DISSEMINATION OF NEWS IN INDIA THROUGH MEDIATED BUZZWORDS: EMERGENCE AND KEY FEATURES

ARANI BASU

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the emergence and key features of mediated buzzwords within the context of sociology of media and extends its scope in the nature of relationship these buzzwords share with other institutions in the society namely politics and economy. For doing so, the author of this paper has chosen General Elections 2014 in India as the time frame to study the mediated buzzwords disseminated by different newspapers before an election. This paper is based on primary and secondary sources of data. It is divided into five sections; the first section presents the epistemological meanings and socio-political context of emergence for each of the mediated buzzwords, the second section identifies the popular buzzwords on the basis of primary collected through interviews with the electorate, the third section chronicles the mediated buzzwords and their frequency of appearances in the newspapers (six leading newspapers in India at the moment, chosen on the basis of Audit Bureau of Circulation Report, 2013), the next section identifies the key features of the mediated buzzwords on the basis of primary and secondary data analysis and the last section introduces the concept of propaganda model of Noam Chomsky and political public sphere of Jürgen Habermas and delineates the relationship between mediated buzzwords, the political structure and political parties in India and the economic system of the country epitomized in the ownership structure of the media houses disseminating the buzzwords.

Keywords: Mediated Buzzwords, General Elections 2014 in India, Media-Politics-Economy, Newspapers in India, Propaganda Model, Political Public Sphere.

1 This paper is based on the author’s doctoral thesis titled “Role of Media in Electoral Politics in India: A Study of General Elections 2014” on the basis of which he received doctoral degree at Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin. All primary and secondary data collected are parts of the doctoral fieldwork in different states in India between 2013 and 2014

* Dr., Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany, aranibasu.b@gmail.com
INTRODUCTION

The political milieu of a country before a national election is generally characterized with several issues, agenda and buzzwords. Most of the time, these buzzwords are generated by the political parties through their manifestos and made popular by the media or coined by the media itself in view of the political climate and wind change before the election. In this light, assessment of media’s role vis-a-vis an election ought to begin with identification of such buzzwords and issues and their analyses. In this paper, mediated buzzwords and issues within the context of General Election 2014 in India will be identified through secondary analysis of newspapers and interviews with the electorate. After identification of buzzwords, the author will elaborate on the key characteristics of mediated buzzwords and lastly, will present the nature of relationship that media houses in India share with politics and economy of the country with special reference to Chomsky and Herman’s understanding of media and manufacture of news.

Although the political climate of a country is perpetually brewing with multiple issues of national concern, six to seven months just before the election is considered to be the most politically ripe period. The entire country had turned into a political hotbed before General Election in June, 2014 – the buzzwords had started doing the rounds in newspapers, news channels, and social media; political parties were issuing their agenda and increasingly engaging in political debates with each other; and the voters had gradually started making their decisions as to whom to elect as India’s next Prime Minister. Within this context, a period of seven months between November 2013 and mid of May 2014 (till election happened) were chosen as the timeline to identify the buzzwords and issues. Next, these mediated buzzwords and issues were identified through secondary analyses of six newspapers in terms of their circulation, territorial significance and linguistic relevance.

Methodology

Researches on mediated buzzwords are in a nascent stage in India till now; however, with reference to society centric approaches of studies on media, various studies on mediated buzzwords and their impact on electorates can be identified. For example, Quin Gang (2005) in “Guidance, Supervision, Reform, Freedom: Plotting the Direction of Chinese Media through an Analysis of the All Important Buzzword” published in China Media Project, University of Hong Kong, writes about three buzzwords and their relative frequencies between 1994 and 2004. These buzzwords were used by the Chinese people to understand the changes in Chinese media over the decade. Here not just the author studies changes in Chinese media as perceived by the Chinese people, he also applies similar methodology as the author in this paper also has adopted i.e. understanding the impact of buzzwords through their frequency

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2 Mediated buzzword can be defined as a word or a phrase that becomes highly popular for a particular period of time (Webster, 2014). Buzzwords often do not hold much meaning aside the spatio-temporal context within which they arise. The term ‘buzzword’ is quintessentially a part of the urban dictionary that is largely used to impress laymen.

3 In this study, buzzwords generated by print media have been taken into account. Radio and Television have been deliberately left out.

4 In the Indian General Elections 2014, BJP led NDA won a landslide victory claiming 336 seats out of 542
of appearances over a period of time. Also, Gabrielle Grow and Janelle Ward (2013) in “The Role of Authenticity in Electoral Social Media Campaign” published in First Monday, look at authenticity as a buzzword and its influence on electoral politics in the USA. They try to investigate whether authenticity as a buzzword influence the voter's political opinion formation. Voters were interviewed and asked questions in relation their perceptions of authenticity regarding political candidates. Referring to these two studies, this paper in context has incorporated both the methods in the study i.e. buzzword analysis on the basis of frequency on one hand and interviews of the electorate on the basis of multiple choice questionnaire on the other.

For primary data, the field of study included West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Delhi. The sample size of voters was 250 who were chosen on the basis of different parameters like age, gender, education, occupation, geographical locations, religion and caste. The researcher identified 25 mediated buzzwords on the basis of structured interviews with the respondents. Next, for secondary data, six newspapers on the basis of circulation as revealed by the latest report of Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2013 were chosen. These newspapers include The Times of India, The Telegraph, The Hindu (English language dailies), Dainik Jagran, Hindustan Dainik (Hindi dailies) and Ananda Bazar Patrika (Bengali daily). Identification of mediated buzzwords in newspapers followed a timeline of seven months - between November, 2013 and May, 2014, as November, 2013; this was the time when the buzzwords gradually started appearing in the newspapers and eventually they gathered momentum as the time of election approached. Buzzwords were identified on the basis of their frequency of appearances in all the six newspapers for the aforementioned period, the social meaning and implication each of them signified and the political contexts within which each of them arose. Once the buzzwords were enlisted both with reference to primary and secondary sources, these two lists were compared to see if both the newspapers and the respondents identified mediated buzzwords in common. It was found that thirteen buzzwords\(^5\) were common to both the lists.

**Mediated Buzzwords as Identified Through Primary and Secondary Data**

A host of mediated buzzwords were identified on the basis of primary and secondary data within the timeline of seven months, between November, 2013 and May, 2014. These mediated buzzwords are discussed in the following section in terms of their buzzwords epistemology and socio-political context.

‘NaMo’ stands for Narendra Modi, the present Prime Minister of India. NaMo surfaced in newspapers around the mid of 2013 and continued to dominate headlines till the election in May 2014. Taking the first two initials from Narendra Modi’s name, NaMo was one of the most popular mediated buzzwords before 2014 General Elections in India. This was the first time a political candidate was given a nickname and popularized massively. NaMo also captures the quintessential world view of the Bharatiya Jatana Party (BJP) and its mother body Rashtriya Seva Sangh (RSS). BJP and RSS stand for establishing and protecting Hinduism in India.

