



Transparency Review

Journal of Transparency Studies

From social engineering to social media

Dinesh C Sharma

The 2014 election verdict is historic in more ways than one. It has not only brought to a halt the so-called era of coalition politics and minority governments, which emerged almost 25 years ago, but has also inaugurated a new chapter in political communication for the first time. Never before has communication been a central force in an election of this magnitude anywhere in the world. Without any doubt, the chief actor and mover - who we can call the chief communicator of 2014 election campaign - was one man - Narendra Modi. While political pundits continue to analyse the ideological divide, developmental policies, vote banks, realignment of forces and so on, they are all unanimous about the central role played by political communication in this election. Congress leaders are lamenting that they could not communicate achievements of their government effectively to voters while the winning side has credited Modi for his ability to connect and communicate with voters - particularly the millennial generation or Gen Y. Nevertheless, it was all about who is a better communicator.

Right from sharing his 'selfie' on Twitter after casting his vote to posting an online

picture of his mother blessing him after the victory, Modi clearly demonstrated that he was fully plugged into the social media. It was as if he had a direct hotline with his 'voters' - 41 lakh followers of his official Twitter handle and several lakhs on other social media platforms. His victory tweet -

'India has won. Bharat ki vijay. Ache din aane wale hai' - was retweeted over 50,000 times. It has become the most retweeted tweet from India ever. The chief campaigner of the BJP used other social networking channels like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Google Hangout and so on. He also made every attempt



to make use his larger-than-life presence on social media to reach out to those not active on social networking platforms. The very act of clicking a selfie in the presence of TV cameras and still photographers was an example of this. In his victory speech in Ahmedabad on May 16 - which was telecast live by several television channels - Modi referred to certain YouTube videos posted by his followers in which even toddlers are seen mouthing the slogan "abki baar Modi Sarkar". Clearly, Modi had a gala time on social media. His chief rival, the Congress and its lead campaigner Rahul Gandhi, on the other hand, had limited presence on social media. Rahul Gandhi, for all



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Note from the Editor

Transparency Review, which started its publication in March 2006, is an attempt to bring into focus research, opinion and news related to vital issues of transparency, accountability, governance, media trends and the Right to Information. Over all these years, the journal has published several articles and research papers by leading experts and activists engaged in the transparency movement in India.

Our endeavour is to constantly make changes in the coverage of different issues keeping in mind changing media landscape and public discourse. New columns such as Social Media Watch, Book Reviews and international trends are proposed to be introduced. Researchers, academicians, media experts, rights activists are invited to offer insightful contributions to Transparency Review. Publishers and authors may send books on relevant subjects for review. Please contact the editor at transparency@cmsindia.org for specific queries.

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IT costs the Government Rs 3.65 to deliver food worth Rs. 1

Why media is like ice cream

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Editor: Dinesh C Sharma

About CMS Transparency

The CMS Transparency team focuses on issues of good governance, raising awareness about the Right to Information Act (RTI) and empowering citizens to benefit from the legislation.

The Right to Information Act 2005 represents a historic breakthrough in recognising the citizen’s democratic rights to monitor measures affecting the public good. Following adoption of the Act by the Parliament of India, the CMS has set up a Transparency Studies wing to document, examine and publicise the interrelation between governance and society in all its aspects. It facilitates dissemination of relevant material, confers with experts and field workers and networks with the media to promote implementation and awareness.



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his projection as a youth leader, does not even have a Twitter account.

The use of social media for political activism, protests and social engagement is now well established and acknowledged, particularly since the Arab Spring and Obama's presidential campaign. In India, mass mobilization of people, notably young men and women, during the Nirbhaya episode in December 2012 and anti-corruption/Jan Lokpal movement, highlighted

the pivotal role social media can play in spreading messages instantly and mobilizing people for a cause. However, such use of social media was not institutional and not backed by well thought-out strategies. Nor was it a well funded activity. Even the nascent political outfit Aam Aadmi Party used social media to reach out to supporters in Delhi and across the world. All such experiences proved to be "proof of concept" for big political parties which could hire strategists and armies of techies to milk full advantage of new, personalized channels of communication during general elections. It's a different matter that only some parties could get it right, while others fumbled. Billions of political messages about parties, candidates and their manifestoes in the form of news, analysis, appeals, opinion poll results, jokes, spoofs, newspaper articles, video links, live feeds, pictures, cartoons, data, clippings and so on were exchanged during the two-month long intense campaign. Online exit polls were also conducted by social networking sites.

One can argue that social media messages have a limited reach, given the low broadband penetration and computer ownership. Even so, social media has been able to overcome these handicaps as the access device for social media is a mobile phone. The number of smart mobile phones, which enable easy access to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube etc, is growing rapidly. Secondly, key messages floating over social networks get amplified and broadcast over

traditional media – television and newspapers. Intimate pictures of a leading political leader with a television anchor were first released over Twitter but the message reached far and wide via satellite television and print media. Smartphone apps (applications), like WhatsApp, are used to share messages, images and voices. This is the way messages meant for social media are reaching far wider audiences. There is a much larger diffusion of political cacophony originating from social

media among people who do not directly engage with social networking. Besides instantaneity, it is the interactivity that distinguishes traditional communication from social networking. For politicians willing to engage with the electorate, this is a great advantage.

If digital media has the capacity to reach out to the electorate or general public as seen in elections 2014, there are also constraints and consequences. One can see that the kind of political engagement social networking can generate is short-lived, instantaneous and superficial. There is also room for manipulation of messages. There have been several cases of fake/spook accounts being created and official accounts of people and political parties being hacked. Online support can be 'bought' through clicks and 'likes'. Pictures and data can be doctored/manufactured and misleading or mischievous messages can be spread in no time. Political activism on social media often borders 'spin doctoring'. Then there is trolling – rude remarks or comments against people who are opposed to your viewpoint. There is every danger of public opinion being moulded in a particular or desired direction. Despite wider diffusion of social networking messages, we cannot deny the fact that we still have a large number of 'digital have nots' and 'media have nots'. For any inclusive discourse, we need to reach out to such populations groups as well. These remain key challenges.

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Personality-centric election brings paradigm shift in political priorities

Dr N Bhaskara Rao

Never before was a Lok Sabha poll driven by individual personalities as in 2014. With a sharp decline in the standing of political parties across, poll campaigns and voting behavior is now inspired by individual leaders whose personality traits excel that of their parties, their ideologies and charters. Personality-centric polls cannot be considered as a reliable process for deepening democracy and making it more responsible. Can we not ensure otherwise that our elected representatives are concerned and preoccupied with public service more?

Clearly, 2014 elections were driven more by Narendra Modi than by BJP. Similarly, the debacle of Congress party is being viewed as more that of Rahul Gandhi's and the failure of JD(U) in Bihar is viewed as personal defeat of Nitish Kumar. Too much focus on individual leaders means pushing aside real issues. About a dozen individual leaders could be named as prime movers of the 2014 poll. Although it was a "Modi-fired" campaign which steered the course, the others had set the pace for overall outcome of this poll. Who are these?

Modi and Kejriwal, of course, are the game changers of not just this 2014 poll, but the ones to come as well. Arvind Kejriwal started it all from nowhere, with nothing to take on. He became a key contender in the poll, but lost the steam midway in a whimper. Meanwhile, Modi, being a three time Chief Minister of a well developed key state, hyped himself to become the Prime Minister at

candidate of the not-so-confident BJP. He did not waste much time in becoming a rallying point within the party and a force to polarize the polity first among allies and then across the country.

In electoral battles in the post-independence years and later, it was the charisma (Jawaharlal Nehru) of leaders which determined the fate at polls, later it was "vote getting" (Indira Gandhi)

or pull power that mattered (for mobilizing voters) or 'brand positioning' that determined poll performance. With increased competitiveness between parties, it was luring proposals which mattered at the polls. This 2014 poll, however, has changed all that. A new poll paradigm has emerged. Modi obviously stands out as the hero of that shift in the paradigm.

There are a few other

winners too who deserve to be talked about.

While Narendra Modi is pan India winner of 2014 landmark poll, five others could also be described as winners of this poll. They are not merely news makers. They are three incumbent chief ministers – Jayalalitha (Tamil Nadu), Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal) and Naveen Patnaik (Orissa) – and two prospective one - Chandrababu Naidu (Seemadhra) and K Chandrasekhar Rao (Telangana).

Among them, Mamata has directly clashed with Modi, and Naidu is a pre-poll ally of Modi. The other three kept their options close to their chest, as their main concern was in the interests of their state. But at one time or other, they were a part of



NDA and all of them are bitter critics of the Congress party. Also, all of these leaders, except Naidu, fought polls on their own. These leaders performed remarkably well and in a much better way than was expected of them at the beginning of the campaign. They even managed to overcome the Modi sway in their respective states. KCR did it as he took a courageous stand of not merging with the Congress party. Congress party leadership was accused often of suppressing popular state leaders from retaining their leadership. Would Modi tolerate and allow such leaders in the coming years?

Is there anything common in the smashing victories of Modi and these other winners of 2014 poll? I recall the poser of Indira Gandhi as if very innocently some nearly 45 years ago. 'What is that people look in a leader and when do they consider someone a leader?' What is interesting is that the leadership features that I passed on to Indira Gandhi after a month of field research are also the same ones now for the resounding victory of Modi and these other leaders.

These are the 3Cs - Concerns, Commitment and Communication skills. More specifically, leaders with resounding successes are perceived as, one, decisive in taking a stand, second, determined and courageous, third, full of grit in personality and grace in lifestyle, fourth, larger and long term concerns, and, fifth, charismatic and a vote getter. While Modi's campaign displayed each and all of these elements in abundance, the other leaders did so in one or other combinations of these five characteristics in their respective states.

Of course, there are at least five or six leaders who were routed at the end of this poll exactly for the opposite of those elements. Although only Rahul Gandhi is talked about in this context, we cannot overlook the vagueness of Mayawati, Nitish Kumar, Mulayam Singh, Sharad Pawar and Tarun

Gogoi. Each of them was a critic of Modi for one or more reasons in the course of their campaigns. More pertinently, they vacillated or dazed in their poll campaigns. Lalu Prasad Yadav and Jaganmohan Reddy too could be added to this group. Most of these regional players whose strength have been reduced to more than half, have cases to settle personally with one or more central investigating agencies.

Rajiv Gandhi missed out on many opportunities to make a big difference to the country despite winning 400 seats in 1984. A famous exposition of Rajiv was that hardly twenty percent of a rupee of government expenditure actually reaches the

poor. But what has he done to correct such a glaring distortion in the system? Unlike in the case of Rajiv Gandhi, Modi achieved a massive majority on his own. He also acquired reputation for his administrative acumen and definitive ideas.

