media not only informs citizens but also influences their perceptions of political leaders, political parties, and governance. Young people, in particular, are increasingly influenced by media exposure. Television, online news portals, and social networking platforms expose youth to diverse political viewpoints and encourage participation in political discussions. Consequently, media contributes significantly to the development of informed, politically aware, and active citizens.



Media and Electoral Politics

Media has become an indispensable component of contemporary electoral politics. Political parties and candidates rely extensively on media platforms to communicate with voters, promote policy agendas, build public support, and shape electoral outcomes. Election campaigns increasingly depend on strategic communication through television, newspapers, radio, digital platforms, and social media networks. The 2014 General Election in India demonstrated the growing significance of media and communication technologies in electoral politics. Political parties extensively used television advertisements, social networking platforms, websites, mobile messaging services, and digital campaigns to engage with voters and disseminate political messages. The election recorded a voter turnout of 66.44 percent, the highest in India's electoral history at that time. The extensive use of media technologies contributed significantly to voter awareness, political mobilization, and democratic participation. Media also performs an important agenda-setting function by influencing which political issues receive public attention. Through selective coverage of political events and policy debates, media shapes public discourse and affects citizens' perceptions of political priorities.

Social Media and Political Participation

The emergence of social media represents one of the most significant developments in modern political communication. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp have transformed the relationship between political leaders and citizens by enabling direct, interactive, and real-time communication. By 2016, India had become one of the world's largest social media markets. Social media platforms created new opportunities for political participation by allowing citizens to express opinions, discuss public issues, share information, and engage in political debates. Political parties increasingly utilized social media platforms to mobilize supporters, communicate campaign messages, and engage with voters. Unlike traditional media, social media enables ordinary citizens to become active participants in political communication rather than passive consumers of information. Furthermore, social media has facilitated new forms of political activism, civic



engagement, and collective action, thereby strengthening participatory democracy.

Media and Democratic Governance

Media plays a crucial role in strengthening democratic governance by promoting accountability, transparency, and citizen participation. As a watchdog institution, media monitors governmental activities and exposes corruption, abuse of power, and administrative inefficiencies. Investigative journalism contributes to responsible governance by ensuring that public officials remain accountable for their actions. Media also serves as an important forum for public discourse, enabling citizens to discuss policy issues, express opinions, and participate in democratic deliberations. Governments utilize media channels to communicate development programmes, welfare schemes, public policies, and administrative decisions. Effective communication enhances public awareness and enables citizens to access government services and benefits. Television remained one of the most influential sources of political information earlier. According to TRAI estimates, India had more than 168 million television households by 2016, demonstrating the continuing importance of television in shaping political awareness and public opinion.

Challenges of Media and Communication Technologies

Despite their substantial contributions to democratic processes, media and communication technologies present several challenges. One of the most significant concerns is the rapid spread of misinformation and false news through digital platforms. The ease with which information can be shared online increases the risk of inaccurate reporting, manipulation, and propaganda, potentially influencing public opinion and electoral outcomes. Political polarization has emerged as another major challenge. Media organizations and digital platforms may sometimes promote partisan or biased content that reinforces ideological divisions and weakens constructive democratic dialogue. The concentration of media ownership and commercial interests can further affect the objectivity



and independence of news reporting. Additionally, the digital divide continues to limit equal access to communication technologies. Socio-economic inequalities, inadequate infrastructure, and low levels of digital literacy prevent many citizens, particularly those in rural and marginalized communities, from fully participating in digital political communication. Addressing these challenges requires stronger media ethics, responsible journalism, digital literacy programmes, and policies that ensure equitable access to information and communication technologies.

Objectives:

1. To study the role of media and communication technologies in disseminating political information among citizens.
2. To examine the impact of media and communication technologies on political awareness and political participation.
3. To assess the influence of media on voting behaviour and democratic governance.

Methodology:

The present study is based on a descriptive research design. The study was conducted among 50 respondents selected through a simple random sampling method in Siddipet town. Both primary and secondary data were utilized for the study. Primary data was collected from the respondents directly and the secondary data was collected from various sources.

Data Analysis:

Table 1: Age – Wise Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–25 Years	18	36.0
26–35 Years	15	30.0
36–45 Years	10	20.0
Above 45 Years	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0



From the above table, it is evident that the majority of the respondents (36.0%) belong to the 18–25 years age group, followed by 30.0 percent in the 26–35 years category. Respondents aged 36–45 years constitute 20.0 percent of the sample, while only 14.0 percent belong to the above 45 years age group.

Table 2: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	60.0
Female	20	40.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is observed that out of the total 50 respondents, 30 respondents (60.0%) are male and 20 respondents (40.0%) are female. The data indicates that male respondents constitute the majority of the sample. However, the representation of female respondents is also significant, reflecting the participation of both genders in the study.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Intermediate	8	16.0
Degree	20	40.0
Postgraduate	15	30.0
Research/Professional	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is evident that the majority of the respondents (40.0%) have completed Degree education, followed by 30.0 percent who possess Postgraduate qualifications. Respondents with Intermediate education constitute 16.0 percent of the sample, while 14.0 percent have Research or Professional qualifications. The findings indicate that a substantial proportion of the respondents are well educated, which may contribute to their greater awareness of political issues and increased use of media and communication technologies for obtaining political information.