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\(^5\) Mediated buzzwords have been analyzed in the study on the basis of both primary and secondary data collected as part of the doctoral field work.
They are strictly anti-Islamic and strongly believe in making India a Hindu state. In its political history, BJP has remained directly associated with various Hindu-Muslim riots, the one involving the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 being the most talked about. In addition, Narendra Modi himself became the centre-stage of the Gujarat riots in 2002. Although the Supreme Court of India gave him a clean chit, releasing him of all allegations of triggering the riot and its devastating aftermath, Modi’s name still remains entangled with it.

During his prime ministerial campaigns, Modi made deliberate attempts at disengaging himself from the religious connotation of Hinduism propagated by BJP and RSS. However, being christened by the media as NaMo brought into light other implications. Politically speaking, NaMo upheld Narendra Modi’s candidature as the prime ministerial candidate and popularized his political capability through an easy and catchy nickname. In view of multiplicity of languages that Indian voters speak, NaMo is easy for them all to pronounce. Therefore, it was envisaged as being a rhythmic, easy-to-remember and catchy household name for Modi. Apart from its political implications, NaMo also bears a socio-religious implication. In Sanskrit, one of the oldest languages spoken in India almost only by the Hindu upper castes, NaMo means to pay homage to gods. In this light, the term not only has a religious but also a caste-related undertone. Therefore, NaMo as a term generated by the newspapers aimed at embodying the religious worldview of the BJP centered around Hinduism and upper caste Bramhanical hardline.

**Gujarat Model of Development**

The term ‘Gujarat Model’ was introduced by the BJP and then Chief Minister of Gujarat Mr. Narendra Modi during the 2007 Assembly Elections. Along with this, few other buzzwords, including Development, Brand Modi, and Toffee Model also gained popularity.

The term Gujarat Model of Development showcases the industrial and social growth of Gujarat during the tenure of Modi as the chief minister of the state. ‘Gujarat Model’ was used by BJP in its campaign during the 2014 General Election with Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate. The term has been used primarily to hail Gujarat’s business friendliness. The model depicts a picture of a welfare state. Gujarat under Modi had developed a good relationship with the business class of India, and thus became one of the most investor friendly states in India. The level of bureaucratic hassle was claimed too low and the state’s land policy was such that it became relatively easy for the investors to invest in the state.

Along with this, the state got maximum political stability. All these characteristics made the ‘Gujarat Story’ successful. During Modi’s chief ministerial tenure, Gujarat, which was overall an under-developed region in the country, grabbed media eyeballs for its fast growth rate and pockets of highly-industrialized zones. Another feature of the Gujarat Model was the balance between industrialization and agriculture. In India, there was always a missing link between the agrarian era with the industrial era, and many regarded Gujarat as the missing link between the two. ‘Gujarat Model’ was termed as a “Toffee Model” (discussed later) by the Congress led UPA-II; however, BJP claimed that it was an ‘Agricultural Turnout Model’. However, many economists termed it as an epitome of ‘crony capitalism’.

In connection to the Gujarat Model, few further mediated buzzwords were disseminated by the newspapers under review such as Toffee Model and Brand Modi.
'Toffee Model' was coined against Modi’s ‘Gujarat Model of Development’. All other parties, including Congress and Aam Aadmi Party openly expressed their scepticism and challenged Modi’s economic model. They often called Gujarat’s development a toffee model, and thereby of no value. Also, the term ‘Toffee Model’ is a sarcastic metaphor for almost free land given by the Gujarat Government led by Modi to industrialist Gautam Adani at a very low price. The main allegation against the Modi Government in Gujarat was that they gave away acres after acres of land to the industrialists at a throwaway price, which led to acute suffering of the underclass and poor people.

**Corruption**

One of the biggest problems that India was facing, apart from poverty, was corruption, especially during the UPA-II rule. CoalGate, 2G Scam and Black money were the three buzzwords that became highly visible vis-a-vis Corruption.

According to Transparency International’s latest survey, India ranks 85th out of 175 countries in the scale of corruption. The Transparency International scale also says that in India 45% of people have first-hand experiences of paying bribes to get a job done in the government sector. Political parties were often found imbued in corruption, viz., the Bofors Scandal or the Coal or 2G scam. In their second term, the UPA Government came under media attention because of two major corruption charges against them – 2G Scam and Coal Scam (CoalGate as media coined). These two charges against the Congress-led UPA government eventually gave rise to corruption as one of the biggest agenda of the opposition parties vis-a-vis the Congress. Corruption as both an issue and a buzzword received massive media coverage and popular support. In fact, the Aam Aadmi Party was started with the basic tenet of eradicating corruption from Indian politics.

In connection to Corruption, few further mediated buzzwords were disseminated by the newspapers under review, including 2G Scam, CoalGate, and Black Money. India is considered a mining paradise; the states earn a huge amount of revenue on the basis of coal allocations. A major scam in allocation of coal blocks in India happened between 2004 and 2009. Media coined the term ‘CoalGate’ for referring to the Coal Scam. The term ‘CoalGate’ was inspired from the famous Water Gate Scandal which shook USA in the 1970s. The Comptroller Auditor General of India (CAG) office accused the Government of India of allocating coal blocks in an ineffective manner. BJP in 2012 lodged a complaint based on which CBI started its investigation to see if the distribution of coal block had any link with corruption. According to the allegations, both the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) and private firms paid much less than what they would have otherwise and were party to the crime. CAG in its first draft noted that the gain was more than US$170 billion. Many top politicians and business tycoons were believed to be involved in the scam.

The 2G Scam was another example of corruption under the UPA II Government involving DMK, the Congress's primary alliance to power in Delhi. The 2G scam or the 2G Spectrum scam was an Indian telecommunications scam which was political in nature involving top UPA leaders. Here, politicians and government officials undercharged mobile companies for frequency allocation licenses, which they turned to make 2G Spectrum subscriptions for mobile phones. A. Raja from DMK, who was in

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6 https://www.transparency.org/country/#IND
charge of the cabinet for Information and Technology, and Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, an MP from the same party were arrested by the CBI. The scam was a facepalm moment for the Congress already reeling under pressure. With media highlights, 2G scam became a major issue during the Elections.

Black money is a big menace in Indian economy since last few decades, with around billions of dollars stacked in either Swiss Banks or some other foreign banks. On behalf of the Government of India, a list of names was placed in the Parliament, but no action has been taken yet. In the last election, black money was a big issue because the UPA Government could not do anything to solve this problem. In this situation, Narendra Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate of BJP gave an assurance to the people during his election campaign that if he would come to power, he would bring back the entire black money from foreign banks and distribute it among the Indian people. Black money is a huge loss to the state exchequer and also a big obstacle to the country’s development. Many sectors like health, education, housing, irrigation, etc. are suffering due to lack of Government funding. In this light, when the media started reporting on ‘Black Money’ and where it all went during the UPA-II tenure, Modi picked it up as one of his major agenda.

Chai pe Charcha (Debate over Tea)

Tea or Chai is a very popular drink in India. Political discussions over a cup of tea are very popular and seen in very corner of the country. In consonance with that, Chai pe Charcha and Chaiwallah became two highly popular mediated buzzwords before General Elections 2014 in India.

