

*Analysis of New Media Usage in Karnataka Assembly Elections 2013*

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## **Abstract**

*The traditional functions of mass media have been challenged by new media, which is changing the participation habits of the audiences. The emergence of new media as a potential force and the impact it has on all the discourse of human life which has not left no stone unturned is interesting to study. Mass media's influence in elections cannot be denied. In this present study, the researchers look into the new media usage trend in General Elections to the Legislative Assembly in the state of Karnataka which was held during 2013 for 224 constituencies. The paper studies the use of digital media in the Karnataka State Assembly elections 2013 and analyse the degree of new media penetration which was put to use in electioneering during this time.*

**Keywords:** New Media, Election, Politics, Democracy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Media can be termed as a revolutionary boon of technology. Media is essentially a working group organized around some device for circulating the same message, at about the same time, to large number of people (Schramm 1963). In which case, we can say that the mass media has

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important roles to play with regards to disseminating information, providing education and to influence opinion. These were considered as the pivotal features of traditional media. This has been challenged by new media, which is changing the participation habits of the audiences. Media are essential when we talk about democracy, and an election is an integral part of it. And media play a pivotal role in not only disseminating the required information but also providing a platform for healthy debate. A free and fair election is not all about the freedom to vote and the knowledge of how to cast a vote, but also about a participatory process where voters are engaged in public debate which will provide them with adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself in order to make informed choices. Indeed, it can safely be said that, a democratic election with no media freedom, or subdued/stifled media freedom, would be a contradiction. New media have changed the dynamics of human communication and its presence is pervasive having far reaching impact on political communication across the globe. The emergence of new media as a potential force and the impact it has on all the discourse of human life which has not left no stone unturned is interesting to study.

Mass media's influence in elections cannot be denied. Scholars are divided in their opinion about media power in elections. On one hand we acknowledge the power of media in elections and on the other we argue whether it is really powerful enough to influence the election outcome. The influence of media in elections has been perceived differently by the academics and the public. (Mutz, 2012) The divide between the two different perceptions 'stems from the fact that the public uses different forms of evidence than academics use to infer media power' (Ibid). New Media has been the latest media that has changed the dynamics of political communication across the globe since the birth of 'Arab Spring'. Democratization of social media has left an indelible mark in the political

scenario of democracies in the world. The digital technology has paved way for digital election campaigns indicating the arrival of e-electoral battles. Even today Barak Obama's aggressive social media electoral campaign of 2008 is considered as historic as it established the power of new media in politics.

Indian elections of 2014 caused a paradigm shift in election campaign by establishing new media as a powerful platform to fight political battles. U.S. Presidential election of 2012 had a huge impact on Indian elections with the former heralding the arrival of social media to reach voters in a big way relegating traditional media to the background. During 2012 US presidential elections, Barack Obama had over 20.4 million followers on Twitter, 29.1 million on Facebook, 2.3 million on You Tube and over 1.4 million on Instagram. The elections increased the advertising revenue of online media cutting into the revenue of traditional media like newspapers and television. It is said that nearly \$40 billion was spent on online advertising in the United States in 2012, surpassing the amount spent on once-supreme print advertisements (eMarketer 2012a, b). The emergence of e-commerce portals has seen voluminous increase in the online users. Attributes like the easy access and reach coupled with mobility and democratization have influenced the use of social media in politics.

India has over 898 million mobile phone users and 121 million Internet users, which is comparatively overwhelming than total newspaper readership of 405 million and total TV households of 231 million with 563 million TV audience. India has over 100 million Facebook users and 22.2 million Twitter users. Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate in Indian elections of 2014 created history by taking to social media and had 3.89 million followers on Twitter and 14 million fans on Facebook, perhaps the highest to any Indian politician. The net savvy writer turned Indian politician Shashi Tharoor laid a precedent by trusting social media to

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express his views on public issues. In 2009 Tharoor took to Twitter and his Tweets became a major source of news for the Indian mainstream media causing flutter in the Indian politics. Social media flooded the Indian political scenario and became a dependable source for media and a dialogue platform for the people. It cannot be denied, that Indian elections of 2014 resulted in the expansion of social media like Facebook and Twitter in India as political candidates recognized the significance of social media in election campaigns. Besides political candidates fighting elections even voters were in need of more information about candidates, political parties and election issues in social media. In India election pundits had speculated about Facebook emerging as a giant in the social media space enjoying immense clout of users. 'The IRIS Knowledge Foundation, a public service initiative of IRIS Business Services Limited, in its research conducted in March 2013, had estimated that the usage of social media would spread by the 2014 LS elections.. It would leave the citizens empowered. About 10 per cent of the voting population have Facebook account and 97 per cent of them are active members. And, on a daily basis almost they make their presence' (Asha K and Usha N, 2014).

In India Internet use by citizens is increasing and mobile Internet has created more access to new media than before. Therefore, one can presume that people are webactive showing signs of visible participation and engagements in online media. According to studies, people are spending more time with social media like Facebook, Tweeter and You Tube changing the media consumption pattern. In fact mobile Internet has given impetus to political parties to connect with the voters saving time and money. Today politicians have immense opportunity to connect with the online voters and have online election campaigns. It is rather easy to communicate online as voluminous information in the form of text, photos, video and others can be uploaded and updated in virtual time. The image of the

election candidates who use online media is perceived as tech savvy, educated and modern by the voters in general and youth in particular.

### **What are New Media ?**

New media has different connotations. It is perhaps the label but it has created more confusion. What is new media today will become traditional media tomorrow like newspaper, radio and television. Perhaps it is the most flexible word coined in the media and each one understands the meaning in their context. Fundamentally, new media is technology driven and Internet based online communication tool that converges as well as diverges.

