CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITTERATURE

2.1 Introduction to Review of Literature

The Researcher found very few studies on the Content Analysis of Tweets by Indian Politicians and Celebrities. However, there has been a lot a Research done by Political Scientists, Communication Scholars and Computer Science Researchers on this topic. However these studies pursue different Theoretical approaches, use different methods including advanced algorithms and are published in their own disciplines. Since these differences make it challenging to engage in Research coming out from other scientific backgrounds it has also led to fragmentation of evidence, even though the body of Research work is rich. The lack of interconnectivity between the disciplines of Political Science Research, Communication Research and Computer Science Research is a hindrance to such Computer-Mediated Communication.

Research in this area in India is limited to the use of Internet for Political Communication through party websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Blogs. The Researcher feels that most studies have used methods such as Network Analysis and Automated Sentiment Analysis and the Theories have been based on Communication, Political Theory and Psychological Effects.

There may be studies pertaining to this topic in India too, but the Researcher has been unable to find them online, and takes this opportunity to mention that this is one of the limitations of this Study. This Study began with the belief that the Content of Tweets of these Politicians and Celebrities speaks about the nature of role that they are playing in the society as Influencers. Presented here is a Literature Review of studies related to this topic.

Internet is referred to as an electronic network of networks connecting people and information through computers and mobile phones. This allows for interpersonal Communication and information retrieval at any time of the day.
Current research on the Internet and its implications focuses on Political Participation, Cultural Studies, its Impact on the Community, Impact on Organizations and Institutions as well as the ‘Digital Divide’.

2.2 Social Media related studies

A number of in-depth studies have been conducted at the international level on the use of Twitter by Politicians in countries such as USA, UK, Australia, Korea, Norway, Finland, Germany, France, Italy and other developed countries. The use of Twitter and other Social Media for civic protests and against totalitarian regimes too are well documented and researched. Considering the topic of the study and narrowing it down exclusively to the use of Twitter by Politicians and Celebrities and the implications that the Internet has on civic engagement, the studies listed here for the review of literature have been segregated under further sub topics such as Users and Gratification, Twitter and elections, Agenda Setting and Twitter and Celebrities.

The idea and basic need to be on a Social Media platform is to remain connected. Human beings continue to find the ways and means to stay connected to one another even as new forms of Communication such as instant messaging which is the basic idea behind a Tweet has evolved.

This self-perception theory has been explained by many scholars. Political expression is related to action on Social Media. It also engages individuals on Digital Media to express themselves politically and in turn mobilise others to participate. This act of participation for ‘public good’ can be an inexpensive affair for an individual following a Politician or Celebrity on Social Media. Most scholars have found it difficult to explain this phenomenon of human behaviour of why humans participate and what benefits it gives them. According to Downs (1957) and Olson (1965), who were instrumental in formulating this theory, two reasons do not justify why people participate for ‘public good’: firstly, the public good has been shared with everyone and second, an individual has very little influence. However, in the case of Twitter it can be seen as a paradoxical situation. People are seen voluntarily participating contradicting this Theory.

According to Self-Enhancement Theory, people usually try to elicit positive feedback that affirms their own ideas about their positive qualities. However, as a
matter of fact, people often make attempts to reaffirm such information and this is
done either through their own actions or through direct questioning. Different
Theories have been proposed by Researchers regarding the kind of feedback and
reactions that people often solicit from others. (Gilovich and Savitsky, 1999).

Self-Verification is important to people as it seeks to give them a sense of
stability in an unstable and unpredictable world. In addition, this confirmation is vital
to social interaction. This is because if other people see us as we see ourselves, they
will have a better idea of how to treat us, what to expect of us, and so forth. Therefore,
people generally prefer and seek out positive feedback about themselves, but mostly
for those attributes that they themselves view as positive, because positive self-views
are usually adaptive. (Taylor and Brown, 1994). Along the same Theories, it has been
proved that people’s autobiographical memory induces them to view themselves as
better and better over a period of time. (Wilson and Ross, 2003).

Twitter as a Communication Tool has established that there are many ways to
stay connected to those that a user chooses to follow on Twitter. As the saying goes,
“Birds of a feather flock together,” this adage does not hold true for Twitter. Twitter
users are not making connections with users of similar characteristics, but are
favouring making connections with users of dissimilar characteristics. For example,
users who Follow Celebrities or Politicians do not necessarily seek reciprocation
when they Tweet to them. The Follower is merely interested in the Content of the
Tweets of the Celebrity or Politician.

The use of Twitter by its users is successful due to the fact that the application
is shaped by the users who use it. An example for this is the use and creation of the
“hashtag” application. The hashtag “#” allows for Tweets to be grouped by topic or an
event by users with that particular post (Johnson, 2011). Users of Twitter all over the
globe can spontaneously generate Tweets along the same topic or event, and the
hashtag permits for easy searching and grouping of a topic on Twitter.

During the 2014 General Elections, #Results2014, #PMNaMo, #raceto272 and
#Elections2014 were some of the top trending hashtags on Twitter on May 16, 2014.
Twitter allows for the ever-evolving possibility of inviting users to contribute to the
progress of this application that will not only shape the future of the application, but
will also enable users to accomplish more sophisticated tasks of finding out what people are doing through the means of Tweets in keeping users connected to one another. (Farhi, 2009).

Batrinca and Treleaven (2014) conducted a study to survey the techniques, tools and platforms for Social Media analytics. The study was conducted to measure sentiment analysis, which is used to determine the attitude expressed by the text writer in Computer-Mediated Communication. The study is of the view that for researchers seeking to analyse Tweets, a major hurdle is to be able to access those Tweets, as companies like Twitter have started restricting access to their data. This has been done to monetise their content. Hence, the study strongly believes that there is a need for putting these Tweets in public-domain computational environments and provide data facilities exclusively for quantitative social science, which can be accessed by researchers via a cloud-based facility. If data like Tweets are not available to researchers, research in this field may be possible only for a few who can afford to buy them and for big corporations and Government Agencies, the study concludes.

The definition of data, rather Big Data is not clearly defined, but is used to refer to the analysis of data in large social networks such as Twitter, according to Malcolm (2014). The researcher feels that the study of Big Data is at a very early stage, especially for communication researchers. Big Data is essential for the analysis of sentiments, automated data segregation, etc. The research being carried out in the field of Big Data at present, will be able to add to the body of research for conceptual and methodological advancement of this field of research. This advancement in the research of Big Data will therefore be significant for communication scholars, who are trying to make sense of this huge amount of Data.

Research on Big Data is linked to computer science research, as the use of algorithms help in transforming the unstructured data generated by humans on the computer networks, into a structured data. The unstructured nature of data on Social Media leads to a lot of ambiguity for researchers. Therefore, it needs to be processed, tagged and quantified in a logical manner. In order to bring this unstructured data into a structured data model, algorithms are used to further analyse and gain insight into this Data.
Malcolm (2014) further elaborates that the discussion on Twitter has been totally dominated by traditional Media actors, and this has become an accepted part of the Twitter culture. Traditional Media too has embraced Twitter due to its features where one can quickly share news, drive traffic to its news sites, elicit opinions and build a better connect and deeper relationship with the users and consumers of news.

2.2.1 Social Media Application for Political Communication

The language used in Politics has evolved from the speeches of Aristotle to present day Tweets. Aristotle tried hard to develop the content of his speech in order to make it persuasive and memorable. His core principle for a great speech was that it should have three Elements-Ethical Appeal, Emotional Appeal and Logical Appeal. (Aristotle, 350 BC). When applied to Tweeting for Political Communication, the same rules hold good.

The use of Social Media like Twitter for Political Communication is to enlighten, express oneself articulately and convey one’s ideological outlook to the public. Nevertheless, there are fundamental compatibilities in the moral viewpoints of an enlightened, articulate rationality and the ideological perspectives which have been acknowledged by some linguists (Chomsky, 1987, p.57-136).

The structure and production of language and meaning arise from different Theories. Swanson and Nimmo (1990), in their book ‘New Directions in Political Communication’ have asserted that in a capitalist society, illegitimate power, exploitation and social deformities are bound to arise in the rhetoric of Political Communication.