A translation of ‘Chai pe Charcha’ would mean ‘discussions over a cup of tea’. Tea stalls constitute the ‘public sphere’ of Habermas (2002), where political discussions take place, political opinions are formulated, and voting decisions are made. Before the 2014 General Elections it was revealed by media that Indian Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi used to be a tea seller as a young man in the streets of Ahmedabad. The election campaign team of BJP connected the tea selling background of Modi with the country’s Chai culture. In every city, Modi started having discussions with voters as he candidly discussed his life and his plans for India’s future. Another highlight of ‘Chai pe Charcha’ was that the areas where he failed to be present personally, Modi made it a point to be present in front of the people through DTH, internet, and satellite TV. The turnout of ‘Chai pe Charcha’ ranged between huge and massive. Media picked this issue and gave a big coverage every time Modi interacted with the people.

In connection to Chai pe Charcha, few further mediated buzzwords were disseminated by the newspapers under review, including Chaiwallah. ‘Chaiwallah’ campaign was also a part of branding Narendra Modi to attract the common people of the country. Narendra Modi’s father Damodarbhai was a tea vendor in a small railway station in Gujarat where Modi worked for few years in his teenage before leaving home in search of god. In a poor country like India, where most of the top political leaders came from rich families, including the Nehrus and the Gandhis, BJP tried to portray Modi as an exception as he came from an economically backward family. It undoubtedly made Modi quite popular.

Hindutva

‘Hindutva’ was definitely among the most popular buzzwords before General Election 2014. Along with Hindutva, another buzzword with similar temperament that became popular was Har Har Modi/Har Ghar Modi.
The term Hindutva was coined by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who was known as the father of all Hindutavadi (Hinduism) organizations. According to Savarkar and then RSS leaders K.B. Hedgewar and M.S. Golwalker, Hindutva is an ideology seeking to establish the supremacy of Hindus in the country with a common nation, common race, and common culture. They believed that India is ‘Hindusthan’, is a land for only Hindus, and all others are foreign to this country. Followers of Hindutva ideology had a long history and tradition in the country. RSS now is working as the mother organization of nearly all Hindutva groups and political organizations like BJP, Viswa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal etc. Earlier Golwalker formed Hindu Maha Sabha in 1937 and another organization named Jan Sangh was formed by Syama Prasad Mukherjee in 1953. Those parties combining with some other right wing political parties and senior and expelled congress leaders like Morarji Desai, Jag Jivan Ram, etc. formed Janata Party during the emergency period in mid 70s, but in 1989, these Hindutvabadis led by Vajpayee and Advani came out of Janata Party and formed the BJP, who are now the political platform of hindutvabadi elements in the country. Modi in his late thirties joined BJP and started to preach Hindutva as an ideology.

Within this historical context, ‘Hindutva’ was brought back in the national political arena and debate by the media especially with reference to Modi’s alleged link in the Gujarat Riots that killed around 800 Muslims and 260 Hindus. It was one of the worst riots in India in the recent past, and public memory was still fresh before the election. Although both Narendra Modi and his aide Amit Shah had already received clean chit by the Supreme Court vis-a-vis the riot, Modi critiques were still sceptic about his role in it. In this light, massive media reporting on Hindutva standing only next to ‘NaMo’ forms an interesting terrain for analyzing the media’s role in the election.

In connection to Hindutva, few further mediated buzzwords were disseminated by the newspapers under review, including Har Har Modi/Har Ghar Modi. Har Har Modi/Har Ghar Modi was a slogan raised by BJP during the 2014 Parliamentary Elections to portray Narendra Modi as their Prime Ministerial candidate as the Hindu God Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is also known as Har in India. The very slogan meant Modi is like Lord Shiva and should have a presence in every house. This slogan also helped to promote Hindutva and won Hindu hearts across India. This slogan made Modi larger than his party; also, it accentuated the communal line of politics of the BJP. In spite of widespread criticism, BJP stuck to it and made it a part of their official campaign. Ultimately the slogan became very popular among BJP backed political cadres and a section of voters.

**Narendra Modi Nicknames**

Between November 2013 and May 2014, a number of mediated buzzwords appeared in the newspapers under review with reference to nicknames of the BJP prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, which also indicated towards his growing popularity. They were much less in frequency than NaMo, and that is why they were not put together with the buzzword with highest frequency. Nevertheless, these buzzwords were significant in their dissemination by the newspapers. They included Modi Wave and Modi Tsunami.

India being a land surrounded by water bodies, the wave analogy is easily identifiable and thereby popular all across the country. Within the political context, ‘Modi Wave’ means conditions favourable for BJP candidate Narendra Modi to completely sweep the elections. The term was coined by none other than Modi’s close
ally Amit Shah. In fact ‘Modi Wave’ was the pivot around which the election campaign revolved. BJP and its allies rigorously spoke about it, while politicians from Congress and the rival camp tried to negate it. Hardly anyone could ignore it; as a result, the contagious term ‘Modi Wave’ was picked up by media in no time. The term also gave an impression to many that no matter what Narendra Modi will have a huge mandate in the elections and he will be the next Prime Minister of the country.

This also made the position of other political parties slightly off shoot in relation to Modi. All the newspapers under review from time to time had used the term ‘Modi Wave’ in the entire duration of the study. Undoubtedly, ‘Modi wave’ was one of the highlights of 2014 elections. Simultaneously, the term also shows the importance of one man in the politics of India for the first time. Earlier the entire focus would be on political parties as an entity and not on one particular candidate. The American media had coined such terms like ‘Kennedy Wave’ ‘Nixon Wave’ or ‘Clinton Wave’ before a General Election. The Indian media and political parties took the cue from them and applied the same theory in practice for the first time in the history of electoral politics in India.

Modi gained immense popularity as the General Election approached and he became a brand in himself. Masks of Modi were being distributed by the BJP cadres in several occasions during a road show or a rally. Modi was made into a larger-than-life figure in Gandhinagar and Varanasi, two of his constituencies, where Modi masks were distributed the most. Masks helped Modi to show the world how popular he is and media printed the pictures to the readers.

**Personal Profile of Politicians**

A significant number of mediated buzzwords appeared in terms of the personal lives of the prime ministerial candidates, mainly Narendra Modi, with reference to caste and marital status. Also, Snoopgate was one of the most popular mediated buzzwords that revolved around Modi allegedly stalking a young woman in Gujarat.

Narendra Modi’s public life has always been clear and open; as a matter of fact, as a political leader he has been media savvy from the very onset. However, his private space, especially his marital status, always remained obscure. He abandoned his wife and never indulged in domestic life. This was taken up by the opposition parties and the media to speculate on his personal life and scoop out details from his past, especially about his wife, for sensationalization. Congress, time and again, attacked Modi on grounds of obscure marital status and doubted his credentials as a responsible public servant when he could not even take care of his own wife.