Modi need not waste his time going by past affiliations and voting preferences. How Modi brings about an inclusive democracy with his motto – sab ka saath, sab ka vikas, remains to be seen.

At a time when the country is happy that 2014 poll has recorded an impressive voter turnout, this phenomena of electoral politics, which continues to be highly emphatic of individual leadership (instead of political processes systems), should make us ponder about vulnerability. CMS studies have also indicated that one reason for the phenomenal increase in election expenditure in the country is that individual candidates account for two-thirds of poll expenditure, while couple of decades ago, it was the political parties that accounted for a higher proportion. To what extent are we ensuring that our democracy is getting deepened and our legislatures becoming more responsible, particularly with a demographic shift all around?

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Who won eye balls and how

Going by prime time coverage of national news channels, Modi received the highest coverage all through March and April. Interestingly even though both Rahul Gandhi and Modi campaigned extensively, it was Arvind Kejriwal, who received much higher coverage despite his campaign being limited to two or three states.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra got more coverage than any of the leaders like Jayalalitha, Mamata, Chandra Babu Naidu or Naveen Patnaik. Also, Amit Shah is one of the top ten to receive high coverage.

This CMS Media Lab analysis reaffirms the fact that election polls (as in 2009) that the coverage of personalities. Despite extensive coverage, there was no qualitative shift in the priorities of coverage. Corruption, Election Commission and opinion polls, in that order, received more coverage among issues next to development and governance related issues.

The analysis is based on the detailed content analysis of 61 days (March 1 to April 30, 2014)

election coverage of five television news channels - Aaj Tak, ABP News, Zee News, NDTV 24x7 and CNN IBN. Findings are based on the prime time coverage (8-10 pm) of these five TV news channels. Figures are based on the coverage time given to election topics / subjects. The time devoted for parties and leaders are calculated on the basis of subjects / topics of the coverage during discussion and reporting in the bulletins.



CMS Media Lab, a specialized team at CMS, has been tracking news media with special focus on Elections, Public Policy, Health, Education, Agriculture, Corruption and other contemporary issues since 2003.

The coverage of TV News channels shows the total mass of critical conversations involving

Narendra Modi in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The election coverage of leaders hardly reflects the ground realities of the battle field. The coverage is not reflective of the regional realities as it ignored many states of the country.

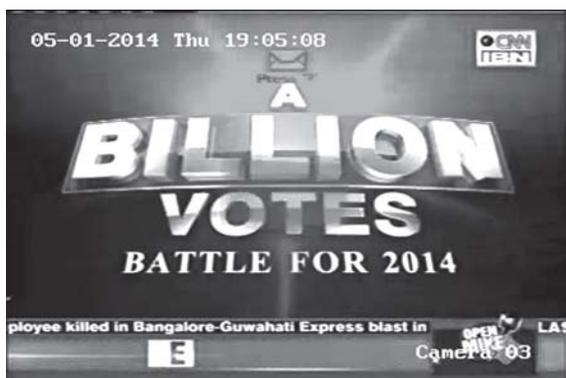
Modi got three times more coverage compared to Kejriwal who, unlike Modi and Gandhi hardly

Findings of the Television News Coverage of Leaders - Top 10 Leaders		
1st March - 30th April 2014		
Leaders	Time in Minutes	% of Time
Narendra Modi	2575	33.21
Arvind Kejriwal	799	10.31
Rahul Gandhi	336	4.33
Priyanka Gandhi	171	2.2
Sonia Gandhi	156	2.01
Manmohan Singh	143	1.84
Mulayam Yadav	142	1.83
Amit Shah	107	1.38
Raj Thackeray	102	1.32
Mamta Banerjee	90	1.16

Note: Figures are % of total coverage given to leaders in 5 news channels (8-10 pm).

campaigned countrywide. Rahul Gandhi, despite being a country wide campaigner of Congress in this election, got only 4.33% of the total coverage given to the political leaders.

Priyanka Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Mulayam Singh got 2% each of the coverage. While Priyanka was in the news for cashing out at Modi, Manmohan Singh caught TV attention due to the



release of a book on him during the same period. Meanwhile, Mulayam Singh recorded coverage for his remarks on rape and women in his rallies.

Among the regional leaders, Raj Thackeray and Mamta Banerjee got less than 1.5 % of the coverage individually. Interestingly, Modi's close aide Amit Shah is in top ten leaders in terms of coverage. Other important regional leaders got less than 1% of coverage given to personalities.

BJP grabbed the first position, acquiring 38% of total election coverage by TV news channels. It received 10 percentage points more coverage time as compared to Congress. Congress is at the second position by acquiring 27.75 % of the coverage time. AAP is at the third position by grabbing 18.70%.

Findings of the Television News Coverage of Parties - Top 10 Parties		
1 st March -30 th April 2014		
Parties	Time in Minutes	% of Time
BJP	1507	37.99
Congress	1101	27.75
AAP	742	18.7
SP	176	4.44
Shiv Sena	72	1.82
BSP	57	1.44
MNS	41	1.04
CPI(M)	41	1.04
TMC	38	0.96
JD (U)	24	0.61

Note: Figures are % of total coverage given to parties in 5 news channels (8-10 pm).

HIGHLIGHTS

» Narendra Modi got the highest two months of coverage by Television News channels, while Arvind Kejriwal, who got the second position in this list received higher coverage in the first fortnight of campaign of March 2014.

» Modi received 7.5 times more coverage of what Rahul Gandhi got on TV. Rahul Gandhi is at third position and got very less coverage compared to Modi and Kejriwal.

» Election coverage on TV News reflects that the fight is between BJP and Congress.

» Party wise and leader wise coverage analysis indicates that the BJP is far ahead of its competitors.

» BJP grabbed the first position in party wise coverage; it topped Congress by a margin of 10 percentage points in total coverage.

» Congress and AAP acquired second and third positions respectively. AAP received half of what BJP got in TV news channels election coverage.

» Although Rahul, like Modi, did nationwide campaign across the country, he got much less coverage of news channels than Kejriwal, whose campaign for this 2014 poll was limited to only a couple of places in two or three states.

» The Election coverage is personality and party centric on TV news channels, not so much on issues.

» Hindutva is not in the top ten issues of the election coverage.

» Campaign against corruption and Election Commission's functioning were among the top five issues of the election coverage figured in the TV news coverage. The others are: opinion polls, public policy, governance, development and local issues.

Among regional parties, Samajwadi Party got approximately 4.5 % of the coverage time. Shiv Sena, BSP, MNS, CPI(M) got between 1% to 2% of coverage, while rest of the regional parties including TMC and JDU received less than 1% of the total coverage time given to parties. Other regional parties like AIDMK, DMK, TDP, BJP, etc got insignificant coverage.

Personalities and parties are the major focus of the 2014 election coverage by TV news channels. Both accounted for more than half of (57%) of the total election coverage. Spoof/comedy

programmes figured as third position in the top ten programmes. Series of scams of the UPA government, and relentless campaigning against scams by opposition parties, prominently by Kejriwal and Narendra Modi, made it at the fourth position (4%) in terms of the coverage.

Election commission (2.47%) and opinion polls (2.32) got fifth and sixth positions respectively. Public policy (2.32 %) and governance (2.05%) acquired seventh and eighth positions in the coverage respectively. Development and local issues are at the bottom of top ten issues.

Findings on Television News Coverage on Election Issues: Top 10 issues/subjects		
1 st March -30 th April 2014		
Issues	Time in Minutes	% of Time
Personality	7753	37.66
Party	3966	19.26
Satire/Comic Programmes	908	4.41
Corruption	749	3.64
Election Commission	508	2.47
Opinion Polls/Exit Polls	478	2.32
Public Policy	474	2.3
Governance	421	2.05
Development	417	2.02
Local / Regional Issues	338	1.64

Modi and BJP hogged prime time TV, finds CMS Media analysis

Arvind Kejriwal comes next, and Rahul Gandhi a distant third

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, May 8

Prime time coverage of elections by key television channels in March and April largely focused on Narendra Modi, says an analysis by CMS Media Labs.

The analysis, done by monitoring five TV news channels during the 8-10 slot (prime time) from March 1 to April 30, estimates that 2,575 minutes or 33.21 per cent of the total coverage given to leaders in the five news channels during prime time went to Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial candidate.

The five news channels monitored were Aaj Tak, ABP News, Zee News, NDTV 24x7 and CNN IBN.

In fact, Modi received nearly 7.5 times more coverage than Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi during prime time. In a year when the elec-



Shah, Raj Thackeray and Mamata Banerjee.

Parties, personalities
Even in party-wise coverage, BJP was found to be far ahead of its competitor Congress. Nearly 38 per cent or about 1,507 minutes were spent by these channels on covering BJP, while about 1,101 minutes or 27.75 per cent of television news coverage went to Congress.

The analysis stated that personalities and parties accounted for more than half of the total election coverage. Development and regional issues were found to be at the bottom of the tally of the top ten issues covered.

"The coverage of TV news channels indicates a critical mass of conversation towards Narendra Modi in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The election coverage of leaders hardly reflects the ground realities of the battlefield. The coverage is not reflective of the regional realities. It ignored many States of the country," CMS Media Labs said in a press note.