The four traditions of democratic theory for mass media discourse, according Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards & Rucht (2002) in their book ‘Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies,’ have been labeled as representative liberal, participatory liberal, discursive and constructionist, and their study attempts to define each tradition, highlight their specific normative criteria and apply this criteria to abortion discourse in Germany and USA. The study summarises these criteria and compares the hierarchy of values expressed in each tradition while collaborating this with brief findings of empirical studies that the researchers have undertaken in
Germany and USA and show how they conform to the standards of different democratic traditions.

Two concepts that have been used to describe the changes with regards to media and politics during the last fifty years are the concepts of mediation and mediatization (Strömbäck, 2008). However, both these concepts are used more often than they are properly defined. Moreover, there is a lack of analysis of the process of mediatization, although the concept as such denotes a process. Thus the purpose of this article is to analyze the concepts of mediated and mediatized politics from a process-oriented perspective. The article argues that mediatization is a multidimensional and inherently process-oriented concept and that it is possible to make a distinction between four phases of mediatization. Each of these phases is analyzed. The conclusion is that as politics becomes increasingly mediatized, the important question no longer is related to the independence of the media from politics and society. The important question becomes the independence of politics and society from the media.

A study by Davis (2009) speculates on the internet’s wider influences on the shape of institutional politics in representative ‘actually existing democracies’. Findings, based on 100 semi-structured interviews with political actors (politicians, journalists and officials) operating around the UK Parliament, suggest two contrasting trends. On the one hand, more political actors at the immediate edges of the UK institutional political process are being further engaged in a sort of centrifugal movement going outwards from the centre. At the same time, the space between this extended political centre and its public periphery is increasing. This fatter, democratic elitist shift in UK politics may be interpreted as ‘new’ and ICT-driven. It might equally be argued that new media is intensifying pre-existing political party and media trends in mature democracies which fail to engage ordinary citizens.

Bimber et al. (2012), in their study on ‘Interaction and Engagement’ were able to prove that with the use of Digital Media, citizens have been able to participate much more voluntarily. This idea of participation has changed the idea of Democracy for citizens, institutions and Politicians. They highlight the need for understanding the implications of this change for institutions, organizations, and citizens and stress upon the fact that this angle of participation and its link to Internet usage needs to be
understood further. The fundamental link between Internet use and political behaviour has different layers to it and this needs to be ascertained, the study concludes.

Ceron et al. (2014) tries to evaluate the relationship between the consumption of online news and a citizen’s propensity to express trust in political institutions. Arguing that the consumption of information from news websites relies on a top-down format that mimics that of traditional media, news on the internet is driven by political elites (Hindman, 2009) and promotes democratic support and political trust. Conversely, the unmediated nature of Social Media along with its bottom-up structure favours the circulation of alternative information that challenges the viewpoints of traditional media and negatively affects trust in political institutions and accountability. However, if Social Media becomes a terrain for the diffusion of unmediated news biased in favor of antisystem arguments, this can damage democratic support and prevent any process of e-democracy and online deliberation.

Anthony (2013) in his study ‘Harvesting the Twittershpere’ proposes a new methodology of using Twitter to conduct a qualitative study. A researcher can search for a specific term, and search through constantly generated Tweets to see what people are saying about the term. In order to do this, the Tweets should be captured, sorted and analyzed in order to provide a unique insight from the consumer. Rather than going for a quantitative study, researchers should opt for qualitative studies as Tweets by nature, offers a glimpse into the feelings of users. Hence, Twitter is the perfect field to conduct a qualitative study since it is about sharing emotions, sentiments and feelings, rather than numbers, facts or statistics, the study concludes.

Bergie (2013) carried out a study on the civil society discussion by citizens on Twitter. In total, 2,608 tweets were read and manually coded as part of the study. The study revealed that Twitter users did not express their opinion strongly but instead tended to amplify a Politician or the Government’s narrative. Only 15.8 per cent of the sample Tweets expressed opinion. Twitter was used, the study says, to understand and seek others’ perspective, and communicate directly with decision-makers. Given the dominance of traditional media actors who were on Twitter, the study found that the variety of topics covered on Twitter and print media mirrored one another and were given approximately the same weightage which was a predictable trend.
Broersma, Graham and Hazelhoff (2014) conducted an analysis of Conservative and Labour candidates’ use of Twitter during the 2010 UK Election Campaign. Their findings indicate that a small seed towards connected representation has been planted. The study says that though Twitter offers for creating a closer and more connected relationship with citizens, the extent to which this type of practice will grow and spread among Politicians at large, however, remains to be seen. Twitter has thus without a doubt enlarged the reach of Political Communication, allowing Politicians to connect with an interested group of following voters and target them directly. The study finds that Politicians use Tweets to broadcast information about their campaign and inform citizens about their political views, which was sometimes sweetened with a personal flavour. The study also finds that Twitter made it possible for creating lasting relationships in terms of being connected between citizens and their representatives. This lasting connection, the study says is in contrast to the traditional model where representatives made their connections with their electorate during Elections and lost connect soon after the Elections. The study also points out that since Twitter is an open system, Politicians and citizens are free to follow one another without being forced to do so, and this creates a sense of continuity and visibility for both of them. The citizens who do not follow a particular Politician can also easily view his Tweets. In The UK, the study argues that there already exists systems of continuous representation and democracy initiatives for online participation, but Twitter makes the entire process more transparent, public, centralised and user-friendly both for the citizen and Politician. The main advantage of using Twitter is its ability to foster two-way communication, the study reveals.

### 2.2.2 Twitter and Celebrities

Technologies like Twitter enable people to connect, because they allow platforms for creating and sharing content. A Celebrity creates an image and aura around themselves that appeals to their fans and to the media. Their use and practice on Twitter has been researched by many researchers. When sociology researchers interviewed young people and asked them about their personal expectations of fame, they found that there was a ‘popular culture’ and this has resulted in the formation of a new discipline that is related to literary studies. This discipline of popular culture examines the growing fascination for the Celebrity culture and called for a textual
analysis as early as in the 1980s. The study of the ‘Celebrity’ has therefore been around for some decades now.

Goffman (1956) in his book ‘The Presentation of Self in everyday life’ speaks about the connect that a Celebrity makes with his audience through repeated engagement. Goffman describes the ‘expressive equipment’, such as the physical setting where a performance occurs, or the ‘personal’, consisting of items we ‘most intimately identify with the performers themselves’, as the ‘front’. Indeed, as they are able to present promotion as reward, publicly performing bonds of intimacy as a way to increase the capital of their brands, we have to wonder whether these performances are entirely cynical or sincere (1956, pp. 10-14). Goffman terms this as the ‘cycle of disbelief to belief’ (1956, p. 12). In the context of Twitter, when these ideas are applied, it may be seen that the interactions are aimed to coerce and influence the audience behaviour. The Celebrity’s performance on Twitter and other Media has been studied by many scholars who say that inspite of knowing that their favourite Celebrity is staging a performance on Twitter or any other channel, the audience usually accept this performance as authentic. This factor is questionable on Twitter as audiences on Twitter are getting an amorphous view into the real lives of Celebrities.

Marshall, (1997) seeks to find out the general public’s eagerness to be associated with a Celebrity. He wonders why each type of a Celebrity fulfills our lives in different ways thus relating to particular needs the public has of Celebrities in the entertainment media. In his book ‘Celebrity and Power’ he says the media has made Celebrities much closer to their fans, giving them instant access. Identifying the forces that have enveloped the development of democratic culture, he examines the cult like followings of Celebrities and those who disappear from the radar, as they get rejected by their fans. This huge fan base leads to capitalism that invigorates the economy for product consumption. He concludes that Celebrity Culture has increased exponentially with the online culture. Marshall argues that Celebrity offers us an example to live by through exemplification of our idea of individual perfection, and that kind of fan following allows formation of clear consumer groups. (1997, p. 248)

Pringle (2004) in his book ‘Celebrity sells’, points out that as consumers of news who watch Celebrities, and get to know them, we are in awe of them. Getting to know about the characteristics and capabilities of a Celebrity leads to a certain kind of
appreciation which can range from ‘mildly interested’, ‘genuine fan’ or a ‘stalker’. The ‘Celebrity Phenomenon’ as the author points out can largely be attributed to the media. This public fascination with regard to Celebrities goes back to many years. A celebrity would not be a celebrity with millions of people in adulation of them, if not for the people themselves, points out the author. Commenting on the future of celebrity, the author says that with globalization the Celebrity will have a wider audience and will capitalize on this massive fan base. Celebrities will cross borders and promote themselves and their brands in markets beyond their own, and “they will continue to play a key role in leading social behaviour and pushing back the boundaries of acceptability.” (Pringle, 2004, pp. 268-271)

As Turner (2004) notes, this dynamic depends on the interplay between the public and private spheres: We can map the precise moment a public figure becomes a celebrity. It occurs at the point at which media interest in their activities is transferred from reporting on their public role (such as their specific achievement in politics or sport) to investigating the details of their private lives. Paradoxically, it is most often the high profile achieved by their public activities that provides the alibi for this process of ‘Celebritisation’ (Turner, 2004: 8).