In November 2013, the so-called ‘Snoopgate’ scandal made headlines after two websites Cobrapost.com and Gulail.com obtained audio recordings of telephone conversations involving Modi’s right-hand man Amit Shah starting an illegal surveillance of a young woman at Modi’s request in late 2009. The BJP admitted that Modi had used the state government machinery to monitor the young woman, claiming the surveillance; it was later revealed that the surveillance was maintained in compliance with her father, but without her knowledge, which still makes the case illegal.

Further, Snoopgate opened the floodgate in terms of reports on how Modi government often spied upon its officials in Gujarat. A judicial panel stated that before the Snoopgate affair, there was evidence of rampant state-sponsored phone tapping by the Narendra Modi government against political rivals, journalists, and private citizens. Further, Wikileaks claimed that Modi as the Gujarat Chief Minister ruled with a
small group of advisors using more fear and intimidation than inclusiveness and consensus. These assessments of Modi’s governance style are inconsistent with the claim that he had no control over the Gujarat riot of 2002. ‘Snoopgate’ also received massive criticism from gender-based organizations all across the country, who directly questioned Modi’s expertise at the promised women empowerment programme when his own government stalked women in the state.

**Dynasty Politics**

Nearly seven decades after Independence, the Indian National Congress is being led by a single family, i.e., the Nehru and Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India and also the President of Congress for several years. When he was the Prime Minister, he nominated his daughter Indira Gandhi as the President of Congress in 1957, who became the country’s Prime Minister in 1967. After Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shashtri became the Prime Minister and he took Indira in his cabinet as Minister for Information and Broadcasting. After the sudden death of Lal Bahadur in 1966, the then Congress leadership failed to choose any senior leader of the party who could lead the nation, and the compromise formula was to elect Nehru’s daughter as the next Prime Minister. Indira was assassinated on October 31, 1984, and her elder son Rajiv took oath as the Prime Minister of India the very next day. After Rajiv’s assassination in May 1991, there was a gap of few years when some leaders outside the Nehru-Gandhi family led the Congress Party, like Narasimha Rao (1991-1996) and Sitaram Kesri, but again inner conflict among senior Congress leaders compelled to bring Rajiv’s widow Sonia Gandhi to lead the Congress Party. She became the President of INC in 1997 and is continuing till date. Although she refused to be the country’s Prime Minister in 2004 and selected Dr. Manmohan Singh in the position, as the Chairperson of UPA and President of Congress she was all along at the helm of affairs. It was a well-known fact during the tenure of UPA Government that the country was technically ruled from Sonia Gandhi’s office. In 2004, Sonia made her son a member of the Parliament, and from then it was envisaged that ultimately he would carry the family baton. In 2014 Elections, Rahul was projected as the Prime Ministerial candidate of Congress and UPA.

**Minority Appeasement**

British colonization in India came to an end in 1947. As India got independence, it also got divided on communal lines. The British had ruled India using the ‘divide and rule’ policy between Hindus and Muslims. Historically speaking, Hindu-Muslim communal politics has been a long-standing crisis in India, and the British exploited it well. During the post-independence era, Hindus started nurturing a sentiment of hatred among the Muslims.

However, going by Sachar Committee Report in 2011, Muslims have poor socioeconomic and educational index in India. In this light, it is one of the most crucial agenda of any political party during General Elections 2014 was to help bring in better conditions of livelihood for the minorities, including Muslims and Christians. In addition, political parties like the BJP, with the worldview of a Hindu state, propelled such sentiments. While on one hand, the Indian constitution declares the state to be a secular one, a major section of the Hindus claimed that the Muslims should go back to Pakistan, on the other. Political parties have long been exploiting such a dichotomous situation and playing the religious card for splitting votes. In view of that, minorities play a crucial role in which way the vote will swing for a party. Congress has
traditionally been a supporter of the Muslim community, especially before elections. BJP, already stamped as a Hindu-Nationalist party, keeping especially the Godhra Riot incident in mind, aimed at breaking their stereotype and reached out to the Muslim voters. As a result, during the poll campaign in 2014, major political parties like the Congress and BJP reached out to the Muslim voters in the hope of receiving their electoral support.

**Lokpal (Ombudsman Bill)**

‘Lokpal’ is a Hindi term meaning ‘care taker of the people’. The Lokpal movement in India was started by Anna Hazare in New Delhi in 2011. The term Lokpal was coined by Dr. L.M Singhvi. It was sought by a section of politicians in India to fight the corruption menace. The Lokpal Bill was passed in 2013 and it covers all members of Parliament and Government officials. During the movement Congress was in the eye of the storm as it was down with corruption during that period. The real argument surrounding Lokpal is if it should cover the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers of the states. Lokpal was one of the most popular buzzwords during December 2013 when the bill was introduced in the Parliament. The Aam Aadmi Party later also left the Delhi government over the Lokpal controversy. It received huge media attention and became a household word. Lokpal awakened the common people’s interest in the possibility of a corruption-free political system in India.

**Corporate-Politico Connection**

Corporate-Politico Connection was significant in relation to the parties accusing each other of using corporate funds for political campaigning. While the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party accused Modi from the BJP of shaking hands with big corporate giants like Adani and Ambani, Modi also claimed that Rahul Gandhi, the prime ministerial candidate from the Congress thrived on friendship with the corporate. Also, Modi’s political campaigns in helicopters raised eyebrows as to from where he received such big amounts of money. In this light, Helicopter Democracy, along with Modi’s business links became two of the most significant buzzwords before General Election 2014 in India.

It was alleged by the other political parties that Narendra Modi had close links with young industrialists, such as Gautam Adani, even while he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Modi allotted huge lands for Adani in his home state Gujarat for industry at a very low price, which raised controversy in the state between 2012 and 2014. Besides, Adani, who had direct links with Narendra Modi much before his stint as Prime Minister, the other major corporate houses in the country also wanted him to be the leader of the nation after Manmohan Singh, to further their own business interests. The Indian corporate lobby was not much happy with the UPA Government led by Dr. Singh, though he was considered as the father of economic liberalization in India. The primary grievance of the corporate sector against Dr. Singh was that in spite of much assurance he could not fulfill all their needs to expand industry and business freely in the country. As a result, during the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections, the corporate lobby gave full support to Modi in various ways, including concerted campaigns through their media, both print and electronic. Media was believed to have played a crucial role in Modi’s victory in the election.

**Gujarat Riot**

Gujarat riot, the genocide against the state’s Islamic population, is a big black spot in secular India. It took place in February-March 2002. Thousands of innocent Muslims were killed and many more were injured and raped. The riots erupted after a train
carrying Hindu volunteers from Ayodha caught fire in Godhra. Many of the volunteers were burnt to death after the fire. In retaliation, Muslims were targeted in various cities and towns in Gujarat, coupled with looting, raping, and killing them. For few days, there was no administration in those areas, and it was alleged that some minister of the BJP Government led by Modi and also some bureaucrats and police officers were directly or indirectly involved with rioting and killing. Modi as Chief Minister was blamed for his silence over the riots. Even the then Prime Minister, Vajpayee, criticized Modi for his inaction. Ripples of the riots were felt worldwide, and for more than a decade Modi was denied a US Visa. After the riots, many cases were filed in High Court and Supreme Court, which continued for a decade. During 2014 Elections, the main campaign against Modi was the issue of Gujarat Riots.

