

# Role Of Television' Political News Coverage With Reference To Social Media In Shaping The Public Opinion.

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## **Abstract:**

The television media along with a strong support of social media has become an integral part of modern society's daily life. With the swift development of information and communication technology, social media platforms have changed the way people interact, share information, and express their views. The purpose of this study is to study the television Media coverage of Indian political happenings since January 2024 and role of social media in shaping the public opinion. This is a fundamental research and uses a qualitative method. The study results show that in a digital age characterized by the central role of social media, it can be concluded that social media has a significant role in shaping public opinion. Through social media, individuals and groups can interact with each other, share information, and participate in discussions that shape collective views on various issues. This helps spreading of information in a rapid way and people connecting over any issue in a certain way or even changing their views due to the media showings.

Television approach to people can be measured globally also but in India, television and social media is a part of everyone's daily life cycle. News is something that no one in the world can avoid considering the current sensational attitude of media, showing every piece of information with a pinch of salt. Thus, to study this entire scenario, some of the coverages that got immense coverage starting from January 2024 to February 2024 and some who did not found sufficient place is what we will see in this research.

**Keywords:** News, media coverage, social media, television news, political news

## **Introduction:**

Indian general assembly elections that happen every 5 years has always been the talk of the town and world media is extremely fascinated by this event. Thus, as India enters in its election year of 2024, the election bells have started ringing even more louder. The social media is also decked up to create and manufacture as much dramatized and sensationist and made up data as possible to entertain the consumers. The actions of the government have been extensively action driven and sharply visible enough to make people understand about their deeds as compared to work done in early 4 years. Since the visual memory of any human brain is very strong, the social media, television altogether plays its part to influence the people.

The motive behind studying the time period from January 2024 is to understand and analyze the impact of the similar television coverage of events on shaping the public opinions as it is an election year that will determine the fate of next 5 years of India. To understand this issue, we all know that elections have been in India since independence. Elections happen for a single reason that is for people who choose their leaders, representatives to voice out their issues loud and clear in front of the government and it can take some action in response. Clearly in 2024 anyone can say that the scenario is not just limited to choosing representative but choosing people from their own community, caste, race and many such criteria have been added up indirectly and unknowingly to fulfill the promises. The question is how? Well, the answer lies in this research paper which focuses on the television Media coverage of Indian political happenings since January 2024 and role of social media in shaping the public opinion. The year 2024 witnessed a high visual base content drama of political

developments in India, ranging from electoral processes to policy implementations. Television media, being a traditional source of news, continues to be a significant player in shaping public opinion. Additionally, the rise of social media has introduced new dynamics to the dissemination of information and the formation of public sentiment. Based on all this data, even before election exit polls or results, the outcome is very clear in people's mind about who is going to emerge victorious in this elections.

### **Literature review:**

Many have studied the coverage of media and its impact on public opinion along with social media specially influencing the public at large.

*The role of social media in shaping public opinion and its influence on economic decisions.* (2023, August). researchgate.net.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374125694\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Social\\_Media\\_in\\_Shaping\\_Public\\_Opinion\\_and\\_Its\\_Influence\\_on\\_Economic\\_Decisions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374125694_The_Role_of_Social_Media_in_Shaping_Public_Opinion_and_Its_Influence_on_Economic_Decisions)

The study of *The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion and Its Influence on Economic Decisions* by Abu Muna Almaududi Ausat talks about how economic decisions are influenced due to social media's influence on Public and how it changes the perspective through tweets, reels and constant hammering of information produced on social media in a certain way.

Calderaro, A. (2018). Social media and politics. *ResearchGate*.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322273564\\_Social\\_Media\\_and\\_Politics](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322273564_Social_Media_and_Politics)

In another research paper by Andrea Calderaro from Cardiff University states the relation between Social Media and Politics. It talks about how the advent of the Internet has generated enormous interest about whether and how digital platforms, including Social Media, have any impact on the political sphere. As a result, today we can rely on an increasing body of research addressing the multiple relations between Social Media and politics from different perspectives.

Communicationtoday, V. a. P. B. (2020, September 26). *Agenda Setting and Online Media*.

Communication Today. <https://communicationtoday.net/2016/06/29/agenda-setting-and-online-media/>

In another research paper by Vishwjeet Singh and Ripudaman Singh, on Online media and Agenda Setting Theory, it states that how the agenda-setting theory to explain the way media influences and affects the perceptions of the public. That is if a news item is covered frequently and prominently the audience will regard the issue as more important and those which do not find sufficient place in media, they are considered as unimportant.

Greenwood, S. (2023, June 1). *Global views of social media and its impacts on society* | Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/12/06/views-of-social-media-and-its-impacts-on-society-in-advanced-economies-2022/>

In another research conducted by Sneha Gubbala, Richard Wike and their colleagues on the topic Views of social media and its impacts on society states that social media is actually good for democracy to share opinion and views as there is no limitation but the influence of such a humongous medium can either create or destroy the essence of information.

These research papers help us understand different views about the topic how social media and television coverage together creates an environment for the public to shape their opinion.