‘Most technologies described as “new media” are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs. New media does not include television programs, feature films, magazines, books, or paper-based publications – unless they contain technologies that enable digital interactivity.’ (Socha and Schmid). ‘All new media objects, whether created from scratch on computers or converted from analog media sources, are composed of digital code; they are numerical representations’ (Manovich). ‘The term “new media” will in general refer to those digital media, which are interactive, incorporate two-way communication and involve some form of computing as opposed to “old media” such as the telephone, radio and TV’ (Ibid). ‘New media are new cultural forms which are native to computers or rely on computers for distribution: Web sites, human-computer interface, virtual worlds, VR, multimedia, computer games, computer animation, digital video, special effects in cinema and net films, interactive computer installations’ (Manovich).

“We call the representation of one medium in another remediation and we will argue that remediation is the defining characteristic of the new

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digital media.” (Bolter and Grusin ,1999, p. 45) “All mediation is remediation (ibid., p. 55).” The experts have debated on the distinction one can make between old and new media. What is new in new media which was not distinguishable in old media. Is it the production, distribution or consumption that defines new media? “What is new about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media (ibid., p. 15).” “Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The use of social media in US elections of 2008 and 2012 and Indian elections of 2014 has generated many research studies that have investigated the pattern of usage and its impact on the electorate. The new media is the youngest member of mass media with a history of less than two decades. Study after study has endorsed that social media are potential enough to transform relationships among politicians, political parties and voters . Most of the studies on the role of social media in political campaigning have opined that there is growing tendency to use social networks as a channel of political communication (Gibson (2010); Gibson and McAllister (2011); Gueorguieva (2008); Gulati and Williams (2010); Steger et al (2010); Asha K. & Usha N, 2014) among others. Social media has become a public platform for recording political comments by the voters. As a result there is a general belief that social media mirrors public opinion. There seems to be significant correlation between public opinion and social media. ‘Analysis of media coverage from the 2010 UK General Election demonstrates that social media are now being equated

with public opinion by political journalists ..... broadening the definition of public opinion to include its social dimension' (Anstead and O'Loughlin, 2015).

The research on new media impact on political campaigns have shown that 'social networking sites (SNS) have had a dramatic impact on how political campaigns function. For instance, in 2004, US Democratic presidential hopeful Howard Dean used a diverse network of bloggers and donors to rise from a relative unknown to a front-runner for the nomination in only a few months (Cited by Ponder, Haridakis, Hanson, 2014). In fact, according to Hindman the Dean campaign was hailed by political and media scholars as the first digital campaign (cited Ibid).

One of the studies on Indian elections of 2014 that investigated the trail of Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi in social media has endorsed the premise that social media were extensively used by political parties. The study found certain significant differences among social media content of the BJP, Congress and AAP political parties. The BJP, the right wing party and its leader Modi had well equipped and qualified IT professionals to run their shows on social media. The content was well thought of, sophisticated, structured well, thinks before inking, no flaws in the usage of language, sharp and witty replies to detractors on Twitter. The downloading of information and opinion was well orchestrated. The packaging and marketing was well carried out. Social media has left the Indian Netizens energised to engage in electoral process. Twitter seems to be emerging as the easy and quick mode of communication with the usage of smart phone increasing. Journalists of print and television, which are considered as traditional media, had to follow up on social media for keeping track of developments as tech-savvy candidates chose to break news and react on Facebook and Twitter (Ibid). However, this study does not say whether the winning or losing of the candidates can be attributed

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to the use of social media. Nevertheless this study vouches for the huge presence of social media in Indian elections that gave a perceptible edge to the Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi to reach youth through social media. Social media savvy Modi swept Indian elections over his opponent Rahul Gandhi, the Vice President of Congress political party who even shied away from having his own website, Facebook or Twitter account illustrating the supremacy of social media in Indian elections.

The question is whether social media is more appropriate for new political parties rather than traditional parties? Surprisingly, unlike traditional political parties in US, the traditional political parties of Europe who used social media have failed to make a dent in the elections in comparison with their new opponents who have outperformed the old guard and built support using social media. ‘Although many politicians and single-issue/protest parties have used social media to build support and prosper at election time, traditional European parties have in most cases failed to follow suit. This leads one to ask the question: is social media simply not suited to traditional parties?’ (Cited by Thejll- Moller, 2013). Studies have found out that ‘social media must be a part of any party’s armory. And it can be, yet parties have failed to thrive in social media due in part to their general decline at a time of dwindling memberships and flourishing alternative political movements....In addition, it is argued that social media works better with key elements like strategy, resourcing and appropriate mindset besides mobilizing supporters in order to reach beyond their own networks, and using data in order to micro-target by localizing and personalizing communications output’ (Thejll- Moller, 2013). Social media builds support not only for already established political leaders but also new and lesser known candidates as the latter do not get adequate coverage in the mainstream media. ‘Lower profile candidates use social media in a compensatory manner, offsetting their limited media coverage which voters



typically rely on in getting to know the candidates' (Jensen, Anstead, 2014).

Studies have thrown more insight into the correlation between online communication and political engagement. Facebook was presumed to have been instrumental in garnering support to the candidates in US Presidential elections of 2008 with over 1 million users. It was found that the 'general election acted as a driving force for individual engagement within Facebook, especially with regard to particular behaviours such as political discussion, political status updates, advertising one's intention to vote and support for a candidate' (Carlisle and Patton, 2013). Elections increase the use of social media for political communication. Elections are fought between novice small parties and old guard established political parties. Web based media in elections give a level playing field to all big and small players owing to technology and unique features of the media like democratization and flexibility of reach and access. In a longitudinal study on Australian survey of elections between 2001-2010, 'it is confirmed that major parties do dominate web media, although minor parties are stronger users of social media. Both strategies are effective in gaining votes, suggesting that the web may be rebalancing if not equalizing party competition' (Gibson and McAllister, 2014). Undoubtedly social media is used for political engagements and more so during elections as it is convenient to update oneself about latest trends in campaigns. In a study on Twitter in Italian elections of 2013, the study points out that more people acquire political information via social media like Twitter. It was found that 'the more the people express themselves politically on these platforms, the more they are likely to contact politicians via e-mail, campaign for parties and candidates using social media, and attend offline events to which they were invited online' (Valeriani et al. 2015).