This process, however, is complicated by emerging participatory media forms whose impact is experienced as new conditions of possibility for Celebrity production and consumption. As Marshall argues, video mash-ups of Celebrity interviews, for example, are dramatically changing the relation between Celebrity and audience (Turner, 2006, p. 640). Meanings produced by these audience authored texts challenge the extent to which a Celebrity might control her image. For Marshall, these are pressing legal questions in an era increasingly defined by such texts which function to narrow the ‘representational gap’ between Celebrity and fan (Turner, 2004: 640). As he puts it: In contrast to traditional media, it is less clear where a product begins and where it ends as this new system of production implies multiple forms produced by users … Perhaps what is even more interesting is that these indiscretions of reproduction and remaking have legal implications related to when a user actually possesses and makes a cultural form his/her own (Turner, 2006, p. 641).

Bennett (2010) in his research while tracing the history of Celebrity studies, explains that Daniel Boorstin in 1961, first published about the manufacturing of the
modern Celebrity. Later, sociologist Francis Alberoni in 1972 conducted a study of Celebrities called 'the powerless elite'. The late 1970s saw a lot of work on Celebrities and the phenomenon of stardom.

Turner (2010) conducted an analysis of Celebrity, Celebrities and Celebrity culture. His study speaks about the dangers of ‘Celebrity worship’ by psychologists. Contemplating on what researchers should seek from the study of Celebrity, and the approaches that are needed to help us understand the cultural and media angle of this popular culture, the study discusses how to establish a stronger base for the study of audience consumption of Celebrities.

In a study conducted on sports athletes who are also considered to be Celebrities, Hambrick et al. (2010) did a content analysis of tweets of athletes, who used Twitter to discuss right from their favourite restaurants to how they spent their leisure hours. The researcher’s claim that along with this interactivity that these athletes had with their fans, these kinds of diversionary tweets gave their fans a sneak peek into their favourite athlete’s life. Building on the uses and gratifications theory, which emphasizes the benefits online users receive such as entertainment and diversion, the study found that Twitter may provide fans with unique insight into the personal lives of athletes and address topics not found to the same extent in mainstream-media sources.

Marwick and Boyd (2011) established that the vast majority of Celebrity Twitter accounts are produced by the Celebrities themselves, and only around 13% of the most popular tweets showing signs of being managed by a team of publicists and/or the Celebrity. As Marwick and Boyd (2011) say, to create a sense of intimacy, publicly acknowledge their fans and use language and cultural references to create affiliations with followers, Celebrities are using Twitter, giving the impression of candid and uncensored look at themselves. They argue that “celebrity practice though, is not an equalizer for democratizing discourse”.

Spirou (2014) seeks in her study to integrate auto/biography theory and argues that rock stars primarily use Twitter for instant autobiography and self-life narratives. Since Twitter gives them the control to represent aspects of their life on their own terms, their identity can be shaped real-time, the researcher says.
The Celebrities use Twitter and other Social Media as branding tools for the promotion of their movies, music, brands and also their own identity. Quoting Laurie McNeill, the researcher tries to frame Twitter in terms of a post human auto/biography, suggesting that the profile is two-dimensional portrait, designed to be a basic autobiography, but limited due to the technology utilised.

Tolson (2015) argues that the terms ‘Celebrity’, ‘Personality’ and ‘Star’ all developed increasingly specific meanings in the discourse so that the term ‘Celebrity’ could be understood as defining an emerging popular culture and the relationship between media performers and outsiders/ordinary people, in an article titled- The history of television Celebrity: A discursive approach. Tolson also points to the importance of detailed empirical methods to show new light on the Celebrity archive.

Merck (2015) argues that the interactive culture that produces today’s instant Celebrity also promotes the agency and expressiveness of the subject who refuses identification, assumes an alias or identifies under a collective rather than individual aegis like Anonymous nor have they ignored the ‘ordinariness’ of those who now receive public attention. Moreover, the diegetic and extra-diegetic charge of ‘fame-seeking’ levelled at the whistleblowers in these films underlines the media’s own stake in Celebrity’s motivating power, as well as its pervasiveness as a narrative of both self-aggrandizement and social achievement. But much as we may claim that we are all Celebrities now, what these films cannot help but demonstrate is the emergence of political resistance whose anonymity necessarily matches that of the secret state it opposes. Perhaps the ubiquity of contemporary celebrity is itself a disguise, masking the increasingly unnamed exercise of political power.

Bennett (2015) explains about the online presentation of the ‘self’ when it comes to Celebrities. The researcher identifies this process as a way of exploring the persona and the public image of the Celebrity. This is done by following certain statistical methods and by drawing on interpretative phenomenological analysis, social network analysis and prosopography to analyse this networked nature of the contemporary public persona of the Celebrity. The researcher explains that ‘Persona studies’, in some respects, offers and stands as a challenge to Celebrity studies as it takes a much wider approach to questions of performance and the ‘self’ than Celebrity studies do.
Usher (2015) conducted a statistical analysis of the Tweets Celebrities who were ranked as the ‘top 20 Celebrity Twitter accounts’ in terms of Followers as on June 2014. The study seeks to examine the sustainability of Celebrity performance on Twitter and levels of interaction of these Celebrities. The study finds that though Celebrities choose to make themselves available to their fans on Twitter, there exists a level of mediation when interviewing occurs through ‘crowd-sourced moments’ on Twitter. This is because Celebrities opt to answer questions from a fan base they usually identify with and usually ignore the difficult questions. They choose to ignore these fans who ask questions which could either damage the version of self they are presenting at that moment or their brand. The study further reveals that audiences on Twitter are not present on Twitter merely to get glimpses of their favourite actors, they are also embracing the opportunity to be included in building a Celebrity’s performance and this they do by often supporting and endorsing the Celebrity’s activities-promotional or otherwise. Hence the study is crucial in revealing not only the presence of Celebrities on Twitter, but also the reason for the presence of their Followers and the Followers role in furthering the brand of the ‘Celebrity’ persona. This reveals that Followers of Celebrities are not ‘star-struck’ and present on Twitter to get unobstructed glimpses into the real lives of the rich and famous, but are also there to actively engage with their favourite Celebrities on Twitter.

Rasul and Proffitt (2011) question the interrelationships between sports and popular culture in their study. The study finds that there are many areas that converge between cultural practices, politics, economics and sports in the globalized arena. The study tries to facilitate the understanding of this interrelationship, using a critical political economy approach. The study tries to understand the formation of the media-hyped Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket tournament as well the Bollywood stars who are involved as owners and promoters of the league. The study calls this an ‘innovative marketing tactic’ as it has harnessed the profit making capability of cricket to increase the interest of the corporate sector and the entertainment industries in the sport. This has resulted in the commercialisation, and corporatisation of the popular sport of India-cricket.
2.2.3 Tweets-Centred Studies

A. Users and Gratification

The basic idea of this Users and Gratification approach is that it asks what people do with Media, not what the Media does to people (Swanson, 1979). Users and Gratification suggests that multiple Media Channels often compete with each other to capture users’ attention, and that active users select the medium that is most suited to meet their needs (Tan, 1985).

Users and Gratifications Theory emphasizes the benefits of using Internet and, by extension, online social networks. Benefits included the ability to interact with other online users and keep in touch with the larger world (Ruggiero, 2000).

Users and Gratifications Theory when applied to Social Media networks such as Twitter, can help establish patterns in tweet behaviour and explain the popularity and growth of this medium. The needs to Tweet constantly access information (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ruggiero, 2000), seek out entertainment and attention diversion means (Ruggiero, 2000), and communicating with like-minded users (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008) are some of the motives recognized that make individuals tweet. Apart from these are the intentions to develop personal identities and keep in touch with the larger world (Ruggiero, 2000).