### **Objective of the research:**

To study and analyze the impact of the television political news along with social media on shaping the public opinion and act as an expected output for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

**Research Statement:** The television political news along with the inclusion of social media content can create a lasting impact on public opinion because of which the political outcome can be considered as a highly influenced one.

### **Research Methodology:**

#### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a fundamental research in nature and uses qualitative methods to analyse how the television coverage along with social media leaves a lasting influence in shaping public opinion. Data collection involved literature review, observations of news from one English news channel and one Hindi news channel along with social media content analysis, with a focus on opinion patterns of young voters and influences reflected on social media on different posts. The end goal was to increase a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between television media especially news channels and social media and how it creates an environment on developing a surrounding for an expected outcome that is the expected response from the public with the help of agenda setting theory which clearly proves that the media works with certain agenda and it acts like a trigger for our human brain to behave in certain manner.

The Agenda setting theory of media states that news and media have a great influence on audiences by their own choice of what they consider newsworthy and what they want to give importance. The theory is designed by Dr Maxwell McCombs, an American journalism scholar, and Dr Donald Shaw, an American social scientist which is based on a 1968 study. The concept finds its earliest mentions in 1922 by Water Lippman, an American writer and political commentator, who also talked about the role of media in shaping the thoughts of the common public. In the 1960s, Bernard Cohen, an American political scientist, also observed and expressed similar ideas that eventually led to McCombs and Shaw formalizing the theory.

Thus with the help of all these methods, the findings, analysis and conclusions were drawn with the help of strong data obtained.

### **Findings and Analysis:**

As India entered in the year 2024, there were many welcoming events and news to show and talk about but the hype around three things that is the controversial remarks made by Maldives ministers to India's PM Narendra Modi during his Lakshwadeep Trip, Ram Mandir inauguration at Ayodhya and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra was tremendous. Taking ahead a lot of issues that required immediate attention from the government like that of continuation of Manipur Violence and unrests could have also found a place for coverage. The Bihar elections and the twists in the elections were focused on Nitish Kumar's turning to BJP. The way this coverage of Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra was done to show Congress not getting expected support from any of the ally it expects to be together in 2024 election.

On the other hand the tweets made by the Maldives minister were completely derogatory as it was about another nation's Prime Minister. In the national interest of any country, no allegations should be baseless and when some other country is involved especially. Also the Ram Mandir inauguration was covered in a way that many other stories were neglected. The glamourization of this event was done in such a way that even a public holiday was declared so as to make people watch the entire Pran Pratishtha (the ceremony of Ram's sculpture establishment). The social media was flooded with Ram's Pictures, selfies with saffron flags, people making reels and saying Ram is coming back home after ages. Well why to make a spiritual happening a political one is the question?

Bihar's politics has always been a point of discussion and considering the history of Nitish Kumar's switching politics is quite famous. The news coverage given to this was more focused on how the Congress Political Party now will face an issue in upcoming election as Nitish Kumar turns to BJP. The extreme use of social media with the help of memes, reels, doctored videos of politicians and making fun of it is going to influence the public opinion at large. It is especially going to reflect in 2024 Lok Sabha elections as the choice heavily relies on media coverage of any incidences.

A group discussion of 32 students studying Mass Media from various universities across India and outside India (BAJMC and MAJMC) was done online to discuss the issue to which response recorded was that the students agreed that social media highly influences public opinion especially with reference to political opinion. The idea behind taking this sample was to understand the youngest form of voters who fall into the age group of 18-23 have a similar opinion about the influence of social media as they themselves are the active users of it. There is also a strong opinion of these students which was a little shocking that they think that people in India do not use their own mind as the media plays on the psyche of people heavily and influence them easily.

The key observation of all this was really alarming as people who support the media are considered pro-government and those who criticize media are directly termed as leftist or to some extent Anti-right wing, anti-national and so on. Such kind of extreme thinking is not beneficial for strengthening democracy but rather weakening it further. Media in the world started with a common goal to “Inform and Aware” and not to create drama or panic among people. Media in reality is a facilitator of information that make people aware and based on that opinions among people are created.

### Conclusion:

As the media shows tremendous inclination for certain set of news, it has been often referred to as GODI MEDIA. This term was given by senior journalist Mr. Ravish Kumar. Another senior journalist Rajdeep Sardesai stated that “ Media has become a Lapdog instead of Watchdog”. These things are alarming for media to understand and analyze that these terms are born out of certain way of media’s behavior and favoring particular set of news. Earlier, viewers were silent spectators of all the news that was communicated to them. They would look at their televisions, listen to radio programs, and have no way to respond to the news or comment directly on it. However, with the rise in social media, viewers are no longer silent spectators, they are actively involved in discourse generation. Through real-time communication, these viewers can now voice their opinions, connect with policymakers, or share information with each other. This is also due to other way round that is political issues made fun of on social media and policymakers, leaders using social media as a serious platform to promote their ideology and demean the opposition. All this helps generate discourse and makes the viewers an important stakeholder in the process. Let’s not forget while doing any action, what further repercussions or impact it will have on people. Media holds the strength to influence people at large so the responsibility must be taken care with utmost sincerity.

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