Politics brews skepticism, cynicism and indifference as public perception of politics and politicians is negative to the core. The presence

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of new media has influenced this perception. A study examining the media intervention in political disaffection among young adults in the US Presidential elections of 2008 reveals that ‘online expression has a positive effect on skepticism. Role of social media has implications in bringing a historically disengaged demographic into the political process’ (Yamamoto, M. and Kushin, M. J. 2014). During elections, voluminous information is posted in the social media about political candidates. Further, the comments, opinions and views of the people discuss the qualities and abilities of the candidates. One can gauge the personality traits of the candidates based on the analysis of social media content. In one such study on Twitter, the personality traits of Barack Obama and Romney in US presidential elections supports the premise that it is possible to do a sentiment analysis and gauge the public perception of political personalities in social media (Bhattacharya et al. 2015).

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the use of digital media in the Karnataka State Assembly elections 2013.
2. To analyse the degree of new media usage by the contestants for influencing voter behaviour.
3. To measure the degree of new media penetration in the electioneering in the State of Karnataka.

### **Profile of Location of the Study**

Karnataka is a state in the southern part of India. Karnataka was established in the year November 1, 1956 . Karnataka with a population of 61 million has been a politically active state since its inception. It has 28 parliamentary constituencies and there are several active political parties in the state. There are 30 districts within this state. The capital city of

Karnataka is Bengaluru, IT bowl of India is also known as the silicon valley of the east and is the largest city of this state. The official language of this state is Kannada and the literacy level is 75.6%.

Elections of this state are conducted as per the Constitution of India. The assembly of this state makes the laws regarding the matters of conducting of the local body elections in a unilateral way. But if there are any changes to be made by the state legislature with respect to the conducting of state level elections it needs to be approved by the Parliament. As per the law of the land, the administrative structure of the state is determined by the Constitution of 1950. The Governor is the head of the state and functions on the advice of the Chief Minister. CM is the head of the Council of Ministers. Karnataka has a bicameral legislature in which the Legislative Council (*Vidhana Parishad*) is the upper house and the Legislative Assembly (*Vidhana Sabha*) is the lower house.

The Karnataka Legislative Council is a permanent body comprising of 75 members. It was established as the Mysore Legislative Council in 1907 (under Regulation I of 1907) in the Princely State of Mysore with a view to associate with the Government certain number of non-official persons having practical experience and knowledge of local conditions and requirements to assist government in making laws and regulations. As on 2013, among the 75 members of the Legislative Council, 25 are elected by the members of Karnataka Legislative Assembly, 25 are elected by local authorities, 7 are elected by the Graduates, 7 are elected by the Teachers and 11 members are nominated by the Governor of Karnataka. One-third of its members retire every two years.

### **General Elections to the Legislative Assembly**

There are 224 seats in the *Vidhana Sabha* or the Legislative Assembly

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of Karnataka state amongst them one member is a representative of the Anglo-Indian community nominated by the Governor of Karnataka. The state of Karnataka is divided into 225 constituencies to elect the Legislative assembly. The members of the *Vidhana Sabha* are directly elected by people through adult franchise. Each constituency elects one member to the assembly. Member is popularly known as MLA. The assembly is elected using the simple majority. The elections are conducted by the Election Commission of India. The normal term of the members is five years. In case of death, resignation or disqualification of a member, a by-election is held for constituency represented by the member.

General Elections to the Legislative Assembly in the state of Karnataka was held during 2013. In this election, 6 National parties, 1 State party, 6 other state parties, 45 registered but unrecognized political parties and Independents (who do not represent any political party) contested elections. There were 224 constituencies consisting of 173 General and reserved constituencies for SC (Scheduled Castes)-36 and ST (Scheduled Tribes)-15. There were a total of 2948 contestants for 224 seats with an average of 13 candidates per constituency. The state has 43.68 million voters including 22.31 million male and 21.36 female voters. In the assembly elections 2013 a total of 31.21 million (72.40%) people voted including 16.15(70.47%) million male and 15.05 (71.45%) female voters.

A total of 2948 contestants including 2772 (94.02%) male and 175 (5.9%) females contested elections. In the final results 224 candidates consisting of 218 (97.32%) male and 6 (2.6%) females emerged victorious winning Karnataka General Assembly Elections 2013. Of the political parties, the traditional party Indian National Congress topped the tally winning 122 (54.4%) seats followed by right wing BJP party and *Janata Dal* (Secular) party winning 40 (17.8%) seats each in the 224 assembly seats. The elections were held on May 5th, 2013.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this paper we analyze the use of new media in election campaigns by the candidates contesting assembly elections 2013 held in the state of Karnataka . This paper investigates the type of new media tools chosen by political candidates to connect with the voters. It basically endeavours to answer questions about political engagements through new media during elections 2013. The content analysis method was found appropriate to study the variety of new media tools used by the contestants. Online communication tools such as websites, blogs, Facebook, Tweets, Skype, You Tube and others that were created for the purpose of elections 2013 by the candidates were selected and analyzed. A total of 2948 candidates contested in the elections for 224 seats. In order to study the entire population, it was decided to select 2867 (97.25%) out of 2948 candidates representing 223 out of 224 assembly seats on the basis of data availability in online sites.