चैनलों के प्राइम टाइम में कवरेज में मोदी अड्डल

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)। मार्च और अप्रैल के महीने में राष्ट्रीय समाचार चैनलों ने भाजपा से प्रधानमंत्री पद के उम्मीदवार नरेंद्र मोदी को अपने प्राइम टाइम में 33 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा कवरेज दिया है। इस दौर में आम अड्डमी पार्टी के नेता अरविंद केजरीवाल और कांग्रेस उपाध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी पीछे छूट गए हैं।

सौरभरस मीडिया लैब ने पांच राष्ट्रीय समाचार चैनलों- आज तक, एबीपी न्यूज़, जी न्यूज़, एनडीटीवी 24-7 और सीएनएन आईबीएन पर प्रसारित समाचारों का विश्लेषण किया है। जिसके अध्ययन में यह बात सामने आयी है कि एक मार्च से 30 अप्रैल के बीच चुनावी कवरेज में से गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को 2,575 मिनट या 33.21 प्रतिशत समय मिला है। दिल्ली के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री अरविंद केजरीवाल इस दौर में दूसरे स्थान पर हैं। चैनलों ने उन्हें 799 मिनट (10.31 प्रतिशत) का समय दिया है। कवरेज पाने में तीसरे स्थान पर कांग्रेस उपाध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी हैं। उन्हें 433 प्रतिशत समय मिला है जबकि मार्च और अप्रैल में उनकी बहन शिवका गांधी को 171 मिनट (2.20 प्रतिशत) कवरेज दिया गया।

अगर बात शीर्ष की दस महिला नेताओं की करें तो शिवका गांधी को सबसे ज्यादा कवरेज मिला है। इसमें 156 मिनट कवरेज के साथ कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी दूसरे स्थान पर हैं जबकि तृतीय क्रम में प्रमुख मन्त्री जयप्रकाश नारायण 90 मिनट की कवरेज के साथ तीसरे नंबर पर हैं। एक मार्च से 30 अप्रैल के बीच अपने पूर्व मीडिया सलाहकार संजय चारु को विवादित पुस्तक के कारण चर्चा का विषय बने निवर्तमान प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह 143 मिनट कवरेज के साथ छठे स्थान पर रहे। उनके बाद 142 मिनट कवरेज पाने वाले सपा प्रमुख मुलायम सिंह यादव और 102 मिनट कवरेज पाने वाले मनसे प्रमुख राज ठाकरे का नंबर आता है। सौरभरस मीडिया लैब का कहना है, "यह विश्लेषण यह दिखाता है कि वर्ष 2009 की तरह वर्ष 2014 का लोकसभा चुनाव कवरेज भी व्यक्तिगत के बारे में है। विस्तृत कवरेज के बावजूद उनकी प्राथमिकता में कोई खास बदलाव नहीं आया है। जिससे और सहज के मुकाबले फटकार, चुनाव आयोग और ऑफिशियल सर्वेक्षणों को ज्यादा कवरेज मिला है।" दलीप आचार पर राष्ट्रीय समाचार चैनलों द्वारा किए गए कवरेज कि बात करें तो सौरभरस मीडिया लैब के अध्ययन के अनुसार भाजपा अपने प्रतिद्वंद्वियों से कहीं आगे चल रही है। एक मार्च से 30 अप्रैल के बीच भाजपा को 1,507 मिनट का समय मिला जो उसके निपट्टाव प्रतियोगी कांग्रेस के 1,101 मिनट से 1.5 गुना ज्यादा है।

“Note-for-vote” dominates yet again

Dr N Bhaskara Rao

By raising the ceiling on expenditure from Rs 40 to Rs 70 lakh for a Lok Sabha candidate in 2014 election, the government may have satisfied a couple of political parties. But it could be accused of making elections in India one of the most expensive events in the world and for making level playing in Indian elections a distant dream.

The Union Cabinet took this decision as recommended by the Election Commission, which in turn did so based on the demands of political parties it had consulted. Only one or two opposed the move. The excuse given for the increase was that the number of polling stations has gone up, although that was only marginal. This move together with the increased use of television advertising has pushed the expenditure in 2014 polls a great deal.

The total expenditure involved in the just concluded 2014 Lok Sabha poll is put at Rs 35000 crore to Rs 37000 crore, as against about Rs 30000 crore estimated at the beginning of the campaign. This is still a conservative estimate. Assuming a voter turnout of 75 percent in this Lok Sabha poll, the expenditure works out to over Rs 650 per vote cast.

The Rs 35,000 crores estimate for 2014 is much higher than Rs 10,000 crores estimated by CMS as expenditure in the 2004 Lok Sabha election. From Rs 2500 crore expenditure in the 1996 Lok Sabha poll, it has increased more than ten fold. Increase in competitive electoral politics of the country is mostly responsible for this substantial increase in election expenditure which in turn could be correlated to increasing corruption in the country during these years.

Money was spent on various counts. For example, about 400 helicopters were used by parties and candidates involving an expenditure of over Rs 450 crore. The percentage of workers and

(rented) crowd mobilized, who were paid for, was much higher than what has been hitherto. Several poll surveys were conducted by media houses and others. If they have to be taken at face value, over Rs 150 crores would have gone into conducting these surveys. Rs 100 crore must have been spent by key contenders for some 50 seats. The estimate does not include money spent by candidates in getting nomination from their respective parties in some constituencies. This was anywhere between Rs 5 lakh to Rs 5 crore.

This 2014 poll also confirms that the proportion of expenditure by individual candidates has gone up significantly. This meant further decline of political parties and rise of individuals. It needs

By hyping up their coverage about candidates who are crorepaties, contractors or rich corporates, news media is unwittingly adding to expectations of voters

to be seen in the coming years what change will come with an increase in corporate funding to parties, from five to seven percent of profits under the new Act.

The “middlemen” played a more active role in 2014. As a result, the extent of direct to voter distribution was less. This could be one reason why, after the polling, the percentage of voters who acknowledged receiving ‘gifts’ was lower. As a result, any accountability and moral responsibility of contesting candidate concerned cannot be expected. In most cases where money was confiscated (nearly Rs.300 crores), no name of a candidate figured.

Perceptions of voters, expecting more money than before, were much higher apparently because of two cues from news media. As never before, news media had repeatedly reported that candidates are crorepaties and/or big industrialists, or something like that. Second, never before did any news channel show that too, repeatedly every day images of bundles of notes being confiscated on the way for disbursement to voters. Both these have increased expectations or demand features

from voters. Thus, instead of demotivating coverage, channels have helped demand creation (though unintentionally). This phenomena of exaggeration of what the “other candidate” is giving, has added to the demand factor. Some local news channels even gave (as part of their news reports) a clear figure of how much was being paid to voters.

It is so obvious from CMS tracking studies, that a major reason for higher and higher poll expenditure over they are is this note-for-vote. Much worse is its impact on accountability of elected reps on the one hand and prevalence of corruption on the other. At this rate, how can Indian democracy assure Good Governance to its citizens?

The expenditure estimate for 2014 is the outcome of an elaborate analysis, based on a variety of past and present trends of parties in contest, keenness in contests, candidate characteristics, campaign monitoring, field observations, large scale survey data, updating with pre and post poll sampled interviews. This estimate includes expenditure involved at four different levels - EC and various Government departments of States and Centre, political parties, contesting candidates and others (like corporate/industry, lobbies). CMS started tracking poll expenditure in 1996.

By increasing the ceiling on election expenditure of individual candidates contesting not only for Lok Sabha, but for Assemblies, the government has now reminded that use of money power poses a big threat to the Indian electoral system. And yet, only West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee has come out openly criticizing the official increase in ceiling on poll expenditure. Clearly, this implies increase in the expenditure allowed at the elections for Assembly and other local bodies.

The increase at this point should be of particular concern as a high percentage of those who contested in 2009 in Lok Sabha poll showed an expenditure substantially less than what the ceiling was at the time. According to an ADR analysis, on an average in 2009, candidates as per their own reports filed with Election Commission was less than Rs. 15 lakh against a ceiling of Rs 40 lakh.

If polls are contested on issue basis, sensitizing and involving voters so that they become active citizens, one can perhaps justify such high expenditure. But this 2014 poll is proving to be a bitterly fought one without keenness on issues and also, without much suspense in the outcome of the

poll itself. The news media are covering polls without taking into account the fundamentals of holding an election in a democracy. And yet political leaders are not addressing this issue seriously as it suits most of them and is of their making.

From Lok Sabha, state Assemblies to Zilla Parishads and Panchayat level - what do elections cost India over a five year period? Assuming that all these elections take place at a different time during a five year period, the expenditure involved now would be in the vicinity of one and half lakh crore rupees!. Much more than half of this would be unaccounted.

Since CMS had brought out the extent of “note-for-vote” phenomena in a nationwide large survey in 2007 (refer Transparency Review – www.cmsindia.org), the Election Commission of India took to several initiatives to curb the flow of cash on the eve of the elections. That is how there have been several news stories during the national, state and by elections, on the extent of cash seized. In each of the recent polls to assemblies, this was anywhere between Rs 50 crore to Rs 150 crores of cash including from an ambulance, or helicopter, car tyre tubes, etc. The EC has inducted senior observers all over, including from IRS service, to track and bring to book such unaccounted expenditure by candidates.

Although corruption is much talked about as a national malice, one aspect that has not been seriously pursued is that this corruption by way of “note for vote” is depriving good governance and is threatening the very roots of democracy and development. And that in fact, is the source and origin of the cycle of corruption in the country. That is why I described it as “Mother of all corruption” in the country. This phenomena has not become a priority concern either of corruption crusaders or of political leaders or of mass media as it should have been by explaining voters what accepting cash does in lure and in lieu of vote, meant to them individually for the next five years. On the contrary, media reports that poll eve expenditure gives a boost to the economy and to consumer markets, when in fact it is eroding the very fundamentals of democracy and also development of the country.

By hyping in their coverage that candidates are crorepaties, contractors or rich corporates, news media is unwittingly adding to the expectations of voters. Based on its annual corruption studies, CMS had indicated that voters would in all

likelihood end up paying individually ten times more as bribe while availing basic public services than what they are entitled to in the normal course, simply because they succumbed to the freebees and cash on the eve of elections.

With one-third or more of news media in the country slipping into the control of corporates and political leaders, we cannot expect to curb the phenomena of paid news on the eve of elections. “Quid pro coverage or reporting” has now acquired a threatening role in driving public opinion trends and priorities of the day.

Betting on who wins or loses or which party gets what number of seats is yet another transaction that is reported on the eve of Assembly and Lok

With extensive use of social media now, satta bazaar centered betting is getting a boost

Sabha elections. This too would be in hundreds of crores. This happens across the country close to the polling dates and more in between the day of polling and day of counting. Although this is less to do with the core of elections as such, the fact that it is often reported prominently in the news media tends to influence voter perceptions and expectations. With extensive use of social media now, satta bazaar centered betting is likely to receive a boost.

The Election Commission of India views and approaches these trends more in terms of curbing black money in election campaigning and does not assess its - implications on good governance and corruption involving citizenly. There is a limit on what the EC could do in this regard without serious realisation on the part of the voters, political leaders and the news media. We need to ponder over the continued desirability of very “first past post” system of elections itself. “State funding” of polls is being talked about. We also need to look into whether party less polls will reduce the role of money at various levels of elections. Political advertising on television on the eve of polls needs to be regulated too, before it vitiates the very poll process. Can news media / social networks be promoted in such a way that can curtail the enormous expenditure of poll campaigns? I feel a search for alternative ways of electing peoples representatives have to be explored – for all levels of governance.

