



MEDIA HABITS AND INFORMATION LEVEL OF CITY CORPORATORS IN KARNATAKA STATE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Preamble

Adequate studies are not carried out in India on the media habits of elected representatives even though cultivation of healthy media habits improves the profile and performance of the elected representatives. The present study assumes academic significance since media habits and information level of elected representatives' matter most from research and development point of view.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The media habits of elected representatives warrant serious research since they affect their day to day activities and political performance under normal circumstances. Studies which are directly related to the topic include – Atkin and Gary (1976), Alger (1989), McCombs and Protes (1991), West (1994), Kaid and Christine (1995), Perloff (1998), Davis (1999), Freedman and Ken (1999), Wattenberg et.al (1999), Anderson and Bushman (2001), Coleman (2001), Goldstein and Paul (2002), Herman and Chomsky (2002), Lee Kaid (2002), Jackson (2003), Odendaal (2003), Graber (2004), Machaiah (2006) Carrizales (2008), Hanssen (2008), Anduiza et.al (2009), Baud and De (2009), Pew Internet (2009), Calista et.al (2010), Lenhart et.al (2010), Karunasena et.al (2011), Olube (2013), Shailashree (2013) and BBC (2014). A synthesis of the available literature suggests that adequate scientific investigations are not carried out by the past researchers on the media habits and information level of city corporators of Karnataka state.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Media provide food for thought and action to all sections of society including the elected representatives. The media also sensitize the elected representatives and other stakeholders of good governance through intellectually sound ideas and guidelines. The information level of the elected representatives needs to be upgraded on the basis of cultivation of healthy media habits. The environment is changing rapidly on account of several factors. The political environment is not an exception. The elected representatives should feel the pulse of the people who matter most in democracy. Scholars have examined the relationship between media and politics and observed that media have a definite bearing on the elected representatives. A synthesis of the available literature suggests that media habits of elected representatives are not fully and properly understood and evaluated by the past researchers. Therefore, the primary tasks of the present study are concerned with identifying reasonably representative sample of elected representatives of major city corporations of Karnataka state so as to assess their views on the influence of media on political agenda setting with reference to urban governance. The media habits of elected representatives are not scientifically examined by the scholars across the globe. Hence, the present study was carried out in the Karnataka state to understand the media habits and information level of elected representatives in urban government bodies like city corporations. The study provides vital insights into the exposure of the respondents to various communications media and technologies since it affects their profile and performance.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the communications media association of elected representatives,
- To assess the dependency of communications media by city corporators
- To analyze the uses of media for city corporators
- To examine the gratifications of media among city corporators; and
- To suggest appropriate strategies for the enhancement of the information level and status of performance of city corporators.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The major objective of the present study was to understand the role of various communications media in equipping the city corporators with relevant information for their day to day operations. The media habits and information level of the city corporator was also assessed by the researcher on the basis of certain criteria. The present study was planned and conducted in three stages. In the first stage, a pilot study was conducted in order to examine the feasibility and appropriateness of the tools and procedures of the study. In the second stage, interview schedules were developed and perfected in order to collect authentic primary data from the city corporators. In the third stage, appropriate scientific statistical analysis procedures were followed to ensure systematic data analysis and interpretation. Overall, the present study approached the problem through a systematic survey method which fits into the context of the present investigation.

Distribution of Study Area and Sample

Sl.No.	Name of the Area	No of Respondents
01	Mysore	125
02	Belgaum	166
03	Bangalore	198
04	Gulbarga	55
Total		N=544

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Demographic Features of the Respondents

- There was more number of male respondents (66.36%), 26-45years old respondents (55.15%), matriculation and pre-university level educational category (59.93%), business category (53.49%), low income groups (77.57%) and Bangalore and Belgaum revenue divisions (66.91%) among the study sample.

Background of City Corporators

- A majority of the male respondents (82.55%) and female respondents (90.71%) have opined that they were elected first and second times to the city corporations.
- A majority of the male respondents (56.23%) and female respondents (49.18%) have stated that they were not associated with any standing committees in the city corporations.
- A majority of the male (93.63%) and female (90.16%) respondents visited the wards daily.
- A majority of the male respondents (72.85%) and female respondents (73.77%) were associated with BJP and Congress which are major political parties at the national level.

Information Level of Elected Representatives

- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.71%) have enhanced their information level about the basic needs of the ward but the new media (64.89%) have failed to do justice in this regard.



- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (87.13%) have enhanced their information level about the civic amenities of the ward but the new media (70.22%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.15%) have enhanced their information level about the urban infrastructure development but the new media (64.71%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (87.13%) have enhanced their information level about the central government schemes but the new media (66.18%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.34%) have enhanced their information level about the state government schemes but the new media (63.24%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.79%) have enhanced their information level about the local-self-government schemes but the new media (65.99%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.42%) have enhanced their information level about the management of health and family welfare in the ward but the new media (66.36%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (83.64%) have enhanced their information level about the educational facilities of the ward but the new media (71.69%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.34%) have enhanced their information level about the local-self-governance but the new media (68.20%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.97%) have enhanced their information level about the redressal of public grievances in the ward but the new media (69.12%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.34%) have enhanced their information level about the adaptation of best practices in the ward but the new media (64.89%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.24%) have enhanced their information level about the crisis management in the ward but the new media (66.73%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.26%) have enhanced their information level about the women and children welfare activities of the ward but the new media (65.26%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.34%) have enhanced their information level about the welfare of dalits, backwards and minorities in the ward but the new media (67.65%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.42%) have enhanced their information level about the social obligations of the ward but the new media (75.0%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.44%) have enhanced their information level about the disaster management in the ward but the new media (71.32%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.15%) have enhanced their information level about the b needs and demands of people in the ward but the new media (66.54%) have failed to do justice in this regard.