The 2867 respondents were spread across 223 constituencies in 30 districts of the state. The constituencies were selected in a way that gave due representation to backward regions of the state and constituencies reserved for SC and ST castes who enjoy reservation under Indian constitution. Care was taken to choose those places where women contested elections as only 5.9% of females stood for assembly elections in Karnataka in 2013. Elections to the Legislative Assembly were held on May 5, 2013 and results were declared on May 8, 2013. All online content constructed by the candidates and their political parties during election period between March and April 2013 was selected for data collection. Online media content of the candidates was analyzed and quantified.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

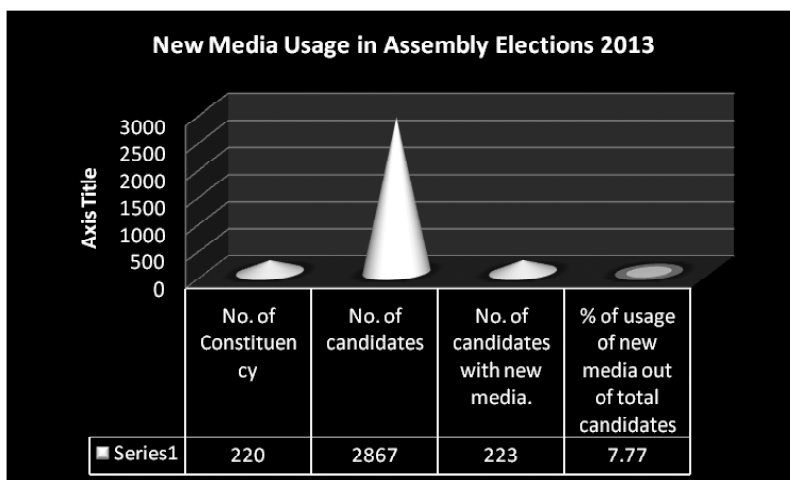
The study aims to investigate the new media usage by the electors in the 2013 State Legislative Assembly Elections in the State of Karnataka.

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The 223 constituencies were categorized into 30 Districts for the purpose of analysis. Karnataka has 30 districts with 224 Assembly seats. Districtwise analysis of new media usage makes interesting revelations.

| District           | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Bagalkote District | 7                   | 59                | 8                                | 13.55   |
| Bengaluru Central  | 19                  | 338               | 54                               | 15.97   |
| Bengaluru Rural    | 4                   | 46                | 16                               | 34.78   |
| Bengaluru Urban    | 6                   | 80                | 38                               | 47.50   |
| Dakshina Kannada   | 8                   | 60                | 11                               | 18.33   |
| Gadag              | 4                   | 47                | 1                                | 2.72  |
| Hubli- Dharwad     | 7                   | 97                | 5                                | 5.15  |
| Davangere          | 8                   | 123               | 1                                | 0.81  |
| Mysuru             | 11                  | 160               | 7                                | 4.37  |
| Mandya             | 7                   | 91                | 2                                | 2.19  |
| Koppala            | 5                   | 58                | 1                                | 1.72  |
| Kolar              | 6                   | 100               | 1                                | 1   |
| Gulburga           | 9                   | 129               | 0                                | 0   |
| Hassan             | 7                   | 80                | 2                                | 2.5   |
| Haveri             | 6                   | 71                | 1                                | 1.40  |
| Kodagu             | 2                   | 23                | 0                                | 0   |
| Chamarajanagara    | 4                   | 48                | 3                                | 6.25  |
| Chikkaballapur     | 5                   | 84                | 1                                | 1.19  |
| Chikkamagalur      | 5                   | 56                | 2                                | 3.57  |
| Chitradurga        | 6                   | 75                | 3                                | 4.00  |
| Raichur            | 6                   | 64                | 14                               | 21.87   |
| Ramanagara         | 4                   | 55                | 8                                | 14.54   |
| Shivamogga         | 7                   | 86                | 13                               | 15.11   |
| Tumkur             | 11                  | 146               | 4                                | 2.73  |
| Bellary            | 9                   | 127               | 2                                | 1.57  |
| Bidar              | 6                   | 94                | 9                                | 9.57  |
| Bijapur            | 8                   | 116               | 2                                | 1.72  |
| Belgaum            | 18                  | 194               | 5                                | 2.57  |
| Udupi              | 5                   | 45                | 4                                | 8.88  |
| Uttara Kannada     | 6                   | 68                | 3                                | 4.11  |
| Yadgir             | 4                   | 47                | 2                                | 4.25  |
| <b>Total</b>       | 220                 | 2867              | 223                              | 7.77  |

**Table 1: Consolidated Usage of New Media Users V/s No. of Candidates**



The consolidated table -1 shows the very low new media usage at 7.77 percent in 30 districts in the Karnataka Assembly Elections 2013. Though all districts from Karnataka have been selected for the study, data of the three constituencies could not be found and one nominated constituency had no data as it did not participate in the elections. A total of 2867 candidates finally contested from 223 constituencies. Out of 2867 candidates a meagre 223 candidates have used new media in assembly elections 2013. The new media usage is very low at 7.77 percent, signifying the low penetration of Internet and inadequate communication infrastructure in the State of Karnataka.

The district wise analysis is as follows;

**Table 2: Bagalkot District**

| District           | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Bagalkote District | 7                   | 59                | 8                                | 13.55   |

The table -2 shows that, the total number of candidates who contested the election from Bagalkot District is 59 from 7 Constituencies. Among

the contested candidates, only 8 have made use of new media in the Assembly Elections. Thus, the total usage comes up to 13.55% in the district, which has a growth rate per capita income ranking of 10 and literacy rate of 69.39%.

**Table 3: Bengaluru Constituency**

| District          | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Bengaluru Urban   | 6                   | 80                | 38                               | 47.50 %   |
| Bengaluru Rural   | 4                   | 46                | 16                               | 34.78 %   |
| Bengaluru Central | 19                  | 338               | 54                               | 15.97 %   |
| Total             | 29                  | 464               | 108                              | 23.27%  |

Bangalore Constituency is divided into Bengaluru North, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru Central and Bengaluru Rural but for the sake of the study, it is been considered as Bengaluru Central, Bengaluru Rural and Bengaluru Urban. Out of 464 candidates from 29 constituencies 108 (23.27%) candidates have used new media in election campaigns. Out of 338 candidates from Bengaluru Central Constituency, 54 (15.97%) have used new media which is lowest in the whole district. In Bengaluru Rural 16 (34.78 %) candidates out of 46 and in Bengaluru urban 38 (47.50%) out of 80 candidates have made use of new media showing a marginal difference between urban and rural areas. The table shows that Bengaluru Urban constituency has seen greater percentage of contestants using new media when compared with other two constituencies. Bengaluru Urban occupies I rank in the per capita growth in the state whereas Bengaluru Rural has earned 2<sup>nd</sup> rank in the growth rate showing consistent growth. Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural have a literacy level of 88.48% and 78.49% respectively.