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Encashing Voters

Andhra Pradesh is an interesting and unprecedented case. CMS studies in the last decade indicated that AP is one of the states where more than half of voters are distributed cash on the poll eve and what is given per voter was also much higher than in most other states. Between March and May 2014, the state is going for elections to Lok Sabha, Assembly, Municipalities and Corporations and for Mandal Panchayts. While Lok Sabha and Assembly polls are held together, for the others, elections are held separately. In all, 42 Lok Sabha, 287 Assembly, 156 Municipalities, 22 Zilla Parishads, 1096 Mandal Parishads and 16,589 MPTCS will be elected in all in these elections. This time, these will be far more keenly contested between four or more different parties. A quick estimate of what is likely to be spent by candidates in these various polls in AP during this quarter would be not less than Rs.7,000 crores and it should not be a surprise if it goes beyond Rs. 10,000 crores. Against a ceiling of rupees two lacs by EC, ten to twenty times more expenditure is expected per member. According to a report, for example, election to Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (with 59 divisions) is expected to be near about Rs.100 crores including what goes into the election of Mayor. And all that in a matter of 20 days. This is despite that Vijayawada Corporation could not even pay salaries on its own. It is a four corned fight. Since announcement of the elections to local panchayts in AP, fifty lacs to eighty lacs of cash is being seized daily in the State by police at entry points of towns. But these are only symbolic. This estimate does not include what is spent towards getting nomination of the respective party. Within the three weeks, after these polls were announced, more than 100 crores of rupees was seized.

Right to privacy gets boost with EU judgment in Google case

In a landmark judgement, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has recognised ‘right to be forgotten’ that would force search engines like Google to remove links to results that are outdated or unwanted by individuals. The judgement will force search engines to remove search results that infringe on an individual’s privacy.

“Google and other search providers should act to remove links when requested and could be coerced into doing so by the authorities if they resist initial applications for change”, the court has ruled. The case was brought by a Spanish man who claimed that an auction notice of his repossessed home returned by a Google search was an infringement on his privacy. Google, however, has decided to contest the judgement.

Here are details of the case as provided by the EU court:

In 2010 Mario Costeja González, a Spanish national, lodged with the Agencia Española de Protección de Datos (Spanish Data Protection Agency, the AEPD) a complaint against La Vanguardia Ediciones SL (the publisher of a daily newspaper with a large circulation in Spain, in particular in Catalonia) and against Google Spain and Google Inc. Mr Costeja González contended that, when an internet user entered his name in the search engine of the Google group (‘Google Search’), the list of results would display links to two pages of La Vanguardia’s newspaper, of January and March 1998. Those pages in particular contained an announcement for a real-estate auction organised following attachment proceedings for the recovery of social security debts owed by Mr Costeja González.

With that complaint, Mr Costeja González requested, first, that La Vanguardia be required

either to remove or alter the pages in question (so that the personal data relating to him no longer appeared) or to use certain tools made available by search engines in order to protect the data. Second, he requested that Google Spain or Google Inc. be required to remove or conceal the personal data relating to him so that the data no longer appeared in the search results and in the links to La Vanguardia. In this context, Mr Costeja González stated that the attachment proceedings concerning him had been fully resolved for a number of years and that reference to them was now entirely irrelevant.

The AEPD rejected the complaint against La Vanguardia, taking the view that the information in question had been lawfully published by it. On the other hand, the complaint was upheld as regards Google Spain and Google Inc. The AEPD requested those two companies to take the

“The activity of a search engine is additional to that of publishers of websites and is liable to affect fundamental rights to privacy and to the protection of personal data, the operator of the search engine must ensure, within the framework of its responsibilities, powers and capabilities that its activity complies with the directive’s requirements”

necessary measures to withdraw the data from their index and to render access to the data impossible in the future. Google Spain and Google Inc. brought two actions before the Audiencia Nacional (National High Court, Spain), claiming that the AEPD’s decision

should be annulled. It is in this context that the Spanish court referred a series of questions to the Court of Justice.

In the latest judgment, the Court of Justice finds, first of all, that by searching automatically, constantly and systematically for information published on the internet, the operator of a search engine ‘collects’ data within the meaning of the directive. The Court considers, furthermore, that the operator, within the framework of its indexing programmes, ‘retrieves’, ‘records’ and ‘organises’ the data in question, which it then ‘stores’ on its

servers and, as the case may be, ‘discloses’ and ‘makes available’ to its users in the form of lists of results. Those operations, which are referred to expressly and unconditionally in the directive, must be classified as ‘processing’, regardless of the fact that the operator of the search engine carries them out without distinction in respect of information other than the personal data. The Court also points out that the operations referred to by the directive must be classified as processing even where they exclusively concern material that has already been published as it stands in the media. A general derogation from the application of the directive in such a case would have the consequence of largely depriving the directive of its effect.

The Court further holds that the operator of the search engine is the ‘controller’ in respect of that processing, within the meaning of the directive, given that it is the operator which determines the purposes and means of the processing. The Court observes in this regard that, in as much as the activity of a search engine is additional to that of the publishers of websites and is liable to affect significantly the fundamental rights to privacy and to the protection of personal data, the operator of the search engine must ensure, within the framework of its responsibilities, powers and capabilities, that its activity complies with the directive’s requirements. This is the only way that the guarantees laid down by the directive will be able to have full effect and that effective and complete protection of data subjects (in particular of their privacy) may actually be achieved.

As regards the directive’s territorial scope, the Court observes that Google Spain is a subsidiary of Google Inc. on Spanish territory and, therefore, an ‘establishment’ within the meaning of the directive. The Court rejects the argument that the processing of personal data by Google Search is

not carried out in the context of the activities of that establishment in Spain. The Court holds, in this regard, that where such data are processed for the purposes of a search engine operated by an undertaking which, although it has its seat in a non-member State, has an establishment in a Member State, the processing is carried out ‘in the context of the activities’ of that establishment, within the meaning of the directive, if the establishment is intended to promote and sell, in the Member State in question, advertising space offered by the search engine in order to make the service offered by the engine profitable.

So far as concerns, next, the extent of the responsibility of the operator of the search engine, the Court holds that the operator is, in certain circumstances, obliged to remove links to web pages that are published by third parties and contain

information relating to a person from the list of results displayed following a search made on the basis of that person’s name. The Court makes it clear that such an obligation may also exist in a case where that name or information is not erased

beforehand or simultaneously from those web pages, and even, as the case may be, when its publication in itself on those pages is lawful.

The Court points out in this context that processing of personal data carried out by such an operator enables any internet user, when he makes a search on the basis of an individual’s name, to obtain, through the list of results, a structured overview of the information relating to that individual on the internet. The Court observes, furthermore, that this information potentially concerns a vast number of aspects of his private life and that, without the search engine, the information could not have been interconnected or could have been only with great difficulty. Internet users may thereby establish a more or



less detailed profile of the person searched against. Furthermore, the effect of the interference with the person's rights is heightened on account of the important role played by the internet and search engines in modern society, which render the information contained in such lists of results ubiquitous. In the light of its potential seriousness, such interference cannot, according to the Court, be justified by merely the economic interest which the operator of the engine has in the data processing.

However, inasmuch as the removal of links from the list of results could, depending on the information at issue, have effects upon the legitimate interest of internet users potentially interested in having access to that information, the Court holds that a fair balance should be sought in particular between that interest and the data subject's

fundamental rights, in particular the right to privacy and the right to protection of personal data. The Court observes in this regard that, whilst it is true that the data subject's rights also override, as a general rule, the interest of internet users, however this balance may however depend, in specific cases, on the nature of the information in question and its sensitivity for the data subject's private life and in the interest of the public in having that information, an interest which may vary, in particular, according to the role played by the data subject in public life.

Finally, in response to the question whether the directive enables the data subject to request that links to web pages be removed from such a list of results on the grounds that he wishes the information appearing on those pages relating to him personally to be 'forgotten' after a certain time, the Court holds that, if it is found, following a

request by the data subject, that the inclusion of those links in the list is, at this point in time, incompatible with the directive, the links and information in the list of results must be erased. The Court observes in this regard that even initially lawful processing of accurate data may, in the course of time, become incompatible with the directive where, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, the data appear to be inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant, or excessive in relation to the purposes for which they were processed and in the light of the time that has elapsed. The Court adds that, when appraising such a request made by the data subject in order

to oppose the processing carried out by the operator of a search engine, it should in particular be examined whether the data subject has a right that the information in question relating to him

personally should, at this point in time, no longer be linked to his name by a list of results that is displayed following a search made on the basis of his name. If that is the case, the links to web pages containing that information must be removed from that list of results, unless there are particular reasons, such as the role played by the data subject in public life, justifying a preponderant interest of the public in having access to the information when such a search is made.

The Court points out that the data subject may address such a request directly to the operator of the search engine (the controller) which must then duly examine its merits. Where the controller does not grant the request, the data subject may bring the matter before the supervisory authority or the judicial authority so that it carries out the necessary checks and orders the controller to take specific measures accordingly.

The effect of the interference with the person's rights is heightened on account of the important role played by the internet and search engines in modern society, which render the information contained in such lists of results ubiquitous

Rights-based welfare state: What went wrong and what can be made right

Yamini Aiyar & Michael Walton

From the Right to Information and the Right to Work to the Right to Education and the Right to Food, the Congress-led government's 10 years in power are bound to find a place in history books for planting the seeds of a rights-based welfare state. If Parliamentary conduct is any indicator, this welfare state is here to stay. The few occasions the party was able to build a consensus in Parliament in the last 10 years was when it passed these rights laws. But even as the Congress successfully scripted the path to a welfare state through its rights laws, it floundered in implementation. The challenge for the new government is in making good the wrongs of these "rights" by ensuring their effective implementation.

So what went wrong and how can this be fixed? In their intent, rights-based laws mark an important shift in the governance trajectory. They signalled a commitment by the state to ensure the provision of basic entitlements. The language also signalled the state's intent to address entrenched, patronage-driven power dynamics between citizens and the state. The Right to Information and social audits are expressions of this intent. For a country where state patronage runs deep, this is a critical structural change for the better.

But the problem is that the laws simply did not go far enough. Despite the formal rhetoric of devolution and accountability, they relied on the old model of centralized schemes that are not designed to respond to the complexities of service delivery. This limited ownership by states, and provided a convenient discourse for explaining failure with the centre and states passing the buck. Take any Congress speech in an opposition state this election and you'll hear the party praising itself for bringing in these laws and blaming the state government for poor implementation. And here's the irony much of the recent innovation in delivery systems from the Public Distribution System in Chhattisgarh to education in Bihar has been driven by state governments. By relying on top-down central schemes, rights laws have served to curb rather than facilitate state-led innovation.