The Users and Gratifications Theory has been in recent years used to examine needs gratified through use of online applications, such as Social Media. Twitter with its interpersonal approach makes for an ideal approach suitable for this theory which focuses on the psychological and social needs of the people on Twitter who are Tweeting actively. This along with how a medium like Twitter can gratify needs and motives to communicate (Rubin, 2009) makes this theoretical approach relevant for the present Study.

A study conducted by Chen in 2011 found that people who actively seek out Twitter are doing so out of a basic human need to connect with others that they can then gratify by using this computer medium. These findings reinforce that communication behaviour is goal directed and purposeful with the active user at the core, as the uses and gratification theory proposes. The study finds that those who stay on Twitter for a longer time end up gratifying their need to connect to people.
These findings offer support for the idea that Twitter is not just virtual noise of people talking at each other, as some critics contend, but that it is a medium that people actively seek out to gratify a need to connect with others. Thus the Users and Gratifications Theory in understanding the need to Tweet highlights the motives for general use of the internet.

B. Collective Activism

For most people, their interest in politics and the elections stem from the Media. This was evident in the study conducted by Trenaman and McQuail (1959). Since that study which showed that television as a medium had increased people’s interest in political issues and politicians considerably, it is now assumed that the broadcast medium is the most significant medium for communicating with the people.

There is another set of connected audiences who believe that they use the media more constructively than others. They believe that others watch television and other sources of media as means of escapism, and as a habit, rather than seek the news and information that is available to them in the media. This is known as the third-person effect (Davison, 1983).

Bernard (2005) in the chapter ‘How Mass Media Stimulate Political Transparency’ in the book ‘Media, Politics and Democracy’ states that “because Politicians understand how important Mass Media has become to retaining powers and influencing citizens, television helps create a new reality occupied by spin doctors, pollsters, pundits and media consultants” (p.248). Calling television a self-fulfilling representation the author says that television is central to successful mass politics and it eventually helps in producing the same essential elements that it portrays.

Internet has in a very short time become a rival for television as an important medium of Political Communication. In theory, Twitter offers the opportunity to increase democratic engagement. By treating citizens not just as voters but as fellow participants who can share valuable knowledge and expertise with those who represent them, a more participatory and conversational democracy could be established. (Coleman, 2005, p.9)
The general belief according to Comstock and Scharrer, (2005) is that when people offer resistance to the Media or show indifference towards the Media this could be attributed to their cognitive and affective upright response. This happens because people consistently estimate that they themselves are less likely to be influenced by the Media than are others.

Anwar and Srinivasan (2012) call Twitter as a networking tool that can be used as a weapon. In the context of the Social Media protests that happened across India after the brutal gang rape of Nirbhaya in December 2012 in Delhi, there were several arrests that the Delhi Police made of the protestors. One of the protestors Sambhavi fired Tweet after Tweets after the police arrested her and several others. “Illegally being held here at Parliament w/15 other women. Terrified, pl RT,” she Tweeted. This triggered off 1,700 Retweets of her SOS and reached over 2 lakh people. Though the police contested her claims, her Tweets triggered a Social Media chain reaction bringing quick reactions from Media, lawyers and activists. Celebrities too condemned this through their tweets. The article sees this as a trend setter, claiming that it set the agenda for public discourse. The article concludes that Social Media is the new power of the ordinary citizen and 2012 unleashed the power of the Social Media.

Oh, Agrawal and Raghav Rao (2010) in their study ‘Tracking the Mumbai terrorist attack through Twitter,” seek to understand role of information through Tweets during a terror attack. In the backdrop of the extreme environment created and the volatile situation during the Mumbai terrorist attacks, the study focussed on how the terrorists used the information freely available on live television broadcasts and Twitter to attack the citizens in Mumbai. The study utilized the framework along the lines of the Situation Awareness Theory to expose the vulnerability of Tweets as a reporting system that was made use by the terrorists after analyzing the content of Tweets about the Mumbai terror attack. The researchers have suggested a conceptual framework to analyse the control of information that might be available and made use of wrongly by terrorists on Twitter.

Alathur, Ilavarasan and Gupta (2011) in their study examined whether online democratic participation by citizens made them feel empowered. The study suggested two stages of citizen empowerment in the virtual space. According to the researchers,
in the first stage, e-democracy participation of the citizens has to be enabled. In the second stage, citizens are made to be part of the decision making process. After thorough review of literature, the researchers delineated a research model and tested this with the help of quantitative data collected through a survey. The study reveals that empowering the citizens through online elements does influence the participation in an Electronic Democracy.

C. Journalists and Twitter

Broersma and Graham (2012) in a study on “Twitter as news source during the 2010 British and Dutch election,” have found that Journalists monitor Tweets of Politicians for potential quotes or flaws. The study also finds that Journalists are no longer the traditional gatekeepers for Political Discourse. It is this interplay between Social Media and traditional Mass Media outlets that explains the presence of many Politicians on Twitter, the study reveals.

Mi Rosie and Jeremy (2015) in a study found that Journalists can use Twitter in many different ways. They can reveal personal details or maintain a purely professional profile. They can interact with their followers or focus on Tweeting news and information. Journalists who interact with their Followers are seen as more credible and rated more positively than journalists who use Twitter solely to disseminate news and information. The researchers conducted an experiment where 156 students were asked to look at and evaluate different Journalists’ Twitter profiles. The Twitter profiles were created based on actual online content, but the profiles were manipulated so that the researchers could analyze how three specific factors affected what audiences thought about journalists on Twitter. The results revealed that interacting with the audience affected what the study participants thought of the Journalist. Journalists who engaged with the audience were rated as more credible and were seen more positively than journalists who did not engage with the audience, but merely transmitted information.

2.3 Twitter and Elections

A study reported in the Public Relations Quarterly by Marina, Sejung and Soon (2002), elucidates the role of the Internet in American politics. This has been carried out from public relations perspective. The study says that the presidential
candidates can gain almost unlimited access and visibility and maintain total control of the message at less expense through the internet. Interactivity and a sense of community between candidates and their target audience allows them to communicate. This dynamic communication strategy adopted by the candidates on the campaign trail, using the internet has been able to build relationships with voters through symmetric two-way communications, especially, with younger voters.

According to a study conducted by Vijapur and Balasubramanya (2003) to assess the impact of political news on young adults besides examining their exposure to media and political participation, there is a positive impact on the exposure of people to political content in media. Thus mass media is important in shaping the future of a democratic set-up.

Machaiah, (2006) conducted a study on media habits of Karnataka legislators in 2006 interviewed all the 297 members of both houses of the assembly to analyse their media habits in relation to print, television, radio and new media. The study was an explorative study primarily based on a systematic case study with the help of interview schedule. The study revealed that in India, politicians have over the years successfully harnessed the internet, particularly to address the apathetic urban electorate. While the 1999 general elections saw the application of internet to politics for the first time, the 2004 polls saw the Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unleashing a full-fledged online campaign. The study also discloses that Karnataka was among the States which pioneered the use of internet in politics, with an MP from Bangalore (South), Ananth Kumar, becoming the first parliamentarian in the country to launch his personal website, in the mid-nineties. The study reveals that the consumption of the media is extremely high among the legislators of Karnataka. The study indicates that the respondents do not attach much importance to new media like internet and news downloads through the mobile phone. However, the researcher suggested that a similar study may be conducted at a future date to understand if there is a difference in the pattern of consumption of new media among the legislators, in course of time. Almost 10 years since this study was conducted, the preferences of elected representatives have changed manifold.

Woolleya et al. (2010) in a study find that the US Presidential Elections in 2008 brought into sharp focus Facebook as a workable tool for Political
Communication. Facebook had till then been known for fostering and maintaining relationships between family and friends. The study reveals that the creation of Facebook group pages on Barack Obama and Presidential candidate John McCain numbered more than 1,000 until Election Day. The study uses Quantitative Content Analysis to assess how Obama and McCain portrayed themselves to these Facebook groups. The study finds that Obama was portrayed more positively across Facebook groups than McCain. The researchers also coded the use of profanities, racial, religious, and age-related language to know how each candidate was portrayed.

Arulchelvan (2010) says Politics and Mass Communication have been going hand in hand from many centuries. Most of the Politicians and Parties have been using Mass Communication effectively and have also easily adapted to the changing forms of Communication from time to time, according to their convenience, availability and reach. With the advent of New Media Technologies the political campaign has gained a new dimension. He further states that door-to-door campaigning and print hoardings in regional languages are at the core of Election Campaigning in India. This changed in 2004, when the BJP launched its aggressive nation-wide ‘India Shining’ campaign. This campaign revamped the party’s website, sent out text messages to 20 million of mobile users and as well pre-recorded voice clips and emails. New media and Social Media have set a new benchmark for Election Campaigning and Political Communication as a whole, the researcher opines.