**Table 4: Dakshina Kannada Constituency**

| District         | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Dakshina Kannada | 8                   | 60                | 11                               | 18.33   |

Out of 60 candidates from 8 constituencies in Dakshina Kannada only 11 candidates have employed new media which comes to 18.33%. One would expect more usage in Dakshina Kannada as it shows good human development indicators which includes education one amongst it. It has a growth rate ranking of 22 and the literacy level of 88.62% is the highest in the state. So, education doesn't seem to be a variable in the usage of new media in the coastal belt of Karnataka state.

**Table 5: Gadag Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Gadag    | 4                   | 47                | 1                                | 2.72  |

Gadag assembly seat saw 47 candidates contesting the elections from 4 assembly seats. Surprisingly, out of 47 only 1 person used new media as a tool during elections meaning a meagre 2.27 percentage. The district has a growth rate ranking of 5 and literacy of 75.81 % which should have otherwise influenced the new media intervention but it doesn't seem to be the case.

**Table 6: Hubli–Dharwad Constituency**

| District       | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Hubli- Dharwad | 7                   | 97                | 5                                | 5.15  |

The twin cities of Hubli- Dharwad district saw 97 candidates participating in elections from 7 constituencies. Out of which only a meagre

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5 amounting to 5.15% used new media as a tool during election campaign. The growth rate ranking of this district is 8 and literacy level is high at 80.30%.

**Table 7: Davangere Constituency**

| District  | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Davangere | 8                   | 123               | 1                                | 0.81  |

The constituency saw 123 candidates fight the elections for assembly from 8 constituencies out of which only 1 (0.81%) used new media. This is the constituency that has recorded least usage of new media in the elections. Traditionally known as the Manchester of the East for spinning cotton textiles, the district has recorded a growth rate ranking of 11 and a literacy rate of 76.30%.

**Table 8: Raichur Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Raichur  | 6                   | 64                | 14                               | 21.87   |

64 candidates contested elections from 6 constituencies in Raichur district. 14 (21.87%) amongst them made use of new media making it one of the districts despite backwardness saw better usage of new media. The growth rate ranking of the district is 20 with a literacy level of 60.46%. The low ranking and low literacy level have not come in the way of usage of new media in the district which is comparatively better in the State.

**Table 9: Ramnagara Constituency**

| District  | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Ramnagara | 4                   | 55                | 8                                | 14.54   |

This newly formed district, which was segregated from Bengaluru rural district in 2007, saw 55 candidates contest from 4 constituencies. Amongst them barely 8 (14.54%) used new media in the elections in a constituency which was the seat of former Prime Minister of India, H.D.Devegowda and the stronghold of *Janata Dal* (Secular) party. It has a literacy level of 69.20 %.

**Table 10: Shimoga Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Shimoga  | 7                   | 86                | 13                               | 15.11   |

Shimoga constituency, the political hot bed of the State, saw 86 candidates contest from 7 constituencies. The new media has been adopted by 15.11 % (13) candidates in the elections. The growth rate ranking of this region is 9 and the literacy level is high at 80.50%.

**Table 11: Tumkur Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Tumkur   | 11                  | 146               | 4                                | 2.73  |

Out of 11 constituencies in Tumkur district where 146 candidates were in the fray a meagre 2.73% (4) made use of new media denoting the low priority given to online communications. The district has a growth rate rank of 13 and a literacy level of 74.32 %.

**Table 12: Mysore Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Mysore   | 11                  | 160               | 7                                | 4.37  |

Mysore district, the headquarters for the world IT giant Infosys was the battle fray for 160 candidates in 11 constituencies assembly elections

2013. Out of 160, only 7 (4.37%) contestants made use of new media showing low level of political engagements through online communications. The district has a growth rate rank of 7 and a literacy rate of 72. 56% but none of these seems to have influenced the new media intervention.

**Table 13: Mandya Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Mandya   | 7                   | 91                | 2                                | 2.19  |

One of the districts which has politically remained strong and predominantly consists of farmers in Karnataka is the Mandya district. It has 7 constituencies from where 91 candidates contested for elections out of which, only 2 (2.19%) made use of new media in the elections. Considered as the sugar bowl of Karnataka, the district has a growth rate rank of 25 and a literacy rate of 70. 14 %.

**Table 14: Koppala Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Koppala  | 5                   | 58                | 1                                | 1.72  |

The district that was bifurcated from Raichur in the year 1998 saw 58 candidates contesting from 5 constituencies in the Karnataka Assembly elections 2013. Out of whom, only 1 (1.72%) used new media showing very negligible usage in this backward region of the State. The growth rate of this region is 14 and the literacy rate is comparatively low at 67.28%.

**Table 15: Kolar Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Kolar    | 6                   | 100               | 1                                | 1   |

Kolar district that has linguistically plural demography had 100 candidates in the fray for 6 seats in the assembly elections. Only 1 (1%) made use of new media showing the minimum intervention of new media in elections. The growth rate rank of the district renowned for gold mines is 6 with a literacy rate of 74.33%.

**Table 16: Gulbarga Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Gulbarga | 9                   | 129               | 0                                | 0   |

One of the two constituencies in the study where the new media usage is nil is Gulbarga district. 129 candidates for 9 assembly seats were in the election fray. None of the 129 candidates used new media as a tool during elections showing poor visibility of online media in the election campaigns. The growth rate rank of the district is 12 with a low literacy rate of 65.65%.