Where genuine devolution was attempted, its implementation was half-baked, encouraging distortions rather than transformative change. The

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a classic example. By design, the Act took an important step by mandating that 50% of funds be spent by the *gram panchayats* (village councils). But this was not accompanied by a complementary devolution of roles and responsibilities for implementation. Consequently, *panchayats* have become post officers for large funds with little authority and responsibility. And so, as the CAG's 2013 audit highlights, *panchayats* don't even perform the most basic of functions like making annual plans and labour budgets. This has de-linked MGNREGA's performance from *panchayat* electoral outcomes and unsurprisingly, MGNREGA is now an important source of rents for local politicians. And when accountability is so diffused and electoral consequences of poor performance are few, even far-reaching provisions like social audits will have limited impact.

The first challenge of a new government, if it is serious about deepening the welfare state project, will be to break out of the centralized delivery model and build a financial transfer system that enables states to innovate and design their own implementation architecture. This needs to be accompanied by genuine devolution of finances and decision-making powers to *panchayats*. Only then will steps to ensure transparency and accountability be effective.

Second, the greatest limitation of the rights laws is that they have failed to tackle the issue of administrative capability. With each new law, the government expended significant energy and political capital on budgetary requirements. Completely absent was any effort to identify the human resource and administrative changes needed to ensure effective spending. To the extent that administrative reforms have been part of the agenda, this has involved penalties for the frontline and use of technology to improve monitoring. But this only entrenched bureaucratic hierarchies and rules rather than tackling the systemic questions of bureaucratic motivation, organizational structure and decision making systems. It also overemphasizes bureaucratic failings at the frontline.

The fate of the rights-based welfare state will depend on the new government's willingness to undertake radical administrative reform. This entails moving beyond punitive action to building a system that privileges problem-solving over hierarchies and rules. The good news is that the new government doesn't need to look far. There are innovative experiments underway across India that offer lessons. In Bihar, for instance, a district collector partnered with a non-governmental organization to implement an effort that empowered, rather than penalized, frontline education officers to work with schools on pedagogical experimentation. This had the stunning consequence of both mobilizing demotivated officers and dramatically improving learning outcomes in the schools. Bihar is now attempting to scale up this experiment across the state. Effective administrative reforms should build on

these experiments by fostering a more local approach to planning and decision-making.

The Congress party's rights-based welfare laws were ambitious in their aspiration of building an accountable welfare state. This now needs better implementation. The new government faces a major challenge of solving this, with serious progress only likely if it places its political weight behind a project of administrative renewal. The new government will also need to prepare the welfare state to address new challenges—ensuring that the right to education provides quality education; that employment guarantee doesn't become a substitute for skills and jobs; that urban poverty is part of the debate, all of which necessitate a strong administration equipped to learn and empowered to innovate. Perhaps citizens should really be voting for a right to effective implementation in this election season!

(Source: Live Mint, 25 March 2014)

Demand for 'Right to Service' Act gathers steam

MUMBAI: A citizens' movement calling for the widespread use of the Right to Service Act is gathering steam in the city with proponents of the Right to Information (RTI) working hard to promote the use of this virtually unknown Act.

A year after India passed the landmark RTI Act in 2005, Maharashtra passed an equally significant, yet virtually unknown law that complements the RTI Act—the Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act, 2006, popularly called the Right to Service Act.

Under this Act, "no file shall remain pending with any government servant in the department or office for more than seven working days". For files that do not need to be transferred to another department, a decision, as well as necessary action, must be taken in 45 days. For those files that need to be transferred to other departments, action must be taken within three months. The Act also talks of a penalty for civil servants who neglect their duties.

Shailesh Gandhi, former central information commissioner, advocates the use of this Act alongside RTI. "This appears to me to be an Act

which may empower citizens and could help to bring accountability and better governance. I have used it to bring accountability in matters of corruption," says Gandhi, adding that citizens can use it with the RTI Act for better governance and the delivery of timely services.

"If an application, representation or complaint has been pending with a government office for over 90 days, complain to the secretary of the department and demand that action be taken against the officers responsible for the delay as per the provisions of this Act. Alternatively, an RTI application could be made and then a complaint could be filed against the officers," he adds.

The Right to Service Act also helps citizens hold the government accountable for arbitrary transfers of government officials. The Act states that "no government servant shall ordinarily be transferred unless he has completed his tenure of posting..." It also says that, every year in January, the "competent authority shall prepare a list of government servants due for transfer in the month of April and May". The Act says that, under ordinary circumstances, the transfer of government servants should take place only once a year.

(Source: Times of India, 06 May 2014)

RTI activist appointed consultant in admin reforms dept

The Delhi government has appointed RTI activist Subhash Chandra Agrawal as a consultant in its administrative reforms (AR) department for a period of one year. While complete details of his duties are still to be notified, sources said Aggarwal's primary responsibility would be as an advisor to government authorities for better implementation of the Right to Information (RTI).

"I will be primarily working on improving the handling of RTI queries, which includes understanding of the queries and giving more professional responses. I have filed numerous RTIs and I am aware of the shortcomings of the system, which will help me to guide officials. I will try to include the Delhi government and its arms amongst

the best-rated public authorities to respond to RTI petitions," Aggarwal said. "I will also contact former and existing Central Information Commissioners dealing with petitions filed at CIC in respect of public authorities concerning the Delhi government for their valuable feedback," he said.

Aggarwal, who took over his new post on April 5, said he would be working from Karkardooma, where he will join on Tuesday. He said he would start with meeting officials to understand their difficulties in handling RTI petitions at Delhi government and sub-ordinate offices. "My appointment endorses deep commitment of the L-G for service to people of Delhi by inducing maximum possible transparency in governance," he said.

(Source: Indian Express, 06 May 2014)

Gujarat turns down RTI query on Lokayukta appointment

MUMBAI: Narendra Modi-led Gujarat government is not willing to disclose how much it spent challenging the power to appoint a Lokayukta by Governor Kamla Beniwal. However, it is ready to show the files containing the information.

Mumbai-based activist Anil Galgali had sought to know from the Gujarat government under the Right to Information Act about how much expenses the state had incurred in hiring lawyers while challenging Beniwal's decision to appoint a Lokayukta, first in the Gujarat High Court and then in the Supreme Court. The government lost the case in both the courts. Galgali's query was sent to the Deputy secretary and Public Information officer of the Law Department DA Vora by the General Administration Department's public information officer Ashok Dave. Vora didn't provide the information and instead wrote back to Dave saying,

"The law offices fees is paid according to Law Officer Rules 2009 and the expenses incurred by the Government is maintained by the GAD."

In a separate letter to Galgali, Vora said the case-wise information cannot be provided to him, but the activist could come to Gujarat and 'inspect' the files containing the information. "I had heard a lot about Modi speaking about transparency in administration. It was a simple query about how much money the government has spent on hiring lawyers against the decision of Kamla Beniwal. Yet surprisingly the Modi government is not ready to reveal it," said Galgali. He added that the reply of the Gujarat government was against the RTI Act. "How can they ask people to come over to their state and look at the papers? They are supposed to provide it by post. Obviously there is something to hide."

(Source: The Economic Times, 06 May 2014)

Remembering Ashish Bose and Khushwant Singh

Dr N Bhaskara Rao

I was shocked to read about the sudden passing of Dr Ashish Bose April 7. He has been a dear friend of mine for 40 years – since the days of vasectomy camps the early 1970s, when I was part of the Health Ministry's team of Red Triangle and 'Do ya Teen' campaign. That was when Dr Bose came up with acronym, BIMARU States and influenced national policy priorities in a significant way.

As members of the first ever National Committee on Population Planning which was headed by Dr M S Swaminathan, Dr Bose and myself had several rounds of discussions. Also, as members of the Managing Committee of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare for two terms, we both shared our concerns about reliance on foreign expert models on grassroots realities. More recently, last year, he delivered a national lecture organized by CMS on Analysing and Envisioning – "The Challenge of Population Stabilisation in India", when he summed up twists and turns in the trends since he had come up with BIMARU referring to 2011 Census.

Dr Bose was a man of integrity and concerns. He always believed in taking action provoking people. He never hesitated to say what needed to be said whether it is a Prime Minister or his own colleague. He was much more than a demographer. He was a visionary social scientist. One should take inspiration from Ashish Bose, who had this profound ability to make complex issues and voluminous data simple and understandable.

In Khushwant Singh, I have lost another dear friend. He was an amazing person of so many pleasant colors, creativities and impeccable credentials. I first met him in early 1970s, when he posed a challenge to conduct a survey on extramarital affairs. CMS took up the challenge and findings of this survey were featured as a cover story of the Illustrated Weekly of India. Nearly 20 years later, I had the privilege of going around with him nook and corner of the country for the first ever Social Audit Panel in India. I can never forget the way he heckled me for visiting Vaishno Devi with my family on our way to Leh. In an unprecedented way, he wrote about me twice in his well known weekly column, first in 1992 and then again in 1996, extracts of which are reproduced here:

With Malice towards one and all..... Khushwant Singh

Complaints against inefficiency and corruption continue to increase. Is there anything we can do about them?

The late Mr. Rajesh Pilot was sure we can. He instituted a Social Audit Committee under retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, P.N. Bhagwati, to go a round the country, listen to concerned citizens and suggest measures to spruce up the services. "We are not report-oriented but an action-oriented committee," says social scientist N. Bhaskara Rao, convener of the panel. He is a slave driver. No sooner a session with the public is over, he dictates the officials present: "These can be rectified immediately; these will take a little time – a week or so; there we will take up with the Minister."

Other members of the panel are experts in their own fields. B.G. Deshmukh is a retired Cabinet Secretary. He knows how to circumvent bureaucratic red-tape. Air Marshal J.K. Seth (Retd.) is a technocrat who knows about computers and chips. Vice-Admiral S.C. Chopra, (Retd.) who looks like King George V, is equally familiar with the latest tele-communications gadgetry. I am the joker in the pack.



HOW often does your telephone go dead? How long does it take you to bring it back to life? How much did you have to bribe the lineman to have your malfunctioned telephone become operable? How many times have you been shocked to telephone bills for calls you did not make? How long does a letter posted from a neighbouring town, take to reach you? How many times have newspapers containing oblique questions against our tele-communications and postal services. Statistics put out by the departments concerned make impressive reading. Nevertheless, complaints against inefficiency and corruption continue to increase. Is there anything we can do about them?