Table 4: Major Source of Political Information

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Newspapers	8	16.0
Television	15	30.0
Social Media	20	40.0
Radio	2	4.0
Others	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is observed that Social Media is the major source of political information for 40.0 percent of the respondents, followed by Television with 30.0 percent. Newspapers account for 16.0 percent of respondents, while 10.0 percent rely on other sources of information. Radio is the least preferred source, with only 4.0 percent of respondents using it for political information. The findings clearly indicate that digital media has emerged as the most influential medium for accessing political news and updates. The growing popularity of social media platforms reflects the increasing role of communication technologies in shaping political awareness, public opinion, and citizen participation in political processes.

Table 5: Frequency of Accessing Political News

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	28	56.0
Weekly	12	24.0
Occasionally	8	16.0
Rarely	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is evident that a majority of the respondents (56.0%) access political news on a daily basis. About 24.0 percent of the respondents follow political news weekly, while 16.0 percent access it occasionally. Only 4.0 percent of the respondents reported that they rarely follow political news. The findings indicate that political information has become an important part of the daily media consumption habits of most respondents. Regular exposure to



political news through various media platforms contributes to increased political awareness, informed decision-making, and active participation in democratic processes.

Table 6: Use of Social Media for Political Information:

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	76.0
No	12	24.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is observed that a substantial majority of the respondents (76.0%) use social media platforms to obtain political information, while only 24.0 percent do not use social media for this purpose. The findings highlight the growing importance of social media as a source of political communication and information dissemination.

Table 7: Perceived Influence of Media on Political Awareness

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Influential	22	44.0
Moderately Influential	18	36.0
Slightly Influential	7	14.0
Not Influential	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is evident that 44.0 percent of the respondents perceive media as highly influential in enhancing political awareness, while 36.0 percent consider it moderately influential. About 14.0 percent of the respondents believe that media is only slightly influential, and a small proportion (6.0%) feel that media has no influence on political awareness. The findings indicate that a vast majority of respondents (80.0%) acknowledge the significant role of media in shaping political knowledge, attitudes, and understanding of public affairs.



Table 8: Influence of Media on Voting Behaviour

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	18	36.0
Agree	17	34.0
Neutral	8	16.0
Disagree	5	10.0
Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is observed that 36.0 percent of the respondents strongly agree and 34.0 percent agree that media influences their voting decisions. Together, 70.0 percent of the respondents acknowledge the impact of media on electoral choices. In contrast, 16.0 percent remain neutral, while 10.0 percent disagree and 4.0 percent strongly disagree with the statement. The findings clearly indicate that media plays a significant role in shaping voting behaviour by providing information about political parties, candidates, election campaigns, and public issues.

Table 9: Media's Contribution to Democratic Governance:

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Important	25	50.0
Important	15	30.0
Somewhat Important	7	14.0
Not Important	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is evident that half of the respondents (50.0%) consider media to be very important for democratic governance, while 30.0 percent regard it as important. About 14.0 percent of the respondents perceive media as somewhat important, whereas only 6.0 percent believe that it is not important. The findings reveal that an overwhelming majority (80.0%) recognize the crucial role of media in strengthening democracy.



Table 10: Satisfaction with Political Information Provided by Media

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	12	24.0
Satisfied	20	40.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Dissatisfied	6	12.0
Highly Dissatisfied	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

From the above table, it is observed that 24.0 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied and 40.0 percent are satisfied with the political information provided by media platforms. Together, 64.0 percent of the respondents express a positive level of satisfaction. About 20.0 percent remain neutral regarding the quality of political information, while 12.0 percent are dissatisfied and 4.0 percent are highly dissatisfied.

Major Findings

1. Young respondents (18–25 years) constitute the largest group (36%).
2. Social media is the primary source of political information for 40% of respondents.
3. More than half (56%) access political news daily.
4. About 76% use social media for political communication and information.
5. Media significantly enhances political awareness among citizens.
6. Seventy percent agree that media influences voting behaviour.
7. Eighty percent consider media important for democratic governance.
8. Most respondents express satisfaction with political information provided through media.
9. Digital communication technologies have increased citizen participation in politics.
10. Social media has become a powerful tool for political mobilization and public engagement.



Conclusion

The study concludes that media and communication technologies play a significant role in contemporary political processes by enhancing political awareness, facilitating political communication, and encouraging citizen participation. The findings reveal that social media has emerged as the most important source of political information, with a majority of respondents regularly accessing political news through digital platforms. Media is widely perceived as influential in shaping political awareness, voting behaviour, and democratic engagement. Furthermore, respondents recognize the crucial contribution of media to democratic governance by promoting transparency, accountability, and public participation. The study also indicates a satisfactory level of trust in the political information disseminated through media channels. Therefore, media and communication technologies have become indispensable tools for strengthening democracy and fostering informed and active citizenship in the digital age.

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