**Table 17: Hassan Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Hassan   | 7                   | 80                | 2                                | 2.5   |

Out of 80 candidates who contested for 7 assembly seats in Hassan district, only 2.5% (2) used new media for election campaigns. The growth rate ranking of this politically high profile district is 19 with the literacy rate of 75.89%.

**Table 18: Haveri Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Haveri   | 6                   | 71                | 1                                | 1.40  |

Haveri has 6 assembly seats where 71 candidates contested in the

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assembly elections 2013. Out of 71 only 1.4 % (1) candidates used new media showing utterly low new media intervention akin to those in the majority of the districts.

**Table 19: Kodagu Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Kodagu   | 2                   | 23                | 0                                | 0   |

Kodagu is the other constituency in the State where usage of new media is nil showing political battles being fought using traditional media. 23 candidates contested for 2 assembly seats in this district. Among them none made use of new media for electioneering. Thus 0% use of new media can be seen in Kodagu district, the coffee land of India. The district has a unique demography with a growth rate rank of 26 and a high literacy rate of 82.52%.

**Table 20: Chamarajanagar Constituency**

| District       | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Chamarajanagar | 4                   | 48                | 3                                | 6.25  |

Chammarajanagar saw 48 candidates contesting from 4 constituencies. Out of which the total new media usage was 6.25 % where only 3 candidates made use of this medium. This district has a growth rate rank of 22 and a literacy of 54.32% which is second lowest in the state.

**Table 21: Chikkaballapur Constituency**

| District       | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Chikkaballapur | 5                   | 84                | 1                                | 1.19  |

Out of 84 candidates contesting from 5 constituencies only one person (1.19%) made use of new media showing a dismal picture in the district of Chikkaballapur. It has a low literacy rate of 61.55 %.

**Table 22 : Chikkamagalur Constituency**

| District      | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Chikkamagalur | 5                   | 56                | 2                                | 3.57  |

The land of hillocks and coffee estates saw only 3.57% contestants using new media out of 56 candidates contesting from 5 constituencies. The district has a growth rate rank of 10 and literacy of 72.88%.

**Table 23 : Chitradurga Constituency**

| District    | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Chitradurga | 6                   | 75                | 3                                | 4.00  |

Out of 75 candidates contesting from 6 constituencies only 3 made use of new media in the city of forts, Chitradurga, making it a total of 4 % use by contestants. Literacy of this district is comparatively low at 60.05% and it has a growth rate rank of 17.

**Table 24: Bellary Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Bellary  | 9                   | 127               | 2                                | 1.57  |

The Bellary district is the mining belt of the state that saw 127 candidates contesting from 9 constituencies but showing a meagre 1.57% use of new media as tool of campaign during elections. The district has a growth rate rank of 7 and very low literacy of 58.28%.

**Table 25: Bidar Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Bidar    | 6                   | 94                | 9                                | 9.57  |

A total of 94 candidates from 6 constituencies contested for the elections of which a total of 9.57 % (9) made use of new media. The district has a low literacy rate of 61.66 % and a low growth rate ranking of 27.

**Table 26: Bijapur Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Bijapur  | 8                   | 116               | 2                                | 1.72  |

A moderately big district with 8 constituencies Bijapur saw 116 contestants fight the elections in the year 2013 out of which, 2 (1.72 %) used new media. The growth rate ranking of the district is 20 with a very low literacy of 56.54%.

**Table 27: Belgaum Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Belgaum  | 18                  | 194               | 5                                | 2.57  |

The second district with highest number of constituencies of 18 next only to Bangalore is Belgaum. This heartland of education centre of north Karnataka saw 194 candidates contest elections from 18 constituencies of which only 5 (2.57%) made use of new media. Despite being proclaimed as an educational centre, the district has a low literacy of 64.74% and low growth rate rank of 16 correlating with the low new media usage.



**Table 28: Udupi Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Udupi    | 5                   | 45                | 4                                | 8.88  |

Udupi, the district which ranks among the top in human development indicator saw only 4 (8.88%) using new media out of 45 candidates contesting from 5 constituencies. One of the districts characterized by high literacy rate of 81.41 % the district has a growth rate rank of 5.

**Table 29: Uttara Kannada Constituency**

| District       | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Uttara Kannada | 6                   | 68                | 3                                | 4.11  |

Out of 68 candidates participating from 6 constituencies only 3 (4.11) used the new media showing low presence of new media in elections. The literacy rate of this district is 78.21% and growth rate rank is 11.

**Table 30: Yadgir Constituency**

| District | No. of Constituency | No. of candidates | No. of candidates with new media | % of usage of new media out of total candidates |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Yadgir   | 4                   | 47                | 2                                | 4.25  |

Yadgir is one of the newly formed districts that saw only 2 persons using new media out of 47 candidates contesting from 4 constituencies making it a total of 4.25%.

The analysis of new media tools shows that Facebook is the most popular among other new media tools with 75.78% of contestants using it for election campaigns. Apart from Facebook, a good number of contestants have constructed a separate website (18.38%) and linkedin (18.83) account for electioneering. Twitter and You Tube have also been used by 17