Yes, thinks Minister Rajesh Pilot. He instituted a Social Audit Committee under retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court P. N. Bhagwati to go round the country, listen to concerned citizens and suggest measures to spruce up the services. "We are not report-oriented but an action-oriented committee," says social scientist N. Bhaskara Rao, convener of the panel. He is a slave driver. No sooner a session with the public is over, he dictates the officials present: "These can be rectified immediately; these will take a little time—a week or so; those we will take up with the Minister."

Other members of the panel are experts in their own fields. B. G. Deshmukh is a retired Cabinet Secretary. He knows how to circumvent bureaucratic red-tape. Air Marshal J. K. Seth (Retd.) is a technocrat who knows about computers and chips. Vice-Admiral S. C. Chopra (Retd.) who looks like King George V, is equally familiar with the latest tele-communications gadgetry. I am the joker in the pack. My only function is what I am performing now viz. to tell the public what the officials are doing and to come forward with practical suggestions of what we can do.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 27 June 1992)

What Stars don't foretell

No Sooner are the elections announced, prognostication of the outcome set in fast and furious? Three groups of people indulge in guessing the results. The first to begin braying about them are politicians whose fortunes are at stake. They can be forgiven because their forecasts are wildly wishful. If they don't bray loud enough, people would think they lost the battle before it was fought. Next come astrologers. The stars they rely on speak in different languages to those who believe their destinies are guided by their conjunctions. Hence we have dozens of astrological forecasts at variance with each other. And finally we have public opinion polls carried out by different organizations, newspapers and journals. They carry out simple surveys and use complicated formulae to arrive at conclusions. They too can be woefully wrong. Our two famous election specialists Prannoy Roy and Vinod Dua bank on Marg surveys. Dr Bhaskar Rao's Centre for Media Studies, I have found provides the most accurate and in-depth polling data and other information. I first heard of it when Mrs Gandhi lifted the Emergency and announced the general elections. She had been assured by the I.B. and her chamchas that the Emergency had been very popular and she would win easily. Bhaskara Rao was the first to forecast that her vote-base in the Hindi-belt had eroded by 10 per cent and she would lose her seat. A few years later, he predicted a fortnight before the 1980 elections that Mrs Gandhi and her party would return to power with more than 300 seats in the Lok Sabha. He was again right. With uncanny accuracy, he was able to foresee the emergence and reemergence of N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra and the States' elections results in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, UP, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Orissa.

"three-score years of age", a masonry hold that age brings wisdom. And wisdom is what we expect from our leaders. There is no reason why we cannot combine the wisdom of elder statesmen with youthful vigour of the younger generation.

What Stars don't foretell

WHEN elections are announced, can forecasters be far behind? Three groups of people indulge in guessing the results. The first to begin braying about them are politicians whose fortunes are at stake. They can be forgiven because their forecasts are wildly wishful. If they don't bray loud enough about how they and the party they support would sweep the polls, people would think they had lost the battle before it was fought. Next come astrologers. The stars they rely on speak in different languages to those who believe their destinies are guided by their conjunctions. Hence we have dozens of astrological forecasts at variance with each other. Only the mentally retarded believe in astrology. And finally we have public opinion polls carried out by different organizations, newspapers and journals. They carry out simple surveys and use complicated formulae to arrive at conclusions. They too can be woefully wrong. Our two famous election specialists Prannoy Roy and Vinod Dua bank on Marg surveys. I have found Dr Bhaskar Rao's Centre for Media Studies as accurate as any in the field. I first heard of it when Mrs Gandhi lifted the Emergency and announced general elections. She had been assured by the I.B. and her chamchas that the Emergency had been very popular and she would win easily. Bhaskara Rao was the first to forecast that her vote-base in the Hindi-belt had eroded by 10 per cent and she would lose her seat. A few years later, he predicted a fortnight before the 1980 elections that Mrs Gandhi and her party would return to power with more than 300 seats in the Lok Sabha. He was again right. With uncanny accuracy, he was able to foresee the emergence and reemergence of N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra and the States' elections results in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, UP, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Orissa.



Dr. Bhaskar Rao, Delhi and Orissa. Who is the Bhaskar Rao? As his name indicates, he is an Andhra. He is the son of a teacher and a teacher himself. He specialized in Mass Media before he became a "Pollster Rao." Apart from evolving his own techniques to read the pulse of the people, he is the originator of the idea of Social Audit in the working of government departments which have to deal directly with the people. Rajesh Pilot as Minister of Communications was impressed with the idea and set up the Social Audit Panel for his Ministry. The panel consisted of six members, all of them unconnected with politics and serving in honorary capacity. Its brief was to have consumers of telecommunication and postal services to air their grievances in the presence of officers concerned. Every open house meeting was followed by a meeting with the officials and they were asked to put down in writing what the grievances would be rectified. Such meetings took place in every state capital and large towns. There is no doubt that asking officials to account for their actions on overights toned up the telecommunication and postal services.

Orissa. Bhaskar Rao, an Andhra it is the son of a teacher and a teacher himself. He specialized in Mass Media before he became a "Pollster Rao". Apart from evolving his own techniques to read the pulse of the people, he is the originator of the idea of Social Audit in the working of government departments which have to deal directly with the people. Rajesh Pilot as Minister of Communications was impressed with his idea and set up the Social Audit Panel for his Ministry. The panel consisted of six members all of them unconnected with politics and serving in honorary capacities. Its brief was to have consumers of telecommunication and postal services to air their grievances in the presence of officers concerned. Every open house meeting was followed by another meeting with the officials and they were asked to put down in writing when the grievances would be rectified. Such meetings took place in every state capital and large towns. There is no doubt that asking officials to account for their actions on overights toned up the telecommunication and postal services.

Old Age & Leadership

With the first rains came fire flies (Juggoons); they could be seen flitting about like living sparks in the herbage. Roshanara Garden beyond Sahi Mandi was their favourite habitat but they could be seen at night in all gardens. I have not seen a Juggoon in Delhi for many years. Then there were moths by the thousands hanging round lights like snowflakes in a snow storm. Last year they were there; this year there was not one. In past years no sooner were the lawns flooded with water, frogs were reborn, their croaking came in waves of sound throughout the night. This year not a single frog was heard in our vicinity. Then there were bugs and beetles which came with the monsoon. Red and Black beetles flew about in gardens. Velvet lady birds and cicadellas (with red spots on their backs) were crisscrossed about. For some years I have not seen any sign of these bugs or beetles. What has happened in all these lovely strata? Have pesticides destroyed them but ever?

Rajesh Pilot was succeeded by Pandit Sukh Ram. Unfortunately he politicized the Social Audit Panel by dropping Bhaskar Rao who was the moving spirit behind the experiment and putting in his favorites on the panel. But the panel continues to limp along and doing as best it can.

However, Bhaskar Rao's idea of making government departments accountable has caught on. The Ministry of Environment and Forests is setting up a Social Audit Panel to look into the functioning of its afforestation plans and preservation of wild life by officials and the truth behind their claims. The government has appointed over a lot to men like Bhaskar Rao.

What's Happened to our Monsoons? I AM not so much concerned with the time we get the first monsoon showers or whether it's been a good or a bad monsoon as with the mysterious disappearance of insects and amphibians which came into existence with it.

Free Publicity

I HAVE wondered why no name of over of condors has thought of DUFFER as a brand name of his product. Apart from the word suggesting what function it performs, this brand name would ensure the product free publicity in the entire length and breadth of the country as the slogan is written in the back of heavy vehicles - Use Duffer At Night.

(Contributed by Mr. G. B. Singh, Delhi)
KHUSHWANT SINGH
(Since Mr. Khushwant Singh is away on holiday, there will be no column next week.)

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 05 October 1996)

Youth faces arrest for anti-Modi Facebook comment

A Goan youth who had allegedly posted comments against Prime Minister designate Narendra Modi on his Facebook account during the Lok Sabha election campaign, is likely to face arrest after a local court rejected his anticipatory bail plea here on Friday.

The district and sessions court rejected the bail plea of naval engineer Devu Chodankar, after a local cybercrime cell investigating the complaint against him claimed that his Facebook post was a larger gameplan to “promote communal and social disharmony” in the state. The post was withdrawn by Chodankar later.

Goan businessman Atul Pai Kane, who heads the BJP-led Goa government’s committee on investment and industrial policy, had lodged a complaint against Chodankar, who is currently out of station.

The police had filed an FIR under Section 153(A), 295(A) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), besides Section 125 of the Representation of People Act as well as Section 66-A of the Information Technology Act.

Cybercrime police inspector Rajesh Job told the court on Friday, that he opposed the anticipatory bail to Chodankar and that his custodial interrogation is “essential” to find out any motive of “a larger game plan to promote communal and social disharmony” in the state.

What’App picture lands youth in jail

A student hailing from Bhatkal was arrested by the police in Bangalore for sending an objectionable message on PM-designate Narendra Modi. The management student is in Bangalore along with four other friends for a one-month internship. He allegedly sent the message by WhatsApp to an activist in Belgaum on May 14. The activist, who did not know the sender of message, saw the message only on May 20, four days after the general election results were announced. He immediately rushed to Kanapur police station in Belgaum to file a complaint. Later it turned out the message did not originate from the student’s phone but from somewhere else.

(Source: Bangalore Mirror , 26 May 2014)

It costs the Government Rs 3.65 to deliver food worth Rs.1

The Government spends Rs.3.65 to deliver food worth Rs.1. Despite this, 57 per cent of subsidized grains do not reach the target group, with close to 36 per cent siphoned off from the supply chain, according to Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Planning Commission.

The IEO was set up to undertake impartial and objective assessment of various public programmes and improve the effectiveness of public intervention. Ajay Chibber, a former UN official, has been appointed Director-General of IEO. Commenting on health schemes, the IEO chief said that the maternal and child mortality rate is over 300 per 100,000 live births in States such as Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Assam. Over two million Indian children die every year before they are 28 days old. However, some States, such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, have managed to lower the mortality rate to around 100 per 100,000 live births. The evaluation of these sectors will provide pointers on why some States do better than others. It will also help in making national programmes more flexible, better adapted to regional requirements and drive the policies to make this happen, the office said. The IEO noted that in 2013-14, the Government had budgeted around Rs.2 lakh crore for its flagship programmes. The money was supposed to improve basic services such as education, health, sanitation, child support, maternal health, rural roads, access to electricity, housing and guaranteed employment, among others. But the results have been mixed and varied across States and districts

(Source: Hindu Business Line, 27 February 2014)

Why media is like ice cream?

Matthew Gentzkow is the man who explained why the media are like ice cream. Gentzkow, who teaches at the University of Chicago, has just won the John Bates Clark Medal for an outstanding American economist under 40 (he's 38). He has some interesting ideas about the modern media, which he culled by studying traditional media, namely, newspapers.