Jacob, (2010) in his study on the impact of political communication on voting behaviour in the states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu posited that in a democratic country like India the private press helps to mould the opinion of voters. He further states that in Political Communication there are three elements-political actors, political communication and media organisation and in a rapidly developing economy like India, the highest rating of media impact on voting behavior came from the voters of the state of Karnataka (88%). The analysis of this finding was that the scientific use of the media by the politicians in Karnataka much earlier than other states in India could be due to the fact that the politicians who secured media education came from reputed universities such as Mysore University in the state which was a pioneer in the field of journalism education. The study also revealed that that Mass Media especially Political Communication through newspapers and...
television channels has an impact on the voting behaviour of people in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu.

India’s socio-political discourse is peculiar due to its staggering diversity, observes (Bhaduri, 2010, p. 45). Hence Politicians use Media to reach their electorate in such a large and diverse country of a billion population. She however argues that the introduction of New Media promoted technical-aided human interaction which brought to the fore a new face of India -the highly educated middle class that was technologically savvy. For digitally-aided Political Communication to work in India effectively, it is important that the Government and Political Parties alike use traditional media to begin with, to educate and inform the masses about the benefits of adopting and adapting to an information technology-driven milieu. Promoting familiarity by factoring in parameters of illiteracy and poverty, among others, is the first step towards fitting in the new technologies to the existing mechanics. The researcher feels that every person from different stratas must be included to bridge the distance between familiarity and fruitful deployment of digitally-aided, Political Communication in India.

Vergeer et al. (2011) study how candidates running for the European Parliament (EP) in 2009 used Microblogging to communicate and connect with citizens. The researchers found that though this new Microblogging tool Twitter was new and a popular Web 2.0 application, there was very little research carried out on the use of Twitter by Politicians. The researchers reviewed various types of campaigning strategies and studied the introduction of this new and distinct strategy of campaigning by Politicians. The study which is descriptive and exploratory in nature, focusses on the use of Microblogging by Politicians from a longitudinal, social network, and ideological perspective. The results of this study clearly showed that most candidates in 2009 used Twitter reluctantly. The study also found that the candidates, who did use Twitter, did so primarily for electoral campaigning and only cautiously for continuous campaigning. The study also revealed how a candidate’s presence on Twitter is an indicator of the progressive nature of the Party he belongs to. While it was found that candidates from progressive parties were most active users of Twitter, conservatives are nearly absent in the online space.
Storck (2011) in her dissertation on the role of Social Media in the Arab springs uprising opines that Social Media was used as an organizational tool, as an alternative press and to generate awareness. The researcher examined how Twitter was used by Egyptian activists during the time period of 25 January when the first mass demonstration occurred in Tahrir Square, to 11 February when President Mubarak stepped down. Content analysis was performed on a total of 1,091 Tweets that were collected by Egyptian activists Alex Nunns and Nadia Idle (Idle & Nunns, 2011). Twitter was used mainly as a platform for discussion of what was going on amongst Twitter users and as a way of providing firsthand accounts of events on the ground. As Twitter is a mobile phone-enabled Social Media with embedding capabilities, users could Tweet updates by the minute and include other forms of media such as photographs and video. Though there is a range of opinion as to how influential Social Media was in generating political mobilisation in the Egyptian uprisings, it has been argued in this paper that its main roles were in providing an organisational infrastructure, as a form of alternative press, and as generating awareness both domestically and internationally of the ongoing revolution. By analysing the way the activists utilized the tools of Social Media through established theories of communication, one can see how the inherent characteristics of Social Media and the Internet were able to foster the necessary requirements for collective action. However, despite its success in organizing the uprisings, it would seem from the current situation in Egypt that Social Media has been less useful in translating the needs and demands of protesters into political reality.

A study conducted on the communication features of websites of political parties in India by Karandikar, (2012) revealed that the non-interactive nature of the website showed that political parties were not interested in encouraging public participation. In most of the websites the study found that aesthetics were poor, information flow between the party and general public was not happening through the website and barring few parties, most parties had not harnessed the convergence of the medium. When the researcher personally interviewed a few Politicians they revealed that since the content posted on the Internet was there for eternity and has the tendency to spread fast, they were not comfortable to commit to their electorate online. Another interesting reason cited by these Politicians to the researcher was that
they considered the internet to be an elitist medium, used only by the elite, who did not come out to vote for them.

Hsu et al. (2012) in their study examined Twitter users among the members of the National Assembly in South Korea. They called these users as ‘A-list’ users and examined some socio-geographic characteristics of these ‘A-list users’ in order to understand their usage patterns in the context of the societal structure of Korea. The users were selected in terms of their geographic locations and social status. The study revealed that the Tweets posted by these users indicated that half of them showed negative attitudes toward the present administration as these Tweets contained emotional terms in their content.

Vadrevu and Lim (2012) examined the trends and implications of the youth with Politics and Social Media in Southeast Asian countries and found that there was a vast variation in the Internet penetration of Social Media like Facebook and this did not come as a surprise to the researchers as the region constitutes of countries with diverse economic and social structures. On one hand are the affluent nations such as Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei which have invested significantly in ICT and education and hence have higher Internet penetration and on the other hand are more populous countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, Phillipines and Thailand, who have lower Internet penetration rates and yet have large number of Internet users. This proves that even if Internet penetration is low in countries, if their urban spaces are densely populated, they can have larger number of Internet users. The study also finds that the penetration of Facebook in Southeast Asian countries will be able to provide an indication of the widespread usage and adoption of Social Media in that region. The study concludes that it may well be safe to say that Facebook penetration mirrors the Internet penetration in the region and therefore the Social Media penetration too.

In an article about online news reporting in the 2009 General Elections, Chattopadhyay (2012) suggests that online news media - a new and popular segment, has emerged in the past decade in the wake of India’s rapid integration into the global economy. He further states that this news media scenario in India has evolved in the post-liberalisation period due to the fact that privatisation and deregulation have facilitated cross-border flows of capital and technology. The article seeks to make sense of how Indian journalism is transforming through Social Media use by
analysing three different stakeholders during the Indian general election: politicians, political journalists and ordinary citizens. The very fact of “being” or “using” Social Media, it argues, becomes an “enticing” aspect for politicians to relate to the young, urban, upwardly mobile middle-class citizens of India thus bridging the gap between the old forms of political communication and the new forms.

Banaji (2012) while researching about the disengagement of the youth from active democratic participation and the decline in voting patterns, attempts to identify the role of the upper middle class section of the Indian population who have taken a recent interest in political talk on the Social Media Channels.

Harindranath and Khorana (2012) say that the recent events in the Middle East and North Africa have been widely celebrated as the triumph of civil society. Such utilization worships the role of Social Media and the Internet as the centre point for the mobilisation of popular protest. The Media as well as research from scholars see these Digital Platforms as shaping these Revolutions, and enabling the shake-up of the civil society. The study cites a recent example from India where such popular mobilisation occurred in the form of the anti-corruption movement in 2011 which was inspired by Anna Hazare.

Nair (2013) in an article reveals that the Internet has highest penetration among the young population of India (18-24 years) at around 48% and lowest penetration of 6% in the older population (54 years and more). The article further reveals that the Internet will reach small towns and the lower strata of the economic ladder faster than retail chains. The growing appetite of Indian consumers also reveals that men are more likely than women to be on the internet (32%) and thrice as likely to be digitally influenced. The article reports that even 18% of lower income households have Internet access and the number of Internet users in India is expected to nearly triple from 125 million in 2011 to 330 million in 2016, according to a report by Boston Consulting Group.