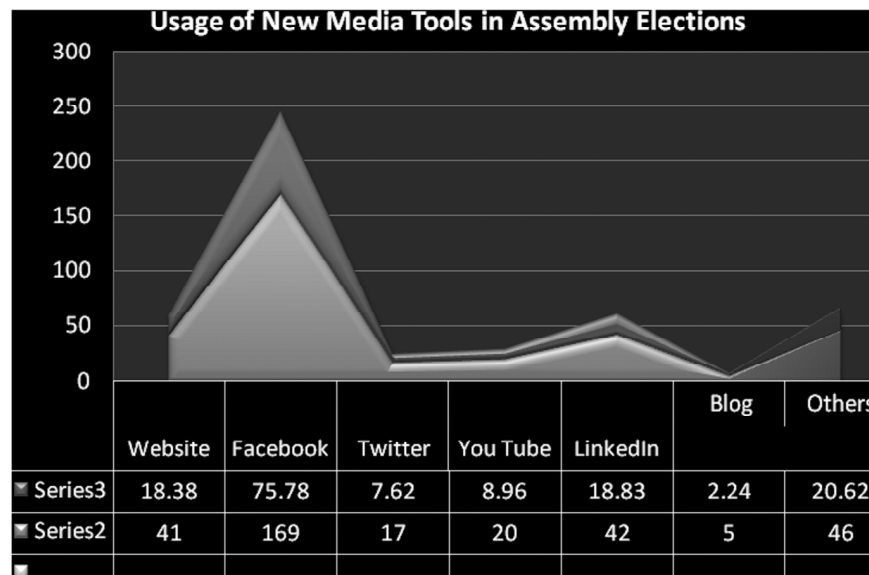
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(7.62%) and 20 (8.96%) respectively. The assembly elections have also seen blog being used by 2.24% (5) in elections. There are bloggers among political contestants. Apart from these popular new media tools a moderate percentage of 20.62 % have used other means like google plus, party official websites sites and other type of social media.

**Table 31: Tools of New Media Usage**

| New Media tools/Users | Website | Facebook | Twitter | You Tube | LinkedIn | Blog | Others |
|-----------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|----------|------|--------|
| f                     | 41      | 169      | 17      | 20       | 42       | 5    | 46     |
| %                     | 18.38   | 75.78    | 7.62    | 8.96     | 18.83    | 2.24 | 20.62  |

**Graph 2: New Media Tools Usage**



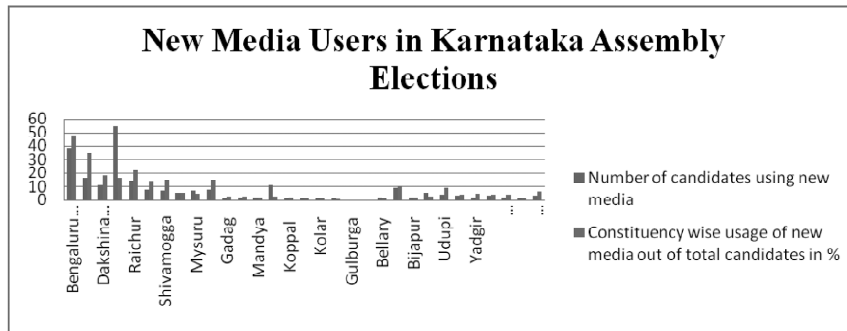
The total number of candidates with new media use vis-a-vis HDI is given below;

**Table 32: Profile of the Constituencies Vis-v-Vis New Media Usage**

| District               | Total number of Candidates | Number of candidates using new media | Constituency wise usage of new media out of total candidates in % | HDI Rank | Ranking Growth rate of Per Capital Income | Percentage of Literacy Rate |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Bengaluru Urban     | 80                         | 38                                   | 47.50   | 1        | 1   | 88.48                       |
| 2. Bengaluru Rural     | 46                         | 16                                   | 34.78   | 6        | 2   | 78.29                       |
| 3. Dakshina Kannada    | 60                         | 11                                   | 18.33   | 2        | 22  | 88.62                       |
| 4. Bengaluru Central** | 338                        | 54                                   | 15.97   |          |   |                             |
| 5. Raichur64           | 14                         | 21.87                                | 27  | 20       | 60.46                                     |                             |
| 6. Bagalkote District  | 59                         | 8                                    | 13.55   | 22       | 10  | 69.39                       |
| 7. Shivamogga          | 86                         | 7                                    | 15.11   | 5        | 9   | 80.50                       |
| 8. Hubballi- Dharwad   | 97                         | 5                                    | 5.15  | 10       | 8   | 80.30                       |
| 9. Mysuru160           | 7                          | 4.37                                 | 14  | 7        | 72.56                                     |                             |
| 10. Ramanagar*         | 55                         | 8                                    | 14.54   |          |   | 69.20                       |
| 11. Gadag 47           | 1                          | 2.72                                 | 13  | 5        | 75.18                                     |                             |
| 12. Hassan80           | 2                          | 2.50                                 | 11  | 19       | 75.89                                     |                             |
| 13. Mandya             | 91                         | 2                                    | 2.19  | 19       | 25  | 70.14                       |
| 14. Tumkur146          | 11                         | 2.73                                 | 15  | 13       | 74.32                                     |                             |
| 15. Koppal *           | 58                         | 1                                    | 1.72  |          | 14  | 67.28                       |
| 16. Haveri 71          | 1                          | 1.40                                 | 20  | 4        | 77.60                                     |                             |
| 17. Kolar 100          | 1                          | 1.00                                 | 17  | 6        | 74.33                                     |                             |
| 18. Davangere          | 123                        | 1                                    | 0.81  | 12       | 11  | 76.30                       |
| 19. Gulbarga           | 129                        | 0                                    | 0   | 26       | 12  | 65.65                       |
| 20. Kodagu23           | 0                          | 0                                    | 4   | 26       | 82.52                                     |                             |
| 21. Bellary127         | 2                          | 1.57                                 | 18  | 7        | 58.28                                     |                             |
| 22. Bidar 94           | 9                          | 9.57                                 | 21  | 27       | 61.66                                     |                             |
| 23. Bijapur116         | 2                          | 1.72                                 | 23  | 20       | 56.54                                     |                             |
| 24. Belgaum            | 194                        | 5                                    | 2.57  | 8        | 16  | 64.74                       |
| 25. Udupi 45           | 4                          | 8.88                                 | 3   | 5        | 81.41                                     |                             |
| 26. Uttara Kannada     | 68                         | 3                                    | 4.11  | 7        | 11  | 78.21                       |
| 27. Yadgir 47          | 2                          | 4.25                                 |   |          | 41.31                                     |                             |
| 28. Chitradurga        | 75                         | 3                                    | 4.00  | 16       | 17  | 60.05                       |
| 29. Chikkamagalur      | 56                         | 2                                    | 3.57  | 9        | 10  | 72.88                       |
| 30. Chikkaballpur      | 84                         | 1                                    | 1.19  |          |   | 61.55                       |
| 31. ChamaraJanagara    | 48                         | 3                                    | 6.25  | 25       | 22  | 54.32                       |
| <b>Total</b> 2867 223  | 7.77                       |                                      |   |          |   |                             |