Along with economist Jesse Shapiro, also of Chicago, Gentzkow examined the ideological "slant" of newspapers by identifying various words and phrases favored by liberals or conservatives. For instance, conservatives often say "illegal aliens" when liberals prefer "undocumented workers." Another example: What liberals refer to as "the estate tax," conservatives call "the death tax." By tallying newspapers' use of liberal and conservative phrases, Gentzkow and Shapiro determined papers' political slant. This compromised their "objective" pursuit of the news.

But why are some papers more liberal and others more conservative? That's the crucial question.

Conventional wisdom holds that publishers impose their views on newsrooms. Not so, say Gentzkow and Shapiro. What actually happens is both innocent and insidious. Papers with more Republican readers tend to provide more conservative stories and language; papers in more liberal areas lean left in their coverage and story selection. The study involved 1,000 phrases reviewed in 429 newspapers, representing about 70 percent of the nation's circulation. To gauge the politics of newspaper readers, Zip code-level data on voting patterns and circulation were matched.

This is how the media resemble ice cream, Gentzkow said in an interview. Just as ice cream makers give customers the flavors they want, newspapers give their readers the stories and slant they want. It's a market phenomenon. Ice cream makers strive to maximize ice cream consumption and profits. Papers try to maximize readership and

profits. Newspapers are commercial enterprises that respond to economic signals and incentives. Editors, producers and reporters sense what appeals to their readers and try to satisfy these tastes.

Applied to cable news channels and the Internet, these same forces polarize politics. This is most apparent on cable, where MSNBC and Fox News have staked out liberal and conservative turf. Similar pressures affect the Internet: Conservatives favor the Drudge Report; liberals, the Huffington Post. By contrast, the shrinking mainstream media (newspapers, network television, news magazines) competed for more centrist audiences. Today, technology contributes to political polarization.

Gentzkow and Shapiro did another study to measure how much the digital media had abetted polarization. Not surprisingly, they found that cable and the Internet are more polarizing than the traditional mainstream media. But they also found that liberals and conservatives visit the other side's outlets frequently and aren't exposed to only one point of view. Also, many stories have no evident political slant.

Still, the larger message is that online identities are shaped by more than ideological competition. Commercial success depends on differentiating Web sites and cable channels from their rivals and attracting bigger audiences of true believers. Commercial imperatives dictate editorial decisions, in ways that are sometimes obvious and sometimes subtle. Cable news channels and Web sites feature stories and guests that please their core audiences and help to maximize viewers, unique page visits, etc. or whatever.

Cable and the Internet have splintered media audiences and, thereby, created ferocious fights for ever-larger shares of ever-smaller fragments of the old mass market. The logic is powerful that the commercial imperatives of the new technologies will deepen the country's political divisions. People will stick to their familiar political flavors and disparage those who choose differently.

(Source: *The Hindu*, 25 April 2014)

Mobiles revolutionise reading in developing world

Unesco is pointing to a “mobile reading revolution” in developing countries after a year-long study found that adults and children are increasingly reading multiple books and stories on their phones.

Nearly 5,000 people in seven countries — Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe — took part in the research, the largest study of its kind to date, which found that 62 per cent of respondents are reading more. One in three said they read to children from their mobile phones, and 90 per cent of respondents said they would be spending more time reading on their mobile phones in the next year.

The study, says Unesco in its report, found that “people read more when they read on mobile devices, that they enjoy reading more, and that people commonly read books and stories to children from mobile devices”.

“The study shows that mobile reading represents a promising, if still under-utilised, pathway to text,” says the report, for which Unesco partnered with Worldreader — a global not-for-profit organisation that works to bring digital books to readers around the world — and Nokia.

The report’s author, Mark West, said that the key conclusion from the study was that “mobile devices can help people develop, sustain and enhance their literacy skills”.

Reasons given by respondents for reading on mobiles were convenience, affordability and lack of access to books. In Zimbabwe, Unesco said the cost of reading a book on a mobile was between 5 to 6 cents, while a paperback bestseller would cost around \$12. Unesco pointed to data from the U.N., which shows that of the seven billion people on earth, more than six billion now have access to a working mobile phone.

The survey also found that mobile reading is a “huge tool of empowerment for women”, said Worldreader’s Nadja Borovac. While 77 per cent of mobile readers in developing countries are male, women spend an average of 207 minutes per month reading on their mobile phones, compared to men’s 33 minutes. “Men use mobiles for reading most, but the most active readers are women,” said Ms. Borovac. She said that mobile reading was “not a future phenomenon, but something which is happening today”.

(Source: *The Hindu*, 25 April 2014)

Here’s a lion sleeping in rule book

There is a very powerful law in Maharashtra that can empower citizens if used effectively, says Sailesh Gandhi. Lokadhikar (a collective of many activists) calls it the Right To Services Act, whereas some people call it the Transfers & Delays Act.

Its actual name is a mouthful: ‘Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act (Act 21 of 2006)’. The first part –Chapter 2- specifies that government servants must have a tenure of three years and should normally be transferred only in April or May. If this is violated, reasons must be given.

Citizens can use this to curb arbitrary transfers of good officers like Khemka or Pardeshi by seeking the reasons using the RTI Act. Better still,

they can insist that the reasons must be displayed on the website as per a recent order issued in Vijay Kumbhar’s case by Shri Ratnakar Gaikwad Chief Information Commissioner of the State.

Section 8 mandates that all departments must publish a citizen’s charter, which should identify the services provided to the citizens along with the timeframe in which the service should be provided.

This charter must be updated every year. If citizens press for getting this implemented, it would make their dealings with government departments easier and result in making babus accountable.

Section 10 effectively says that no decision on any file can take more than 45 days if a matter has to be decided within the department, and not more than 90 days where other departments have to be consulted.

(Source: *DNA*, 15 May 2014)



Social Media Watch

<p>Ittikhar Gilani @ittikhargilani · May 25</p> <p>In era of information, can't v've oath of transparency than secrecy? Wy minister need to keep secrets frm public who chose thm to govern?</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>	<p>AmnestyInternational @amnesty</p> <p>A year ago, Obama promised more #transparency over use of #drones. Since then, not 1 memo declassified. pic.twitter.com/GdQ3SGvngU</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>
<p>Reuters India @ReutersIndia</p> <p>New Indian government will be judged on how it tackles graft – Transparency International reut.rs/1gmrFA9</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>	<p>Vinita Deshmukh @VinitaDeshmukh</p> <p>The Prime Minister's website pmindia.nic.in is full of life. Let us see if it becomes full of transparency too!</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>
<p>Subramanian Swamy @Swamy39</p> <p>India needs today a truly competitive market economy with strict level playing field and transparency in the exercise of discretionary power</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>	<p>Ashim Sen @aashimsen</p> <p>Even in a free democratic secular India there are more don'ts than do's. Freedom has a price after-all, absolute transparency.</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>
<p>Gini R Khan @giniromet</p> <p>When Modi could bring good governance and transparency to Gujarat, why can't he fix India's corruption-ridden, torpid administration</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>	<p>Jaideep A. Prabhu @orsoraggiante</p> <p>Oodles of Nuclear Plant Data on US NRC website: goo.gl/sU6ZHp India's AEC can learn a thing or two about transparency from this</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>
<p>KPMG India @KPMGIndia</p> <p>There is a need for simplification & transparency in the land acquisition process. bit.ly/ease-of-doing-...</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>	<p>Matthew Rees @reesmf</p> <p>It's time to bring transparency to the BBC's electoral reporting to remove any suspicion of bias - please sign: you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/bias...</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>
<p>MediaNama.com @medianama</p> <p>India leads in Facebook censorship with 4,765 content pieces blocked in H2 2013 goo.gl/fb/9TSgI</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>	<p>Raja Seevan @rajaseevan</p> <p>INDIA needs Efficiency, Transparency and Accountability across all sectors, people should stop asking whats in it for me? instead contribute</p> <p>↳ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More</p>

भारत में पहले आम चुनाव 1952 में हुए थे जिन्हें सफलतापूर्वक सम्पन्न करने में चुनाव आयोग ने आधिकारिक रूप से करीब साढ़े दस करोड़ रुपए खर्च किए थे जबकि 2014 में जारी लोक सभा चुनावों के लिए चुनाव आयोग लगभग 5,000 करोड़ रुपए खर्च कर रहा है। हालांकि जानकारों के मुताबिक 1952 में हुए पहले आम चुनाव में करीब 400 करोड़ रुपए खर्च हुए थे। हैदराबाद की बात ये है कि चुनाव सन्वन्धी खर्चों पर नज़र बनाए रखनी वाली दो प्रमुख संस्थाओं के अनुसार इस बार चुनाव आयोग और सभी राजनीतिक दलों का मिलानुला खर्च 30,000 करोड़ रुपए के आंकड़े को पार कर जाएगा बीबीसी के अनुसार सेंटर फॉर मीडिया स्टडीज और एंथ्रोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्मस का मानना है कि इस हिसाब से मौजूदा लोक सभा चुनाव अब तक के सबसे खर्चीले चुनाव हो जाएंगे। इस खर्च के बीच भारत में हो रहे इन चुनावों ने एक और रिकॉर्ड बना डाला है क्योंकि अब अमरीकी राष्ट्रपति चुनाव के बाद ये दुनिया के दूसरे सबसे महंगे चुनाव कहलाए जायेंगे। आखिर किन चीजों और खर्चों के चलते ये आंकड़े आसमान छूते जा रहे हैं?