**Rahul Gandhi Nicknames**

Rahul Gandhi is the present Congress leader and one of the most influential leaders of the country. He also epitomizes the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty. He was the face of Congress in the 2014 General Elections. However, media depicts Rahul as a typical mama's boy. Many regard him as a reluctant politician. Before the General Elections 2014, Rahul gave few interviews to the media that made headlines for all the politically incorrect comments he made; eventually he found himself at the receiving end of jokes centered around him. Soon media started calling him ‘RaGa’ in the same line as it coined for Modi – ‘NaMo’. Media coinage for Rahul Gandhi synonyms can be analyzed better in comparison to that of Modi. While Modi was termed a Tiger, Rahul Gandhi was called a ‘Shehzada’; Rahul’s Google Hangout was brought in comparative lines with Modi’s tea stalls to identify the former as an elitist leader while Modi was projected as a leader for the ‘Common Man’. Next, ‘RaGa’, in Sanskrit, one of the oldest languages spoken in India, stands for a melodic mode used in Indian classical music. Coining such a term for Rahul Gandhi indicates towards a deliberate attempt by the media to portray him with a soft image associated with music – a space considered far away from hard-hitting politics. RaGa never came close to NaMo in terms of popularity and frequency in terms of buzzwords before the General Elections 2014.

**Ab Ki Bar / Modi Sarkar (This time / Modi Government)**

It was also a very popular slogan for BJP to portray Narendra Modi as the next Prime Minister of the country during 2014 Elections. This slogan meant the upcoming government would be Modi’s Government. This was also a slogan where BJP tried to make Modi’s image larger than the party. The main allegation was that the slogan made the entire campaign look like a one-man show, and BJP as the party that Modi belonged to, took a back seat. An indirect message was also given to the voters that if Narendra Modi gets elected, then it would act as relief balm for them from the clutches of misery. This kind of political cult during elections was last seen during Indira Gandhi’s campaign in the 1970s when ‘Indira is India and India is Indira’ did rounds.

**Common Man**

Electoral politics involves money and power that alienates common people or the voters from the immediate political process. Specifically in a country like India, the largest representative democracy in the world, indirect democratic representation further facilitates this alienating process. In this light, reaching out to the voters is one of the priorities for any political party in India. R. K. Laxman, one of the finest political cartoonists in India created an iconic depiction of the ‘common man’ who represents an average middle-class Indian. Aam Aadmi Party brought back this image of the
common man in the mainstream political process by naming the party after the
former. Aam Aadmi party with its leader Arvind Kejriwal stormed into the Indian
political system with his common man image. A former employee of the Income Tax
Department represents the commonest of the common India. With his common man
image he came, he saw, and he won the Delhi Legislative Elections of 2013. As
Kejriwal’s common man image worked in his favour, other parties, especially the BJP,
took it upon themselves to cash in on that same image and they were successful
indeed. Modi’s campaign strategy exploited his past as a tea seller, together with his
‘Chai Pe Charcha’.

Also, Congress leaders like Rahul Gandhi strived to win over the voters portraying a
‘common man’ image. ‘Common Man’ as a social icon had already been a media
favourite in India, and after AAP’s win, it started selling like hot cakes which the other
parties just took forward during their electoral campaigns for General Election 2014.

Most Popular Mediated Buzzwords as Identified by the Electorate

Having presented the context of emergence and socio-political significance of the
mediated buzzword, this section will now discuss the popularity of different
buzzwords among the electorate. Primary fieldwork conducted between November,
2013 and May, 2014 in the five states mentioned earlier with a sample size of 250
facilitated the identification of mediated buzzwords for the author of this paper. It was
found that NaMo tops the chart with maximum number of respondents (79%), opining
that it was the most frequent buzzword they found in the newspaper before General
Election 2014 in India. NaMo is followed by Gujarat Model of Development (63.5%),
Chai pe Charcha (61%), Minority (56%) and Hindutva (53.5%). Let us analyze the first
five buzzwords before considering the next sets. It is interesting to note that the
buzzwords identified through secondary analysis of the newspapers as having highest
frequency are similar to the ones considered most popular by the electorate. Among
the top five buzzwords that surfaced in the study, NaMo is unanimously considered to
be at the top. This finding has the possibility of implying that not only did newspapers
attempt at constructing NaMo as the ultimate catchphrase of General Election 2014 in
India, they were also highly successful at it since the electorate also identified
massively with it. Secondly, it rationalizes the massive margin with which the BJP
prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi won the election since majority of the
electorate found NaMo to be the most popular and visible buzzword of the election,
and thereby, in all likelihood, it shaped their political opinion formation.

NaMo is followed by Gujarat Model of Development, Chai pe Charcha, Hindutva and
Minority. In this light, out of top five, three buzzwords during General Election 2014 in
India encapsulated Narendra Modi in a positive note. Gujarat Model was considered to
be the ideal model of economic development in India as Modi tried to shed his
communal image and lay more stress on economic growth as his political agenda.
Although Gujarat Model was at times compared with a ‘Toffee Model’, and the
newspapers under review disseminated such news, it appears that the electorate had
been heavily influenced by Modi’s potential for turning the country’s economy for
better.

Next, Chai pe Charcha as a buzzword captures Modi’s modest image as a tea
vendor’s son. Such a ‘common man’ image helped Modi identify with the electorate,
which was largely of that socio-economic profile in India. Keeping these buzzwords
aside, Hindutva and Minority surfaced in the top five most popular buzzwords
considered by the electorate. Here, it is imperative to highlight a point of difference
between the way these two buzzwords were generated by the media and the electorate identified it to them. With reference to the newspapers, media generated Hindutva and Minority mostly in negation to Modi’s communal image. Although Modi was acquitted in Gujarat Riot of 2002, his image as instigating a communal disharmony in the state loomed large. Media, along with Modi himself, tried replacing this image of the latter with political news reports in the line of how Modi put India’s economic development before the BJP’s Hindu nationalist politics and how he aimed at reaching out to the Muslim voters and welcomed Muslim businessmen in Varanasi during his political campaign. On the other hand, constant mention of Modi’s communal reference, even in distinct anecdote, made the electorate reflect more on the latter’s Hindutva relation with Hindutva politics. However, this is not to imply that it deterred the electorate to vote for Modi; as a matter of fact, a significant percentage of the electorate identifying themselves as quintessential Hindus voted for Modi influenced heavily by these buzzwords.