Castells (2013) analyzed the similarities between Italy and USA in news reporting during Elections. He opines that regardless of their ideology and political rhetoric in Public Discourse, Politicians while campaigning are solely focused on winning. Everything else is an offshoot of the campaigning process.
The IRIS Knowledge Foundation (IKF) in its study (2013) found that the use of Social Media had serious implications, mostly positive, for Indian democracy. This is because of the fact that it empowers the citizens. The study stresses on the need for candidates to have a strategy of Media planning ready before the Elections in order to make their campaigns effective. Creating relevant content on Social Media will automatically increase accountability, the study finds. The study highlights the fact that the Indian electorate is young and Tech-savvy. A young population who is eager to vote and take active part in politics has serious implications for Politicians. This new generation of young voters is living in urban settings, has access to the internet and is assertive when it comes to getting what they want and asking for it. The study also cites evidence that shows that this young population of Indian citizens is ready to be assertive, prepared to take an aggressive stance and can be gullible to the various alternative view points freely available to them on the Internet. These young citizens have been disillusioned with the incompetencies of the previous Governments and have also taken to the streets to protest. This was evident in the mass mobilization of people through Social Media platforms during the fast by Anna Hazare, even if this movement did not last for long.

“Social Media in India-2012” -a report released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in February 2013 showed some interesting findings. The study revealed that one-third of the Social Media users, were from smaller towns in India with population of fewer than 500,000. This is a significant finding and even more significant is the fact that a quarter of Social Media users are residents of towns with a population less than 200,000.

Ahmed and Jaidka (2013a) in a study analysed and explained the role of Twitter in facilitating social movements and shaping the outcome of protests, especially in the context of the brutal gang rape in Delhi in 2012. The study made use of automatic as well as manual analyses of Tweeting themes and highlighted the usage characteristics of Twitter users who expressed their anguish which resulted in a huge public outcry in the national capital of India. The results of this study were able to identify Twitter as an important channel where diffusion of ideas took place. Twitter had the ability to share news and ideas more rapidly amongst its users across geographical locations. The content analysis revealed the prominent use of Twitter by
its users who took on the role of Citizen Journalists on the days of the protest to report live from the ground about the protests that were taking place in Delhi.

Ahmed and Jaidka (2013b) in a similar study on Twitter becoming a critical force in generating and disseminating information pertaining to news events, public and media action, especially in situations such as protests, opine that public activism and media coverage form a symbiotic relationship. The study identifies different types of users or “key actors”, e.g., traditional media organizations, new media organizations, non-government organizations and individual users who posted on Twitter in the period before, during and after the mass protests pertaining to a gang-rape incident in the Indian capital city of New Delhi in December 2012. The study especially focuses on the role of ordinary citizens in creating and disseminating information. The results indicate that individual users contributed to more than half of the information dissemination, and that the common man played an active part in creating and facilitating this information flow. The researcher stress upon the fact that the findings can be leveraged by digital libraries for customizing the library experience for individual users as well as virtual communities according to this new dynamic paradigm of information creation and consumption.

Eijaz (2013) studied the usage of the Social Media by Political Parties in Pakistan. The study found that the use of Social Media to interact and engage people and especially youth has increased tremendously. Political parties like PTI, PPP, PML-N, and others, the study reveals are operating their own networks on social networking sites to communicate, and mobilize people to participate in the political process. Twitter statistics of Pakistan’s top Politicians in 2013 show that among the Politicians, Imran Khan had the most Followers on Twitter. The researcher reveals that the assumption of people’s empowerment due to New Media is a myth without the creation of an egalitarian society where everyone has equal opportunities and an equitable distribution of resources. The study also points out that New Media adds to widen the gap between information/knowledge haves and have-nots. However, with an increased literacy rate, improved infrastructure, and equitable resources, people can participate actively in the political process the study concludes.

Dang-Xuana et al. (2013) in their study investigate the use of Twitter for Political Communication during the Elections. The study specially focused on the
characteristics and behaviour of communication of influential Twitter users in the State Parliament Elections in Berlin in September 2011. Tweets of the 30 most retweeted users are analyzed with respect to content-related features such as emotionality, appraisal of Political Parties or Politicians and topics they Tweeted about. The study tested the hypotheses regarding the relationship between sentiment in terms of emotionality and appraisals occurring in Tweets and their quantity and speed of dissemination. The aim of this study was to help both researchers and Politicians to have a better understanding of the nature of influential people in Political Communication and the role of Twitter in the information diffusion of sentiment.

Digrazia et al.(2013) published a study that reported that political campaigns could use Twitter to successfully predict the winner of most races, findings that might strengthen Social Media’s already robust political presence. This study suggests that the Social Media outlet does provide an accurate reflection of the electorate. The key measure, researchers from Indiana University found, was a candidate’s “Tweet share,” the percentage of total tweets about a race that mention them. The more often a candidate is mentioned on Twitter relative to their opponent, the study reported, the greater their chance for victory. The data was collected from Tweets of the 2010 elections and did not rest on the fact if they were positive or negative Tweets. The study revealed the number of times a candidate was mentioned on Social Media sis not correlate with the winning of that particular candidate. Perhaps most interesting, was whether the Tweet praised or criticized the recipient was irrelevant. When it comes to Twitter and Politicians, apparently all publicity really is good publicity. In the researcher’s view, the findings should revolutionize how campaigns conduct themselves. Rather than spending hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of dollars on surveys, campaigns could simply gauge their status on Twitter. Doing this would help campaigns with fewer resources compete with well-heeled incumbents.

Sreekumar and Vadrevu (2013) in their study try to understand the limited yet important implications on the rise of the political Twitterati for liberal Democracy in Singapore. The study critiques country’s various narratives of accomplishments through ‘series of Tweets’ that were infused with wit, sarcasm, parody and satire and finds that the political Twitterati in Singapore has expanded their outlooks of
democratic participation while remaining loyal to the country’s non-Western liberal democratic framework.

Bannerjee (2014) in his blog examines the professionalisation of Indian election and the way communication strategies were developed by political parties for elections, the article states that campaigns were handled in-house by representatives of the party itself. The growth of India’s GDP and rise of the middle class in the decades following liberalization in the 1990s saw a broad social transformation. Accompanied with technological changes such as the advent of television, internet and Social Media, the nature of political campaigns in India has seen a sea change. The article justifies this by quoting the example of BJP hiring a number of international public relations firms as early as 2009.

K, Asha and Usha Rani (2014) tracking the use of Social Media adopted by various party's and candidates in the 2014 General elections in their study, find that the two national parties-Congress and the BJP were way ahead of other national parties when it came to using Social Media. The findings of the study conclude that Social Media has arrived to stay and Politicians cannot ignore it anymore as its usage will only grow. However, the study finds that in India it is too early to expect Social Media to influence elections in general and voting behaviour in particular. Describing the use of Social Media as a ‘paradigm shift’ especially in the largest election in the world in 2014 which had 814.5 million voters with 23.1 million (2%) first time voters in the age group of 18-19 years, where interestingly, the total voter turnout bordered on 66.38%, the study claims that Indian politicians, to escape the gatekeeping by the media, took shelter under Social Media. The study also finds that New Media has shattered media stereotypes and has become a medium for public discourse. Terming it as the ‘new power centre’, the study finds that New Media has knocked down mainstream media which wielded power for more than a century.

Usha Rani (2014) while critiquing Gutenberg to Arab Spring: A Journey of Media Evolution says there is enough evidence in history to believe the extensive use of Mass Media like radio and cinema as tools of political propaganda by Governments across the world. The study citing the Arab Spring Revolution calls it a symbol of pro-democracy movement that left an indelible mark in the Middle East and North Africa and played a key role in political upheavals in the countries where Media
control reined supreme from many ages. The researcher constructs her case around the Arab Spring event that propelled Social Media even putting it ahead of other news Media and forced political regimes to contemplate on regulating this New Media. The researcher considers New Media as an alternative Media that is free from government, editorial and management control with public access to infinite space and time coupled with opportunities to own a Blog or a website linked to Social Media to express oneself. The study highlights the importance of a common man enjoying the freedom of speech and expression in both Democracies and Totalitarian Governments.

Harindranath and Khorana (2014) in their study seek to theorise the mobilisation of popular support through Social Media during the ‘anti-corruption movement’ in India in 2011. The study was conducted by tracking the Twitter feeds involving the main themes around the civil society-led movement during two crucial phases of fasting by its Gandhian leader, Anna Hazare. The paper highlighted the mixing of nostalgic pre-independence discourses with New Media and provides a means of contextualising what such discursive mobilisation means for contemporary political formations in a post-colonial society such as India. The study throws light on the urban and middle-class-centred nature of the protest and its preference for Media over electoral representation.