Gratifications of Media among Elected Representatives

- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (93.20%) have satisfied them with respect to adaptation of best practices but the new media (65.81%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.44%) have satisfied them with respect to crisis management but the new media (71.51%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.44%) have satisfied them with respect to women and children welfare but the new media (65.44%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (87.87%) have satisfied them with respect to welfare of dalits, backwards and minorities but the new media (67.83%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.79%) have satisfied them with respect to social obligations but the new media (73.71%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.26%) have satisfied them with respect to disaster management but the new media (70.77%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (88.05%) have satisfied them with respect to needs and demands of people but the new media (69.85%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.63%) have satisfied them with respect to successful role models in the field of urban governance but the new media (66.54%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (86.03%) have satisfied them with respect to success stories in the field of urban governance but the new media (70.77%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (92.28%) have satisfied them with respect to problem- solving means and mechanisms but the new media (68.01%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.99%) have satisfied them with respect to suitable remedial measures in the field of urban governance but the new media (66.91%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.15%) have satisfied them with respect to pro-active role in the field of urban governance but the new media (68.01%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.52%) have satisfied them with respect to implementation of development schemes on the basis of active people's participation but the new media (69.12%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (89.71%) have satisfied them with respect to active social mobilization for better urban governance but the new media (69.30%) have failed to do justice in this regard.
- A majority of the city corporators of Karnataka state have stated that the traditional media (90.44%) have satisfied them with respect to active political mobilization for better urban environment but the new media (70.77%) have failed to do justice in this regard.



TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

H1. The information level of the city corporators in Karnataka state has increased about urban governance and development through traditional and new media exposure.

The data analysis clearly reveals that the traditional media such as inter-personal communication, print media and electronic media have enhanced the information level of city corporators of Karnataka state as compared to new media. Hence, the above hypothesis stands disproved according to the data analysis.

H2. The traditional and new media services have satisfied the needs of the city corporators for effective delivery of services in Karnataka state.

The data analysis clearly reveals that the traditional media such as inter-personal communication, print media and electronic media have satisfied the needs of the city corporators of Karnataka state as compared to new media. Hence, the above hypothesis stands disproved according to the data analysis.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of the findings of the study in general terms are given below.

Government of India

The bureaucratic control of corporation government is the biggest impediment to urban governance in India. The elected representatives continue to remain at the receiving end. The Government of India should realize the need for remodelling the structure of corporation government in order to ensure sound democratic management in the urban areas. A national pattern of municipal structure should be introduced to enhance administrative efficiency and public accountability. The responsibility of urban governance should be absolutely entrusted to the elected representatives. A strong political executive is imperative to develop a sense of responsibility and commitment in civic affairs. The obligatory and discretionary functions of office bearers and city corporators should be redefined and those who fail to discharge these functions should be brought to the book in order to safeguard public interest. There is need for coordination between the deliberative and executive wings in the city corporations to ensure smooth implementation of development projects. The government should also develop research, training, extension, publication and other activities which can improve the status of urban governance in India. Adequate budgetary allocations, institutional arrangements, human resources management, technological resources mobilization, community participation, program implementation, scientific evaluation and other aspects of urban governance should be addressed by the government.

Implications on Karnataka State Government

The Karnataka State amended the municipal acts to meet the requirement of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act. In India, local government is widely known as local self-government. The municipal corporation enjoys a greater measure of autonomy than other forms of local governments. Various acts were experimented and replaced for the establishment of municipal corporations. Practically, a municipal corporation is set up under a special statute which is passed by the state legislature. The persons with corrupt and criminal background should be prevented from contesting the elections. All functions of urban development boards constituted in the state should be brought under the jurisdiction of the respective municipal bodies. The elected representatives should be given adequate orientation to effectively supervise, investigate and inspect the various administrative and developmental units and activities. The elected representatives and officials should discharge their services which are essential to public health, a clean environment and good healthy living. Advanced solid waste management strategies should be adopted to keep the cities clean and safe. This necessitates the cooperation and coordination among various agencies, rather than an insular approach for better management of urban waste.

The elected representatives lack administrative experience. They are also unaware of the implementation of various development projects. The city corporators should be enabled to develop their knowledge, experience and expertise in order to make effective contribution to policy making and programme implementation at the local level. The state government should create adequate provisions for conduction of workshops on development of



proficiency, communication skill and leadership qualities of city corporators. New initiatives are also required to overcome digital divide for better e-governance and developmental endeavours.

CONCLUSION

The importance of urban development forming the core of sustainable national development strategies is realized by the stakeholders of national development. Media intervention for urban development and crisis management assumes significance in the new millennium in a developing nation like India. Active, willing and voluntary participation of various stakeholders of urban development is solicited in modern society. Communication strategy should be considered as a sub-system of integrated urban development in the country in general. The media institutions are required to sensitize the various stakeholders of urban development. The media and other urban development organizations should take advantage of opportunities to work together and provide need-based services to the mankind to enhance the status of urban development. The media should identify and communicate to the public specific measures that have either succeeded or failed to reduce the impact of several crises and hazards in modern times. Timely, adequate and relevant media services are required to facilitate appropriate individual and community action for better urban development. The present study reveals that digital divide exists in the modern society and elected representatives, officials and other stakeholders of urban development do not enjoy the benefit of access to new media even though they have the power to transform the urban society. The city corporations should enable the elected representatives, officials, community organizers and other stakeholders of urban development to cultivate healthy media habits and gain better insight and capacity to transform the lives of the people in the urban areas.

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