The next set of buzzwords includes Corruption (47.5%), Lokpal (43.5%), Modi’s Popularity (40.5%), Dynasty Politics of the Congress (38%) and Modi’s Business Links (32.5%). Around similar percentage of the electorate identified Corruption as the problem and Lokpal as an answer; also, Modi’s Popularity and Modi’s Business Links featured in the top ten most popular buzzwords. Interestingly, buzzwords directly related to the then government, i.e. UPA-II led by one of the oldest parties in India, the Congress, were conspicuous by absence as only one buzzword, namely, Dynasty Politics of the Congress was featured in the top ten buzzwords identified by the electorate. It is noteworthy here that while mediated buzzwords related to Modi (both positively and not so positively) featured seven out of ten times among the most popular buzzwords identified by the electorate, buzzwords related solely to the Congress appeared only once. This may reflect upon the overall split in the dissemination of party-specific political news and reception of such news by the electorate. A massive margin for the BJP’s win coupled with Modi’s popularity account for the numbers appearing here. Between the 11th and 20th most popular and influential buzzwords identified by the electorate vis-à-vis General Election 2014 in India, featured Rahul Gandhi’s Nicknames (31%), Ab Ki Bar/Modi Sarkar (29%), CoalGate (22%), 2G Scam (20.5%), Modi Selfie (18.5%), Modi’s Personal Life (17.5%), Gujarat Riot (16.5%), Development (14.5%), Black Money (12.5%), Vote Bank Politics (9%), Third Front (7.5%), Toffee Model (6%), Technology (5%), Snoopgate (4%), and Price Rise (3%).

Rahul Gandhi was re-christened time and again by different newspapers with different nicknames and almost always with a negative connotation; these not only made headlines, but also influenced the electorate in forming their political opinion against the Congress’s prime ministerial candidate – a fact reflected already in the election results. Next, Hindi being one of the most spoken languages in India, a catch phrase in Hindi centered around Modi gained as much popularity. Next, Corruption was one of the top ten most popular buzzwords; in this light, it is logical to find two of the most integral components of Corruption during the UPA-II rule, i.e., CoalScam, 2G Scam and Black Money, as being among the most influential mediated buzzwords for General Election 2014 in India. Modi being featured in almost all the most popular buzzwords, Modi Selfie and Modi’s Personal Life also influenced the electorate in formation of their political opinion to a considerable extent. As mentioned already,
Modi, though declared clean by the Supreme Court, was never above the scanner vis-à-vis communalism, at least for a certain percentage of the electorate. Majority of them were influenced by the buzzword referring to Gujarat Riot.

As mentioned before, Gujarat Model of Development was one of the most popular and influential mediated buzzwords during General Election 2014 in India; concomitantly, Development itself became a popular buzzword, and although not many, but a decent percentage of the sample were influenced by it. India being a country ridden with caste and communal politics, a considerable percentage of the sample identified vote bank politics as one of the most influential buzzwords during General Election 2014. Moreover, Modi being the prime ministerial candidate form the BJP, a Hindu nationalist party, religion played havoc in this election, especially for wooing the vote bank. The Third Front received not much attention, although the Indian political scenario has historically been dominated by the potential of a strong alternative beyond NDA and UPA.

Nevertheless, a certain percentage of the electorate was influenced by it as a mediated buzzword. Toffee Model received some popularity, followed by Technology, Snoopgate, and Price Rise, as identified by the electorate as mediated buzzwords.

Next, with reference to the effectiveness of buzzwords in influencing political opinion formation of the electorate, among total number of respondents, i.e., 250, 115 (46%) opined that the buzzwords influenced majorly in the formation of political opinion, 88 (35.5%) opined to have been relatively influenced by mediated buzzwords in forming their political opinion, 33 (13%) of the respondents said that they were influenced in a minor fashion, and only 14 (5.6%) of them mentioned that the buzzwords had no influence on their political opinion formation at all. It is interesting to note that a staggering 46.5% of the respondents answered in affirmative vis-à-vis effectiveness of the mediated buzzwords. This also accounts for the unobtrusive nature of media in general, and the newspapers under review in particular, to disseminate political news in such fashions to have maximum impact.

Identification of Mediated Buzzwords in Newspapers

As mentioned before, the author identified the mediated buzzwords on the basis of primary data collected through interviews with the electorate. Next, he compared the primary data with the data collected through secondary sources i.e. the newspapers namely The Times of India, The Telegraph, The Hindu, Dainik Jagran, Hindustan Dainik and Ananda Bazar Patrika. Following buzzwords were identified after secondary analysis of the newspapers within the mentioned period. They were identified as mediated buzzwords to the exclusion of other issues in terms of their frequency of appearances.

Most popular mediated buzzword i.e. NaMo surfaced 76 times in the seven newspapers under review. Among all the buzzwords and issues identified, NaMo had the highest presence. Times of India lead the chart with NaMo appearing 25 times in 7 months which was closely followed by Hindustan Dainik (22), Dainik Jagran (15), The Telegraph (9) and Ananda Bazar Patrika (3). NaMo appeared in The Hindu only twice.

Next, the buzzword Gujarat Model of Development appeared for a total number of 74 times during the course of 7 months. The buzzword appeared most in Dainik Jagran (19 times), closely followed by the Times of India (18 times). Gujararat Model of Development appeared in Hindustan Dainik 12 times, in the Telegraph 8 times and Ananda Bazar Patrika published it 6 times. Third most disseminated buzzword i.e. Corruption appeared in the selected media for a total number of 71 times. The
buzzword appeared most in Dainik Jagran (20 times), followed by Times of India and Hindu (14 times each) whereas Hindustan Dainik published it 12 times. The Telegraph carried the buzzword 8 times, whereas in Ananda Bazar Patrika it appeared for 3 times. Corruption was followed by Chai pe Charcha. Chai pe Charcha as a buzzword appeared 64 times in total within the chosen time frame. The buzzword appeared the most in the Times of India (34 times), followed by Hindustan Dainik and the Telegraph (9 times), The Hindu (5 times), Ananda Bazar Patrika 94 times) and Dainik Jagran (3 times). Next, Hindutva as a buzzword appeared the most in the Times of India (20 times), followed by Dainik Jagran (13 times), The Telegraph and Dainik Hindustan (9 times), The Hindu (7 times) and Ananda Bazar Patrika (6 times).

Next, Narendra Modi Nicknames as buzzword like Modi Wave and Modi Tsunami appeared in the selected newspapers for a total number of 49 times. Times of India led again as they the mentioned buzzword appeared for 17 times. Times of India was followed by Dainik Jagran (12 times), The Telegraph (11 times), Hindustan Dainik (6 times). Next, the buzzword ‘dynasty politics’ appeared for a total number of 42 times. It appeared the most in Dainik Jagran (13 times) followed by Times of India (11 times), The Telegraph (9 times), Hindustan Dainik (7 times) and the Hindu only 2 times. Ananda Bazar Patrika didnot carry the buzzword in any of their editions within the reviewed period. Followed by Dynasty Politics, Minority Appeasement as a mediated buzzword appeared 41 times in 7 months in the newspapers under review, making it one of the most popular buzzwords before the election. It appeared the most in Dainik Jagran (16 times) followed by Times of India (10 times), Hindustan Dainik (8 times), The Hindu (6 times), Ananda Bazar Patrika (1 time). The Telegraph did not publish Minority Appeasement as buzzword within the selected time frame. Next, Lokpal appeared 36 times in 7 months in the newspapers under review, with Dainik Jagran leading the frequency of appearances. In Dainik Jagran the buzzword appeared the most (14 times) followed by the Hindu (9 times), The Telegraph (5 times), Times of India, Hindustan Dainik (3 each) and Ananda Bazar Patrika (twice).