Rajput (2014) in his research paper calls Social Media as the medium through which the modern digitalized world communicates. This, the paper suggests was evident in the revolts in the Arab countries where Press freedom is curbed as well as in mature Democracies like the US Presidential Elections. The study forecasts the active role that Twitter and other Social Media Sites will play in the forthcoming Elections in India. The study reasons that Social Media cannot completely replace traditional media such as radio, newspaper and television, but will provide Politicians a direct way to communicate with the public, and can be used along with the existing traditional modes of communication. The study which was conducted before the 2014 General Elections in India, opines that as Internet is penetrating deeper into the Indian society and reaching the common man, the Politicians cannot afford to ignore and challenge its power. It is in this context that the significance of Social Media in the elections increases even though initially there were concerns whether Social Media
was important as a tool for Political Communication. The study puts Social Media in a place that is parallel to traditional media, to highlight this factor. The study analyses the Twitter accounts of top Politicians in India who are actively Tweeting. The data from the study shows that the usage of Twitter in India among Politicians is still in a nascent stage and has a long way to go. Even though the BJP and Congress Party is trying to leverage Social Media in their campaigning, the study finds that left-wing Party’s are not active on Twitter. The AAP the study finds has been trying to appeal to the youth who are active in Digital Communication. The study also reveals that Narendra Modi and Shashi Tharoor are among the top 15 leaders on Twitter with the most number of Followers. Cautioning the kind of Tweets that come from these leaders, the study calls for a code of conduct to communicate on this new platform that is uniformly followed, as a negative Tweet may harm the Party’s image and ruin the prospects of potential candidates during Elections. The study concludes that Politicians need to be more active and creative in their Tweeting activity and that for the time being, the Twitter war among Indian Politicians has only just begun. As more leaders join Twitter and learn how to Tweet, the study expects that Twitter will play a very crucial role in painting the political picture of India.

Chopra (2014) while exploring the use of Social Media in the recent General Elections, says that Modi tweets to talk, Arun Jaitley selects a corner to keep up with his Facebook timeline, Sanjay Jha is live on Twitter when he is not live on television. The author points out to the fact that this is the first time in Indian history that the Congress, AAP and BJP sought suggestions from Social Media Followers on their Manifestos. Such significant changes are the new communication order of the world’s largest democracy and this new phenomenon that India is witnessing now, USA saw six years ago. When Political Parties begin to conduct Social Media workshops as part of their strategy for elections, the author says that you know that they are serious about this new discovery of Digital Communication.

Lama (2014) elaborates that the Press played an important role in the freedom struggle of India. Political Communication is deeply entrenched in India and was prevalent much before the advent of Media. He says that the introduction of Social Media gave Politicians and Political Parties a new platform to be more interactive and personalized, to gain trust and votes of their Electorate. He points out that the success
of Barrack Obama's use of Social Media in the US Presidential Elections influenced Indian Politicians and Political Parties to utilize the benefits of Social Media to their advantage.

Roy (2015) examined Social Media as a new weapon in Indian Democracy. The study reveals that most of the conversation happens on Social Media and India’s large segment of population consisting of its youth, spends a considerable amount of time on Twitter, Facebook and on mobile messaging applications. The reach might be questioned, the study says, pointing out that from politics to films, from an actor to a cricketer, everybody has a Social Media presence and is using it effectively. Social Media the study says, has jolted people out of their comfort zones, and brought them on the same pedestal to engage in meaningful dialogues with Politicians and Celebrities. The study points out that Social Media, though a relatively new entrant in the field of Mass Media, has proved to be more Democratic than newspaper and television and its power can be seen in the way it is being used by service organizations, media barons, actors and others to inform people about their objectives. The study points out that this medium helps in the formation of a participative environment and empowerment of the users through higher level of interactivity and

Pal (2015) Narendra Modi’s Social Media presence is among the most extensive for any politician in the world, including on Twitter where he currently stands second in following only to Barack Obama. With a mix of “feel good” messages, shout-outs to other celebrities, and well-timed ritualized responses, as well as a careful strategy of “followbacks” for a small selection of his most active followers, Modi has been able to grow his following dramatically especially since 2013. Twitter helps Modi directly reach a significant constituency of listeners, and use it as a channel to talk to the main stream media. In addition, the very appearance of his using Social Media effectively is in itself valuable in reshaping his public image as a Technology-savvy leader, aligned with the aspirations of a new Indian modernity.

Chakravartty and Roy (2015). This essay introduces the theme of the special issue. While elections across the globe today are mediated in the sense of being pervaded by the ambient presence and explicit deployments of varied media, the Indian national elections of 2014 showcase a specific logic of mediated populism that has become globally influential of late. To understand this logic, we examine the
contexts and lineages of the present moment of mediated populism, i.e. the wider political-economic dynamics and contexts that shape and embed the Modi phenomenon. We focus on the changing relationship between privatized media across platforms, political elites and conceptions/productions of “the people” that these particular political historical dynamics have affected and enabled.

On February 6, 2012, NDTV a national television channel broadcast a discussion on use of online media by political parties. A summary of the discussion is as given below: The BJP has been on Social Media for a while with its leaders constantly on Twitter. The Congress party, which is seen to be somewhat of a communications dinosaur, formally launched its own channel on YouTube on February 26, 2012.

In a first, the grand old party of India was making its debut on You Tube. The channel will post speeches of the PM, party president Sonia Gandhi and General Secretary Rahul Gandhi, speeches will be available online and there will be live web chats with ministers and leaders. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, party spokesperson and Digvijay Singh, General Secretary have been active on Twitter for a while now. Each day Technology evolves and we try to keep pace with technology, says Abhishek Manu Singhvi. Sachin Pilot, Cabinet Minister of State for IT and Communication says that though the face-to-face contact and emotional connect will continue to the main channel of communication with the voters, the new media certainly adds another dimension and the aim is to grab the attention of the youth who are now spending much more time on the internet than on TV. The UPA government is going to give broadband connectivity to every Panchayat, discloses Pilot. The BJP made its presence felt on Social Media on January 2011, 2012, when it began the Ekta Yatra from Kolkata. Their website had five lakh Followers on that day. Shazia Ilmi, Team Anna agreed that though there is a Digital Divide the Social Media usage is thriving even in small towns. All parties are looking at a one crore new age voters. There are 110 million Internet users in India, she argued. The panelists agreed that this is an evolving medium which is adding colour to the campaign. The content is there for posterity. Even after the deadline for the campaigning is over, you can always find the speech live after 6 pm, which is the deadline for canvassing as laid down by the Election Commission.
Ceron et al. (2014) conducted a content analysis of Social Media to know how it can improve the knowledge of citizens political preferences with an application to Italy and France. The study finds that there is a correlation between the ability of Social Media to forecast electoral results and the results of traditional mass surveys. However, this does not mean that Internet users are representative of the whole population of a country’s citizens. The study was conducted to analyse the online popularity of Italian political leaders throughout 2011, the voting intention of French Internet users in both the 2012 presidential ballot and the subsequent legislative election.

Ceron and Giovanna (2015) studied the content of e-campaigning. The study examined the electoral campaign for the 2013 Italian general election to assess the effectiveness of positive and negative campaigning messages, measured through content analysis of information published on the official Twitter accounts of Italian parties. Since political parties broadcast minute-by-minute the campaign messages on Social Media, the comprehensive and unmediated information was found to be useful to evaluate the impact of different electoral strategies. The study found that negative campaign has positive effects and its impact is stronger when the attacker is meanwhile under attack.

Vaccari et al. (2015) in a study to find out the relationship between political expression and action on Social Media studied a representative sample of Italians who discussed the 2013 elections on Twitter. The study finds that users who engage in political discussions on Social Media may influence other people in their online networks, who will in turn get motivated to engage and participate in political actions. When citizens acquire political information on Social Media and express themselves politically on these platforms, they are more likely to contact politicians via e-mail, campaign for parties and candidates using Social Media, and attend offline events to which they were invited online, the study finds out.