सेंटर फॉर मीडिया स्टडीज के चेयरमैन एन भास्कर राव कहते हैं कि आयोग को ही इस चुनाव में पांच से सात हजार करोड़ खर्च करने

30,000 करोड़ का चुनाव

भारत में अब तक का सबसे महंगा चुनाव



पड़ सकते हैं। पहला जो खर्च है जो चुनाव आयोग ब्युज से लेकर सरकारी अफसरों की तैनाती और सुरक्षा प्रदान करने में लगाता है। इस बार यही खर्च 5,000 से लेकर 7,000 करोड़ रुपए तक हो जाएगा, क्योंकि कई इलाकों में अतिरिक्त सुरक्षा और तैनाती की जरूरत पड़ रही है। ये सिर्फ लोक सभा चुनाव करने का खर्च है, विधान सभा चुनावों का नहीं।

चुनावों में दूसरा सबसे बड़ा खर्च होता है विभिन्न राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा विधान, प्रचार और उम्मीदवारों पर किया जाने वाला खर्च। तीसरी श्रेणी पर उम्मीदवारों द्वारा किया जाने वाला खर्च होता है जो वे अपने चुनाव क्षेत्र में करते हैं। राव के मुताबिक ये यही खर्च होता है जिस पर चुनाव आयोग ने लगभग रणनीति की कोशिश भी की है और फिलहाल कोई भी उम्मीदवार 70 लाख रुपए से अधिक का खर्च एक चुनाव में नहीं कर सकता। उन्होंने बताया: भारत में मुश्किल यही है कि

उन्होंने पांचवां और अहम वन चुनाव खर्च भी बताया: कॉरपोरेट या बड़े ब्युपार समूहों द्वारा चुनाव में खर्च किया जा रहा रुपया अब बेहिसाब होता जा रहा है। सभी के अपने मकसद होते हैं।

2014 के आम चुनावों में साफ देखा गया है कि बड़े राजनेता अगर दिन में तीन रैली करते हैं तो वो रैलियों 1000-2000 किलोमीटर तक की रेंज में भी हो सकती हैं। इसके लिए करीब 400 निजी हेलीकॉप्टरों की सेवाएं ली जा रही हैं और दर्जनों निजी विमान एक हवाई पट्टी से दूसरी तक की पूरी यात्रा चंद मंटे में ही पूरी कर लेते हैं। सेंटर फॉर मीडिया स्टडीज द्वारा जमा किए गए आंकड़ों के अनुसार अब तक करीब 400 करोड़ रुपए तो सिर्फ हेलीकॉप्टरों पर ही खर्च किया जा चुका है।

हा इन सबका एक फायदा यह नजर आ रहा है कि इस बार संभवतः लगभग सभी क्षेत्रों में रिकॉर्ड वोटिंग भी हुई नजर आ रही है। अब यह 16 मई को पूरा चलेगा कि इसका किसको किसका फायदा हुआ।

अभी भी वोट फर्क नोट का चलन है यानी मतदाताओं को पैसा पहुंचाना या फिर उनके लिए जरूरत की चीजें मुहैया करवाना आम बात है। खास बात ये है कि इसमें काले धन का प्रयोग अभी भी प्रचलन में है। लंबी यात्रा खर्च मीडिया के हिस्से का है और जानकारों के अनुसार 2014 के आम चुनावों में पार्टीयों ने टेलीविजन चैनलों, अखबारों और रेडियो स्टेशनों में अपने प्रचार के लिए जितना खर्च किया है वो कम से कम दो पिछले

आम चुनावों के बराबर है। एंथ्रोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्मस के प्रमुख अफिल वर्मा का मत है कि मीडिया में अपनी पब्लिसिटी करवाने के लिए राजनीतिक दल और उम्मीदवार कितना पैसा सुटते हैं इसका हिसाब शायद ही किसी के पास हो। राव ने भी बताया कि उनकी संस्था के चुनाव सन्वन्धी शोध में पता चला कि महज 125 करोड़ रुपए तो सिर्फ ओपिनियन पोल करने में ही खर्च कर दिए गए।

JANSATTA NEW DELHI APRIL 24, 2014

पांच साल में चुनावों पर खर्च 1.5 लाख करोड़ के पार

नई दिल्ली, 23 अप्रैल (भाषा)। लोकसभा चुनावों के छठे चरण के करीब पहुंचने के बीच एक नई अध्ययन रपट जारी की गई है जिसमें कहा गया है कि पिछले पांच साल में देश में हुए विभिन्न चुनावों में कुल राशि डेढ़ लाख करोड़ रुपए से ऊपर की राशि खर्च की गई और इसमें से आधे से अधिक धन 'बैंगामी स्रोतों' से आया था। सेंटर फार मीडिया (सीएमएस) द्वारा करया गया यह अध्ययन ऐसे समय में सामने आया है जब विभिन्न राजनीतिक दल इस बार के लोकसभा चुनावों में एक दूसरे पर कालेधन का इस्तेमाल करने आरोप लगा रहे हैं। सात अप्रैल को शुरू यह चुनाव 12 मई तक चलेगा। अभी तक पांच चरणों में 232 लोकसभा सीटों पर मतदान हो चुके हैं, जबकि बाकी चार चरण में 311 सीटों पर मतदान होने हैं। कई ऐसे मामले देखे गए हैं। इस दौरान निर्वाचन आयोग ने कालेधन के

प्रयोग पर निगरानी तेज करते हुए देशभर में बड़ी मात्रा में नकदी और अन्य प्रतिबंधित चीजें बरामद की हैं। सीएमएस के अध्ययन के मुताबिक, पिछले पांच साल में भारत में विभिन्न चुनावों के दौरान 1,50,000 करोड़ रुपए से अधिक धन खर्च किया गया। सीएमएस के चेयरमैन एन. भास्कर राव ने बताया- यह एक मोटा अनुमान है। इस भारी भरकम राशि में से आधे से अधिक राशि कालाधन है। चुनावों के लिए कालेधन का इस्तेमाल हमारे देश में सभी भ्रष्टाचार की जननी है। सीएमएस की रपट में कहा गया है कि डेढ़ लाख करोड़ रुपए में से 20 फीसद या 30,000 करोड़ रुपए चालू लोक सभा चुनावों में खर्च किए जाने का अनुमान है। इस कुल राशि का एक तिहाई या 45,000-50,000 करोड़ रुपए राज्यों के विधान सभा चुनावों में खर्च किए गए। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, करीब

30,000 करोड़ रुपए पंचायतों के चुनावों पर, 20,000 करोड़ रुपए मंडलों के लिए, 15,000 करोड़ रुपए नगर निगमों के लिए और 10,000 करोड़ रुपए जिला परिषदों के लिए खर्च किए गए। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है- लोकसभा चुनावों में मीडिया प्रचार अभियान (25 फीसद) और सत्तारूढ़ पार्टियों द्वारा चुनाव पूर्व खर्च (20-25 फीसद) का इसमें अहम हिस्सा है। अध्ययन के मुताबिक- छोटें चुनावों में, चीजें अलग होती हैं। मीडिया पर खर्च बहुत कम होता है और मंडलों व पंचायतों में रैलियों पर खर्च एक तरह से न के बराबर होता है। उन्होंने दावा किया कि स्थानीय चुनावों में राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा खर्च 10 फीसद से कम होता है, जबकि लोकसभा चुनाव में यह 20 फीसद होता है। यही दूसरी ओर, लोकसभा के मामले में उम्मीदवार द्वारा पार्टी टिकट हासिल करने के लिए बहुत अधिक धन खर्च किया जाता है।

RASHTRIA SAHARA NEW DELHI APRIL 24, 2014

पांच साल में चुनाव पर खर्च हुए 1.5 लाख करोड़ रुपए

इसमें से आधी से ज्यादा रकम काला धन होने का अंदेशा

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)। लोकसभा चुनावों के छठे चरण के करीब पहुंचने के बीच एक नई अध्ययन रपट जारी की गई है जिसमें कहा गया है कि पिछले पांच साल में देश में हुए विभिन्न चुनावों में डेढ़ लाख करोड़ रुपए से ऊपर की राशि खर्च की गई और इसमें से आधे से अधिक धन 'बैंगामी स्रोतों' से आया था। सेंटर फार मीडिया (सीएमएस) द्वारा

कराया गया यह अध्ययन ऐसे समय में सामने आया है जब विभिन्न राजनीतिक दल इस बार के लोक सभा चुनावों में एक दूसरे पर काले धन का इस्तेमाल करने आरोप लगा रहे हैं। सात अप्रैल को शुरू यह चुनाव 12 मई तक चलेगा। अभी तक पांच चरणों में 232 लोकसभा सीटों पर मतदान हो चुके हैं, जबकि बाकी चार चरण में 311 सीटों पर मतदान होने हैं। निर्वाचन आयोग ने काले धन के प्रयोग पर निगरानी तेज करते हुए देशभर में बड़ी मात्रा में नकदी और अन्य प्रतिबंधित चीजें बरामद की

हैं। सीएमएस के अध्ययन के मुताबिक, पिछले पांच साल में भारत में विभिन्न चुनावों के दौरान 1,50,000 करोड़ रुपए से अधिक धन खर्च किया गया। सीएमएस के चेयरमैन एन. भास्कर राव ने बताया, 'यह एक मोटा अनुमान है। इस भारी भरकम राशि में से आधे से अधिक रकम काला धन है। चुनावों के लिए काले धन का इस्तेमाल हमारे देश में सभी

ब्लैक मनी

- 30 हजार करोड़ मौजूदा लोक सभा चुनाव पर खर्च होने का अनुमान
- 50 हजार करोड़ राज्यों के विधानसभा चुनाव में खर्च किए गए
- पंचायत चुनावों पर खर्च किए गए लगभग 30 हजार करोड़ रुपए
- मंडलों व जिला परिषदों पर कुल 35 हजार करोड़ खर्च किए गए



प्रकार के भ्रष्टाचार का जनक है।' सीएमएस की रपट में कहा गया है कि डेढ़ लाख करोड़ रुपए में से 20 प्रतिशत या 30,000 करोड़ रुपए चालू लोक सभा चुनावों में खर्च किए जाने का अनुमान है। इस कुल राशि का एक तिहाई या 45,000-50,000 करोड़ रुपए राज्यों के विधान सभा चुनावों में खर्च किए गए। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, करीब 30,000 करोड़ रुपए पंचायतों

के चुनावों पर, 20,000 करोड़ रुपए मंडलों के लिए, 15,000 करोड़ रुपए नगर निगमों के लिए और 10,000 करोड़ रुपए जिला परिषदों के लिए खर्च किए गए। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है, 'लोकसभा चुनावों में मीडिया प्रचार अभियान (25 प्रतिशत) और सत्तारूढ़ पार्टियों द्वारा चुनाव पूर्व खर्च (20-25 प्रतिशत) का इसमें अहम हिस्सा है। अध्ययन के मुताबिक, 'छोटें चुनावों में, चीजें अलग होती हैं। मीडिया पर खर्च बहुत कम होता है और मंडलों व पंचायतों में रैलियों पर खर्च एक तरह से न के बराबर होता है।' उन्होंने दावा किया कि स्थानीय चुनावों में राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा खर्च 10 प्रतिशत से कम होता है, जबकि लोकसभा चुनाव में यह 20 प्रतिशत होता है।

यही दूसरी ओर, लोकसभा के मामले में उम्मीदवार द्वारा पार्टी टिकट हासिल करने के लिए बहुत अधिक धन खर्च किया जाता है।'