The next mediated buzzword i.e. Corporate- Politico Connection appeared for a total number of 29 times in the selected newspapers. The buzzword appeared the most in Dainik Jagran (8 times), followed by Times of India (8 times), The Hindu (5 times), The Telegraph and Hindustan Dainik (3 each) and Ananda Bazar Patrika (2 times). It was followed by Gujarat Riot. During 2014 Elections the main campaign against Modi was the issue of Gujarat Riots. Gujarat Riot as a buzzword appeared for a total number of 25 times within the selected time. The Buzzword appeared the most in the Times of India (6 times), followed by The Telegraph, The Hindu (5 times each), Hindustan Dainik, Ananda Bazar Patrika (4 times each) and Dainik Jagran (once). Next, Personal profile as buzzword appeared a total number of 43 times. Times of India published it as buzzword the maximum number of time, which was 16, followed by Dainik Jagran (10), The Telegraph (8), Hindustan Dainik (6) and the Hindu (3).

This was followed by Rahul Gandhi Nicknames. They were published as buzzword for a total number of 21 times. Times of India carried it for the maximum times which were 10 followed by Dainik Jagran (6), Hindustan Dainik (3), The Telegraph (2). Next, Ab Ki Baar/Modi Sarkar (This Time/It is Modi’s Government) appeared for a total number of 19 times. Dainik Jagran carried it 8 times, whereas Times of India published it 7 times. The Telegraph carried it 3 times where as Hindustan Dainik published the buzzword just once. Lastly, the buzzword Common Man appeared for a total number
of 15 times. Times of India carried the buzzword for the maximum time, which was 7, followed by Dainik Jagran (4). The Hindu carried it twice whereas Hindustan Dainik published it just once.

**Key Feature of Mediated Buzzwords**

The central focus of this paper has been mediated buzzwords; consequently, the key findings would also stem from a thorough analysis of the buzzwords, their intrinsic characteristic features, and the pattern of their relationship with and influence on other variables in the study, namely, electorate, politics and economy.

Mediated buzzwords possess the following immediate characteristics defining them. Firstly, they are emerging as the latest entrant in the news-making terrain as a successful mechanism for reaching out to the electorate by the media. They are simple in language, therefore are easy to understand and identify in the headline or within the news content, for example, Modi Wave or Black Money. Buzzwords like these would appeal to voters across all educational and social backgrounds since they do not involve unfamiliar words. They are also easy to remember and the electorate can directly and personally identify with them. Secondly, they often draw the linguistic structure from a vernacular language, like Ab Ki Baar/Modi Sarkar (Hindi language, one of the official languages in India), or from larger global contexts like CoalGate (taken from American media’s reference to the ‘Water Gate’ Scandal of 1970). Thirdly, these buzzwords are highly mobile and travel fast through word of mouth. This characteristic can be ascertained largely from the fact that the buzzwords gain popularity and influence the political opinion formation of even those electorate who are barely literate but participate in political discussions in public spheres and learn and remember the buzzwords by listening to such discussions.

Next, the closer the election period, more is the usage of the buzzwords by the media houses. As found in the study, the buzzwords started surfacing only 7 to 8 months before the election and gradually gathered pace. According to the study, the buzzwords started appearing with higher frequency as the election came closer; they gathered maximum momentum just one or two months before the election, since the entire country turned into a political hotbed during this period. Thus, the buzzwords both facilitate in creating the milieu and also explore the political terrain already created before the election to encourage political engagement of the electorate. Also, the buzzwords are low in news content but high in symbolic value and rhetoric; for e.g., a buzzword like SnoopGate itself does not say much about the issue and the context, but it has a tacit provocative element that introduces the subject of stalking into an electorate’s mind. When this buzzword becomes headline, such provocation would enable the electorate to read the full news to find out who is stalking whom. On the contrary, if the newspaper had published the same news (on Modi snooping on a young working woman in Gujarat) without incorporating any buzzword and only stating the basic fact of the news in the headline, it might, firstly, not attract as many readers' attention, and secondly, the header being a tell-all, hardly any reader would read the entire piece of news. In this light, the buzzwords are facilitating more political engagement for the electorate by telling less about an issue, but encapsulating it in essence.

Also, the buzzwords possess high impressionistic quotient in comparison to issues; e.g., a buzzword like Toffee Model drives the sarcastic element of the coinage home with the word ‘Toffee’. Toffee is often associated with playful activity of children, and therefore with frivolity. Similarly, the buzzword Toffee Model was coined to mock
Modi’s developmental model by his oppositions who considered his economic developmental claims and plans unrealistic. The sarcasm and intended frivolity came out easily through the buzzword Toffee Model as against Gujarat Model, since a reader would be reminded of something as non-serious as a toffee every time Modi’s developmental issues would be discussed.

Next, NaMo, Gujarat Model of Development, and Chai pe Charcha emerged as the most popular and influential buzzwords being identified through newspaper reports and by the electorate. All three of them corresponded to the BJP and its prime ministerial candidate for General Elections 2014, Narendra Modi. The effectiveness of the buzzwords could also be proved a posteriorie by the fact that Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India after General Elections 2014. Then, in a country like India, buzzwords have strong communal and caste overtone. Buzzwords like Hindutva, NaMo, and Minority bear heavy communal overtone that are largely Hindu in nature. On the other hand, buzzwords like Vote Bank Politics throw light on the fact that caste continues to be a strong reference point for voting in India, a feature that is kept alive by the media in its pattern of buzzword dissemination. These imply that politics and religion have strong interconnection, and the media not just acknowledges this but also facilitates the relation through mediated buzzwords before national elections.

With reference to the top five buzzwords, namely NaMo, Gujarat Model of Development, Chai pe Charcha, Minority, and Hindutva, it appears that these buzzwords had the biggest impacts on respondents between the age group of 31 and 40, followed by 51 and 60, middle-skilled male respondents having completed their school education, hailing from the suburbs, high caste Hindus with visible caste consciousness. In this light, all the buzzwords in general had larger popularity and appeal, but the top five buzzwords had relatively restrictive popularity. However, it is interesting to note that India, in spite of being a country with only 73% literacy rate, electorate with just school education comprise the category of people experiencing maximum influence of the buzzwords for the formation of political opinion. This is largely due to the fact that a significant number of the electorate, as also found in the study, participate in political public spheres and identify the mediated buzzwords by listening to people reading newspapers out to them in such spaces. Moreover, in this regard, it is crucial to note that there is a difference between literacy and education since being literate only means the ability to sign one’s own name and not necessarily being able to read and write.