Best and Meng (2015) in their study on “Twitter Democracy: policy versus identity politics in three emerging African democracies” say that Twitter offers new ways for citizens to discuss and debate Politics and engage in the Democratic Process. These online systems could be places for rich policy relevant debate, which is favored by scholars of deliberative democracy. Alternatively, Social Media might be a
platform for an identity driven form of political discourse that is routinely scorned by scholars of democracy. To examine these two possibilities, they analyzed tweets sent during three national elections; the defining participatory process of democracy out of a dataset of over 760,000 tweets gathered during national elections in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya from 2011 to 2013. In order to analyze the degree to which Twitter was being used for policy relevant discussion they developed policy term sets through a text analysis of the major political party platforms. To examine the amount of discourse focused on identity issues they created identity term sets based upon national religious, tribal, and regional differences. In Nigeria, where divisive identity Politics feed violence and electoral misconduct, discussion of tribe, region, and religion dominated mentions of policies. In contrast Ghanaians, who enjoy the most robust Democracy of the three countries, were seven times more likely to discuss policy issues rather than identity. Since Kenyan democracy was still undergoing consolidation, the Tweets reflected this, with many Tweets devoted to tribal identity as campaign policy. These findings suggest that Social Media discussions may reaffirm the fact that they deepen the ideals of Democracy in a country especially during the Elections.

2.4 Twitter and Political Agenda-setting

Arguably, there seems to be no unanimity among scholars about the concept of agenda-setting. Who sets the agenda for whom? Does the media set the agenda for politicians or is it vice-versa?

New media could impact agenda-building processes such as media agenda building and intermedia agenda setting. With the advent of new channels of political communication comes the need to re-evaluate the agenda-setting power of the news media (Bennett & Iyengar, 2009; McCombs, 2004).

Agenda-setting theory, which suggests that the media have the power to determine the important issues of the day (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), is currently undergoing scrutiny (Bennett & Iyengar, 2009). Reverse agenda setting brings us full circle and suggests the public, long seen as a minimal player in agenda setting, may influence news media. (McCombs, 2004).
According to Dunn (2009), “the basic agenda-setting hypotheses treated the public agenda as a dependent variable influenced by the independent variable of media agenda. (p. 637).

“Considering the evidence that campaign agendas influence media agendas, which in turn influence public agendas, it is worthwhile to investigate how candidate agendas are formed” (p. 639). Before deciding to run for a political office, it is important for candidates to set a theme for their campaign. Each candidate needs to decide what they want to accomplish if they get elected. However, most candidates do not just discuss and focus on the issues that they want. Candidates are often influenced by their opponent. This is called inter candidate agenda-setting. According to Dunn (2009), intercandidate agenda-setting could be seen in the 2004 United States presidential election. He found that there was not much inter candidate agenda-setting during the crucial months on the campaign. However, there was a small period of time where one candidate greatly influenced the other candidate’s agenda. This study looked at the 1990 gubernatorial race that took place in Texas. It examined how the candidates’ political advertising impacted the media’s agenda. Political advertisement agenda, television agenda, and newspaper agenda were analyzed and a cross-lagged comparisons were done between the three. This study found that political advertising influenced newspaper agenda. It was also discovered that newspapers greatly impact television agenda.

Jungherr (2014) conducted a literature review in view of the growing use of Twitter during election by politicians and public alike and the ever increasing body of research on this topic. He laments that fact that though a lot of research is being conducted on Twitter's role by political scientists, communication scholars and computer researchers, the research is very fragmented as these researchers publish their finds only in their respective fields. He calls for the need not to let this fragmentation happen, as a consolidated account of literature of past studies will help researchers to develop hypotheses based on empirical findings of such past research in the field. Since research in this field is new, a common flow for evaluating these studies has not yet emerged. Hence researchers have not spent enough time identifying common patterns and hence there are is no list of phenomena and patterns that should be expected ideally when conducted such research.
Smith (2009) in a study finds that Twitter gained into prominence after the 2008 US Presidential Election Campaign of Barak Obama, where he used this microblogging tool extensively, breathing new life back into the debate, even as Social Media provided new opportunities for citizen engagement in politics.

Coleman (2001) found in his research on the role of internet in the UK elections, offline campaigning by candidates (one-way communication) offered very few opportunities for citizen engagement.

Strandberg (2009) examines the campaign websites of the 2003 Finnish parliamentary candidates. By examining candidate-level online competition in the candidate-centred Finnish context, individual-level variables are brought to attention in explaining website uptake and how campaign sites were used by candidates in terms of functions and sophistication. The findings show that the distribution of the candidates’ web presence was skewed towards an over-representation of major party candidates. Moreover, in predicting candidate website functions and sophistication, belonging to a major party was a strong predictor. Candidate competitiveness and incumbency were also found to be significant predictors. Nevertheless, the findings in the article indicate that the relevance of these political factors may be less significant than other factors, for example genre effects, in explaining candidate website content and presentation.

Lillekar and Jackson (2010) in their study explain that Social Media very rapidly became a prominent tool for parties and politicians to provide information about themselves, mobilise volunteers for campaigns and connect directly to the public.

Parmelee and Bichard (2012) say that agenda building at the second level refers to Journalists being influenced to use certain attributes to portray issues and other objects. Journalists often find story ideas and sources from Tweets.

Parmelee (2013a) in another study find that with the increase in Social Media use by Journalists and Politicians, researchers are now trying to explore how Politicians use various forms of Social Media as information subsidies to impact news coverage. There are two levels where agenda building occurs. First-level agenda building happens when journalists are persuaded to cover issues and other objects
they otherwise might have ignored. Much of the research done on agenda building has employed quantitative methods, such as content analysis and surveys. Conducting content analyses and surveys usually involves gathering large, randomly drawn samples of information subsidies and Journalists, then analyzing the data with statistical tools to make inferences regarding the degree to which political leaders and others can shape news coverage. While quantitative methods have greatly contributed to the understanding of the agenda-building relationship, this study focuses on Political Journalists in US newspapers who use Twitter. The researcher analyzed the transcriptions and answers sent via email by using a grounded theory approach. This approach involved first open coding to develop categories from the data collected, and then comparing and integrating categories to reveal themes of the ways in which Tweets influence Journalists and why such influence is possible.

Jungherr (2014) notes that 2009 saw the widespread and rapid adoption of the microblogging service Twitter by politicians, political parties and political supporters in Germany. He claims that the reason for this sudden rush to be on Twitter was due to the media reports on the successful use of internet by Obama in his campaign. He goes on to say that the eagerness with which the German politicians jumped on to the Twitter bandwagon led to public ridicule. Citing the example of the widely reported case where two Members of Parliament Ulrich Kelber and Julia Klöckner twittered the result of the German Bundespräsidentenwahl from the floor of the house minutes before the result was officially pronounced, he argues that instead of understanding the medium these politicians merely wanted to be seen as using it. The politicians were also not clear about what they wanted to achieve with their activities on Twitter and how to evaluate it. Highlighting the ugly aspects of campaigning negatively, Jungherr stresses on the need for constructive political microblogging, as the public and media are constantly monitoring every move on Twitter. Jungherr notes that it is important to accept the reality that online activity of political actors will always be more pronounced and aggressive in times of political campaigns. He cautions that if their activity declines online after the election, it need to be construed as a sign of an ‘offline autumn’.

Conway et al. (2015) in their study on ‘The Rise of Twitter in the Political Campaign: Searching for InterMedia Agenda-Setting Effects in the Presidential Primary’, looked at the influencing patterns of national newspapers from the Tweets
put out by candidates and political parties. The study made use of the time series analysis method to show how Twitter and newspapers have a symbiotic relationship and that this relationship varies in its intensity and duration depending on the issues to be analysed. The study, during the course of the 2012 Republican and Democratic Presidential nomination campaign, tested this intermedia agenda-setting relationship from newspaper articles of USA’s top newspapers and Tweets from Presidential primary candidate Twitter and campaign feeds. The study found that there were positive correlations between issue ranks in news coverage and Twitter feeds and this suggests that newspapers, candidates, and parties placed similar emphasis on issues. The study also found that newspapers were influenced by Tweets from candidates and parties. The study suggests that traditional media like newspapers have not completely lost their agenda-setting power. Political candidates, the study reveals, continue to seek out newspapers for their legitimacy and likewise, Social Media users look to the traditional media for information on unassuming issues.

2.5 Overview of the Literature

Keeping in mind these general findings, the present study is designed to

- Understand how Twitter has changed the ways in which Politics is acted out and understood by the Public and Media.

- The positive outcomes of this Digital Revolution far outweigh its limitations in recent Literature Review. Although it is too early to draw a firm conclusion, this Study seeks to explore the future potential of the Medium.

- Study the Nature of the Content of Tweets of Celebrities as powerful influencers in society.

- Assess the portrayal of the ‘Self’ by Politicians and Celebrities through their Tweets.

- Ascertain whether Politicians and Celebrities have fully understood the implications that their Tweets can have on their image and on their Followers.