\* New District      \*\* Bengaluru Central

**Graph 3: New Media Users and Percentage**



Of the 30 districts in the study, Kodagu and Gulbarga have not seen any usage of the new media whereas, Davangere, Haveri, Kolar, Koppala, Chikkaballapura and Bellary have seen least usage with 0.81%, 1%, 1.40%, 1.72%, 1.19% and 1.57% respectively. Gadag, Tumkur, Mandya, Hassan, Chikkamagalur, Chitradurga, Belgaum with 2.72%, 2.73%, 2.19%, 2.5%, 2.57%, 3.57% and 4.00% have seen a poor usage of new media respectively. Specially, Tumkur being tier two city, its proximity with the capital of the state and with literacy rate of 75.14% one would expect these districts to have used the new media to its full potential. Udupi, Uttara Kannada and Yadgir with 8.88%, 4.11% and 4.25% illustrate a slow pace in new media adoption and usage. Chamarajanagar with 6.25% fairs better than Hubli – Dharwad with 5.15% and Mysuru with 4.37%. Shimoga with 15.11% and Ramnagara with 14.54%, have shown a moderate performance. Bagalkot with 13.55% has shown a higher usage of new media in the elections. This district with HDI rank 22 as per economic survey 2013 – 2014 based on Karnataka human development report has shown a remarkable usage of new media and is almost on par with Bangalore Central with 15.97%. Raichur with 21.87% of new media is also one of the districts of Karnataka which ranks 27 in human development index. Raichur with low literacy level fairs better in new media usage as compared to Dakshina Kannada with 18.33% which tops the state in the

literacy rate. Nevertheless one cannot say that new media usage is independent of literacy and HDI performance. Contrary to these two districts, Bangalore district illustrates a different performance. Bangalore Rural district with 34.78% and Bangalore Urban with 45.70% are the top districts with new media use. Bangalore Urban which tops human development index rank with 1<sup>st</sup> also has seen maximum usage of new media. Though, if we look at absolute number Bangalore Central ranks first with 54 using new media but when we look at the absolute number in comparison with the of the total candidates contested the percentage comes down.

It is clear from the analysis that, the penetration of new media into the political scene in India is a reality but what is noteworthy is the full potential of this medium is not harnessed. Though, the district wise percentage gives us a better picture when we look at the overall usage of new media in the assembly election 2013, it is mere 7.77% showing vast scope for this medium in political communication. With Internet being more easily accessible through various user friendly devices the usage of this medium is only going to increase in the days to come.

It is learnt from the above analysis that, Bengaluru Urban has seen maximum utilization of new media and Kodagu and Gulburga the least with none using it there. The new media utilization in Bengaluru and Dakshina Kannada is more which is followed surprisingly by Raichur and Bagalkot districts. Though, the human development indicators doesn't show a bright picture in Raichur and Baglakot districts, the new media utilization is better while compared to rest of the counterparts. It is also seen that, the use of new media have been successful in cities when compared to towns and villages. This shows that, the penetration of new media in tier two and tire three cities is not adequate. The proximity of few districts with the commercial centres or industrial hubs have not shown any advanced use in the new media tools.

In Karnataka state, the low use of new media in elections suggest that the political parties still tend to depend on traditional structure and are sceptical about new media for fear of losing elections. The traditional political parties seem to have tremendous confidence in traditional media and have exhibited stereotypical behaviour in not using new media for political engagements to the extent to which they have expanded in India. Perhaps the usage by the candidates depends on the level of online participation by the voters which requires high Internet penetration in the constituencies. Despite increasing Internet usage in India which stood at 243 million in January 2015 that is third in the world next to US's 275 million and China's 620 million users, the contestants in elections have shown moderate to low new media usage. India's rural Internet users have increased to 60 million consisting of youth and other entertainment seekers. With the rise of Internet users in India in general and mobile Internet which is estimated at 200 million, political parties and contestants can explore new media for influencing voter behaviour. As a result the social media emerges as the alternative media in India like other countries in the world to harness online community for political engagements including elections. The low level of interest and confidence in new media by the political contestants is attributed to the digital divide in the society.

As the people turn more and more toward participatory forms of journalism which is contributed by the Internet, and also as mainstream news media have started adopting more of these interactive features, the media atmosphere is slowly and incrementally shifting away from the broadcast model which believed in 'few communicate to the many'. Instead, the shift has given rise to a model which is inclusive by which it means, everybody communicates with everybody i.e. audiences also have different layers of voice. In India, as of now even though the traditional media have taken to their own online versions, yet they have not fully adapted to the

new technology. The new generation on whom the nation's future relies on have a strong imprint on usage of new media and this preference of younger generation in using the new media is making it more interactive. So, if we look at the Rogers model of 'Diffusion of Innovation' and apply that to the above analysis, we can say that, looking at the usage of the new media in Karnataka Assembly Elections – 2013, the state of Karnataka is somewhere between late majority and laggards stage.

***Note: The data has been collected by N. Usha Rani and the UGC UPE FA –II Project Fellows; Arjun R., Deepa T.M., Hanumantha Gouda K.M, Shivaprasad B.M., Srinivasa D., Soumya K.B., Vagdevi H.S., Venugopala Gowda M.K.***

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