**CONCLUSION**

Having identified the intrinsic characteristic features of the mediated buzzwords, this final section will look into the pattern of their relationship with and influence on other variables in the study, namely electorate (representing society) and politics. Firstly, mediated buzzwords embody the inter-relationship among society, politics, economy and media. This inter-relationship has been studied extensively by Noam Chomsky and Herman in their Propaganda Model (1988). Mediated buzzwords are disseminated by media houses publishing the newspapers. These media houses are often owned by private businesspersons or corporate conglomerates. Also, occasionally, these private owners of media houses have explicit or tacit political
connection or affiliation. In this light, at the structural level, media houses are exposed
to the country’s politics and economic system and possess mutual relationship.

Secondly, media not only possesses a close structural relationship with politics and
economy, the media-politics-economy interface conditions or affects the influence of
the buzzwords on the electorate. This largely happens if the ownership and political
connection of the media houses start influencing the editorial choices of the news they
publish. In other words, it has been found in the research that the functioning of
media houses in the study was influenced by the economic and political factors that
manifested through the type of mediated buzzwords each of them chose to coin and
disseminate. Even tacit political preference and economic interests of the media
houses can potentially compromise the dissemination of news, which may translate
into denial of full information to the electorate, as espoused by Chomsky in the
Propaganda Model (1988). As found in the study, mediated buzzwords reflected upon
the political and economic undercurrents that media houses in the context were
subject to; however, it would be unjust to conclude that the buzzwords were
completely co-opted by the vagaries of the latter.

Next, as it emerged in the study, a sixth filter, i.e., anti-Islam also worked along
with other five filters espoused by Chomsky and Herman⁷. Anti-Islam as a growing
sentiment in India before General Election 2014 has been epitomized in the mediated
buzzwords popularized by the newspapers under consideration, e.g., NaMo, Hindutva,
Minority Appeasement, and Gujarat Riot. NaMo, as already discussed in the study,
bears strong Hindu religious anecdote, while Minority has been clubbed with the term
‘Appeasement’. Appeasement by definition means granting concession to potential
enemies for maintaining peace. Also, Gujarat Riot emerged as a negative reference to
the Muslims before the election.

In this light, the paper identifies the sixth filter that has acted in identifying and
popularizing the mediated buzzwords. Linked to this argument is the issue of
professionalism of journalists. Chomsky and Herman have been criticized for not
considering professionalism and independence of journalists. As it emerges in the
study, journalists cannot exercise professionalism unless that falls in line with the
organization policy of the media house they work for. Here, Chomsky differentiates
between elite media and quality press. Elite media refers to those media houses that
are balanced in their worldviews (which presumably would allow more journalistic
professionalism), and quality press refers to those media houses which are more
populist in temperament (as a result the journalists here also have to follow populist
ideology in line with the media houses). Chomsky (1987) notes that the distorting
filters are stronger in case of quality press than elite media. In the American media,
New York Times and Washington Post are referred to as elite media, whereas The
Boston Globe and The Los Angeles Times are more of quality press; similarly, in
Germany, Sueddeutsche Zeitung represents elite media, and Bild is all about quality
press.

Here, in this context, mediated buzzwords disseminated by The Times of India are
more conditioned by the filters and as a result exhibit populist worldview (with most
popular buzzwords like NaMo, Gujarat Model of Development, and others), whereas

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⁷ Five filters espoused by Chomsky and Herman in Manufacturing Consent: The Political
Economy of the Mass Media (1988) while discussing the propaganda model include ownership
of the media, advertisement, news source, flaks and anti-communism
The Hindu exhibits more balanced editorial policy (with buzzwords like Lokpal, among other less popular ones). Fourthly, mediated buzzwords were identified both in terms of frequency of appearance and those that were chosen by the electorate. A gap between buzzwords as identified in newspapers (media) and those surfacing through interviews of the subjects (electorate) shows that media chose to prioritize certain buzzwords over certain others. This further underscores the media-politics-economy interface that enables the media to highlight some buzzwords and underplay the rest even when they make news.

Sixthly, mediated buzzwords have both direct and indirect impacts on the electorate. This is linked to the level of education and literacy and also the difference between the two. Those with education can read newspapers and would come under direct influence of the buzzwords; however, those without education but with only literacy (can only sign) would be indirectly influenced by the buzzwords. Indirect influence happens through the participation of the electorate in public sphere, both in rural and urban spaces. For e.g., people gather at tea stalls and informally discuss the political situation in the state, especially before a national election. Newspapers constitute a significant part of such discussions, where those who cannot read much, listen to a person reading out that day’s headlines and important news reports to them. During these occasions, buzzwords are read out and later discussed at length. Since the buzzwords are easy to remember, they stay in the memory of the ones participating in such discussions in the public spheres.

Next, linked to the previous finding, mediated buzzwords, although analyzed only in newspapers, appear to have a larger impact when discussed and deliberated upon in the public sphere. This could further be proved by one of the findings in the study that the buzzwords in general were popular and influential on respondents cutting across all educational backgrounds, to the extent that few of them like Price Rise and Toffee Model enjoyed maximum popularity among the basic literate. Having explained the difference between literacy and education before, this suggests massive popularity of political public spheres as core spaces for discussing and engaging with everyday politics of the state. As a matter of fact, the BJP tried cashing in on this with its Chai pe Charcha campaign strategy before General Elections 2014, which became one of the most popular mediated buzzwords disseminated by the newspapers.

Next, as found in the research conducted by the author, the buzzwords were more popular among men than women. This is connected to the buzzwords being popularized both through direct reading in newspapers and listening to political discussions in public spheres. In India, men participate more in public spheres than women. Therefore, even if educated, a significant number of women do not participate in political public spheres like their male counterparts. As a result, they identify with the buzzwords either by reading in newspapers or by listening to the discussions of the male members of the family at domestic spaces. This indicates that the public sphere is still dominated by men in India.

Lastly, notwithstanding the media-politics-economy inter-relation and tacit influence of politics and economy on mediated buzzwords disseminated by the newspapers, the issue of autonomy of the media cannot be ignored. In spite of close relations between media-politics-economy, the media does not turn into a puppet in the hands of the other two. This could also be observed from the buzzwords generated by newspapers like Dainik Jagran and Hindustan Dainik, newspapers which would disseminate
buzzwords apart from those reflecting on their tacit political preferences. Media in India still functions as an autonomous independent institution, else buzzwords like Lokpal, Gujarat Riot, and Corruption would not gather momentum and become popular. Also, as found in the research through the analysis of mediated buzzwords influencing the electorate, India, irrespective of low literacy levels in comparison to the developed countries, exhibits high level of dynamism and receptivity within the electorate as politically conscious and informed voters actively participate in public spheres. Although influence of these buzzwords is subject to a level of electoral participation conditioned by, as Habermas puts it, access to resources, social status, and cultural background, the final analysis suggests that the buzzwords gained popularity and influence across different social locations. Therefore, the agency of the media as an institution and continuous presence of the public sphere are the two key factors that facilitate the inter-communication between media houses as the disseminator of news and the public as the receiver of news in India.
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